Lengthening Cords and Strengthening Stakes: A Case Study in the Provision Of Nurse Education in A Global Context

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

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

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ABSTRACT

The development of educational programs in one culture for the delivery in another is not a new phenomenon. Practices associated with colonial and cultural imperialism have been documented in the literature. In recent decades, higher education programs in cross-cultural contexts have proliferated. As enrolments at universities in many western countries have increased and funding has been reduced, these universities have sought markets in other cultural contexts to provide them with a financial lifeline. This trend is consistent with the forces of globalisation and has not only economic implications but also cultural, social and political dimensions that need to be addressed.

Universities in developing countries have often found it necessary to expand their educational options to respond to the evolving needs of their students. Partnerships with universities that offer their programs in the cross-cultural marketplace have attempted to satisfy these demands. This study investigates the experiences of academics who have participated in such a marketing relationship. They were employed by two universities, one in Australia and one in Hong Kong, involved in an agreement to provide post registration nursing courses in Hong Kong.

A number of issues are explored in this study. These issues include the implications of developing and delivering education in a cross-cultural context specifically Hong Kong given the learning experiences of students from that culture. There are also important implications arising from the fact that nursing education has a history that has been shaped by the relationships nursing has had with other disciplines, particularly medicine.

The study adopts a qualitative methodology and uses social critical theory to explore the experiences of the academics employed by these two universities. It is argued that their experiences have not been openly articulated. This has meant that educational programs have been marketed and delivered without input from those who are involved at the grass roots.

Through revealing the reported experiences of the academics, this study aims to identify forces of dominance in the education and health systems that have kept nursing academics in a subordinate position. The thesis argues that these forces have prevented them from articulating the issues that impact on their work, including the quality of the educational programs that are delivered.

The findings suggest that the nursing academics have been subjected to several forces that have subjugated them. These forces include the more powerful rhetoric advanced by management and the medical profession. In this cross-cultural context, the academics in Hong Kong have also been dominated by the Australian academics. This study identifies some of the points of resistance to the dominance and also strategies that nurse academics have adopted in becoming become agents of change within the field of nursing education. Implications of these findings for the future of cross-cultural education in nursing are also discussed.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets the scene for the thesis. It provides an overview of the background to the research problem. It also introduces the research questions that emerge from the context that is described. A rationale is provided for the significance of the questions and why they are worthy of study. In addition, theoretical frameworks that are used to critically analyse the findings of the study are introduced. Finally, the subsequent chapters of the thesis are outlined.

Background to the Study

The impetus for this study arises from my interest and concern with maintaining integrity and quality in higher education. This interest is motivated by both my previous studies in adult education and experience as a practitioner in several higher education contexts. For a period of 10 years in a previous work role, I was employed in a School of Nursing at an Australian university that was providing higher education programs for nurses in Australia as well as in partnership with a university in Hong Kong.

I have become aware through this experience and contact with my fellow academics that a number of factors in the current higher education context stand to interfere with the capacity of universities to provide quality education particularly when it is offered in a cross-cultural context. As I became increasingly aware of these forces I was moved by a desire to explore their impact further.

Nurse education has been at a cross roads in the past three decades. There has been a world wide recognition of the need for nurse education to move away from hospital based training and this has heralded the development of a number of university programs initially leading to Diploma and later Bachelor level qualifications. Such a program was developed by the Australian university that is the focus of this study to provide opportunities for higher education for registered nurses in Australia. In time, registered nurses in Hong Kong identified similar needs. Concurrently there was a void in the capacity of local institutions in Hong Kong to provide programs of this nature.

The Australian university was one of several Australian universities that responded to the need by offering programs that had been developed in Australia for Australian students to meet the needs of registered nurses in Hong Kong. As a result the Australian university has since 1987 been involved in a cross cultural educational partnership with a university in Hong Kong offering programs for nurses working in the Hong Kong health system to also upgrade their qualifications.

Such a partnership is one of the many examples of the practice of one culture providing education for another. The literature on the history of education (Carnoy, 1974; Tomlinson, 1991) describes how certain countries and institutions have in the past, purveyed programs of education for others. There have been a number of motivations underpinning this practice particularly in respect of higher education. In some cases, it was a consequence of colonisation and was one manifestation of the dominance of the colonising culture over others. In other instances such as was the case with many students studying in Australia from Asia, the provision of education for other countries was a form of aid that provided promising students with educational opportunities abroad with the expectation that they would return to their own culture on completion of their studies.

The changes that have been described in terms of nurse education have occurred at a time when there has also been a significant reframing of higher education policy and the role played by the contemporary university in many countries. This situation has arisen because of an increase in student enrolments and the decreased funding per student from government sources resulting in an unprecedented crisis in funding. In order to secure their economic survival, several Australian universities have responded to these economic pressures and educational policies by performing in ways more in keeping with private enterprise.

One of the strategies adopted by a number of universities in Australia (including the one that is the focus of this study) as a means of securing revenue from other sources, is to turn to overseas, predominantly Asian markets, as a means of securing fee-paying students. In Hong Kong this is complemented by the need for educational programs that has arisen in Hong Kong as a result of nurses seeking higher education options.

This study then takes the form of a case study and arises in this context of contemporary higher education in Australia that is characterised by ever increasing pressures to find sources of funding. In the early 1980s the two universities that form the focus of this study began collaborating and an academic partnership was established. As stated earlier the nature of the partnership was that the Australian university would provide post registration programs in nursing for students in Hong Kong who had trained in the hospital system so that they could upgrade their qualifications to Diploma and later Bachelor's level. Further details of the nature of this case study are elaborated upon in Chapter Two.

A brief overview of the development of the programs that are offered by the two universities involved in this study follows in the next section.

Programs of Study

At the outset in 1987 when program delivery began, the nature of this partnership was that a Diploma program was offered over two semesters. For the first semester, students studied in Australia and then completed their second semester of study in Hong Kong. The collaborating partner in Hong Kong was to be responsible for administrative functions including advertising, student recruitment and day-to-day co-ordination of the program.

During 1990, a Bachelor program commenced as a result of growing demand to further advance professional qualifications for nurses. This program was offered over five semesters and students were required to complete the first semester in Australia. Administrative arrangements for the program remained as they were for the Diploma that had been offered until that time. However, by 1994 the viability of students coming to Australia began to be questioned for a number of reasons. These included the financial costs of studying in Australia for one semester and the lack of work continuity for many students who, in order to come to Australia, had to resign from their positions and subsequently lost the seniority they had established in their workplace. There were also emotional issues faced by students who were struggling with cultural adjustment while completing a highly demanding semester of study. Consequently in that year

changes were made and the entire Bachelor program was offered in Hong Kong over a five semester part-time basis.

In 1996, a Masters program was offered in addition to the Bachelor program. This enabled students who had completed their studies at the Bachelor level to further their studies. Normal progression through the Masters takes four semesters of part-time study.

The administration, development and delivery of these programs are somewhat complex as will be outlined in the next section. To date, the responsibility for the design and development of the programs in both universities has been allocated exclusively to academic staff from the Australian university. The current situation is that Australian academics prepare a study guide that provides guidelines for delivery of the material and a supporting book of readings for each unit in the programs. One senior academic staff who has the overall responsibility for the programs and two junior academic staff undertake co-ordination of the program in Australia. One is responsible for the Masters program and the other for the Bachelor program. A project manager and one clerical staff also support the programs.

In Hong Kong the programs are offered through a school at a mainstream Hong Kong university. One senior academic has the responsibility for the programs however a non-academic staff member, who acts in the capacity of a project manager, undertakes the day-to-day co-ordination of the programs. Two other non-academic staff members are responsible for assisting with the day-to-day administration of the programs - one for the Masters program and the other for the Bachelor program. While the units are developed by Australian academics, local academics in Hong Kong are employed on a semester-to-semester basis to facilitate the delivery of the units. Mechanisms exist for the Hong Kong academics to have email contact with Australian academics that developed the units and to have contact with the program co-ordinators on a needs basis. Any such contact with Australian academics is indirect as it is made via the Hong Kong project manager.

Students are recruited locally in Hong Kong and their applications are processed at the Australian university. Currently in both programs, students enrol in two units per

semester and attend for one evening per week of face-to-face lecture contact with local facilitators. In addition, support infrastructure including administration resources, Information Technology (IT) resources and library have been established to assist students with their study.

Given this background, there are a number of pressures that come to bear on the academics (both in Australia and in Hong Kong) that are involved in developing and delivering programs that are appropriate for students in Hong Kong. Some of the contextual and epistemological tensions faced by the academics involved in this endeavour are outlined below.

Contextual Issues Around the Programs

The context for the purposes of this study refers to the work environment specific to the academics both in Hong Kong and Australia. There are several issues that arise from this work setting which shape the nature of the academics' work. These issues were identified through my observations as a staff member who had been responsible for developing materials for several units both in the Bachelors and Masters programs. These observations were reinforced by formal and informal discussions with fellow academics prior to this research commencing. The identified issues will be addressed in the following section.

Firstly, the work of academics is subject to the forces of globalisation that impact on higher education and in this case the relationship between the two institutions. This impact of globalisation in higher education is discussed in Chapter Three Although there are economic, political, cultural and social dimensions to the globalisation debate (Wiseman, 1998), in this particular context the economic discourses are fore-grounded. As a result, the predominant voices are those of management and administration that espouse economic rhetoric. Such voices reflect certain economic and political positions that are of interest to the management of universities because they support the financial viability of the university in part through a reliance on the types of educational practices that are consistent with globalisation trends and economic rationalism.

Decisions that concern the programs tend to occur as a result of direct negotiations at the management level of the two universities namely the two senior academic staff and the program managers. There was little consultation with the academics involved in developing and delivering the programs. While some decisions regarding the programs rightfully do not necessitate the involvement of academics, there has been an inclination for decisions of an academic nature to be made by the senior academic staff, occasionally in consultation with programs managers, but without input from academics. This is particularly in the areas concerning policy-making, learning practices of Asian students and contextualising the teaching material for Hong Kong. Any collaboration with academic staff from either country concerning the viability or appropriateness of the units within the programs on offer is not encouraged and when information of this nature is offered by academics it is often overlooked.

Furthermore, since these units are developed by Australian academics they are based on Australian health care and educational perspectives. There is no formal modification for the specific context in Hong Kong where the programs are delivered and no concerted attempts have been made by the Australian academics to consult with their colleagues in Hong Kong in order to identify the needs of local students or to make the units more culturally appropriate. Within this context, the programs offered to students in Hong Kong tend to assume a 'product orientation' (Jakupec & Yoon, 2000) and they have not been tailored for the cultural context where they are delivered. This is apparent both in terms of content and mode of delivery. Consequently a mismatch exists between what management-devised policy deems to be an appropriate educational product and the needs of the local culture that for the greater part is undefined.

A second peculiarity that shapes the nature of the academics' work is the fact that the Hong Kong government accreditation necessitates the content and delivery of the programs to be kept as uniform as possible between the two universities. This requirement is written into the academic contract between the two universities and states that the same program must be offered in both the Australian and Hong Kong context in order for the graduating students to be accredited with the same educational qualification. This requirement has been interpreted literally even though it again disregards sensitivity to the differences in cultural context. As a result, there has been little modification of the material that was in the first instance prepared for delivery to

Australian students to accommodate the needs of students in Hong Kong.

A third peculiarity is that recognition and reward given to Australian academic staff that is involved with the Hong Kong programs tends to be minimal. Such involvement is not recognised favourably as part of the academic's career path. The fact that academic staff is employed casually on a semester-to-semester basis in Hong Kong gives them little work security or tenure. In Australia, involvement in this program gives academics little credit when it comes to promotion. Academics involved in these programs also find that they are usually expected to prepare or revise learning packages within tight time limits. Even if time were not an issue, many academics feel constrained by their limited experience or training in the area of preparing packaged learning materials. While in-service training opportunities in developing such materials do exist, they are often not available at times or venues that are convenient for academic staff. When materials are developed they are often done so on a 'shoe string budget'.

This constraint is further exacerbated by the expectation that the Australian academics will produce units for delivery in Australia as well as in Hong Kong. Apart from occasional visits to Hong Kong for brief periods of time, few opportunities for cultural familiarisation exist for academics. Consequently, these units are often developed in isolation of experience and understanding of the Hong Kong culture.

On-going commitment to the program in Australia tends to be confined to the three academics that are the designated program co-ordinators. Because of the aforementioned peculiarities, the commitment and interest expressed in these programs by academic colleagues in Australia and Hong Kong tends to be sporadic and haphazard. This lack of integrated effort and involvement results in significant inconsistency in the quality of the materials developed. Even though the Australian university embraces over-ridding philosophies on health and education that will be elaborated on later, in terms of the packaging of materials for delivery in Hong Kong there is no standard as to what constitutes an exemplary package of learning materials. The issue of inconsistency in quality has been ongoing and has been raised in many forums including meetings, which are held when academic co-ordinators visit Hong Kong on a once per semester basis. This issue has also been raised through regular e-

mail contact between the co-ordinators and program managers at both institutions who have requested that greater attention be paid to standardising the quality of materials offered.

Epistemological Issues Around the Programs

In addition to the above-mentioned contextual factors that shape the work of academics, a number of challenging epistemological issues also arise for the various parties that are implicated in the articulation of the programs in Hong Kong. The epistemological issues are related to the nature of the educational and health philosophies and practices between cultures and mechanisms that exist for monitoring the quality of the education that is delivered in a cross-cultural context.

The various parties that are affected by the epistemological concerns include the students enrolling in the courses, the professional licensing body that oversees the quality of nursing programs (The Manpower Bureau), administrative staff in Hong Kong and academic staff employed by the two institutions involved in the partnership. Each of these parties has diverse needs and their behaviour shapes and is shaped by divergent philosophies in respect of education and health between Hong Kong and Australia.

The students enrolling in these courses are primarily nurses who are in full time employment and studying on a part-time basis. There are several factors in respect of learning that the students share in common. They have been educated in the Hong Kong education system that borrows from the Eastern traditions and philosophies of learning (On, 1996). Predominant characteristics of learning in this tradition include an emphasis on the collective and an active discouragement of individuality or challenge. This gives rise to a power hierarchy where the teacher is 'all knowing' and imparts his/her knowledge to the students who hold deep respect for their teacher. Success in learning is often equated to the ability to reproduce what the teacher has taught and memorisation features significantly as evidence of the learning process. There is also a considerable body of research on the learning approaches adopted by Asian students, which suggests that although students initially use memorisation, it later helps them

adopt deep approaches to their learning. Research that addresses the learning approaches and experiences of students in Hong Kong is discussed further in Chapter Four.

Based on observations and informal discussions with the academics in the learning context wherein this study is couched, it appears that they perceive that the students adopt surface rather than deep approaches to their learning. However, Mezirow who has based his model for understanding student learning on the work of Habermas provides an alternative framework (Mezirow, 1981). Using this model the nature of the Hong Kong education system is arguably one where the technical learning domain has been favoured. The preference for engaging the technical learning domain is reinforced by the students' experiences as registered nurses in the work context as outlined below.

In Hong Kong, there continues to be a number of mitigating factors in the local health system that perpetuates an empirical approach to the way health care is delivered. They include the fact that the health system is dominated by the medical profession that has historically been allied with a scientific positivistic position to understanding a person's health status (Grant & Yuen, 1998) - an issue that is elaborated upon in Chapter Five. This is especially the case for health care delivered in a hospital context where the majority of nurses in Hong Kong are employed. The Hospital Authority alone employs 78% of the registered nurses in the country (Grant & Yuen, 1998). Such a system restricts the autonomy of nurses and keeps the profession tightly controlled within a biomedical hierarchy. While medical dominance seems to be pervasive in health systems throughout the world, in Hong Kong it appears that given the learning approach that has been adopted and the fact that health care still is predominately hospital based, medical dominance is well entrenched.

This continues to be the case in spite of the significant inroads that have recently been made into the professionalisation of nursing. As Friedson (1988) suggests, one of the important characteristics of a profession is the ability to exercise its own autonomy and independence in a particular area of expertise. In Hong Kong, development in the professionalisation of nursing is likely to be on going with the change from hospital-based training to university-based education for nurses that began in 2002.

There has been a realisation in Hong Kong of the extent to which medical dominance exists within the health system and a number of initiatives have been taken to address the imbalance of hospital based medical care delivered from a biomedical perspective. Such initiatives include the appointment of a Working Party in Primary Health Care (P.H.C.) in 1989. The report that was prepared by the working party and delivered in 1990 (Young, 1990), advocates for more community based services with a particular emphasis on P.H.C. More recently a consultancy team from Harvard University was commissioned to report on the health system in Hong Kong (Harvard University, 1999). Again, this report advocated a move towards the adoption of a stronger P.H.C. orientation to the provision of services.

In spite of the pressure that has been brought to bear on the health system from such reports, it remains the case that the stronghold of the power in Hong Kong continues to lie with the medical profession. This stronghold is exemplified by the groundswell of resistance from doctors to the contents of the Harvard Report (1999). Its recommendations have only been implemented in a modified version. Nursing, as one of the disciplines central to the delivery of health care, is inevitably shaped by this hegemony of the medical profession.

The second party that is relevant to this study is the Office of Manpower Bureau, which is an arm of the Hong Kong Government Education Department. The Manpower Bureau is responsible for overseeing/administering the Nurses Registration Ordinance (Hong Kong Government, 1992). All practicing nurses in Hong Kong must be registered in accordance with the Nurses Registration Ordinance that identifies the competencies and skills required of the graduates. The competencies are phrased in scientific terminology that again serves to reinforce a mechanistic definition with an empirical base that defines what constitutes a competent nurse.

The third party that is relevant to this study is the academics, who develop and deliver the programs to students. As described above, the students' education to date has occurred in a context that espouses an empirically based epistemology. They consequently work in a health system that subscribes to a health philosophy that would be considered compatible with a task oriented learning approach that has been characteristic of their earlier education. Conflict arises for the educators who are

expected to deliver the courses that are the focus of this study because there is such a fundamental difference between the students' previous learning experiences and those inherent in the programs that are offered by the universities in question. The educational and health philosophies that are implicit in these programs arise from a different paradigm that is outlined below.

The philosophy of health that underpins the programs developed by the Australian academics is Primary Health Care (P.H.C.). Wass (1994) contends that P.H.C. aims to provide an alternative framework to the medical model for improvement of the world's health in that it acknowledges

> the principles of equity, consumer and community participation in decision-making, the use of socially acceptable and affordable technology, the provision of services on the basis of needs of the population, the provision of health education and work to improve the root causes of ill health (Wass, 1994,9).

In Chapter Five this thesis will argue that the medical model is professionally and culturally colonial dominated by doctors and has been inadequate in addressing the broad spectrum of health issues. In particular, it fails to recognise the inequalities in health status experienced by people by virtue of disadvantage resulting from social class, gender and ethnicity.

Unlike the medical model that legitimates positivistic and dominating approaches to health care delivery, P.H.C. focuses on empowerment, thereby enabling nurses to work in more autonomous and self-determining ways. This allows parties other than the medical profession to become more active participants in decision-making about those influences that impact on health and therefore lead to a sharing of responsibility for health care by other health allied professionals and the community.

In order to enable nurses to adopt such an approach to health care delivery, their education should ideally be complementary with the philosophical assumptions implicit in P.H.C. The principles of emancipation from the 'libidinal, institutional or environmental forces that limit our options and rational control over our lives' (Mezirow, 1981, 144) need to begin within the education process if nurses are to be effective practitioners in facilitating the emancipation of others. Educational

approaches that are tailored specifically for this learning outcome are therefore necessary.

Mezirow (1981) argues that the educational approach most appropriate for facilitating learners to become critical thinkers who are capable of facilitating emancipation in others is the perspective transformation process. This approach emphasises helping the learners become more self-aware of the hegemonic power of relationships that are implicit as ideologies become institutionalised and then internalised by learners as habituated ways of thinking, feeling and behaving. It advocates a learning process that involves exposing assumptions that are taken for granted and calling them into critical consciousness so that the learner understands more fully how those assumptions came about. Mezirow (1981, 153) argues that such an approach presents learners with 'alternative meaning perspectives relevant to their situation, to become acquainted with them, to become open to them and to make use of them to more clearly understand'.

The units that have been developed by the Australian academics attempt to facilitate a perspective transformation process (Mezirow, 1981) both through the content and processes of learning consistent with the P.H.C. philosophy. Students are encouraged to be self-reflexive and to challenge socially constructed practices and beliefs. There is a strong emphasis on questioning the constraints imposed by dominating ideologies and institutions and to engender change through social action. This is evident through the range of program core units including those that focus on P. H. C., critical thinking and applying the principles of P.H.C. to stimulate community action and social change.

The epistemological differences that exist between the students' experiences in the Hong Kong health and education systems and the programs developed by the Australian academics have led to significant disquiet for the academics employed by the two institutions. Specifically, the content and mode of delivery of the units that have been developed by the academics for students in the Australian context are not necessarily congruent with the educational experiences of the Hong Kong students and the articulated needs of the industry in which they work. A mismatch arises between the philosophical foundations of the units as they are developed and the empirical foundations inherent in both the educational and health systems in Hong Kong where the students study and work.

In conclusion, this is a context where a number of significant contextual and epistemological forces impact on the two universities involved in an educational partnership. The forces impinge on a variety of parties that include management, marketing, employers, licensing bodies, academics and students all of whom are involved at many levels in this educational enterprise. These contextual and epistemological forces and the issues which therefore arise have provided the impetus for this study which explores the experiences that arise for academics who face the dilemma of satisfying their employer as well as student needs. The de-facto expectation of the management in the two universities is that the academics take a product orientation. This is juxtaposed against a growing awareness amongst the academics that the programs do not meet the needs of the students, nor are they tailored to be relevant to the cultural context where they are delivered.

Purpose and Focus of the Study

Much of the literature on the current status of delivery of higher education in a cross-cultural context has, as its focus, concern with the economic discourses. This literature is elaborated on in Chapter Three where it will be argued that the pre-eminence given to economic rhetoric is more consistent with the sentiments of the management and marketing arms of universities whose concerns are with economic viability. This is at the expense of attention to program design, development and delivery and the appropriateness of material for the culture where it is delivered. Consequently, there are important unanswered questions as to whether programs that are developed in one culture are culturally relevant and appropriate for the students who are studying them in another culture (Davis, Olsen, Bohm, 2000).

The purpose of this study is to examine programs in higher education at the grassroots rather than at the global perspective. It brings into close scrutiny the workings of a particular program that is offered in a cross-cultural context especially its academic components and in doing so indirectly illuminates global forces. It is timely since Marginson (2004) asserts that foreign students considering Australian universities have not seen a rise in the quality of education to match the increase in costs. While this

report did not focus on programs offered offshore exclusively, its contents are relevant all universities offering courses locally and offshore to international students.

Evidence according to Marginson (2004) suggests that programs offered to students from another culture are under pressure to review their quality if they are to remain competitive and survive. In order for quality to be improved, there is a need for voices that represent an alternative to those that reflect economic concerns and that can inform in respect of quality education appropriate for the particular cultural context and the needs of students, to be heard. Specifically these are the voices of academics that are involved in the development and delivery of programs. This is not to minimise or discount that other significant voices such as management, administration and the students exist, however they will not be used in this study. The academics have been used as the focus because of their insight into and first hand experience with the development and delivery of programs. Unless the experiences of the academics are canvassed in the first instance, it is impossible to focus on or value the student needs, which can be ascertained later from the students.

Research Aim

As discussed earlier, the perspective that directs the educational partnership that is the focus of this study to date has been that of management. This gives pre-eminence to economic and political values reflecting the dominance of economic rationalism. The educational partnership has consequently adopted a product orientation particularly from the Hong Kong perspective. It involves delivering programs that have been developed in an Australian context with little recognition of the culture or the needs of the students in Hong Kong potentially recreating patterns of colonialism that have been evident in the past. This position is consistent with the assertions of the IDP research project on Australian off-shore higher education programs which conclude that programs developed for off-shore delivery are generally supply driven, taking a product approach rather than being demand driven where a market approach is adopted (Davis et al., 2000). This study aims to provide a counter-perspective to the current relationship that exists between the two universities in question.

This thesis will argue that the views of academics working at the grass roots have by and large been silenced leaving a void in the extent to which their experiences are revealed. There is little evidence of them collaborating on the marketing, development, design, implementation and delivery of the programs in this cross-cultural context in spite of their direct experience with the programs. Anecdotal evidence from the academics suggests that when they have attempted to articulate concerns they have not been heard or their suggestions have been sidelined. Specifically, this study is concerned to provide a platform whereby the academics' experiences can be elicited and their views about these dimensions of the programs be represented. These include both aspects of the program's operation, namely administration and policy-making as well as those that address issues of a more academic nature such as content and models of delivery. This study is concerned to address ways of enhancing the academic integrity of these offshore programs so that they can become more culturally and vocationally appropriate for the students in Hong Kong.

Through eliciting the academics' experiences, the specific issues that impinge on academics who develop programs using a perspective transformation approach (Mezirow, 1981) for delivery in an Asian culture where empirical approaches to education are valued, will be identified. In addition, the appropriateness of those programs in preparing nurses who work in a medically dominated health system in Hong Kong will be clarified. The tensions that exist for academics who develop programs from educational and health perspectives that are inconsistent with those implicit in the culture where the programs are delivered will therefore be recognised.

Research Questions

There are two perspectives to this research - Australian academics who develop the courses and part-time academics employed in Hong Kong who facilitate those courses. The study therefore addresses the following research questions:

* What are the issues concerning content, mode of delivery of the programs, administration, policy making and implementation and resources faced by academics involved in developing and delivering nurse education programs in

Australia using a perspective transformation approach for a market in Hong Kong that values empirical approaches to health care and education?

* How can the programs be made more relevant to the needs of the students employed in the health care system in Hong Kong?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in the fact that by revealing the experiences of the academics, the findings will elucidate issues that relate to the professional practice of developing and delivering health education courses for delivery in another culture. As this practice is expanding and competition is increasing, it is important for the on-going credibility of the delivering universities that programs that are marketed are responsive to and appropriate for the cultural context in which they are delivered. This is a salient consideration for the economic viability of the universities that envisage their economic survival to be in part met through marketing programs in a global context.

The study is also significant because local needs of students need to be given weight, considering the history of colonialism in Hong Kong. During the period of British rule, which ceased in 1997, cultural imperialism was evident to the point that Western cultural forms were dominant. However, it is now questionable whether knowledge, values and practices that existed during the period of colonial rule remain relevant. By eliciting the needs of students in Hong Kong through the academics involved, recognition can be given to knowledge and ways of knowing that are specific and germane to the culture.

Research Process

This study uses a naturalistic case study approach, to investigate the experiences of academics that are involved in health education programs offered and developed by an Australian university for delivery by a partner university in Hong Kong. This approach is considered suitable because of the contemporary nature of the phenomena which lend themselves to being investigated in their natural context. The experiences of the

academics are then analysed using social critical theory, which has been adopted as the underpinning theoretical perspective to argue that power, inequality and oppression are endemic in several dimensions of the context wherein this study is located perspective (Habermas, 1987).

The Thesis As It Unfolds

This chapter sets the scene for this study as it focuses on the particular context in which this research is being conducted. It also identifies a number of contextual and epistemological issues that pertain to the particular context. Two research questions evolve from these issues. Given the background for this study that has been outlined in this chapter, several dimensions of this research context have emerged. These include aspects of power and dominance; the development of higher education and the forces that have led to the commodification of education in a global context; the characteristics of Asian learners and the professionalisation of nursing. Theoretical perspectives to these aspects are expounded in the following chapters.

Chapter Two therefore introduces critical social theory as a theoretical lens for analysing power and dominance issues that are inherent in the experiences that are revealed by the academics in respect of several dimensions of the study's context. The case study method that is used for the management of the data collected is described. Ethical issues and limitations to the study are discussed.

The third chapter argues how a number of factors have impinged on the status of higher education. It discusses the circumstances that are currently faced by many universities given the forces of globalisation. The economic, social, cultural and political dimensions of globalisation are discussed. The impact of these dimensions on higher education and reasons why universities have consequently sought opportunities to promote their products to overseas markets is debated. The implications of such marketing relationships are discussed.

The significance of developing education that is relevant in a cross-cultural context is discussed in Chapter Four. Various theories that have been proposed to explain the

forces of cultural influence are examined. Research exploring the learning approaches adopted by Asian students, the role of the educator in such a culture and the expectations of students are considered.

A discussion of the professionalisation of nursing within the health care context is covered in Chapter Five. This chapter also addresses and critiques alternative paradigms for nursing education.

Chapter Six presents the study findings and discussion. In this chapter the material gleaned from the academics is presented under several themes of dominance. This is a rather lengthy chapter however after much consideration as to whether two chapters were appropriate it was thought best to manage the data and its discussion in the one chapter.

In Chapter Seven conclusions are presented. A number of implications for practice are also outlined.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In the last chapter, the research questions that will be explored in this study were presented. The nature of the research questions influences the methodology necessary to explore them. The researcher must consider the various methodological options. It is important to acknowledge that one option is not necessarily superior to the other, and that researchers need to be open to 'a paradigm of choices'. In doing so, they must engage in a process that 'rejects methodological orthodoxy in favour of methodological appropriateness' (Patton, 1990, 39). The choice of methodology needs to respond to 'the purpose of the enquiry, the questions being investigated and the resources available' (Patton, 1990, 39).

Several other authors (McIntyre, 1997; Higgs & Llewellyn, 1998; Lawler, 1998) agree that researchers need to run a methodological argument that debates the relationship between the 'research problem' and 'theory' and to adopt or reject the various methodological options based on reasoning that demonstrates an understanding of their use and limitations in respect of the questions that are to be explored. As a result, what is provided is a rationale for the most appropriate methodology, its logic and justification. In turn, this informs the preferred method to investigate the research issue.

As McIntyre (1998) asserts, this can be a daunting task because there are so many options available. As well as the nature of the research questions, other factors such as the researcher's epistemological beliefs, the emphasis the researcher wants to place on the topic to be investigated and the form in which the data is available to the researcher (Yates, 1997) are prominent when considering the choice of methodology.

This chapter argues for the choice of methodology that will facilitate a critical debate of the questions developed in the previous chapter. This chapter considers empirical, interpretive and critical methodologies and concludes that a social critical theory

methodology is most appropriate because of the circumstances and influences related to dominance and power that are implicit in this research. The methodology that this thesis ultimately adopts is guided by a Habermasian perspective (Habermas, 1971, 1974, 1984) in particular as interpreted in an educational context by Mezirow (1981). It is based on the argument that such a critical approach is required for this research to achieve its aims of bringing to the fore and revealing the experiences of academics that have by and large been disempowered by a host of dominant interests and ideologies endemic in this cross-cultural educational process. Once the academics' experiences have been heard and understood, the application of Habermasian social critical theory becomes appropriate because it provides an impetus for change and action.

Having argued for this choice of methodology, this chapter then elaborates on the use of case study as an appropriate method for exploring the questions. Discussion centres on justifying how the various aspects of case study enable the research questions to be investigated.

Finally, the chapter sets out a number of factors pertaining to the research design. This includes discussion about the informants and how they were selected, the instruments that were used to collect the data, data analysis, a number of salient ethical issues and limitations of the study.

Arguing for a Choice of Methodology

Within the context of educational research, the problematic is an abstract term used to denote what the researcher is taking to be the problem for research. In other words, it refers to 'that which is at work in the research' (McIntyre & Garrick, 1998, 21). The problematic refers to the real concern of the study that in turn is shaped by factors such as the researcher's theoretical base, interest, prejudice, politics and perspective.

Researchers have several methodological alternatives by which they can explore the problematics inherent in their research. In this research, the problematics share a common theme, namely that of power and domination and this has shaped the final choice of methodology which will be subsequently justified. The first problematic is

associated with the changing context of higher education wherein economic rationalism has become the dominant ideology. The views of management who espouse the economic rationalist perspective dominate those of academics. Secondly, there is a problematic inherent in the production of material that is not tailored to the medically dominated Hong Kong health system context where it is delivered. Finally, there is a problematic that relates to globalisation as a dominant force that impinges on higher education and its delivery in a global context. This pertains to both what is considered valid knowledge and to how that knowledge is imparted at the grass roots.

Firstly, within the context of the management of the programs investigated here, dominance is evident in the decision-making powers of management over academics and the manner specifically, in which the programs are marketed. This practice furthers the foregrounding of economic rationalism as the prevailing discourse and marginalises the input of academic staff whose voice is not sought. Consequently, they become subjugated and relegated to the status of intellectual labourers with no voice in the system. In order to avoid a continuation of such practices the methodology adopted by this study needs to facilitate the safe disclosure of the academics' experiences.

Secondly, within the context of the health system, power imbalance is seen in the way nursing has historically been subjected to the hegemony of the medical profession. It is problematic to speak of approaches to delivering health that empower nurses when the reality for nurses is work in a health system still very much medically dominated. This is particularly so in Hong Kong where, relative to Australia, the stronghold of power in the health system continues to lie in the hands of medical practitioners.

Such level of dominance in the health system has implications for the efficacy of health education programs such as the ones offered by the universities in this study. These programs promote a perspective transformation approach (Mezirow, 1981) that challenges the hegemonic position of experimentally tested medicine and science. This is unlike many programs in nursing that ascribe to a more empirical approach where technical interests (Habermas cited in Mezirow, 1981) meaning technology and science are reified and valued both by the education system and in the workplace. Potentially this raises issues for academics teaching in the program since there is an incongruence between the educational philosophy of the programs in which the students are enrolled

and the work context where those students are employed. A methodology that allows the nurse academics' viewpoints to be revealed free of the dominating forces of medicine is timely and appropriate for this study.

Furthermore, there is a high risk that cross-cultural educational relationships such as the one that is the focus of this study can become a form of cultural colonisation. The practice of one dominant culture exerting social control over another by imparting knowledge, language and values that were given precedence over those of the local culture raises concerns. For some time the academics in both institutions have felt perturbed that the programs delivered in Hong Kong are supply driven and therefore serve 'economic rationalist' agendas that are endemic in the contemporary economic climate in higher education. The programs confirm a certain epistemological position that gives little acknowledgment to the cultural forces that underpin the educational context in Hong Kong where they are being delivered. The impetus for this research therefore arises from the fact that while the continuation of current practices may serve the economic needs of the educational institutions in question, they may not be meeting the needs of the students in Hong Kong. The students' needs can begin to be identified by canvassing the viewpoints of the academics.

Since the academics are the point of focus of this study, a methodology that in the first instance is sensitive to and allows their experiences to be revealed on many counts is crucial. Such a methodology is concerned with capturing and interpreting the stories of the academics rather than taxonomising, categorising, classifying or abstracting the world (Kerlinger, 1986). As Marquard (1991) contended, increased attention to the ways in which human sciences are studied has been a necessary outcome of the conditions of the 'modern world'. It is his assertion that the 'more modern the modern world becomes, the more unavoidable the human sciences' also become (Marquard, 1991, 94). Practices associated with 'modernisations' that homogenise the human condition through an emphasis on 'experimentally tested and technically generated object worlds' (Marquard, 1991, 96) have lost their validity. So too has the creation of only one story - that of progress – that posits 'a sole model of rationality and only one way of finding truth' (Usher, 1996, 10).

Marquand (1991) argued that studies into the human sciences such as this one cannot have the effect of neutralising our historical worlds and alienating humans from their traditions. Traditions are, according to Marquand (1991), expressed through the telling of narratives and stories that are essentially the concern of the human sciences. Such stories reconnect humans with the past; serve to compensate for the disaffecting damage done by certain modernisations in this case, dynamics of power and dominance, and in doing so facilitate future modernisations.

As well as documenting the conscious intentions of the academics through their stories, another important dimension of this research is that it occurs within a social context. Giddens (1994) argues that all behaviour occurs within the milieu of social practices and all experience is located within the context of space and time. Therefore all experience is perspective bound, partial and dynamically interrelated with the historical and cultural locale where it occurs (Gadamer, 1975). This recognises that humans are shaped by their previous life experiences as well as the present social order that surrounds them. The constellation of these two sets of influences structures their interpretation of reality. This social order and the rules that comprise it are not inviolable but agreed to and validated by people as they interact with their environment (Candy, 1991).

In the case of this study, while the interpretations of the academics' experiences in the work, educational and cultural context where they occur are crucial to the methodology, interpreting the experiences alone renders the research incomplete (Usher & Bryant, 1989; Garrick, 1999). A sole emphasis on seeking to explain how the academics attribute meaning to their circumstances and how they develop and make use of the rules that consequently govern their behaviour has limitations in the extent to which it recognises the relationships that arise between their subjective interpretations and actions on the one hand and significant external factors and circumstances on the other.

Usher and Bryant (1989), Usher (1996) and Garrick (1999) have all been critical of methodological paradigms that place emphasis on knowledge derived from the meanings individuals attach to their experience alone because human beings do not live in a world constructed exclusively of their own creation. Rather, they argue that humans are subjected to a myriad of influences and pressures that serve to shape

attitudes and perceptions often beyond their consciousness. While social reality is in part constructed and maintained by individuals, it is also the case that the range of possible interpretations of reality open to individuals is 'structured historically in the traditions, prejudices and institutional practices that come down to us' (Taylor, 1993, 59).

There needs to be a recognition therefore of how social reality has developed in a historical sense and how other factors such as ideology, language use, and power, that are intrinsic to social, political, cultural institutions in the society, act to constrain and limit an individual's range of options. As Carr and Kemmis (1986, 13) suggest such a methodology takes the research a step further and interrogates the 'origins, causes and results of actors adopting certain interpretations of their actions and social life' that have their genesis in factors that are external to human experience.

The Case for Social Critical Theory as the Chosen Methodology

As a response to the need to go beyond experience alone, there has been an evolution of more critical methodologies appropriate for use in the social sciences. Recognising the limitations of other methodologies, social critical theory defines the practice of social science as a critical process of inquiry that 'goes beyond surface illusions to uncover the real structures in the material world in order to help people change conditions that build a better world for themselves' (Neuman, 2000, 76). The intention of critical researchers is to critique and transform social relations and to help individuals change their world. In the case of certain professional and occupational groups, the application of social critical theory facilitates a questioning of the way in which these groups become committed to the values and beliefs that serve and support the interests of other classes rather than their own (Buechler, 2000).

The adoption of a critical methodology is appropriate in this study that initially investigates the experiences of the academics. While the value of these experiences cannot be overlooked, what is important and becomes the source of critical debate in this thesis is that those experiences are shaped by other factors that are intrinsic to the educational, work and cultural contexts in which the academics find themselves. These

factors need to be exposed for the constraining influence they have on the work of the academics and consequently the nature of the educational products that are ultimately delivered. Critical social theory facilitates this process through two forms of critique – immanent and ideology critique.

Immanent critique (Habermas, 1972) refers to critique that focuses on the 'here and now'. As stated earlier, the social critical theory paradigm considers social reality as being constantly shaped by social, political, cultural and other similar factors. Social reality therefore is continually changing and this change is founded in the tensions, paradoxes, conflicts or contradictions of social regulations or institutions. Such paradoxes or inner conflicts explain the complex interrelationships that are inherent in the true nature of social reality (Habermas, 1972).

Immanent critique seeks to expose how the norms of industrialised societies are sustained by the interactions humans have with their social reality and institutions within society. In the course of their everyday interactions, individuals reinforce and affirm these norms as acceptable and factual.

By virtue of their exposure to social reality and the constraints of the inherent economic conditions, cultural context and historical conditions, research from a social critical perspective ascribes to a fundamental assumption that people develop norms that are deceiving, mistaken and act against their own self interests through a process of false consciousness (Habermas, 1987). The constraints of the structures external to the individual have the effect of becoming manipulative, distorting and consequently dictating and limiting of the individual's place in the world.

Immanent critique seeks to reveal the distortions inherent in the social values and norms that have come to be accepted as commonplace. A critical approach advocates that illusions and distortions are often disguised and therefore not in the realms of our consciousness. However, they are powerful in that they allow some groups within society to hold power and promote dominant ideologies that are exploitative of others.

Consequently, immanent critique becomes a tool that redresses practices such as social injustice, domination and inequality by identifying and removing the distortions

imposed by various social institutions and structures and their policies. The social critical researcher is concerned to uncover myths, reveal hidden truths and to expose hypocrisy within the context of social reality.

As applied to this research, Barnett (1994, 142) argues that the present arrangements and those looming in view in higher education reflect 'uneven forces'. The views of the academics have been silenced by the more powerful voices of management who largely speak in economic rationalist terms that dominate the prevailing discourses. On the part of the academics, this constitutes an example of false consciousness because the overriding emphasis on economics imposes constraints on the academics and renders their voices ineffectual.

There are also inequities as well as the potential for false consciousness to arise when education is offered in a cross-cultural context. In the past, cultural imperialism and colonisation (Carnoy, 1974; Tomlinson, 1991) were seen to have occurred when imperial powers imposed their systems of education and culturally specific material, usually from the West, on other cultures. Recently, some authors (Best & Kellner, 1991; Lather, 1991) have argued that globalisation has had similar totalising and homogenising effects on cultures. However, there are opposing views to this homogenisation theory. One alternative suggests globalisation is leading to a resurgence of local traditions (Edwards, 1994; Usher, Bryant & Johnston, 1997; Bauman, 1998) while another proposes that current globalising trends are leading to a hybridisation of cultures (Appadurai, 1996). These notions will be developed in more depth in Chapter Four.

In this particular educational partnership, there is the risk of the Western academics' voices predominating and taking ascendancy over the voices of their colleagues in Hong Kong where the programs are delivered. Furthermore, within the context of the health system in Hong Kong where this study is located, there is also potential for a power imbalance developing. It is a context where the voices of nurses have little potency compared to the more dominant voices of the medical profession.

Using social critical theory, this study aspires to expose areas of false consciousness that preclude the voices of academics both in Hong Kong and Australia working at the

grass roots of the program from being heard. With this new awareness the ideas and understandings of the academics themselves will be revealed and used to provide opportunities for change and improvement.

Ideology critique, the second form of critique proposed by Habermas (1972), aims to critically investigate traditional and dominant ideologies that are hegemonic and support the dominance of certain persons and institutions at the expense of the individual. These ideologies according to Horkheimer and Adorno (cited in Best & Kellner, 1991, 219) produce 'social regression and irrationality with the institutionalisation of social domination in the capitalist labour process and economy, bureaucracy, the culture industries and the ascending hegemony of instrumental thought'. Dominance can be exercised in a number of ways such as through policies, technologies, media and other social mechanisms that effect social control. The dominant social structures are also often self-reinforcing in so far that they reproduce themselves and in doing so maintain their power base.

In order to support themselves, these ideologies have developed their own forms of scientific enquiry to examine and explain social progress. From a Habermasian perspective, totalitarian ideologies are endorsed through practices and traditions such as empiricism, determinism and instrumental rationality. The pre-eminence of science is consistent with the assertions of modernity and Enlightenment that there are grand narratives that give rise to claims of truth. It is the force of the argument embedded in these metanarratives that give them power as the hegemonic force. This being the case, science has ruled out rival and equally valid alternative ways of knowing (Feyerabend cited in Barnett 1994).

Such ideologies consequently become fallaciously immune to the effects of social influences and phenomena and use as an argument in their support that they are value-neutral. In positing this position, they have become the preferred ideologies for the dominant social structures of the day, particularly government instrumentalities.

Barnett (1994) suggests that these ideologies have prevailed because they pretend to promise the outcomes that those instrumentalities are seeking. Nowadays that tends to be the provision of intellectual capital as well as what nurtures the contemporary

economic and commercial concerns. Clearly, the services, goods and knowledge that are favoured are those that further economic gain rather than those that serve social benefits. This creates a potential legitimation crisis in the sense that, if the emphasis on the economic agenda is not considered legitimate by society, those in power substitute legality through policies and rules that justify its legitimacy (Habermas, 1976).

Barnett (1994, 142) argues that 'there is always an alternative even if it is convenient to the dominant powers for us to believe to the contrary'. In order to arrive at the alternatives, she suggests that it is necessary to ask critical questions that explore how the social values that underpin changes that occur in our society are dominated by the existing social structures and ideologies. This is the basis of the Habermasian tradition of social critical theory, which interrogates the existence and dominating effects of ideas and concepts inherent in the current ideologies and brings into consciousness how their existence distorts human reality. The process of exposing and questioning these factors that give rise to false consciousness, allows us to become emancipated from their 'reified powers'. Thus becoming emancipated can be achieved through ideology critique.

Ideology critique is salient to the changes that have occurred in higher education particularly in the way economic rationalism has become the prevailing ideology. Economic rationalism has its roots in instrumental rationality. Both Habermas (2001a) and Arendt (1958) whose writings have informed an understanding of economic rationalism retrieve a deliberative rationality from the reasonable public discourse embodied in Aristotle's phronesis and praxis in the classical polis and illustrate how it is in opposition to a hegemonic instrumental rationality inherent in modernity. Arendt's (1958) point of departure is the duality in terms of politics (free relaxed discourse of elite individuals about matters of principle, liberty, participation) and the world of inequality, crime, poverty, work, unemployment and environmental problems that is dealt with by the expert instrumental rationality of bureaucrats and administrators.

For Habermas (2001a), economic rationalism can be understood from the point of view of duality in the life-world of social interaction where individuals construct and interpret their identity of themselves, morality, aesthetics and common culture. This is

contrasted to the system, which is the world of the state and economy ruled by instrumental rationality, cost efficiency and technical manipulation.

It will be argued in greater depth in the subsequent chapters, that the ideology of economic rationalism has had a significant impact on the face of higher education in the past 20 years. In the mid-1980's there was an increased consciousness on the part of politicians that higher education was not contributing to Australia's economic development and needed to be realigned to be more in keeping with the operations of competitive market forces. Driven by an economic rationalist agenda, the government consequently embarked on a restructure of the higher education system (Pusey, 1991).

As higher education was restructured in keeping with Australia's economic interests, there have been widespread changes to its provision and delivery. Such changes have essentially targeted the right to a free higher education and have replaced it with a notion that if higher education is going to contribute to the economy, the responsibility for covering its costs falls not only on the government but also on individuals (Jakupec, 1996). There was consequently a significant reduction in government funding per student to higher education. One strategy that universities have adopted to address these financial shortcomings is by seeking fee-paying students both locally and abroad. The proliferation of programs offered in cross-cultural contexts is one of the ways in which universities hoped to bolster their budgets.

Similarly in the Hong Kong context where this study is located, the preferred ideologies espoused by the dominant voices both in the context of education and the health system have advocated an empirical agenda. This gives rise to a power hierarchy where the teacher is 'all knowing' and imparts his/her knowledge to the students who hold deep respect for their teacher (Kelly, Wong & Pratt, 1999). Furthermore, the health system including the management of the nursing profession is unabashedly dominated by the medical profession, which has historically been allied with a scientific positivistic position to understanding a person's health status (Grant & Yuen, 1998).

Habermas (cited in Best & Kellner, 1991, 6) is critical of the emergence of such dominant ideologies as he construes them to be the consequences of the Enlightenment

project, which underpinned modernity. Nonetheless, he concedes that it was an attempt to

> develop an objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic. At the same time the project intended to release the cognitive potentials of each of these domains from their esoteric forms. The Enlightenment philosophers wanted to utilise this accumulation of specialised culture for the enrichment of everyday life.

Habermas (cited in Best & Kellner, 1991) therefore sees modernity and the metanarratives that have evolved through this period of sociological history as an 'unfinished project which contained unfulfilled emancipatory potential' (Best & Kellner, 1991, 234).

Processes Implicit in Social Critical Theory

The implementation of social critical theory as a research methodology involves a process that moves beyond understanding human experience. Social critical theory seeks firstly to raise dissatisfaction with the way things are by using communication practices that lead to a deeper understanding of the socio-cultural phenomena that impinge on the lives of individuals. As Sayer (1992, 252) asserts 'the purpose of all science, indeed learning, is to change and develop out of our understanding and reduce illusion ... Learning is the reducing of illusion and ignorance; it can help free us from domination by hitherto unacknowledged constants, dogmas and falsehoods'.

Sayer (1992) argues that only once individuals have an understanding of the historical events that have shaped the current context in which they find themselves, in other words, a raised consciousness, can they be empowered to improve the status quo by becoming agents of change. Social critical theory is action oriented and aims to empower people to change the world for themselves. As Fay (1987, 27) states, social critical theory intends to explain a social order in such a way that it becomes itself 'the catalyst which leads to the transformation of this social order'. It is this empowerment or emancipation (Friere, 1972; Habermas cited in Held, 1980) of others, particularly those at the grassroots or those who are disenfranchised by oppressive institutions and the accompanying dominant ideologies that are fundamental to the efficacy of research using a social critical theory paradigm.

In a nutshell, the process of social critical theory is to view social situations in the large, macro-level historical context, to critique them and to harness the energies of people to work together to bring about change by overcoming the forces that have opposed them. It is a process therefore which strives to improve social conditions by enabling people to move away from positions of subjugation to a space where they can proactively shape their own destinies. The goal of emancipation for those who have been have marginalised is the ultimate aim of social critical theory. In the case of this study, this group is the academics for which involvement in this study represents a vehicle for their experiences to begin to be revealed and represented.

According to Habermas (cited in Best & Kellner, 1991) the process by which this can be achieved is through employing critical, reflexive, activist modes of thought 'which combine theoretical construction with empirical analysis, self-reflexivity and critique with theory construction and theory with practice' (Best & Kellner, 1991, 236). Reflexivity is critical to this process and refers to a capacity to challenge the traditional power imbalances that support and justify the dominance of technical interests and the adoption of an empirical-analytical approach for social research that has dominated health and education because it proposes to provide the truth. As Habermas (1987, 69) claims, many empirical methodologies have largely ignored this human capacity and in doing so have protected 'scientific inquiry from epistemological self-reflection'. Through reflexivity the world becomes reconsidered, as it should be – just, equitable, and free of domination.

Essentially as Barnett (1994, 147) claims, reflexivity which enables emancipation is achieved through a 'combination of knowledge about the psychological and social environment, a personal understanding of that knowledge and critical self reflection, so that by that understanding one can see new possibilities'. Self-reflection is an essential part of the emancipation process because it allows knowledge and understanding to become introjected, consequently allowing individuals to have self-transforming powers (Barnett, 1994). However, Lather (1991) argues that intra-personal change alone is insufficient and on its own is superficial and reductionist.

Habermas (cited in Best & Kellner, 1991) developed the concept of praxis to explain how critical social theory can be implemented: namely how the process of self-reflection leading to emancipation can occur. Praxis refers to a testing of the dominant

claims of knowledge in specific or practical situations. Hence, praxis disputes that knowledge claims are determinable and rather argues that any knowledge claims need to be understood in the context of particular practical situations.

It is a premise of social critical theory then that language is the crucial medium through which human existence is revealed and critiqued. The power of the unconscious forces that dominate and lead to false consciousness, are manifest in distorted and limited communication. In the social world of individuals in Western capitalist societies, McCarthy (1978, 86) argues 'institutions of power are rooted in distorted communication in ideologically imprisoned consciousness'. Such distortions need to be challenged.

Habermas (cited in Held, 1981) contends that a new form of communication, which he termed 'ideal speech situation', is the way forward in dissolving distorted patterns of communication and the means to achieve reflexivity and praxis. At a practical level, in order for social critical theory research to fulfill its obligations of practical action and emancipation, individuals must become involved in collaborative acts of practical action and a rational critique of social life. In Habermas' view, all speech, language and communication within such a context are oriented to the notion of a discursively achieved consensus (Habermas cited in Held, 1980) within a context of mutual understanding.

Habermas argued that consensus of this nature is 'ideal' and therefore rarely achieved. It is 'the ultimate criterion of the truth of a statement or the correctness of norms' (Held, 1980, 256) and, although unachievable, we can move towards it. As a starting point, social critical theory argues that a life where truth and justice exist is possible. It is through the ideal speech situation that 'issues of truth, truthfulness and appropriateness' (Young, 1990, 127) are rendered problematic and that the potential for democratic discourse arises. Dialogue and discourse then are central to social critical theory and, as Agger (1991, 165) suggests, provides the vehicle by which social actors can experience 'dialogue chances' in order to avoid 'ideological dominance' that might be pervasive in their lives.

In the case of this research, certain hegemonic cultural, economic and professional

forces have marginalised the views of the academics in both cultures. Such forces serve to maintain the false consciousness and reinforce the powers of domination. Using social critical theory, this research aspires to create new knowledge and understandings and open opportunities for change and improvement based on the ideas and understandings of the academics themselves. This is done in the first instance by giving the academics an opportunity to express their views, thus giving them the chance for their voice to be revealed and represented with the aim of opening up the potential to later transform their professional lives. Raising dissatisfaction with the way things are is essentially the first step in actualising the intention of social critical researchers, which is to be action orientated. It is therefore the intention of this research to begin the process of exposing the current situation as it exists for academics and commence a process of creating a situation akin to an 'ideal speech situation' where the dominant ideologies and structures can be identified, rendered problematic and subjected to a process of reflexivity. In the long term, it is envisaged that this will be a step towards challenging the processes that have kept the academics from becoming emancipated from those dominant social structures and ideologies to experience a shift from 'what is' to 'what it is they want to become' (Glass, 1994).

Once the appropriate methodology for exploring the question is identified, a choice can be made of suitable methods to conduct the research. While researchers often debate allegiances between methodology and choice of methods, it may well be that the qualitative/quantitative debate creates an arbitrary dualism that only serves to camouflage complex and important issues that relate to paradigms and knowledge construction. What seems more important is to utilise whatever methods are appropriate, given the research issues at hand.

Methodology Determines Choice of Method

The study of human sciences using a social critical theory methodology lends itself to qualitative or naturalistic methods of enquiry. The central feature of such a naturalistic approach is 'the desire to represent the world as it is, in all its complexity and changeability, and to avoid the imposing artificial structures' (Hammersley cited in

Woods, 1997, 50). Yin (1989) argues that if the research question is exploratory, explanatory or descriptive in nature, the naturalistic method of a case study is appropriate. Case study methods can use both quantitative and qualitative techniques depending on the research question.

Explanatory case studies seek to explain various aspects of a causal argument and are more appropriate to answer 'how' or 'why' questions. Hence, they are useful when the research comes from a scientific paradigm. Descriptive case studies describe a phenomenon in question from different perspectives. Therefore they are more appropriate for exploring questions in an interpretive framework. Exploratory case studies debate the value of further research and examine various hypotheses or propositions and lend themselves in particular to exploring 'what' type of questions. They are more likely to be used when a social critical theory methodology is deemed appropriate. Yin (1989) notes that these categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive and suggests that studies may have more than one purpose. Essentially, what defines the nature of the case study method is the end product (Hakim, 1987).

This research explores the issues that arise for academics involved in developing and delivering materials in health education programs that are offered across two cultures using social critical theory as its underpinning methodology. It has elements of both a descriptive and exploratory case study, as will be outlined below.

Case Study Approach to this Research

Defining the case study method has posed considerable difficulty. As Woods (1997, 51) suggests, 'case studies have acquired varied definitions and usages in the literature'. Yin (1994) also argues that it is one of the most challenging research methods, particularly in respect of data analysis because of the voluminous amount of data that can be generated.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, a number of definitions of case study as a method have been proposed. One of the most widely cited writers on case study research is Yin

(1989, 23) who defined it as

> an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context; when the boundaries between the context and phenomenon are not clearly evident; and in which multiple courses of evidence are used.

Such evidence can be of both a qualitative and quantitative nature. This capacity to span both research paradigms gives the case study method considerable flexibility.

Several other researchers have defined the scope of case study research. Woods and Cantazaro (1988, 553) attempted to convey the depth involved in this type of research by defining case study as an

> intensive, systematic investigation of a single individual, group, community, or some other unit, typically conducted under naturalistic conditions, in which the investigator examines in-depth data related to background, current status, environmental characteristics and interactions.

Hewitt-Taylor (cited in Schneider, Elliot, LoBiondo-Wood, & Haber, 2002, 35) describes the case study research approach as enabling 'a detailed examination of a single case or unit, within a real life contemporary context using multiple sources of data'.

There are several commonalities inherent in these definitions. Firstly, case study method can facilitate an investigation of a contemporary phenomenon about which little is known. In the case of this research, the issues faced by educators in developing and delivering programs of study in a current cross-cultural context are poorly understood.

For this reason, this research that involves educators looking closely at their practices is very much exploratory and descriptive. It lends itself to the use of the case study approach as verified by Merriam (cited in Yin, 2000) who suggests that exploratory case study is essential when variables are not easily identifiable or too embedded in the phenomenon. In terms of theory formation, such an approach can be equated to Eisenhardt's (1989) concept of a bottom up approach. That is, it is first necessary to describe a phenomenon before explaining it.

In this study, there are a number of contemporary phenomena of an economic, political,

social and cultural nature that emanate from the forces of globalisation and have been mentioned earlier. These affect the practices of educators who both develop and deliver the programs. While such forces are often beyond the educators' awareness, they substantially shape their practices. These forces are not adequately reflected in the theories that are currently used to understand teaching and learning in cross-cultural contexts.

This provides a second justification for the use of case study. The case study is appropriate for situations where the constructs being studied are inextricably bound with the environment within which they occur (Yin, 1994). In other words, to understand a construct adequately it is necessary to study it in its natural context. In this case, the issues faced by educators are shaped by a myriad of other social and contextual forces in their work environment.

Case studies are also an appropriate method for studying a 'unique situation in great depth, and where one can identify cases rich in information – rich in the sense that a great deal can be learned from a few exemplars of the phenomenon in question' (Patton, 1990, 54). This method is appropriate when there is a circumscribed cohort for example in this case, where the number of academics employed in Australia and Hong Kong is small.

Case study involves the investigation of a single subject in considerable depth. The single subject may be an individual, a group, an organization, a program or society. Yin (1994) states that the subject or unit of analysis is related to the way the research questions have been framed. In this particular study, the phenomenon that is being explored is the development and delivery of courses in a cross-cultural setting. The case that this study draws from comprises two specific health education programs that involve two universities, one in Australia, the other in Hong Kong. The educators who work within these programs form a single unit of analysis.

Yin (1994) suggests that a single unit of analysis is relevant when the case is unique, extreme or capable of revealing phenomena that have not previously been revealed. This is an example of the latter because even though there may be many similar programs in the context of higher education, there is a lack of research into the

practices of academics that develop and deliver courses. This research provides the opportunity for the educational practices of one such group of educators to be explored.

Although this is a single case study, it will explore several subunits within the program and this renders it an embedded rather than holistic case study (Yin, 1994). The specific subunits of analysis are the content, mode of delivery, administration, policy and resources that support the program. The embedded nature of the case study lends itself to discussion about these different facets of the program and the responses provided by the academics to each of these sub-units will be used to explore ways in which dominance is built into the program.

The Research Design

The following section explains the research design and will describe the informants and how the data was collected.

The Informants

Case study research relies almost exclusively on non-probability sampling with the specific purpose of selecting participants who can provide rich descriptions of life events, processes, situations or experiences that are amenable to in-depth study of the research questions being explored.

The informants who were involved in this study had experience pertaining to the research questions by virtue of their participation in the area as academics that developed and or delivered the programs either in Australia or in Hong Kong. Since the study seeks to identify the issues that impact on academics whose voices it has been argued have been silenced, their experiences alone have been canvassed in this study.

Academics in Australia

At various meetings relating to this area of the school's work, interest had been expressed amongst this group to participate in an exploration of their practice and especially how to improve its quality. These academics informally expressed to the researcher a willingness to participate in this research prior to its commencement. As the researcher, I was a peer in the same school and I contacted my fellow academics by letter inviting them to participate in the study.

Ten academics employed by the Australian university and who had been involved in development of the unit material were invited to participate in the research. Of the ten staff, five took part in the research. Two responded at the outset that they were too busy and would not be participating. The remaining three did not return their questionnaires by the cut-off date in spite of reminder notices.

The final Australian case study group consisted of five academics. There is considerable variation in the length of time the academics had been involved in this area of work, in the number of units they had developed and in their involvement and degree of collaboration with colleagues in Hong Kong. They also varied in the level of exposure to the program in Hong Kong. Three academics (Aust 1, Aust 2 and Aust 3) have performed administrative as well as a unit development role. In the past there was a practice whereby co-ordinators as well as other staff visited Hong Kong on a once per semester basis and had some contact with the teaching staff in Hong Kong. The visiting academics usually also presented a lecture to the students to give an Australian face to the program.

Academics in Hong Kong

At the beginning of each semester, casual staff is employed in Hong Kong to facilitate the units to be offered that semester. Some are employed on a once-off basis while others have considerable continuity of service. Some of the academics that participated in this research had facilitated only one unit while others had experience over several units and semesters.

Letters of invitation were sent to ten academics that were employed in Hong Kong at the time the research was conducted. Six academics chose to participate in the research. Two of these six (HK 1x, and HK 3x) were expatriates. The former was from Canada and the latter was from the U.S.A. Both were living and working in Hong Kong. The remaining four notified me that they did not intend to participate.

Data Collection

Data for this study was collected using a survey instrument that was initially sent to the academics and was followed up by semi-structured interviews with some of them (where required) to clarify certain points. These qualitative methods for collecting the data are salient given the intent of the study to capture the in depth experiences of academics as they develop and deliver the programs. It also lends itself to generating material that can be subject to thematic analysis consistent with the social critical theory methodology that was argued for earlier.

The survey instrument consists of questions concerning five sub units of analysis that relate to various dimensions of the academics' work namely: content of the units, mode of delivery, administration, resources and policy (see Appendix One). The first sub-unit pertains to the material contained in each unit or the content and flows out of the literature on cultural relevance in particular the risks associated with cultural imperialism and colonialism, which will be discussed in Chapter Four. The second sub-unit relates to strategies for delivering the content in a way that is respectful of cultural differences. Again the literature pertaining to this sub-unit can be found in Chapter Four. The latter three sub-units relate to support infrastructure that underpin the programs and facilitate their delivery. These categories emerged as significant in Chapter One as the context for the study was established and are built upon in Chapter Three.

Chapter One highlights a number of contextual and epistemological issues that impinge on academics as they develop and deliver the learning materials. These issues impact on the students and their learning behaviour because of the diversity of roles they perform. Three significant roles have been identified. Firstly that of being a

student with immediate and past experiences as a learner in the Hong Kong context. Secondly as nurses employed in a work setting predominantly in hospitals; and thirdly as workers in a wider health system, which has global health dimensions. Therefore the sub-units of analysis in the survey instrument canvassed the views of the academics in respect of each of the three roles the students perform.

Considerable time was spent developing and refining the categories and questions. In order to facilitate the academics' responses, some prompts were provided for each category although they were only meant to stimulate thinking rather than constrain the breadth of responses.

Prior to final administration of the survey, it was trialed with two academics, one in Hong Kong and one in Australia. Following slight modifications, the survey instrument was then administered to academic staff in Hong Kong and Australia.

The informants were told at the outset that the surveys would take approximately one to one and a half hours of their time and that they may be contacted in the future if there were any points that needed clarification. All informants were requested to read and sign the consent form to participate in the research (see Appendix Two). The aim of the research was outlined in the consent form. Offers were also made to the informants that any questions arising about the research could be discussed with the researcher. Participation was voluntary and there was no element of coercion.

Semi-structured interviews were used to follow up the material gleaned from the survey when there was a need for clarification. Three interviews were conducted with Australian staff and five with Hong Kong staff. As a form of in-depth interviewing, the semi-structured and unstructured formats share similarities in that they allow the researcher and informants to partake in an interaction that is informal and generates rich, textured, person centered information (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, Sullivan, 1999). The academics were invited to 'recall, reveal and construct aspects of subjective experiences and interpretations and to make that discussion coherent and meaningful' (Minichiello et al., 1999, 397).

In the cases where interviews were conducted, consent was obtained for the interviews

to be taped. The researcher transcribed the interviews. In the case of all informants, copies of their final survey instrument responses were shown to them for verification. In the cases where interviews were conducted, transcripts of the conversations were shown to the respective informants for comment.

The data obtained from the informants was later coded using the Nvivo program.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics clearance was obtained at the commencement of the study from the U.T.S. Ethics Committee, and the ethics committees of the two co-operating universities. There were several ethical considerations, which needed to be considered in this study. These considerations are outlined in the next section.

Validation by Informants

The ethical considerations concerning the researcher/participant relationship in eliciting the information and in the analysis and interpretation were acknowledged. Therefore the interpretations of both the survey data as well as the interview data were shown to the informants for verification to clarify their meanings at several stages in the research process.

Power Relationships

Power relationships are inherent in social research. Therefore it is an issue that had to be acknowledged in the research plan and its ethics application. Details of the research were provided to ensure 'informed consent' of the informants. Informed consent was sought from all the informants in order to preserve their dignity and privacy.

There are also wider issues of power in this context of this study that are referred to at several points throughout this thesis. The academics are subject to issues of power in

their relationships with management and with each other. These issues arise by virtue of the cultural and work relationships implicit in the program. It is therefore important that academics did not feel compromised, disadvantaged or subject to any backlash from supervisors or management because of disclosures made as a result of their participation in this study.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Because of the sensitive nature of the material that this study gleans, details that might identify the programs and the institutions involved have been disguised or generalised to maintain anonymity. Furthermore, the informants were assured of confidentiality in the reporting of results. Pseudonyms were used to protect their identity This is particularly important in this study because some academics work alongside peers on a day-to-day basis and there is the possibility that their responses could be identifiable both to management and /or peers.

It is essential in a study of this nature that informants must not feel compromised by disclosing their experiences. As stated earlier, there is the likelihood that some elements of their experiences may reveal information that is sensitive regarding details of the institution, others in their workplace or practice. As Minichiello et al. (1999) argue it is the responsibility of the researcher to interpret the experiences of the informants in a judicious manner. The informants having access to their disclosures, being asked to read the researcher's interpretations of their responses and being able to withdraw from participation whenever they desired are ways of dealing with this ethical dilemma.

The fact that the researcher is a peer of the academics and worked in the same school can pose an ethical dilemma. Minichiello et al. (1999) discuss the insider/outsider controversy. On the one hand, it is argued that insiders are in a privileged position of having special insight into matters that may concern the informants and therefore pose more incisive questions about behaviour they observe. On the other hand, it is suggested that insiders have certain subjectivities that will lead to biased data gathering reflecting the researcher's own false consciousness. Furthermore, a researcher with prior experience with the area may take for granted some of the story disclosed by the

informants. Minichiello et al., (1999) therefore suggest that the researcher who is an insider needs to retain integrity by balancing the perspective that results from experience in the area alongside a sound research methodology.

In the case of this research, this is in part addressed by the role of the researcher being one of 'speaking out' for the informants rather than 'speaking for them' (Luke, 1992, 1). While as the researcher, I identified to some extent with some of the informants, my experience is different again and as Fine (1992, 218) argues 'I …do not sit where they sit'. Through the academics breaking their silence in this research what evolves is a 'dialogical chance', which is comprised of the informant's interpretation of their experiences, my representation of their experiences and my own experience in the research.

Option to Withdraw From Study

The interests of the informants were further protected by assurance at the outset that they could discontinue participation at any stage in the research process. In fact several informants chose not to participate in the research and others chose this option after being given the survey instrument. It is realised that there might be a potential threat to validity because not all of the Hong Kong and Australian academics that are involved in the programs participated in the research. However, there is no reason to believe that those who did not participate would have proffered any counter arguments.

The ethical issues associated with representing another person's story and the potential for assuming a colonial stance have been recognised by many authors including hooks (1990, 151) who writes 'speech about the other annihilates, erases. No need to hear your voice. ... I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. ... I am still author, authority'. Where permission was granted, informants were shown transcripts for verification before any further analysis and incorporation into the fuller text occurred. The participating academics had further opportunity to change their mind about having any aspects of their interviews used at this stage.

Availability of Data to Informants

The researcher's interpretation of the experiences reported by the informants was made available to them for comment at several stages prior to reporting. Qualitative research is oriented towards placing the informants' interpretations and meanings at centre stage and this can pose the risk that the researcher's interpretation of the responses may be accorded greater validity than that of the informants themselves. To address this issue the researcher undertook to ensure that the informants through a collaborative consultation process could make amendments to the data they provided prior to final reporting.

Limitations of the Study

There are a number of limitations implicit in this research. This arises primarily due to the fact that this study is confined to two groups of academics employed by the universities in Australia and in Hong Kong who teach in the two health related programs. The limitations are discussed below.

Firstly, the study attempts to explore the experiences of academics that develop and deliver the programs within two different cultural contexts – one that values a perspective transformation, the other an empirical technical learning domain. I was an academic within the context that comes under scrutiny in this study. This presents some limitations to my role as the researcher that could be seen as paradoxical. While I researched the educational experiences of my colleagues, in some respects I am also an insider to the target group - that is as an academic within the Australian group which values perspective transformation. I recognise that I am attempting to locate myself with the academics in order to understand their perspective and then ultimately facilitate change while at the same time being a peer.

Secondly, the experiences of the academics involved were captured in a window of time. Educational programs are dynamic, as are individual experiences. The findings of the research are therefore only representative of how it was for the academics at the

time of them responding to the survey (Denzin and Lincoln 1998). In this respect the findings are time limited.

Thirdly, this study explores the experiences of academics only and not students, managers or administrators. This is not to underestimate or discount the importance of the experiences of the students particularly, who have also been a disempowered group in this context. Their experiences would add immeasurably to the hiatus of knowledge that exists in this context. However they have not been included since their experiences are more appropriately canvassed once those of the academics have been elicited. In this context the views of the academics are used to foreshadow student needs that can be explored at a later date.

Finally, the two populations are limited and defined by the parameters of the programs. This includes both the geographical limitations in that the research is being conducted in Australia and Hong Kong as well as the institutional limitations that only two educational facilities are involved and only a specific program of study within those facilities is explored. This means that the findings are only relevant to those particular groups within that specific cultural context. The qualitative nature of this study therefore, limits the generalisability of the results to the particular groups within the specific cultural context that this study is set in. However, it is envisaged that the recommendations that flow out of this study might resonate with higher education programs offered in other cross-cultural contexts leading to fruitful areas of possible investigation related to those programs.

Conclusion

This chapter has set the scene for the choice of methodology that was used to explore the research questions that were developed in the previous chapter. It has argued that, while there might be a range of possible methodologies, the choice of actual methodology is determined by the nature of the research question and the researcher needs to develop a methodological argument that justifies that choice.

Throughout the chapter various methodological approaches have been explored and

debated and it has been argued that the research questions lend themselves to the use of a social critical theory methodology. This research methodology attempts to represent the experiences of academics, which, up to this point, have been disempowered and marginalised in a higher education context. It has been argued that this methodology by exposing academics' experiences will challenge the processes and constraints of the system that keep academics from being emancipated and thus begin to improve the status of higher education in this cross-cultural context.

This research takes the form of a case study method using survey and interview techniques to collect the data. The case study method, as it pertains to this study, its strengths and shortcomings have also been debated. Finally ethical considerations and implications and limitations were outlined and discussed.

In the subsequent chapter, the foundations will be laid for the context within which this study is framed. It will set the scene for the evolution of higher education in a global context. It will also begin to identify some of the sources of power, as education increasingly becomes a commodity for trade.

CHAPTER THREE: SETTING THE SCENE - THE EVOLUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Introduction

Over recent decades, a number of factors have impacted on higher education in Australia and have significantly shaped its course. Changes in public higher education have paralleled the history of cycles of economic growth since the Second World War (WW2) to more recent times when economic growth has been subjected to the effects of neo-liberal ideologies. This has meant that higher education has increasingly been viewed through a socio-economic frame. As Henry, Lingard, Rizvi and Taylor (1996, 73) suggest, 'education systems have been made objects of micro-economic reform with educational activities being turned into saleable or corporatised market products'. For many universities in Australia, their educational 'products' has become an item of trade for marketing abroad and a source of income that is contributing to their economic survival.

This chapter explores how the work of the educators in a cross-cultural context is impinged upon by a number of factors that have contextual dimensions. It traces the way the historical progression of higher education both at the national and international levels, has followed economic trends and particular ideologies that resonate with those trends. It also introduces globalisation as a theoretical underpinning to give meaning to the economic, social, cultural and political forces that affect the way in which higher education is offered in a cross-cultural milieu.

The Response of Higher Education Globally to Economic Changes in the Post World War 2 Period

The post WW2 period was characterised by cycles of economic prosperity and development. The roles played by universities from the post war years until the mid seventies were multifaceted although there was some variation between countries. In the U.S. for example, universities featured centrally in fostering economic prosperity by serving the needs of industry and the wider community through providing liberal as well as career based education (Shumar, 1997). In this context, universities were largely under the control of business and public interests in terms of their management and their courses were designed to meet the needs for a well-trained workforce. Elsewhere in the world including in Australia however, there was pressure from the Federal government for universities not to be overwhelmed by the forces of business interests and so they retained their autonomy as public institutions. At a global level, economic discourse generally featured minimally in university rhetoric during this period (Shumar, 1997).

Universities were not however immune to the economic changes that occurred in the wider economy in the 1980s. These changes included a decline in government funding per student in almost all of the Organisation for Economic Development (OECD) countries with Australia witnessing one of the highest reduction per head despite a rise in the number of enrolments and an increase in operating costs (Healy, 2005). All of these factors have contributed to the fiscal crisis experienced by many universities in North America, Britain and Australia in recent decades (Readings, 1996; Shumar, 1997).

Furthermore, higher education came under the close scrutiny of governments in many countries belonging to the OECD (OECD, 1987). The OECD is an international organization whose role is to act as an 'institutionalising mechanism for the new global education consensus, which stresses the centrality of an educated and multi-skilled workforce to the competitive advantage of nations' consistent with the neo-liberal economic approaches (Lingard, 2000, 98). The OECD was critical of the higher

education sector for its inability to contribute to the educational and skill development required for economic development of those nations and increased pressure was applied on universities from governments to fulfill this role. Universities were therefore challenged to provide 'continuous lifelong learning opportunities for a highly skilled or educated workforce' therefore contributing to a shift away from education for the elite to opportunities for mass education (Jakupec, 2000, 76).

Similarly, Currie and Newson (1998,149) suggest that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have applied pressure on governments to 'change public policy based on social good to one based on economic good, leading towards greater deregulation and privatization'. Universities have not been exempt from the mirco-economic reform that followed and were exhorted to provide skilled workers for the economy by increasingly functioning like private businesses.

Universities in different countries responded in diverse ways to the pressures arising from the application of these neo-liberal ideologies to higher education. Several writers such as Readings (1996), Shumar (1997) and Paul (2000) have made reference to the unprecedented 'crisis' experienced by universities in their attempt to be responsive to the newfound context in which they operate. Readings (1996, 11) for example, described the contemporary university as 'transforming itself from an ideological arm of the state into a bureaucratically and relatively autonomous consumer oriented corporation'. Shumar (1997) echoes these sentiments and refers to the way 'the economic' has secured prominence in the prevailing discourse pertaining to universities as increasingly they are viewed as businesses providing a product to 'consumers' the market. He refers to the commodification of higher education that is underpinned by an emphasis on raising revenue.

In the Canadian context, Paul (2000) also refers to the period of instability faced by universities and their role in contemporary society. He suggests that historically universities have been one of the most stable institutions in society, however this is changing and, in the current context, they feel considerable pressure to juggle the various roles expected of them. In particular he refers to the tension existing between the competing expectations that universities function simultaneously as a haven for scholars as well as a tool of economic growth.

Similar changes to those evident in higher education at the international level have been seen in Australian institutions of higher education. The past two decades have been characterised by the emergence of a significant number of economic, social, cultural and political factors that have profoundly affected the face of higher education in Australia. In an attempt to accommodate and respond to these factors and to secure their survival, many Australian universities have undergone radical changes in their practices. Such changes have been necessary as universities respond to diminishing resources per student from public sources and the pressures of the economic rationalist ideologies adopted by the government (Marginson, 1997).

Consistent with the demands of the 'economic rationalist' climate of current times mentioned earlier, it has been necessary for the survival of many universities in North America, Britain and Australia to introduce initiatives that increase their sources of independent funding. Attempts to achieve this have been made by universities adopting more efficient managerial styles and new strategies to reach a range of hybrid and niche markets. Several authors who were referred to earlier have commented on the manifestation of such strategies and the changing culture this has brought about in higher education. Readings (1996) for example, referred to the concept of the university as a corporation adopting new discourses of 'excellence' in respect of service provision to 'consumers'.

Shumar (1997) also writes of higher education becoming a product, to be sold to the public. He argues this requires a different infrastructure of marketing and administration to reach new non-traditional markets. This has seen the centralisation of power at the management level and an alienation of academics from decision-making (Barnett, 1994). The application of these trends to the Australian context will be developed in the subsequent sections.

Higher Education in Australia

The post WW2 period in Australia saw a state mediation between labour wage and capitalist production as embodied in the government spending programs that was seen at the time. These aspects were clearly evident in the policies of the Whitlam government of the 1970s which stressed the principles of equity and participation and that all Australians were entitled to higher education as a basic right. Higher education in this period was accessible and affordable to all Australian students.

This was also a period where public education was considered to fulfill two roles in preparing students both vocationally and personally for life in society. At one level, higher education was intended to equip students with system-maintenance skills (Habermas, 1979) such as technical knowledge, cognitive and linguistic competencies that made the individual employable. At another level, the aim of higher education was the social integration of the individual by developing life-world skills such as social skills, cultural understanding and other skills that were more in keeping with practical and emancipatory interests (Habermas, 1979). Hence higher education served both a vocational role but also a self-actualising and empowering role that equipped graduates personally for the world of work.

Following 'economic rationalist' trends implicit in the policies of Reagan in the USA and Thatcher in the UK, in the second half of the 1980s, the Hawke Labour government in Australia reframed the higher education ideologies introduced in the 1970s by the Whitlam Labour government (Marginson, 1993) mainly to reduce the burden of higher education on the public purse. Under the Hawke government, the cost of higher education increased greatly with the Dawkins reform allowing a large number of Colleges of Advanced Education to become universities. The higher education reform package and policies of Dawkins (Pusey, 1991) reflected the emerging 'economic rationalist' ideology. These policies were consistent with a New Right ideology adopted by many OECD countries (OECD, 1987) where it was argued higher education overtaxed the public purse and was riddled with gross inefficiencies. This had the effect of 'reducing the higher education policy to that of a rational calculation of means to achieve economic ends' (Jakupec, 1996, 78). Pressure was consequently placed on

many Australian universities to perform in ways more in keeping with private enterprise and higher education was no longer acknowledged as an independent activity. In practice, this was manifested in an ongoing pressure to restructure into more cost efficient units, offering only economically viable courses that were attuned to the market place and an adoption of a user pays system through Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) and more recently other forms of charges such as charging full fees for students enrolled in graduate programs (Kenway, 1993; Kenway, Bigum, Fitzclarence & Collier, 1993; Marginson, 1995, 1997; Kell, 1997).

Jakupec (1996) argues that while such changes were not necessarily considered legitimate by the society, they were legitimised by the government and made implicit in policies. In fact, as expectations rose for institutions of higher education to become more entrepreneurial in their operation, government intervention into their daily functioning increased significantly.

This economic pressure on Australian universities continued during the 1990s. The governments of the time expected institutions of higher education to deliver a more fiscally effective and efficient service responsive to the needs of industry (Jakupec, 1996) while enrolment numbers escalated. Dudley (1998) argues that following the initiatives of Dawkins, higher education became increasingly implicated as a tool of micro-economic reform. In this sense, the aim of higher education became principally that of providing a pool of highly skilled workers who would 'enhance Australia's competitiveness in the international capitalist marketplace' (Dudley, 1998, 22).

At the same time, Australian universities experienced an unprecedented ongoing crisis in funding from government sources. Marginson (1998) claims that during this period the government contribution to university funding in Australia fell from 90% to 60% and that this situation has been compounded by the on-going threats of further market deregulation. In addition, since 1995 public expenditure per student in Australia has fallen 30% in real terms, the highest fall of any country in the OECD (Healy, 2005). Several Australian authors (Kenway et al., 1993; Marginson, 1997; Kell, 1997) highlighted potential difficulties for the survival of some Australian universities that were not responsive to these changes in market conditions.

One of the specific responses of some Australian universities to these challenges has been to explore alternate ways of attracting a market of full-fee paying students from both local and overseas sources. The revenue raised from such 'academic capitalism' a term devised by Slaughter and Leslie (1997) to describe the shift towards the market and the need on the part of universities to secure funding from private sources, has increasingly become the lifeline to overcome the budget crisis faced by many Australian universities. Thus education has become a commodity for trade and a means of enhancing Australia's 'economic efficiency, productivity and global competitiveness' (Dudley, 1998, 36).

It was obvious that, as higher education increasingly became an export commodity, many Australian universities responded by seeking markets for their courses abroad. The Australian university, which is the focus of this study, is one that has sought to find markets for its products in other cultures specifically in Asia. The particular trade relationship that is explored in this study has developed over the past 15 years with a collaborating university in Hong Kong.

Australia in the Global Context of Higher Education

Australia being geographically positioned in the Asian region, has for several decades played an integral role in providing students from a number of Asian countries such as Malaysia, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Singapore to name a few, with opportunities for higher education. A significant number of private students mainly from South East Asia came to study in the 1950s and 1960s. Many of them completed the final years of matriculation in Australian schools and then enrolled at the universities taking advantage of the modest fees charged by these institutions and employment opportunities offered during university vacation. Then there was also Australian government aid provided under the Colombo plan whereby high achieving Asian students were offered scholarships by the Australian government to study in Australia (Davis et al., 2000).

Once the economic tide began to change in the Australian higher education scene however, the provision of 'aid' in this form ceased and alternative forms of educational

relationships between Australia and her Asian neighbours were forged. Consequently, many Australian universities positioned themselves in the emergent 'markets' associated with the economic growth happening in Asia and the Pacific rim. Higher education continued to grow as a sought after market commodity. The IDP study on trans-national education (Davis et al., 2000) quotes some startling figures to support this claim.

The abovementioned report (Davis et al., 2000) highlights that 72% of the offshore courses in the sample were offered either in Hong Kong, Singapore or Malaysia. Furthermore, at least 35 of the 38 universities that are members of the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC cited in Davis et al., 2000) are involved in trans-national educational programs of some kind. Of the 35 Australian universities surveyed by the same report, 20 universities indicate they had a high long-term interest in offshore education provision. Generation of additional income for institutional use was ranked by 41% of the survey respondents as the most significant motivator for involvement in this endeavour (Davis et al., 2000). Additionally, 28 of 31 responding universities indicated that commercial viability was an important criterion for evaluating the effectiveness of their offshore programs. It is apparent that, in spite of recent economic difficulties that beset some Asian economies in the late 1990s, other Asian economies have prospered and Asian markets continue to be perceived as central to the sustainability of many Australian universities.

The findings from the IDP study also suggest a flourishing of trans-national education programs with a 25 % growth in this area in 1999 (Davis et al., 2000). In terms of student numbers, the proportion of overseas students enrolled in Australian universities increased to 12.1% of the total student population (Davis et al., 2000). In 2000, 35% of the total enrolments of international students were in offshore programs (Davis et al., 2000).

These figures highlight a significant change in the way education has become a commodity for trade. As Shipman (2002) argues education in the earlier post WW2 years was excluded from the trade agenda for several reasons. These included political barriers that circumvented a price being charged for education services. Furthermore, there were practical obstacles that arose because education was a commodity that could

not easily be transported and stored for sale at another time and place. By 2003 however, overseas students contributed 14% to the revenue of Australian universities up from 6% 1995. Education is now Australia's 9th largest export and the third largest service export worth $7 billion per annum (Marginson, 2004).

According to Shipman (2002), a number of changes have occurred that have made trade in education more accessible. Such changes include the technical innovations that have enabled education to be marketed at a distance without the marketing institution being physically present on the buyer's home terrain. Furthermore, governments have pushed education into the commercial arena by allowing profit-marking prices to be charged for the sale of educational programs. This has led to the development of an infrastructure for the marketing of education both locally and abroad. New forms of educational relationships have consequently ensued.

Forging Alternate Educational Relationships with Asia

The question arises, can this burgeoning growth in higher education continue? Many universities have lulled themselves into thinking that this exponential growth of full fee paying Asian students is inexhaustible and that their economic survival is consequently assured. Several authors (McBurnie & Pollock, 2000; Davis et al., 2000; Shipman, 2002) have however identified a range of ethical responsibilities, economic and cultural factors that make it problematic for universities to assume this position in the long term.

Jakupec and Yoon (2000) argue that countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and China, which have been the source of many of the higher education 'consumers' for Australian universities, are expanding opportunities for students to study at home. This is a result of a myriad of factors including the personal and financial costs associated with students studying abroad, the increase in the range of courses offered by local universities, as well as greater competition between universities delivering their courses on an offshore basis. Hawkridge (cited in Jakupec & Yoon, 2000) in reference to the changes that are occurring in higher education suggests that we may well have witnessed the 'big bang' in higher education. This is a phenomenon that is characterised by massive exponential growth in a brief period of time. Rather, Jakupec

and Yoon (2000) suggest what lies ahead of us may be the 'big crunch' that is likely to arise when the demand for higher education begins to stagnate

McBurnie and Pollock (2000) also suggest it may be foolhardy for Australian universities to presuppose that the marketing of education is the panacea for their economic ills and fiscal crises. There are several potential difficulties with assuming this position. The creation of offshore programs involves significant financial risk and universities may come under scrutiny through the processes instituted both in Australia such as the Australian Universities Quality Assurance Committee (AUQA) and in the host country that are designed to ensure quality assurance. If the program is not a success, it may be necessary for universities to use their own resources to face the consequent financial disaster.

There are also questions pertaining to the notion of quality that are raised by the authors of the IDP report (Davis et al., 2000). They suggest that the nature of the trade relationship when programs are marketed in another culture remains supply rather than demand driven. Although many programs speak of partnership there is a glaring absence of collaborative decision-making in the content of programs that continues to be predominantly controlled by Australia. Of the programs surveyed in the IDP sample only 28% incorporated content for local conditions. In all cases, the Australian institution had the responsibility for the quality assurance of the programs and only in 19% of the cases did the overseas partner have some joint responsibility (Davis et al., 2000). Marginson (2004) claims that students are expressing dissatisfaction with the quality of education offered by Australian institutions and they lament that while costs have increased dramatically, the educational products are no different to those offered in 2001.

Another factor that needs to be considered in the trade relationship involving higher education is the contextual forces that come into play when working with Asian partners. Providers of higher education are faced with trade partners who have different ways of doing business, hold different values regarding international trade agreements and experience different constraints on attaining national agendas (such as human rights). In respect of the latter, Shipman (2002, 81) specifically highlights the difficulties inherent in establishing how high the fees for education can be levied

'before the public ethos of allocation on merit gives way to the private allocation on ability to pay'.

A further concern associated with working with Asian partners is raised by Rizvi (1997) who suggests that Australia continues to feel considerable ambivalence in its relationships with Asia and this is reflected in the practice of marketing higher education. He states that Australian academic institutions 'trade on their indeterminacy, assuming Asia to be both as object of desire and of derision' (Rizvi, 1997,19). To elaborate, it is his claim that universities are faced with a challenging dilemma. On the one hand, universities recognise Asian markets as fundamentally linked to meeting their educational, economic and political objectives. On the other hand, they are unable 'to secure sufficient distance from the racial stereotyping that involves viewing Asian immigrants as a homogenised mass who pose a constant threat to Australia's national identity, as well as to its economic wellbeing' (Rizvi, 1997,19). The question arises where does this leave Australia in terms of its future trade with the Asian markets.

Australia's Future in Higher Education Trade with Asia

The Australian tertiary education sector therefore currently finds itself at a crossroads. Kell (1997) echoes Rivzi's (1997) sentiments and warns of the challenges likely to be faced by educational providers who move in the direction of forging links with Asian markets. Kell (1997) questions the efficacy of the 'trading model' of education as an appropriate paradigm for the development of future educational partnerships. He argues that the values implicit in such a model are not all that different from those embodied in the early post-war assistance schemes such as the Colombo Plan in that they reflect a colonial paradigm that reinforces paternalistic attitudes as well as economic and cultural imperialism.

A number of authors (Adams, 2000; Jakupec & Yoon, 2000; Jakupec, 2000) have suggested strategies that may be adopted by Australian universities to maintain their competitive position in this highly dynamic environment. In the opinion of Jakupec and Yoon (2000) the survivors of the big crunch will be the universities who adopt a market oriented rather than product oriented approach. The authors suggest the former will

only be achieved if there is efficacy, an on-going responsiveness to the changing needs of students, the use of diverse technologies for the delivery of distance education, and above all, an acknowledgment that educational processes are dynamic (Jakupec & Yoon, 2000).

In addition, Kell (1997) writes of the need for a different style of relationship to emerge. He argues for new models of international co-operation that require long term joint and collaborative efforts as equals, and that encompass a broad view of teaching, research and community service. In addition to paying attention to the academic partnership, Adams (2000) warns of the need to work with partners who are competent in dealing with the administrative responsibilities of managing an offshore program and have a sound standing with the community and the government in the host country.

Australian universities therefore need to consider links that embrace the national, regional and individual needs of Asian communities as partners in programs of mutual benefit that go far beyond simply 'selling' courses. Jakupec (2000) refers to the principle of 'co-opetition' between organizations as a means of facilitating collaboration and establishing trade relationships in a global context. There is an urgency for universities to question the nature of their relationships with their trading partners and explore whether in fact they are genuinely working collaboratively with each other or whether collaboration is simply an idealistic objective in an environment that continues to foster a spirit of competition.

It would be reasonable to expect that if the programs offered by an academic institution are to remain viable in the marketplace they need to be perceived of a high quality and responsive to the learning needs of market in the country where they are being offered. Fundamental to delivering such high quality education is the valuing of difference and listening to the educational goals and needs of academics and students and their espoused views of what constitutes quality education in their respective cultures. This involves collaborating and a significant shift from practices where the delivery of courses is product rather than market driven (Jakupec &Yoon, 2000).

Implications of Changes in Higher Education for Educators

There has been little evidence in the literature of the voice of academic staff involved in this global enterprise or a recognition of the extent to which their work is currently shaped and influenced by the contextual forces in their work environment. In order for this to occur, more opportunities need to be provided for the voices of the academics involved in this global process to be heard. Historically, the discourses that are foregrounded in this debate are those of the personnel involved in marketing and administration both of who advocate an economic perspective.

Significantly underpinning the economic pressures faced by the decision makers within institutions of higher education are the forces of globalisation. These refer to global processes that shape the fabric of society and, while they have been primarily economic, they are not exclusively so. There also a number of social, cultural and political forces that surround the globalisation debate.

Globalisation

As a concept, globalisation is difficult to define because it is so all encompassing. However, it has assumed a significant place in contemporary socio-economic discourse and notably 'affects various peoples around the planet in different ways' (Capella 2000, 229). In the last two decades, globalisation has been referred to by a number of social theorists to describe the complexity of economic, social, cultural and political phenomena that influence aspects of everyday life and society (Haughey 2000). As such, each of these phenomena is considered significant to debates pertaining to globalisation and highlight key issues which currently impinge on higher education. Each will be discussed in turn.

Much of the literature on globalisation has focused on the economic aspects. (Ohmae 1995, Soros 1998; Capling, Considine & Crozier, 1998). Globalisation in this context refers to a world wide economic integration. The forces of economic globalisation are

evident in the development of international markets and a rapid proliferation of multinational and trans-national corporations that are the essence of New World Order. By way of example, economic globalisation is manifest in geo-political projects of large-scale capital, as epitomised by Disney theme parks and franchised capitalism. The forces of globalisation are evident in a ready and free movement of all forms of capital - people, products, and sites of production, money, information and ideas - around the globe. Additionally, there has been a deregulation of trade, finance and investment, all of which have become prone to free market forces.

Such a position advocated by organizations such as the OECD (1987) considers the market forces that come into play in society as a consequence of globalisation are neutral and objective and the change that they bring about is devoid of human agency. In other words, this position presents such changes are inevitable and countries are powerless in their wake. The only alternative is for countries to respond passively to the changing policies and programs.

This stance on globalisation also contends that trans-national movements are happening at the expense of national boundaries and governments that have increasingly been replaced by state-corporate alliances. Fiscally, such alliances mean that corporations are under less pressure than was previously the case to respond to the needs of the nation states and this has resulted in escalating budget deficits in those countries (Harrison & Bluestone cited in Shumar, 1997). Some nation states have consequently faced a financial crisis as their economic base has become progressively eroded by the rise of multinational companies that have thrived given the context of the forces of globalisation. Governments therefore feel a tension to address on the one hand, the demands of their constituents to provide education and welfare benefits, and on the other hand the reality of diminishing resources. In terms of higher education, the budget provision from government sources has increasingly been jeopardised.

Dudley (1998, 26) questioned the rationality implicit in the globalisation argument that the global market forces are ungovernable and therefore a 'neutral, inevitable and objective reality'. She argued that the discourse of globalisation is discursively constructed of a grand narrative that foregrounds economic rationality, minimalist state and free trade. Similar sentiments are voiced by Hirst and Thompson (1996), who argue

that the rhetoric of economic globalisation is largely a myth. Furthermore, they propose that while there have been significant economic changes in the latter part of the twentieth century, these changes are normative and not all that different to periods of imperialism and the political ideologies of neo-classical liberalism seen earlier in history. Finally, they warn of the risks inherent in the globalisation discourses becoming self-fulfilling and, as Campion and Freeman (1998) suggest, ultimately encouraging a sense of inevitability and powerlessness.

Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton (1999) argue that the globalisation debate thus far has expressed itself in three positions. The first two have already been discussed above. The first is the hyperglobalist position that finds its expression in the work of authors such as Ohmae (1995) who maintain that the nation state tends to disappear because strong global economic networks render it obsolete. The second is the skeptic position such as that advocated by Hirst and Thompson (1996) that suggests that globalisation is simply a new form of imperialism or internationalisation. The third position they advocate is the transformational perspective (Giddens, 1990; Scollon, 1994; Ruggie, 1996) that recognises the existence of economic, political and cultural processes that modify the role of the capitalist state as it has come to be known.

The transformational position redresses some of the criticism that has been pitched at the view that globalisation can be understood strictly from an economic frame and that it is simply an alternative form of Western colonialism. This position argues that the forces of globalisation are not uni-dimensional and it has significant social, political and cultural implications that interpenetrate with the economic. Robertson (cited in Spybey, 1996) stresses this interactiveness of the various dimensions of globalisation in particular the way in which they lead to a reflexivity of global and local practices. Robertson argues that it is this interactiveness that renders globalisation different to the colonial practices of the past.

An important social implication of globalisation is the development of and use of Computer and Information Technologies (CITs). Giddens (1994) attributes the intensification of globalisation as being due to the 'emergence of means of instantaneous global communication and mass transportation'. Specifically in the higher education sector, CITs play a significant role in meeting the needs of the

emerging markets. CITs enable the compression of time and space - concepts that have been referred to by Edwards (1994) and Giddens (1994). Giddens (1994) refers to the CITs facilitating the process of 'action at a distance' thereby allowing for the interactiveness of economic with political and cultural activities. As Giddens suggests CITs enable the 'creation of large scale systems' as well as the 'transformation of local and even personal contexts of social experience' (Giddens, 1994, 4-5). To a large extent, the use of CITs in higher education addresses the problems posed by geographical isolation and distance and they can therefore make possible a decentered place of learning (Lyotard, 1984).

There have been a number of other positions proposed by writers in respect of CITs. For example, Jakupec and Yoon (1999) argue that the proliferation of CITs has social equity benefits for students who, with the aid of technology, are enabled to study their course anywhere in the world without the need to make personal contact with their instructors. Other researchers adopt an economic rationalist point of view and suggest that the use of CIT's to reach large numbers of students maximises profitability of universities (Berman, 1998; Capella, 2000). Others such as Lyotard, (1984, 5) claim CITs have become an 'informational commodity indispensable to productive power'. Finally, Appadurai (1996) identifies mass migration and the use of electronic media as contributing to the creation of diasporic public spheres that traverse nation states.

As was argued earlier, the forces of globalisation impinge on the fiscal status of the nation state; however, there are also implications for the nation state at the political level. Burbules and Torres (2000, 14) who subscribe to the hyperglobalist position claim that the forces of globalisation have led to an erosion of national autonomy and therefore 'a weakening of the concept of 'citizen' that has come to be enacted through the ideologies of recognising, acting upon and conserving citizen's rights'. Readings (1996) and Capella (2000) refer to the role educational institutions have traditionally played in achieving this end, in particular educating citizens for democracy. In the current context, Readings (1996) contends the role of the university, as an institution instrumental in producing and legitimating a national culture, is no longer valid.

Correspondingly, higher education will need to embrace and address new forms of community as the world increasingly adopts a 'global fusion and national fission'

perspective (Readings, 1996). The seat of political power is moving from the nation states to lie with the multinational and trans-national corporations and international organizations such as OECD, IMF, World Bank, Asian Development Bank and EU. Each of these has a position that impacts on the higher education agenda and it is necessary for their respective positions to be recognised as part of that agenda.

Finally, it has been argued by several authors such as Holton (1998) and Tomlinson (1999) that the forces of globalisation have cultural implications. In order to contextualise discussion concerning what is occurring to culture, it is important to firstly define the term 'culture'. Holton (1998) refers to the difficulties inherent in arriving at such a definition, however Tomlinson (1999) suggests that there are a number of widely accepted premises that constitute the 'cultural' dimension of human existence. Essentially he suggests culture refers to 'the ways in which people make their lives, individually and collectively, meaningful by communicating with each other' (Tomlinson, 1999,18). Holton (1998) concedes that this includes both the practices that facilitate our understanding and capacity to act upon the world as well as the ideas, emotional symbols and values we use to interpret our existence and justify our actions. Holton (1998) also argues the importance of recognising the dynamic forces implicit in this definition of culture in that culture may be both a precipitator for change as well as being profoundly affected by change.

Reference has been made in the literature to the way in which the cultural aspects of globalisation present a paradox. The essence of this paradox is captured by many writers (Best & Kellner, 1991; Usher et al., 1997; Bauman, 1998). Best and Kellner (1991, 223) argue that 'there are social tendencies today both towards fragmentation and totalisation'. These two positions represent a point of distinction between the writings of post-modern versus social critical theory authors on globalisation. Bauman (1998, 2) states 'globalisation divides as much as it unites; it divides as it unites - the causes of division being identical with those which promote the uniformity of the globe'. Usher et al. (1997) concur with this perspective in proposing that the advent of globalisation has produced an interesting juxtaposition of homogeneity and heterogeneity.

The principle of homogeneity is implicit in the concept of 'capitalist modernity', defined by social critical theorists Best and Kellner (1991, 218) as 'a new system of state capitalism and bureaucracy, of the culture industries, of science and technology as domination, and of the administration of thought and behaviour'. Capitalist modernity threatens the demise of the individual within the context of culture by its overemphasis on the capitalist economy, bureaucracies, instrumental rationality and dominant social structures. Usher et al. (1997) agree that globalisation leads to a similar form of convergence that, at a global level, is manifested in the spread and dominance of Western institutions, knowledge and culture and attempts to create a global culture or as Ritzer (1993) would suggest the McDonaldization of society.

While the homogenising effects of globalisation are often portrayed as negative because of the apparent neutralising effects on a culture, there are instances where there also benefits to be gained from these homongenising forces. The emancipation of women in cultures that have been traditionally patriarchal for example has in part been due to globalisation.

Several other authors have written about this trend towards homogeneity including Lather (1991,40) who voices a concern with this approach to globalisation claiming that it leads to an unequal distribution of power and resources. In relation to the third world countries especially, Lather (1991) expresses disquiet that the specificities and complexities of cultural difference that exist in those cultures are being denied.

Bauman (1998) contends that, as individuals become increasingly disempowered by the forces of globalisation that impinge on their space, they have responded in culturally ritualistic ways that confront these very forces that they believe have disenfranchised them. He argues that there is an emergence of a process of de-differentiation in which the increasingly fragmented social world recognises a multiplicity of communities, cultural traditions and knowledge. Although it may seem that their behaviour is a contravention of law and order, Bauman (1998, 22) contends that it is an 'attempt to make the territorial claims audible and legible'.

A number of writers like Bauman (1992; 1998) argue for an alternative perspective consistent with post-modern thought which is based on a premise that rejects modernist

assumptions of social coherence and notions of causality in favour of multiplicity, plurality, fragmentation and indeterminacy (Foucault cited in Casey, 1995). Such a position advocates that cultural globalisation is leading to a reinforcement of local cultures and identities. Edwards (1994) for example asserts that the current globalising trends are affirming and empowering the identities of local cultures and therefore giving recognition to multiple truths and acknowledging multiple voices. Usher et al. (1997, 3) also suggest the process of globalisation has called for a greater emphasis on local, sub-state autonomy and identity which has led to a 'renaissance of place bound traditions and ways of life'. Similar sentiments are expressed by Lather (1991) who suggests there is evidence of an emergence of local, historically contextualised and pragmatic ways of viewing the world that are tolerant of social differences, ambiguity and conflict. In fact, Saul (2005) advances that these trends may even be signaling the collapse of globalism.

Several other authors have described the manner in which the forces of globalisation strengthen local identities and cultures. Fukuyama (cited in Haughty, 2000) writing from a business perspective remains unconvinced that cultures will be readily homogenised and believes there are powerful networks that dictate the norms and the manner in which business is conducted in each culture. Holton (1998, 135) concludes that the persistence of national identities offers 'some kind of stable anchor for identity and political security in an age where impersonal global capital predominates'.

This position of recognising local identities and cultures is in direct challenge to the practice of speaking for others and making universal claims of truth. It argues that the mentality of control and a wish to impose order on the other – phenomena that have been observed through the practices of colonialism and in the relationships that have existed for example between the east/west that will be discussed in the next chapter are untenable. It involves questioning the assumptions and understandings inherent in universal truths or metanarratives implicit in ideologies of dominance (Lyotard, 1984).

Usher et al. (1997) argue that the application of post-modern understandings reframes higher education at the institutional level as well. While it was debated earlier that institutions of higher education are experiencing an economic crisis arising from the forces of 'economic rationalism' and globalisation, the implications of post-modern

thought on higher education are such that the epistemological foundations of the university culture and teaching fundamental in the modernist context become disputed.

Other post-modern authors such as Lyotard (1984) also question the metanarrative of universities which gave them authority, legitimacy and credibility as purveyors of knowledge and culture. As universities are faced with post-modern conditions (Seidman, 1994) the absolute standards, universal categories, and grand theories that historically determined the content of teaching and process of delivery in the university context are being abandoned. This shift from stability and certainty of knowledge which was the hallmark of universities in the modernist context to the post-modern context which values multiple minds, subjectivities and knowledge that reflect different social locations and histories is according to Lyotard (1984) decentering. There remains no centre, no integration, coherence, purpose or certainty.

In the wake of post-modernism and its societal implications for society, educators are faced with a dilemma. They can no longer ignore the paradoxes, uncertainties and complexities confronting them. Lather (1991,xvi) writes that a close inspection of the conditions in which we live provokes us to 'turn unities into multiplicities, clarities into ambiguities, and univocal simplicities into poly-vocal complexities'. Educators who are committed to the development and delivery of effective programs of education cannot be oblivious to these conditions in their work context. In respect of higher education, Rivzi (2000) claims that the forces of globalisation are such that students studying in a cross-cultural context do not necessarily feel the pressure to conform to the Western norms implicit in the courses they are studying.

The positions proposed in the cultural homogeneity versus cultural heterogeneity debate are discreet. The former informed by a social critical theory contends that there is a trend towards cultural convergence and the proliferation of predominantly Western institutions leading to a culturally seamless world. The other, more consistent with post-modern thought, argues that there is a resurgence of nationalism and ethnicity and an increased re-emphasis on the notions of boundaries between cultural groups.

Best and Kellner (1991) argue that a dialectical theory that addresses the two aspects of this conceptual opposition can best explain the contemporary social processes and

developments. They propose a form of critical theory that 'analyses the multi-dimensional processes towards fragmentation and unification, implosion and differentiation, and plurality and homogenisation in contemporary techno-capitalist societies (Best & Kellner, 1991, 223). More recently Burbules and Torres (2000, 14) have re-iterated Best and Kellner's position (1991) by proposing a third alternative to explaining the cultural dimensions of globalisation that encompasses and explanation of 'cultural homogeneity and cultural heterogeneity appearing simultaneously in the cultural landscape'. Appadurai (1996) refers to this as the hybridisation theory and this will be discussed in great depth in the subsequent chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the development of higher education at the global and local levels since the WW2. It has discussed the changes that have occurred in this sector through the post-war periods of economic growth to the more recent times when neo-liberal ideologies have emerged. The impact of economic changes on the delivery of higher education and the pressures that come to bear on universities to find alternative funding sources have been argued.

This chapter has also explored how the economic, social, political and cultural dimensions of globalisation impact on the work of educators in a cross-cultural context. Tensions, which exist as the various dimensions of globalisation impact on societies have been presented. In the next chapter, the cultural effects of globalisation will be used as a starting point to discuss literature pertaining to education as it is delivered in a cross-cultural context.

CHAPTER FOUR: EDUCATION IN A CROSS-CULTURAL CONTEXT – THINKING GLOBAL, TEACHING LOCAL

Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the notion of globalisation as relevant for explaining some of contextual factors that currently impinge on higher education and it was suggested that one of the important dimensions to the globalisation debate is the cultural implication. In terms of education provided in a cross-cultural context then, the resultant effects on one culture when it accepts educational products from another one are a necessary consideration. This chapter initially explores a number of theories of cultural influence including cultural imperialism and more recently cultural homogenisation and cultural hybridisation. The changing base of power relationships that have emerged with the advent of these theories is discussed.

This chapter draws on critical social and post-modern theory as relevant to explaining epistemological phenomena that currently shape the face of higher education in a cross-cultural context as in this case where Eastern and Western cultures meet. Specific attention is also given to research that has explored the learning experiences of students in Asia including student stereotypical beliefs of Asian students held by educators and learning styles adopted by Asian students, issues of collectivism in Chinese culture, the role of the teacher in the Asian learning context and the expectations of Asian students.

Theories of Cultural Influence Pertaining to Education: The Notion of Cultural Imperialism

The practice of one cultural group developing and delivering education for another group has been established over time and in many contexts. It has been evident in the

colonisation of countries throughout the world, the international movement of students and academics and more recently in the proliferation of offshore courses. A number of theories have been developed to explain the consequences on cultural practices and identities that have resulted from those forces that nowadays are attributed to globalisation but which have existed in various forms throughout history. These theories include cultural imperialism (Carnoy, 1974; Tomlinson, 1991), cultural homogenisation and cultural hybridisation (Holton, 1998).

The theory of cultural imperialism emerged in the 1960s and refers to the practices of domination and attempts at cultural homogenisation and imposition usually of Western capitalism and culture on the non-western world (Tomlinson, 1991). This theory is relevant for those working in a cross-cultural context because it alerts us of the extent to which colonised cultures can potentially be rendered powerless, as humans within them are 'shaped, subjugated and disciplined' by power relations. One of the ways power relations are 'established, consolidated or implemented' is 'by the production ... and functioning of discourse' (Foucault cited in Casey, 1995, 13). Foucault (1972) argues that it is through discourse that society validates and legitimates what is of value and how we communicate about what is condoned in our society. The threat posed to colonised cultures by these communicational practices has been raised by many other writers including Tomlinson (1991), Burton-Jones (1995), Gopinathan (1997) and Rizvi (1997).

Some of the significant authors on the power of discourse to construct the notion of difference and domination by virtue of culture are Said (1978, 1993, 1995), Huntington (1993) and Ang and Stratton (1995). Said (1978, 1993) referred to constructions of 'Oriental' as authoritarian, stagnant and inflexible in contrast to the 'western Occidental' which is constructed as free, democratic and tolerant as being imagined. Ang and Stratton (1995) also consider East and West to be imaginary entities constructed through symbolic mirroring in a battle of overlapping, interested Self/Other representations. Huntington (1993, 40) suggests that this binary gives rise to a belief amongst many from the West that the West is 'free and democratic' while the East is 'authoritarian and despotic'. On the other hand, from the point of view of some Asian leaders Huntington (1993, 40) argues, the East is represented as 'ordered and harmonious', while the West is portrayed as 'decadent and selfish.' In Holton's (1998,

164) view, the net effect of such discourse is that 'the drive to power overrides the search for truth and the caricature replaces subtleties of conceptualisation'. Consequently, the potentialities to recognise and value commonalities in experience and interdependence between different cultures are marginalised and ignored. Arguably, it seems that cultural imperialism in essence has been replaced by cultural homogenisation.

The risks of cultural homogenisation have been a real concern for those working in education within a cross-cultural context. While engaged in the process of developing programs of study for students in another culture, educators need to be attuned to the potential risk of recreating the whole history of global dominance that has been consequence of colonialism and imperialism. The position of 'speaking for others' is politically problematic and has the potential to be violent to other cultures by advancing the Western style of thought as the master discourse. Western educators involved in course development and design, run the risk of acting from their own set of values about education and life experiences, and impose them uncritically onto another culture.

These above mentioned educational practices have often been shaped by the principles of classical pedagogy (Airihenbuwa, 1994). This refers to an educational paradigm that places patriarchy, white and middle class at the forefront of academic discourse (Airhihenbuwa, 1994). More specifically in terms of the two partners involved in this research, Robinson (1999, 34) asserts the emphasis in Western education models is on occidental concepts including 'individual development, self-management, autonomy in learners, independent learning, learner choice, active learning, dialogue and two way communication'. In contrast to this position, the starting point for Chinese–speaking learners she argues is cognitively different from that of students in the West, and educators who do not realise or account for this phenomenon are likely to recreate patterns of domination that are not respectful of the particular culture in which they are working.

Gopinathan (1997) and Rizvi (1997) express similar sentiments of concern. They argue that the educational experiences provided to students in a cross-cultural context are fraught with misunderstanding unless there is some sensitivity to the risks of

imperialism. In their keynote addresses at the 1997 Australian Association for Research in Education (held jointly with the Asian Educational Research Association) both made reference to the colonial attitudes that have been endemic in the educational relationships Australia has forged with South East Asia. Rizvi (1997, 15) stated

> knowledge of Asia was framed within a colonialist framework, which homogenised its object, and viewed the Orient as a passive adjunct to the universalising grand narrative of Western Imperialism.

Rizvi's (1997) propositions are to some extent manifest in the particular enterprise that is the focus of this research. The Australian academics enter the educational arena in Hong Kong with their own self-concepts, culture, language and values as to what constitutes quality education. There is nothing that necessitates them to have an understanding of the world of their students. While there may be an understanding as an observer, there is rarely an understanding that comes from being an active participant who has a stake in that culture. The academics have the option to leave at any time and are rarely or only peripherally touched by the culture in Hong Kong.

In the way many programs are designed to date, the aim of the educational enterprise is to remodel the student in Hong Kong into an image of ourselves and the values inherent in Western culture. There is an expectation that the students will participate in the programs and unquestionably engage with the learning material and teaching process that is borne out of Western cultural contexts, practices and traditions. As Burbules (1997, 99) argues, this stance offers limited choice to students. It places students in a position that requires them to abandon or suppress their differences for the sake of conformity and 'fitting in; or to accept the characterisation of one's own differences from the dominant perspective, becoming alienated from one's set, and so lose out on the opportunity that education represents.

Essentially, such an attitude fails to acknowledge the fluid and diverse. Rather it aims to unify and solidify. Inevitably it becomes disempowering and acts as an agent of control. While others are controlled, the potential threat that could be posed by their culture and knowledge is minimised.

In the case of developing educational programs, Foucault (1981) posits that disciplines also enforce control of discourse by establishing their own rules of what counts as legitimate knowledge within the boundaries of that discipline. Again this discourse is often limited by the institutional structures of Western practices. In the case of this study, the Western discourses in the discipline of health and education for example are fore grounded. Any discipline by staking out the limits of its own legitimate domain, Foucault (1981, 62) warns is likely to 'push back a whole teratology of knowledge beyond its margins'. It is within this teratology he argues that 'the marvelous and monstrous' can often be discovered (Foucault, 1981, 62).

In the process of designing and developing courses for students from another culture, it is essential therefore not to ignore 'the marvelous and the monstrous' (Foucault, 1981, 62) that lie beyond the confines of our intellectual boundaries but comprise a very real component of the cultural experience of the students. Spivak (1990) suggests that a possible difficulty arising from globalisation is that postcolonial writers package courses for global consumption in ways that totalise and deny the complexity that arises from cultural differences. This is consistent with the assertions made by other authors Lather (1991), Falk (1993) and Jakupec and Yoon (1999) all of whom raise concerns that, in the global context, the populations of developing countries are potentially marginalised from the production of knowledge. In terms of higher education it is potentially leading to a novel form of cultural poverty, because of the erosion it causes to the cultural values and norms of the receiving culture (Jakupec & Yoon, 1999).

In order for academics working in a cross-cultural context to operate with integrity it seems important that their personal frameworks for making meaning of the world be critically challenged. This is a phenomenon Burbules (1997) refers to as recognising the 'difference beyond'. Burbules (1997) agrees with Robinson's (1999) view that the language and understanding that exist for making meaning in one culture are not relevant for another culture and consequently we often encounter such differences with a sense of bewilderment, with no standards of sameness or even analogy to work with. Our encounter with the other always involves an otherness that is beyond our comprehension. Levinas (1989,43) succinctly encapsulates this idea by stating "The relationship with the other is not an idyllic and harmonious relationship of communion or a sympathy through which we put ourselves in the other's place; we recognise the

other as resembling us, but exterior to us; the relationship with the other is a relationship with Mystery'.

Incapacity to acknowledge difference because it is beyond our understanding results in what Thiong'O (1986) refers to as a 'cultural bomb'. The effect of the 'cultural bomb' on other cultures he suggests is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. Tragically, he concludes, this leads to people perceiving their past and culture as a wasteland and therefore wanting to distance themselves from the very essence of their being. In the case of third world countries, Thiong'O (1986) argues that their voices historically have not been heard, and continue not to be heard in the light of globalisation influences.

While this argument tends to present a negative perspective of domination and powerlessness on the part of academics and students in the other culture in the case of this particular case study the completion of a degree in Hong Kong especially one delivered in the medium of English serves the needs of people to develop their identities through consumption (Urry, 1994) and aestheticisation of life. As Usher et al. (1997) and Baudrillard (cited in Jakupec, 1999) argue, it is not products per se that are the focus of consumption but signs and symbols attached to those products which become the markers of difference. In Bauman's (1998, 83) words 'consumers are first and foremost gatherers of sensations; they are collectors of things only in a secondary or derivative sense'. Bourdieu (1984) asserts this approach to consumerism gives people the opportunity to demarcate their distinctive social space and makes a statement about their social standing and worth.

Knowledge is one of the commodities available to consumers and it has a performative value seen by learners as a way of optimising their efficiency and effectiveness (Usher et al., 1997). Education plays a crucial role in contributing to the multiplicity of experiences that are an integral part of defining a lifestyle. It is the wealthy that can buy an overseas educational program thereby differentiating their identity and benefiting those who are already privileged. Education therefore is exchanged on the basis of the performative value it has for the student. In other words, it serves the purpose of 'value adding' to graduates, and the development of an educational elite who then often

become attractive employees to the multinational and trans-national companies that featured so predominantly in the earlier discussion on globalisation. In this context the acquisition of a degree from an overseas university is important to the self-perception and identity of graduates and their families and becomes a means for graduates to distinguish themselves from others.

It could then be argued that to a large extent, elitism and the growth of a dominant class is perpetuated in countries such as Hong Kong by the development and design of courses by overseas universities particularly those offered through the medium of English. Historically, one of the imperialistic practices that have emerged as various parts of the world have been colonised is that certain European languages have taken precedence over others, in particular over local languages and dialects. Pennycook (1994) suggests that a functionalist approach has been adopted by many Western educators involved in providing education for students abroad for example in Hong Kong. The spread of English in such countries therefore is considered as natural, neutral, practical and beneficial. English is viewed within Hong Kong as the dominant language in business and the professional spheres such as medicine, law, economics, and academia. In spite of student surveys such as those conducted by The Open Learning Institute of Hong Kong (Murphy & Yuen, 1999) that highlighted a demand for courses to be delivered in Chinese, the contemporary demand amongst Asian professionals still continues to be the acquisition of a degree where English is the medium of delivery.

The question arises - Are the current globalising trends and the advent of cultural homogenisation any different in their effects on culture from those evident during the periods of cultural imperialism when nations were colonised by others? Many authors such as Lash (1987), Tomlinson (1991) and Pieterse (1995) suggest there are significant differences. One of the major differences arises from the changing definition and role of the nation state. In the periods where colonisation was observed, the nation state was viewed as the major framework for social life and powers of domination and coercion were exerted by certain nations that developed an aura of 'cultural confidence' (Tomlinson, 1991, 175).

Nowadays, given the forces of capitalist modernity (Best & Kellner, 1991), nation states are finding it increasingly difficult to carve out some tenable level of sovereignty and control. Capitalist modernity as it currently exists Tomlinson (1991, 174) argues 'is technologically and economically powerful but culturally weak' and has led to what Giddens (1991) refers to as a crisis of moral legitimacy especially in the Western world. The potency inherent in the nation state therefore has to a large extent been eroded and has been replaced by the forces of global capitalism. In Hong Kong, this is superimposed by the handover of Hong Kong from British rule to that of mainland China in 1997, which has resulted in a significant shift in the power base and the related values. With the precedent of strong Anglo Saxon influence during British rule, it is highly unlikely that Hong Kong will embrace the cultural shift more in keeping with the values espoused by China without question.

The cultural changes that are being brought about by globalisation have given rise to an alternative theory for understanding the effects of the current global forces on culture namely the hybridisation theory. In essence, this theory recognises at one level the potency of global capitalism and the forces that drive for a single global culture and cultural homogenisation but also acknowledges that there are other significant forces apart from nationalism and ethnicity that contribute to cultural identity. Fundamental to this theory is the notion that, while the legitimacy of the nation state as the primary point of reference for social life has been eroded, a number of other socio-cultural processes and spaces have replaced it.

Appadurai (1996) refers to processes such as global flows namely mediascapes, ethnoscapes, financescapes and technoscapes as the framework by which people, technologies, capital and ideas traverse cultural spaces. Certainly some flows, in particular those emanating in the West, Ahmed and Donnan (cited in Rizvi, 2000) suggest are more forceful and widespread. However the significance of such trans-cultural flows Appadurai (1996) argues lies in the ways they become 'indigenised' or incorporated within the local political and cultural economies and therefore create a hybrid culture.

The various theories that have been developed to explain the effects on culture have important implications for the work of academics within cross-cultural contexts.

Burbules (1997) contends managing 'difference' poses many dilemmas and consequent challenges. In order to address these challenges, he advocates that educational goals be tied to a critical re-examination of difference, questioning of our own systems of difference, and what they mean for us and for other people. His work on the 'grammar of difference' encourages us to see differences in areas where previously we did not notice them, to see differences as significant but not unchanging and to appreciate that the way in which differences are constructed or interpreted from one standpoint, is just that, and to be open to the possibility of other standpoints. He urges us to identify whose characterisations or categories of difference are being granted preference in particular circumstances and finally he suggests that academics need to explore deeper ways by which difference and similarity imply and inform each other.

As Robinson (1999) suggests such an approach is consistent with the potential that exists for an increase in global interchange that could be made possible through the globalisation process. She argues for a two way appreciation of the east/west debate with an acceptance that globalisation has led to the development of a hybrid of cultures which are no longer strictly eastern or western. What is necessary Robinson (1999, 54) argues is for academics to have a deeper understanding of the cultural contexts of learners and 'to build better bridges into and out of cultures of learning'.

To this point this chapter has overviewed the broader epistemological issues that impinge on higher education in a cross-cultural setting. It will now address literature that has explored specific issues related to student learning in Hong Kong. It will therefore canvass issues such as the prevalence of instrumentalist thinking and stereotypical beliefs about Asian students and the way they learn, the cultural foundations for learning that arise from the Confucian tradition and the perceptions of students and teachers regarding learning in an Asian context.

The Prevalence of Instrumentalist Thinking and Stereotypical Beliefs about Asian Students

As mentioned earlier, several authors (Huntington, 1993; Ang & Stratton, 1995) have written about how language, discourse, and hierarchical opposites arise and shape subjectivities, social institutions and consequently policies in higher education. They question the extent to which these binaries perpetuate artificial social and political hierarchies and the implications such hierarchies have for educational practice. In this respect, Rizvi (1997) has expressed concern that the articulation of education for students from Asia has been dominated by instrumentalist thinking that is based on a particular politics of difference - namely a binary between the East and the West.

This position is reflected in the perceptions many hold of Asian students. There is a tendency to perceive such students as a homogeneous whole and, while they do share some commonalities such as their Confucian heritage and their English as a Second Language (ESL) status (Chalmers & Volet, 1997), there is a need to appreciate the immense diversity that exists between cultures considered Asian. Additionally, stereotypical beliefs about student approaches to learning adopted by Asian students abound. Included amongst such beliefs held by educators about Asian students and their approaches to learning are that they adopt a surface approach to learning, they are content focused, they rely heavily on memorisation and repetition in the learning process, they are reluctant to discuss, criticise or express an opinion and they expect the lecturer to provide the correct answer (Ballard & Clanchy, 1984; Samuelowicz, 1987). Ang and Stratton (1995) challenge these assertions and suggest that, while differences do undoubtedly exist between students in the East and West, the distinctions have to be considered beyond Oriental /Occidental binaries.

These assertions have important implications for the development of education programs by Western academics, who each have their own personal narrative about the other. They need to subject their own narrative about the culture in which they are working to a process of reflexivity, so they can increase their awareness of their own position in relation to the other. Several researchers have attempted to explore the learning behaviours adopted by students from Asian cultures in order to increase

understanding of the challenges involved with working in a cross-cultural context. A critique of some of the significant work in this area is provided below.

Learning Approaches Adopted by Asian Students

With the nature of higher education institutions in Australia being such that such a significant number of students come from Asian backgrounds, it becomes necessary for universities to revisit and reconsider their policies on teaching and learning (Cordiero, 1995: Croxford, 2001). This has however proved to be a challenge for many universities that have been criticized for not making adequate adjustments to accommodate the diversity of cultural backgrounds of their student cohort (Burns, 1991).

Watkins (1996) highlights that the research approaches that have been taken to investigating the learning behaviours adopted by Asian students specifically have tended to share several similarities. Specifically, they have used either an analysis of student responses to quantitative learning questionnaires, phenomenography or a combination of the two approaches. Significant in this respect have been three instruments - the Learning Process Questionnaire and its equivalent appropriate for tertiary settings, the Student Process Questionnaire - developed by Biggs (1987) and the Approaches to study inventory developed by Entwistle and Ramsden (1983). Analysis of student responses to these questionnaires lend support to whether students adopt a surface approach in which the student's intention is memorisation of the text, deep approach where the intention is understanding of the text or achieving approach where the intention seems to be a switch between deep/surface approaches in their learning

There has been some contradiction in the way in which deep/surface approaches to learning have been understood. Biggs (1993) and Entwistle and Ramsden (1993) reached the conclusion that the approaches adopted by students are not static but related to a variety of factors including their motivation, intentions and perceptions of the learning contexts. Similarly, researchers using phenomenographic approaches to investigate student learning (Marton & Ramsden, 1988; Salyo, 1988) assert that student

learning cannot be understood independently of students' perceptions of the learning task and the learning environment. There is recognition by some that the learning environment is a significant factor in explaining how students learn. Others have extended the concepts to imply that deep approaches mean 'deep learning' leading to 'deep processors' (Mitchell cited in Haggis,, 2003) or 'engagers' (Kember & Yan, 2001). This discussion Haggis (2003) suggests has led to considerable confusion as to whether the deep/surface approaches concept is a static or changeable phenomenon.

Apart from the difficulties inherent in how the deep/surface approaches have been used there are problems associated with instruments that have been developed and standardised in the West being administered in other cultures as if concepts are universal across cultures. Watkins (1996, 9) draws on the work of Enriquez (cited in Watkins, 1996) and Sinha (cited in Watkins, 1996) and contends that educators 'from Third World countries have questioned the appropriateness of Western theories, constructs, and measuring instruments for non-Western cultures'. Similarly, Bond (1996) refers to the fact that most of the research on learning has taken place in Western cultures using Western constructs yet 20% of the world's population is Chinese.

To counter this argument, Watkins (1996) attempted to justify the reliability and construct validity of student approaches to learning instruments and phenomenography across diverse cultural contexts. Entwistle (1997, 217) also agued that the notions of deep and surface are a 'valid and useful description of the teaching and learning process in higher education'. This is confirmed by other researchers including Drew (2001) and McLean (2001).

Furthermore, there has been an implication that the adoption of deep/surface approaches is a reflection of the quality of learning. Adopting a deep approach is considered to be preferred because it is argued to lead to 'ways of understanding that include more complete ways of conceiving something' and therefore results in better learning outcomes (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999, 4). Surface approaches that use memorisation are discouraged because they are associated with a lack of understanding.

In spite of the difficulties associated with using these concepts for understanding student approaches to learning, numerous studies have nonetheless used them with Asian students in an attempt to explore the approaches they take to their learning. The findings of this research have begun to challenge the stereotypes regarding the ways Asian students engage with the learning process (Gow & Kember, 1989; McKay & Kember, 1997; Chalmers & Volet, 1997; Ellis, 1997). Studies by Kember and Gow (1990), Biggs (1990,1992, 1996) and Davies, Atara Sivan and Kember (1994) all lend weight to the assertion that students from Hong Kong specifically are more inclined to adopt deep and achieving approaches to learning rather than surface approaches.

In order to understand the conclusion these studies have reached, it is important to appreciate the effects of the culture specifically the Confucian ethic on the learning behaviour of students in an Asian context. According to Lee (1999), Chinese concepts of learning and social behaviour are shaped by the Confucian tradition that holds as a fundamental premise that learning is for the purpose of self-realisation. Confucian philosophy emphasises human perfectibility and educability and an emphasis on willpower and effort. It is a philosophy that espouses that everybody is educable and Confucius himself accepted everyone from all classes into his academy. It was his contention that intelligence is not an inhibitor to a person's educability, and that all human beings have an infinite potential for growth and an inexhaustible supply of resources for development (Tu cited in On, 1996).

In the Confucian tradition, it is not difference in ability or intelligence that is of the essence in a student's level of achievement. Certainly individual differences in ability exist, but it is cumulative effort that determines the extent to which people achieve rationality or wisdom. Significantly, within this philosophy, concentration of the mind and steadfastness of purpose (On, 1996) are the foundation stones to the achievement of human perfectibility.

Confucius (cited in On, 1996, 35) conceived the learning process as one involving 'studying extensively, enquiring carefully, pondering thoroughly, sifting clearly and practising earnestly'. This suggests an emphasis on repetition as Dahlin & Watkins (2000) found in their in-depth interviews with secondary school students in Hong Kong. Unlike their Western counterparts Hong Kong students used repetition to create

a 'deep impression' leading to memorisation as well as developing understanding. Memorisation has played an important role in the history of Chinese education. The Chinese civil service exams have always required the memorisation of large quantities of Confucian text (Bloch & Chi, 1995) while in modern Chinese classrooms it continues to play an important role (Bond, 1991; Leung, 1995; Biggs, 1996) and students are often given lecture notes to memorise (Chan, 1999).

Memorisation however is only ever meant to be an initial step in order to become familiar with the text, but never as an end in itself. True learning only happens once the student then uses the material as a basis for reflection, questioning, understanding and application to personal life experience. These are all factors associated with a deep approach to learning.

Biggs (1996, 50) therefore concludes 'what some Western observers are seeing is not what they think it is' and that the appropriateness of a deep and surface approach to learning in an Asian context is questionable. In an earlier study, Kember and Gow (1990) compared the learning styles of Western students with students from Hong Kong. They found that the factor structures for deep understanding and achieving responses were consistent, but questioned whether the surface, rote learning construct is applicable to the Hong Kong context. Through their interviews with students, they concluded that memorising information is an attempt on the part of students to adopt a systematic, step-by-step approach to learning rather than simply rote learning. Marton and Trigwell (2000) and Kember (2002) refer to this as the Chinese Paradox.

Similarly, Marton, Dall'Alba and Kun's (1996) study using teacher educators from mainland China explored this emerging paradox that confronts educators - that is - the extent to which Asian students use memorisation yet at the same time seem to adopt a deep approach to learning. They propose that there are cultural differences with the concept of memorisation. In Western cultures memorisation is equated with rote learning and unrelated to any deeper forms of understanding. In the Confucian tradition on the other hand, memorisation of the text and understanding are inextricably interwoven – 'memorisation can be used to deepen and develop understanding' (Marton et al., 1996, 82). Memorisation has also been identified by some researchers

(Tang & Biggs, 1996) as an important strategy for meeting the needs of assessment in a culture that is still highly examination oriented.

Although this research is of considerable significance in its attempts to assist educators in their understanding of students' conceptions of learning in Asian cultures and specifically in Hong Kong, research of this nature has limitations. The Study Process Questionnaire (Biggs, 1987) has been used as the empirical tool to measure student approaches to learning and uses the categories of deep and surface to describe students' behaviour to learning. Concerns have been voiced about the use of a tool that has been developed in the West to understand student learning in another culture without modification because it constitutes yet another form of cultural dominance. Post-modern critics (Webb, 1996) also question the use of such categories and suggest that they are yet another binary distinction which simplistically leads us to explain student behaviour and fails to acknowledge the social and cultural constructions of learning that are open to richer and multiple interpretations.

Haggis (2003) also critiques the metanarrative of conceptions, perceptions and approaches to learning from the perspective that it advocates an 'elite set of assumptions about student purposes and motivation' (Haggis, 2003, 97) valued by academics. She argues that the current context where students will inevitably move in and out of higher education throughout the duration of their lives' will call for a different set of understandings in respect of student learning which places more value on the 'richness and complexity of his/her multiple contexts' (Haggis, 2003, 98).

These findings on learning approaches adopted by students may be complicated for students studying a course delivered in English, which is their second language at best. There is considerable evidence to suggest that the experience of learning a language contributes to the development of skills beyond the language process and this has been explored by a number of authors (Kao & Hoosain, 1986; Liu, Chen & Chen, 1988). Robinson (1999, 35) contends that the process by which learners acquire the language skills of the logographic Chinese script is quite different to the task of learning an alphabetic language. The former requires the development of skills in 'perceptual discrimination, spatial relationships and memorisation'. Therefore, it is not accidental, but rather a product of language acquisition, that the Chinese are stronger in the skills

of spatial, numerical and non-verbal skills compared to Westerners who are stronger in verbal dimensions and analogical thinking (Vernon, 1985).

In respect of thinking skills, Hsu (1985) identified that the Chinese place greater emphasis on synthesis in their thinking, compared to Westerners who value analysis more highly. This is then reflected in the quality of written work and the understanding students have of conventional academic writing. In the Western culture, relevance and sequential logic developed into a linear argument is valued and digression is penalised. In comparison, Chinese thought and writing style tends to be more reflective of the cultural emphasis on a holistic paradigm that values harmony in the interrelationships of humans with their environment. Chinese students therefore are more likely to adopt a holistic style in their writing and dialectics play an important role in developing an argument. Such argument lends itself to more spiral rather than linear writing structure. In many situations then students' work can be misconstrued as inadequate when in fact it may be a reflection of culturally acceptable way of writing academic discourse.

Johnson and Ngor (1996) also highlight that where English is used, as the language of instruction in Hong Kong the primary emphasis of language development for students is on reading particularly in pre-tertiary settings. Oral and written expression language skill development is inhibited for a number of diverse reasons. In terms of oral communication, these reasons include firstly the tradition of the teacher-centered approach in the classroom in Hong Kong that restrains students from conversing with each other. This is based on cultural rules to be discussed later that dictate one's right to speak based on social position or rank (Gao, 1998). Secondly, Bond (1991) contends that Chinese students are reluctant to speak in classrooms where they are not acquainted with their fellow students because of a norm in the Chinese culture that distinguishes between established acquaintances and strangers. Conversations are rarely initiated with strangers. Thirdly, many students feel anxious about the prospect of being asked to speak in English because of a fear of loss of face if they respond incorrectly or of being perceived by fellow classmates as a show off (Chan cited in Lee, 1999; Lau cited in Lee, 1999). There is also a predominant Chinese belief that associates speaking with negative consequences as expressed in phrases such as 'what has been said cannot be unsaid' and 'misfortune comes from the mouth' (Gao, 1998, 169). Furthermore, Bond (1993) identified a particular reluctance to speak if the disclosures have an

emotional component. Finally, the exposure to oral English is further compounded by teachers who ostensibly use English as the language of instruction but in reality any spoken English is often interspersed with Cantonese.

Regarding written English, Johnson (1994) believes that in Hong Kong little value has been placed on written expression especially in assessment tasks in favour of an examination focus, where multiple choice and other forms of objective testing are used. When the students are required to express themselves in a written form, grammatical accuracy and expression are ignored in favour of the students demonstrating they have the factual knowledge. This lack of emphasis on the development of technical writing skills makes correct writing and referencing particularly challenging for Asian students who do not have a firm grasp of English.

The technical difficulties of writing are exacerbated by the emphasis in academic writing of putting arguments into 'one's own words' which requires students to put a 'voice' to their work (Scollon, 1994; Bowden, 1996). This is a complex task as the intricacies of meaning are often lost when one tries to put someone else's ideas into their 'own words' (Bowden, 1996). It is not uncommon for second language writers to have considerable difficulty understanding the meaning behind some of the text. To then be expected to rephrase without losing the main point becomes arduous. Hence the notion of putting into 'one's own words' may prove overwhelming for students who already feel relatively tentative about the language (Pennycook, 1994). Given these difficulties with written expression, Watkins, Biggs and Regmi (1991) and Salili (1996) assert that memorisation may be a safe learning strategy adopted by students when faced with a medium such as written expression that is unfamiliar and challenging to them and requires a control of the language that they have not yet achieved.

Another difficulty faced by students studying in a second language is that of misunderstanding what is commonly referred to in the West as plagiarism (Deckert, 1992; Evans & Youmans, 2000; Hafernik, Messerschmitt & Vandrick, 2002). Asian students have featured prominently in the research conducted on plagiarism (Deckert, 1993; Lahur, 2005). Some suggest that these students are at increased risk of committing acts of plagiarism (Deckert, 1993; Currie, 1998; Park, 2003; Lahur, 2005) and a study conducted by Zobel & Hamilton (2002) found that Asian students were

found to have submitted more copied assignments than Australian students. Unfamiliarity with the concept of plagiarism has been one of the most consistent explanations given for plagiarism amongst Asian students (Biggs & Watkins, 1996; Zobel & Hamilton, 2002; Briggs, 2003; Lahur, 2005). In fact, Biggs and Watkins (1996) suggest that it has only been in recent times, that plagiarism has been brought to the attention of Chinese students as an unacceptable academic practice.

Deckert's (1993) study with first year ESL students in Hong Kong suggested that they had little familiarity with the concept of plagiarism and furthermore a limited capacity to recognise it. Even when the inappropriateness of the practice was explored with the students, they were more concerned with it having a detrimental effect on learning and that it might be seen to reflect the student's laziness rather than an infringement on the rights of the writer or that fact that it constituted academic misconduct and dishonesty. When the same issues were explored with third year students, Deckert (1993) found they had a better appreciation of the writer's rights and plagiarism being an act of dishonesty.

A later study conducted by Kam-cheong and Cheung (1999) supports this notion that what is considered plagiarism in Western academic circles, is not viewed in the same light by students in Chinese cultures. Values fundamental to Chinese cultures, for example that of collectivism, whereby constant reference is made to the opinions and views of others in preference to a personal commitment to an opinion (Gao, 1998) and the fact that intellectual property is considered as having public ownership (Deckert, 1992) means that different meanings are attached to practices associated with using the material of other authors in academic work.

To the Chinese student, paraphrasing another's ideas into their own words seems an illogical way of operating when the ideas have been expressed by the author much more succinctly than they can in their imperfect English (Leki, 1992; Kirby, Woodhouse & Ma, 1996). In fact, qualitative accounts from Asian students have suggested that it is assumed that even if part of a written assignment has no reference cited, it could well have come from a past scholar or equally credible source (Alexander, 1998). In Kam-cheong and Cheung's (1999) study using 380 students studying an undergraduate business course, the results indicated that students were

more likely to identify direct copying of language as plagiarism, but less likely to consider copying of ideas or incorrect documentation of sources as examples of plagiarism. Even when students did correctly identify work as having been plagiarized, their reasons for their judgments were often misconceived.

Within the Singaporean context, Lim and See (2001) examined students' attitudes towards various forms of academic misconduct and dishonesty. They found that students generally perceived academic activities such as plagiarism to be relatively innocuous compared to practices such as cheating in an examination. Such findings are disturbing in so far that they highlight little change in students' conceptions of what constitutes academic integrity from the results of two studies that had been conducted earlier. In the first of these studies, Stevens and Stevens (cited in Lim & See, 2001) found that the students they surveyed did not consider plagiarism to be as serious while later Barnett and Dalton (cited in Lim & See, 2001) established that over 50% of the students in their study did not consider the practice of fabricating a bibliography to be academic misconduct.

Deckert (1992) refers to a concept of 'learned plagiarism' which he suggests occurs when students are encouraged to memorise and copy the work of others as part of the learning process. The emphasis on memorisation he suggests provides some appreciation of why Asian students have poor insight into the implications of textual ownership and plagiarism that are more Western constructs.

The literature on plagiarism amongst Asian students is now leading many educators to appreciate the conplexity of the concept and its cultural dependency (McCormick, 1988; Pennycook, 1994, 1996; Cordiero, 1995). Consequently there is a need to shift away from a moralsied view of plagiarism to a more enquiring position that attempts to understand which factors including diverse educational and cultural backgrounds affect such behaviour (Hafernik et al., 2002).

In addition, recognition needs to be given to the increased body of literature that is finding that undergraduate students of Western origins also have little understanding of what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it (Froese, Boswell, Garcia, Koehn & Nelson, 1995; Ashworth & Bannister, 1997; Roig, 1997). It seems that for all students

entering higher education institutions understanding the concept of plagiarism is a gradual 'process of acculturation' (Ashworth, Freewood & Ranald, 2003, 257). It is also highly probable that this acculturation process is inhibited by plagiarism being a poorly understood and ill-defined concept that seems to confuse even some academics (Pennycook, 1994; Lipson & Reindl, 2003)

Dealing with Issues of Collectivism in Chinese Culture

One of the significant determinants of achievement that have been identified within the Confucian tradition is the notion of inter-relatedness or collectivism (Hofstede 1983). In comparison to Western cultures which prize the setting of individual goals and rewards their achievement through autonomous behaviours, within Chinese culture, the 'concept of success is clustered with happy family, academic achievement, career success and having many friends' (Salili, 1996, 87).

Central to Confucian philosophy is the notion of the relational self, whereby the individual exists only in relation to others (Gao, 1998). Within this tradition there are five principal relationships. These relationships are hierarchical and the more senior individual has more power and authority and include: ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, elder and younger brothers and between friends (Bond & Huang, 1995; Cho, 2000). All relationships within this tradition are governed by *li* which represents the rules and obligations individuals follow as they strive towards personal cultivation. These rules ensure that people act according to their rank (*zhenming*) and are believed to foster social harmony (Cho, 2000).

These concepts have ramifications for the study patterns of students in Chinese culture. In the first instance, there is a rigorous socialisation process where academic success is highly valued by the family and failure is considered a source of great stigma. Chinese students are therefore under extraordinary pressure to perform, and with the criterion for achievement being the amount of effort, there are enormous stresses that arise for those students whose chances of success are low (Hau cited in Salili, 1996).

In this context, Biggs (1996) alerts us to the problems inherent in imposing the intrinsic/extrinsic/achievement motivation categories giving rise to deep/surface and achieving approaches to learning on the Chinese culture. He argues for example that in the West a deep intrinsic motivation is the precursor for adopting a deep approach to learning and therefore defining what is meaningful and worthwhile in learning. The Chinese learner, he argues, adopts a more pragmatic approach to adopting a deep strategy. The motivational factors he considers as fundamental are 'personal ambition, family face, peer support, material rewards, interest and internal dispositions that create a sense of diligence and receptiveness' (Biggs, 1996).

Within the classroom, this notion of collectivism becomes apparent in the manner in which students engage in learning tasks. Predictably, Chinese students expend more effort and perform better in co-operative contexts when they are familiar with the other students. Yu (1980), in comparing the performance of Chinese students in individual versus collective situations, concluded that motivation to achieve was much higher in the co-operative contexts. Similar findings by Ho (cited in Hofstede, 1980) suggest that collective endeavours were more important to the Chinese than individual competitiveness. Finally, Salili (1996, 88) concludes Chinese students 'place greater importance on group goals rather than individual goals in achievement and they are concerned about their collective face in their pursuit of achievement'. The phenomenon of social loafing, characteristic of collaborative learning processes in Western culture, Salili (1996) argues is not relevant for the Chinese culture.

Considering the preference for collectivism within Chinese culture, Tang (1996, 184) contends that the small group 'involving collaboration and co-operation is highly recommended as a teaching strategy with Chinese learners'. In a study involving physiotherapy students from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, she found 87% of the students spontaneously formed study groups and worked collaboratively to prepare for a written assignment. The collaboration took the form of sharing the literature search and the information found, and then participating in group discussion involving arguing, critiquing each other's ideas, suggesting improvements, sharing and exchanging ideas and debating the information they had researched. Tang (1996) also found that this practice amongst the students in Hong Kong significantly increased their adoption of a deep approach to learning. Chan and Watkins (1994) in an earlier study

reported that Hong Kong students themselves perceived collaborative learning tasks to promote deeper learning strategies.

The Role of Teachers in the Asian Learning Context

In addition to the stereotypes regarding learning approaches which students from Hong Kong adopt, teaching in the Eastern cultures is often perceived by Western educators as teacher directed rather than student directed (Bond, 1991). Lee (1999) suggests that the concept of teacher-centeredness and what is considered as authoritarianism (Ho, 2001) may be more associated with the Confucian tradition 'rule of respect for superiors (Liu In-mao cited in Lee, 1999, 256). Essentially this rule dictates respect for and obedience to superiors. In the Chinese culture, the sense of self exists in a hierarchical structure and is embedded in multiple prescribed roles. Harmony is achieved when appropriate role relationships are maintained and there is acceptance of the established hierarchy (Gao, 1998). A good teacher in this tradition is one who 'knows how to guide students without pulling them, guides students to go forward without suppressing them, and opens the way for students to think for themselves' (Lee, 1999, 256). There is an overriding emphasis on building moral character (Ho, 2001) and exercising authority reflects the teacher's care for the students.

In response to this style of teaching, students are expected to learn what they are taught, and show their respect for teachers through attention, silence and fear. It is understandable that students would rarely question teachers or challenge their teachers' judgments (Ho, 1993; Scollon & Wong-Scollon, 1994; Biggs 1996).

This is possibly the basis of the misconception held by many Western educators that Chinese students are 'passive and compliant, rarely ask questions or volunteering answers, reluctant to question statements, reluctant to discuss, criticize reading and express an opinion' (Biggs, 1996, 47) and 'do not volunteer to participate in tutorial discussions' (Volet & Renshaw, 1996, 207). In fact, Lee (1999) suggests that for many students remaining reticent in class may be seen as a way of avoiding punishment or

being disliked by the teacher (Lee, 1999) while the assertive or eloquent student is often considered disrespectful (Liu, 1986).

Understandably, it is confronting for students in some higher education settings to be exposed to learning activities where didactic class presentations are complemented with tutorial sessions that expect student participation. While McKay and Kember (1997) found that a sample of nursing students in Hong Kong preferred a learning environment that was student directed and required them to adopt a more active and meaningful approach, Lee (1999) suggests this is only likely to occur if the teacher creates a classroom environment that facilitates such interaction. She concluded that this can occur by adopting a number of strategies including the teacher leading discussion, stimulating thoughts and developing arguments in tutorial sessions, preparing the students for open discussion by giving them time to consider some arguments in advance and introducing activities that build trust and acceptance in the classroom so that teachers and the student group feel some sense of kinship.

A study of 82 teachers from four Hong Kong universities (Kelly et al., 1999) aimed to explore the teaching and learning goals of Western and Chinese teachers and students and the conceptions of effective teaching in these groups. The results of the survey suggest that the majority of both Chinese and Western teachers shared the goal of developing academic skills: knowledge, skills, critical thinking and problem solving through their teaching. There was some consistency between the findings of this study and that conducted by Kember and Gow (1993) with Hong Kong academics. Kember and Gow (1993) found that academics in Hong Kong identified the development of general problem solving ability to be the primary function of higher education.

The findings of the study by Kelly et al. (1999) however also highlighted some significant differences between Chinese and Western academics. Many of the Chinese teachers considered the transmission of basic knowledge as a necessary condition for the development of other intellectual skills such as knowledge application, problem solving and critical thinking. The Chinese teachers also expressed a concern for orchestrating the learning experience - that is estimating how much knowledge the students needed to be given in order to have a basis for analysis and critical thinking

and how much structure the students needed. Gardner (1989) refers to this teaching strategy that tends to be highly directive and imitative as 'mimetic'.

The Western academics that participated in Kelly et al.'s study (1999) in comparison seemed to assume a base level of skill in terms of students' intellectual independence and placed little emphasis on transmitting basic knowledge as a building block to the ultimate development of intellectual independence. The subject matter as far as the Western academics were concerned, was often seen as irrelevant and merely a vehicle for teaching thinking skills and approaches to problem solving.

Biggs (1996) suggests there are significant differences in the teaching style that has traditionally been used in Hong Kong in comparison to that of the west. He contends that whereas in western cultures exploration often precedes the development of skills, the Chinese believe in skill development that is acquired by repetition with a strong emphasis on the pursuit of the 'right way' first and only then is there a foundation for creativity. Gardner (1989) advocates that such an approach is highly consistent with the Chinese emphasis on product rather than process.

Contrary to research suggesting that teachers in Asia are authoritarian and create learning environments which are teacher directed, are the findings of a study of teachers in Taiwan, China and Japan (Stigler & Stevenson, 1991) that purported that teachers in these cultures adopt a student directed approach. Likewise, O'Connor (cited in Kelly & Ha, 1998) found that among a population of Chinese teachers, the teaching approach was student directed and that teachers spent significant periods of time interacting with students both inside and outside the classroom. Volet and Pears (1994) argue that the tendency for Chinese students to approach the teacher after the class, gives them time to think the problem through.

Kelly et al. (1999) found a significant difference in the attitude that Western versus Chinese academics hold towards students. Their results support the findings of Stigler and Stevenson (1991) and O'Connor (cited in Kelly & Ha, 1998) in that the relationship they identified existed between Chinese academics and their students was based on the Chinese concept of 'heart'. They also described a level of informality in the manner in which Chinese academics interacted with students outside the class. In comparison, the

Western academics tended to adopt a 'professional' approach, allocating office hours and demonstrating a wariness of becoming too involved with the students on a personal basis. The fact that many teachers in the Chinese culture live in dormitories on campus gives rise to considerable additional teacher/pupil interaction outside the classroom

On exploring the issue of attribution of effectiveness of teaching and learning to the teacher alone, the students or a combination of both, Kelly et al. (1999) found that the Chinese academics were more likely to be sympathetic to the students, and more inclined to try and understand student behaviour by acknowledging the influences that might be affecting their learning. The Western academics in comparison tended to make more negative judgments about students who they considered to be poorly motivated.

This study also identified key difference between Chinese and Western academics concerning what constituted effective teaching. Both academic groups emphasised lecture presentation skills and preparation for lectures as fundamental to effective teaching. The Chinese group, however, were more concerned than their Western colleagues with structuring a learning environment that was responsive to student needs (Kelly et al., 1999). The Western group in comparison demonstrated more concern for facilitating student learning through feedback on assignments and creating a classroom culture where students are critically challenged and provoked into alternative ways of thinking.

Expectations of Asian Students

Volet (1999) claims that one of the requirements for an effective teaching and learning environment is congruence in teachers' and students' expectations of their roles in the learning process. Caiger, Davies, Leigh, Orton and Rice (1996) proposed a number of teacher qualities considered by Asian students as measures of effective teaching. These include systematically organising the material to help students learn and assisting students to understand that material so they pass the external exams. Similar findings were found in a study by Volet and Pears (1994) which identified that students'

perceptions of good teaching was the provision of good notes and model answers to the questions in the exam as well as techniques for remembering material for the exam.

Kelly et al. (1999) also explored what students considered to be significant qualities in an effective teacher. The students identified a range of attributes including knowledge of the subject, presentation skills, caring for students and helping them learn. The authors found that what each of the students considered important was related to their goals. Some students for example wanted their teachers to give them clear guidelines on what to study, give model answers and explain the subject clearly - attitudes that conform to the pragmatic stereotype of the Asian student. Other students expected teachers to be knowledgeable in their field and placed emphasis on the teacher's practical and applied knowledge in the field. Many students also responded positively to teachers who take a personal interest and act as guides and caregivers and perceived their Chinese teachers as providing this more so than the Western academics.

The research on Asian culture and learning practices within that context has important implications for the design of culturally appropriate learning experiences for students. Academics are faced with numerous dilemmas in respect of their practice. Volet (1999) suggests some of the following questions emerge – Should academics adopt an ethnocentric model of teaching and learning and expect students from other cultures to adapt to the Western concept of what constitutes good teaching and learning? Alternatively should they adopt a customer-oriented approach and accommodate to cater for the cultural differences in their student population–particularly in a context that is supply rather than demand driven (Davis et al., 2000). Volet (1999,639) proposes educational experiences provided for students in a cross-cultural context must be based on sound principles of learning that leads to 'deep conceptual content'. She suggests a number of strategies such as self regulated learning programs and process oriented instruction for achieving this goal.

The Use of Information Technology by Asian Students

A number of salient issues are raised by the recent practices of developing and delivery flexible learning programs for other cultures using Information Technology. The advent of technologies has given rise to a new relation between author and text as well as significant changes in the nature of the relationship of the teacher/student. Poster (cited in Lather, 1991) focuses on the extent to which 'reality' becomes constituted in the 'unreal' dimension of the media. In the case of the Hong Kong, this is likely to create some confusion for students who, according to Kelly et al. (1999) highly value a close relationship between teachers and students and respond to a more collective approach to learning. In reality, many universities involved in delivering education in Hong Kong where cross cultural partners are involved, have recognised this need and have employed local facilitators to assist with the delivery of courses.

It is also worthwhile noting that still only a minority of the world's population who has access to worldwide communications systems, and it continues to be a male dominated and mainly white North American (Spender,1995). Educators need to be conscious of the risk of marginalising potential students and denying them the participation in educational opportunities through the disparities in access (Dhanarajan, 1998). In Hong Kong, despite the extent to which the country seems to have embraced the technological explosion, in the field of education the greater number of the courses offered by the Open University and the universities involved in this research continue to be print based. Kelly and Ha (1998) suggest that this is the case because the students' living circumstances are often cramped making it impossible to have a personal workspace. The situation is different for on-campus students who have access to quite sophisticated computer and library facilities. Notwithstanding these living conditions that are specific to Hong Kong and may limit the domestic access to technology in the home, Evans (1999) suggests that there is a universal trend for print based material still to be integral to the distance packages. He suggests therefore that communications technologies are a complement rather than a replacement for the print based material.

On-line courses in Hong Kong appear to have more appeal for students studying in specific areas or circumstances. These include situations where comparable courses are

not available in Hong Kong, where the available on-line course is more cost effective and where students have access to on-campus facilities (Kelly & Ha, 1998). A study conducted by Muppala and Ha (1997) investigated the reactions of Chinese teachers and students to web-based courses developed and taught to on-campus students in Hong Kong. The authors assert that the way in which the web sites are developed in Hong Kong need to be responsive to the specific needs of the local students and be consistent with research findings regarding the preferred learning styles of students.

The web site in that culture has not become a 'stand alone' means of instruction. Many courses that have been designed for Western students use the web as a medium for independent study with very little guidance provided by the lecturer. In the Hong Kong context, the lecturer is still in the foreground of the course delivery and the web is used more as a source of course related information, a site for self-assessment exercises and a vehicle for making course notes accessible. The authors found that one especially beneficial aspect of the web was the opportunity it provided for students to engage in dialogue with the lecturer away from the classroom setting. This practice often does not occur in the Chinese culture because students fear a loss of face by asking a question that might appear trivial or in the case of courses delivered in English because Chinese students feel embarrassed to ask questions.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored literature pertaining to a number of issues that are relevant to developing and delivering educational programs in a cross cultural setting. One of the issues that have been discussed is the effects of colonial and imperialistic practices that assume that students from other cultures have the same educational interests and needs as those of the colonising culture. More recently, a number of alternative theories of cultural influence including cultural homogenisation and cultural hybridisation have been proposed This chapter argues that if education delivered cross-culturally it has to be sustainable in the future and it needs to be responsive to the needs of the culture where it is delivered.

This chapter also explores cultural practices relevant to learning that are evident in the Asian context in particular learning styles adopted by Asian students, the effects of a Confucian value system on learning and the role of the educator as perceived by both students and the educators themselves. It discusses the challenges faced by academics that are involved in developing programs for students from another culture and explores the tension between sameness and diversity that are predictably encountered in such an educational enterprise. Certainly if sustainability is to be ensured, educators need to have an on-going commitment to proactively confront the dilemmas posed by difference and create learning environments and experiences that are culturally sensitive and appropriate.

In the next chapter, particular attention will be paid to nurse education and emerging trends as nursing becomes professionalised.

CHAPTER FIVE: NURSE EDUCATION AND THE PROFESSIONALISATION OF NURSING

Introduction

This chapter will explore the historical evolution of nursing and nurse education. The genesis of nursing as a respectable occupation for women is attributed to the work of Florence Nightingale. This chapter will use ideas from social critical theory and post-modernism as perspectives to discuss the evolution of the nursing profession since that time. It will explore the extent to which socio-political factors have shaped the birth of nursing therefore resulting in a scientific underpinning to its development as it seeks to professionalise. This has been largely due to the political and cultural dominance exerted by the medical profession over nurses and resultant relationships of power (Roberts, 1983; Chinn & Wheeler, 1985). Such authors argue that the autonomy and independence of nurses was severely curtailed and they were relegated to the role of as 'handmaidens of medicine'. Others (Cheek & Rudge, 1994) contest that this relationship is not so unilateral and argue that nurses do in fact have their own sources of power.

The lack of professional status for nurses is reflected in the manner in which the education of nurses has evolved. Until recently, nurse training occurred within the constraints of a hospital and the doctors to a large degree determined the curricula (Hall, 1980). It will be argued that such an approach to education and training fostered the empirical-analytical natural sciences as fundamental to the training programs offered for nurses and consolidated the dominance of medicine over nursing. Within such a context the development of nursing as an autonomous and independent profession was inconceivable and did little to emancipate nurses from the hegemony imposed by medicine.

In an attempt to secure more autonomy and emancipation from the domination of medicine, a concerted effort has been made by nurses to professionalise (Speedy, 1987;

Jolly, 1989). It will be argued that this struggle for the professional identity of nurses required a concurrent shift in the ways of knowing that have underpinned some nurse education programs. The empirical-analytical approach is no longer as applicable to the world of nursing of to-day as nursing practice is closely aligned to the lived experience of patients (Pitts cited in Hiraki, 1992) and furthermore requires nurses to be critical of the social, cultural and political influences that impinge on the profession.

Hence the focus of nursing needs to move from the dominant ideology that has favoured and reinforced the objective scientific position. In emancipating themselves from this ideology, nurses must move to a point where they are able to critically think through the issues that pertain to their practice such as giving greater acknowledgement to the subjectivity of a patient's experience within the context where it occurs.

This chapter therefore will argue that while nursing education maintains what Habermas termed empirical-analytical or historical-hermeneutic conceptions of knowledge there will be little chance for nurses to become emancipated from the oppression they experience. If nursing is to advance and professionalise it would benefit from a framework developed by using as its premise Habermas' social critical theory. Such a position needs to be complemented by teaching strategies that reflect a similar philosophical persuasion.

Nursing: Its Evolution As a Profession and the Accumulation of a Body of Knowledge

Nursing education in most countries has witnessed a transition from hospital based to university based. In so doing it has faced certain challenges to the theoretical underpinnings of its practice. Some of the significant forces that have impinged on the evolution of the body of knowledge within nursing will be discussed in the following section.

Nurses as an Oppressed Group

In order to understand the current status of nursing, it is essential to appreciate its historical roots within Western capitalist society. This assumes as a beginning point the fact that nursing has essentially been 'women's work' (Abel-Smith, 1960) and secondly that throughout history it has been subject to the hegemony of medical and male dominated health bureaucracies.

In its infancy, nursing care was delivered by women who were representative of the lower strata of society (Glass & Brand, 1979) and who until that time, had been largely delegated to domestic service. Industrialisation in the nineteenth century heralded a number of significant changes in the fabric of society. These included improvements in public health and a rapid rise in the evolution of medicine. Developments in health care required a body of knowledge that was supportive of the medical practice, which was essentially administered by the male doctors. The women who assisted the doctors in the emerging nursing role were poor with minimal formal education. They were driven by motives bound to 'self abnegation, strict obedience to authority and dedication to duty' (Glass & Brand, 1979, 32).

Florence Nightingale is often accorded as having contributed significantly to the advancement of nursing in this period of history. Her philosophy on nursing arose from a humane base and in many ways the principles she advocated particularly in respect of nurses being good women (Glass & Brand, 1979) served to reinforce the caring, nurturing and domestic role that paralleled the status women had assumed in society to that point. While such a role might have had a strong humanistic base, it also held the profession back. As Clay (1992, 15) suggests, if 'nurses are to make a difference they must break from the Nightingale tradition of a 'good', unquestioning woman'. In fact, it was this role that women assumed in health care that left the doors open for the development of the patriarchal structure of the hospital, where men assumed the role of administrators, and doctors had ultimate control over the management of hospital functions and staff, including nurses. Within this evolving medical context, the nursing role came to be seen as inferior and sub-ordinate to male-dominated medicine (Wood, 1990).

A number of authors have commented on the resultant effect on the autonomy and independence of nurses arising from the hegemonic effects of the small but elite, politically, socially and economically dominant medical profession. Roberts (1983, 21) contended that 'nurses like other groups throughout history, are an oppressed group, which is controlled by societal forces. The view of nurses as oppressed is supported by the fact that nurses lack autonomy... and control over the nursing profession'.

Roberts (1983) argues that the oppressive nature of the forces that have impinged on nursing have prevented nurses from playing an independent role in matters to do with their own profession. Short and Sharman (1995) comment that the predominance of women – 95% of the nursing workforce in Australia - has been one factor which has given rise to the medical profession making the majority of decisions relating to nurses' training, practice and working conditions. This is particularly salient, considering that nurses in Australia account for nearly two third of employees in health and health-related professions, while doctors comprise only 11% (Short & Sharman, 1995).

This situation is not isolated to the Australian context and in countries throughout the world Roberts (1983) suggests nurses have been oppressed and over time, have come to perceive themselves negatively. They have developed a certain fatalism that has been impervious to information to the contrary. This has lead to inaction that has severely limited the nursing profession's capacity to become involved in issues of a wider socio-political nature. Hedin (1987, 267) asserted that 'nurses ...comprise an oppressed group whose actions are prescribed by others and which is often exploited for the benefit of others'. Similar sentiments are captured by Delaclour (1991, 413) who claimed that 'nursing has been constructed by powerful discourses including those of medicine and gender, in which our society's dominant ideologies are enshrined'.

Ashley (1980, 4) also drew links between patriarchy, subsequent misogyny and its effects on women and nurses by stating 'within patriarchy the power of structured misogyny keeps women in their role of glorified servants to men'. This has had ramifications in terms of the self esteem of nurses as suggested by Mason, Backer and Georges (cited in Glass, 1998, 122) who write 'many nurses are likely to be limited in ... confidence ... given their gender, and society's inaccurate images of nurses'.

In the light of this, Hedin (1987, 267) suggested that the oppression of nurses needs to be taken as 'a given in order to move on to what actions can be taken to overcome such situations'. Attridge and Callahan (1989, 47) also write of a fatalistic acceptance leading to inaction 'Members of oppressed groups ...view oppressors as 'powerful, right and good', (they) resent and negate their own characteristics, fear their own freedom, conform to prescribed behaviour". Oppressed groups have no hope of acquiring independence and emancipation if they cannot distance themselves from the false consciousness of the dominant ideology. In time what happens is that the oppressed group loses its cultural identity and eventually reflects the ideology of the dominant group. The values and norms of the dominant group, in this case those of medicine, become internalised and accepted as par for the course by the oppressed group namely nursing.

Lather (1991,3) claimed that once this position is acknowledged, emancipatory critical social science research is the only appropriate research paradigm that has the potential to empower those who are oppressed to change and understand their world. For Fay (1987, 23) a critical social science is a 'theory, which will simultaneously explain the social world, criticise it and empower its audience to overthrow it'. Such a move towards transformative and emancipatory change is appealing to women and nurses who understand oppression and are committed to improving the status quo. As Davis (1993, 78) writes 'Emancipation is dependent on enlightenment and the ability to act freely to change oppressive social systems which in turn enables the realisation of human potential'.

The position presented to this point gives prominence to a rather negative and fatalistic position for nurses who are portrayed as dominated by the medical profession – a structural form of power. The post-structural perspective points to a distinction of different kinds of power that exist in the nursing profession. As Foucault (1980, 142) contends,

> power is an issue but manifests more as a capillary that is pervasive in all directions and operates at all levels in any particular context one should not assume a massive and primal condition of domination a binary structure with 'dominators' on one side and 'dominated' on the other, but rather and multiform production of relations of domination.

In Foucault's view, power is not only in the hands of those in the dominant position. Those who are dominated also have power according to Henneman (1995, 869) who suggests power 'is also held by those who are governed, either directly or through resistance to power'. Nurses as a group in the health system Gilbert (1995) argues have their own source of power and knowledge even though it might appear to be restricted by others such as the medical profession. Gilbert (1995, 869) writes in this respect

> ...A nurse does not have the power to take life but may have the power to define a person, or to allocate resources, in a way, which can have positive or negative consequences for the person.

Similarly, the power that is accorded to the medical profession is to a large extent fostered by society that operates as part of the capillary of power. Society furthers medical dominance because it values knowledge that pertains to the body and its functions more than knowledge that relates to the care of that body.

Ways of Knowing in Nursing

Concurrent with the socio-political changes described above in the post-industrial period, there was an emergent parallel change in what was considered valid knowledge. Hence, the growth of scientific knowledge emerged as the privileged form of 'legitimate' knowledge in many disciplines including chemistry and physics. Legitimate knowledge according to Willis (1989, 21) refers to 'a process whereby a set of practices is accepted as authoritative and becomes hegemonic'.

This process heralded the emergence of a positivistic paradigm that has dominated the delivery of education. Such a paradigm is defined by Carr and Kemmis (1986, 51) as having solid roots in the sciences and

> has provided a corpus of knowledge about the natural world which has enabled the environment to be controlled with ever-greater sophistication and has allowed for a range of practical problems that were once considered insurmountable to be successfully resolved.

The emphasis of positivism is on scientific rigor and the discovery of universal laws 'that enable us to predict and control physical and social processes' (Keat, 1981, 2). Several writers have theorised the extent to which positivism serves technical interests

and is consistent with the ideologies of Western capitalism. Habermas (1987, 310) for example writes 'that the empirical-analytical natural sciences have served to produce normological knowledge that reduces all activity to the constraints of an external reality of prediction and control'. Ewert (1991, 349) also refers to how technical interests are consistent with the epistemology of positivism and with 'goal directed activity in a presumed objective world'. Science and technology have been given ascendency as the credible sources of knowledge in western societies and consequently have become the authoritative voices. Gellner (cited in Barnett, 1994) also argued that the science has been justified in assuming the superior epistemological and social position.

The credibility of medicine is greatly attributable to its identification with this empirical-analytical conception of knowledge that is also mechanistic when it is applied to the study of the human body and disease. By giving ascendency to the sciences, the emphasis in the study of medicine has been on the diagnosis of illness and disease and its treatment. Turner (1987, 217) argues that the authority of medicine is 'rooted in the 'truth' of the scientific/medical discourse' that is evident in the ways disease processes are understood. This is exemplified in the following.

> The power of the [medical] profession depends, at least in part, on the ability to make claims successfully about the scientific value of their work and the way in which their professional knowledge is grounded in precise, accurate and reliable scientific information (Turner, 1987, 217).

Habermas (1974) would argue that medicine has asserted its dominance by positioning itself as an empirical-analytical science. Similarly, writing from a post-modern perspective Cheek and Rudge (1993, 276) argue that the scientific/medical discursive frames which abound in the current health context

> ...determine the limits of possibilities for the study, treatment and management of the objectified client. The power and control exercised by 'experts' over clients-as-objects thereby constrain the types of discourse that can be developed about the client's situation.

In taking this position, recognition of other dimensions of the human condition including affective and spiritual experience or the social context in which experience occurs, have been minimised (Dunlop, 1988).

While medicine was asserting its body of knowledge legitimating itself as a scientific discipline, the development of nursing knowledge and theory was impeded by structures that did not recognise nursing as a profession. This was largely in part due to the fact that nursing had primarily been an occupation of women with limited formal education and it did not have a platform that advocated for the development of a professional body of knowledge. In fact, it has only been in the past two decades that nursing has formed part of the university curriculum. According to Lawler (1984, 4), the 'scientification of occupations and disciplines has been made possible by the adoption of the scientific method partly because this was the province of universities' and nursing which, until recently was not taught within universities, was therefore excluded from this.

Feyerband (cited in Barnett, 1994) claim that science has no justification for assuming superiority and in doing so it limits our cognitive choices. Similarly, Crane (1991, 396) commented that 'such an approach seems to achieve very little in the preparation of the clinical practitioner'. One of the first nursing theorists who attempted to develop a conceptual framework for nursing theory, research and practice was Carper (1978). Carper (1978, 13) argued persuasively for a nursing body of knowledge as 'a rationale for nursing practice' that the guides the practice of the discipline, sets expectations and makes meaning of phenomena encountered by practitioners. She suggests that such knowledge 'involves critical attention to the question of what it means to know and what kinds of knowledge are to be most of value to the discipline'.

Specifically, Carper (1978) identified four ways of learning in nursing. The first which she refers to as empirics is similar to positivism and what Habermas (1987) terms empirical-analytical knowledge. Fundamental to this way of learning is the validation of knowledge by 'seeking and generating explanations which are systematic and controllable by factual knowledge' (Carper, 1978, 14). It would be fair to say that in keeping with the example provided by other disciplines such as medicine, the volume of nursing knowledge that has modeled itself on this way of knowing has been extensive.

Secondly, Carper (1978) refers to aesthetic knowledge. The notion of aesthetic knowledge moves the body of knowledge in nursing forwards beyond a position that

values exclusively the scientific and empirical to an appreciation of nursing as an art form. Lawler (1991) argues that it would be doing a great disservice to nursing to fail to recognise this dimension of knowledge. According to Lawler (1991) this form of knowledge is concerned with the lived experience of patients as they live with certain health conditions and are the recipients of health care. Aesthetic knowledge explores aspects of nursing including empathy, relationship and creativity in meeting the patient's needs through interpretation of experience that is impossible solely by using empirical research methods.

The third way of knowing proposed by Carper (1978, 19) is that element of self-knowledge on the nurse's part that allows the nurse to develop 'an authentic personal relationship' with the patient. Carper (1978) argues that the two above-mentioned ways of learning in nursing do not facilitate a level of engagement that is so fundamental to nursing practice. This third way learning in nursing attempts to redress the shortcomings of empirics and aesthetic knowledge, in that it focuses on the relationship.

Finally, Carper (1978) refers to the ethical or moral components of nursing practice. Carper (1978) argues that in spite of the existence of various codes of ethical practice, their mere existence does not make the articulation and application to everyday nursing dilemmas any easier.

Carper (1978) does not propose that these various ways of knowing are mutually exclusive of each other. Rather she is critical of foregrounding one, namely the positivistic over the other, which has traditionally been the case in the development of nursing theory. Similarly Barnett (1994) highlights subscription to either school of thought leads to an impasse that obstructs our capacity to move forward. According to Barnett (1994, 143) 'no single set of criteria has the right to insist on the higher ground'.

As Hagell (1989) argues the determinants of what comes to be considered legitimate knowledge in a profession is not necessarily the nature of the knowledge itself but rather a reflection of the group of individuals who advance that knowledge. The development of certain forms of thought is much better understood by a wider

appreciation of the social interests they reflect in the wider society. The social position and point of view of that group are crucial to the kind of knowledge that is generated by that group. Science that has been considered legitimate knowledge is essentially male biased.

Other nursing theorists including Lawler (1984), Holmes (1991) and Street (1992) responded to Carper's attempts to conceptualise nursing as a social science. In particular, they have supported her attempts to broaden what is considered legitimate knowledge in nursing beyond the positivistic paradigm and call for other ways of knowing, approaches to research and theory development and alternative practices for delivering health care. Street (1992) argues for a more critical approach in suggesting that nurses need to be involved in a process of enlightenment. This process of enlightenment or ideology critique requires that nurses participate in a systematic learning process of reflection and collaborative critique of their nursing actions, their socio-political context and the knowledge that informs and develops from these reflective processes. Collaborative discourse enables nurses both in academic as well as practical settings to engage in ideology critique and to plan systematic counter-hegemonic actions, which empower their patients, their colleagues and themselves.

Thompson (1987, 35) expresses a similar quest for empowerment by advocating for 'a pattern of thought and action that challenges institutionalised power relations or relations of domination in the social reality of nursing' and as a consequence 'helps nurses absorb the critique of domination and integrate their public and private worlds in new patterns of practical action' (Thompson, 1987, 36). Such forms of knowledge provide alternatives to the hegemonic medical discourse that has underpinned the conceptualisation of nursing.

Discussion to this point has focused on nursing education generally. However, the programs that are the focus of this thesis are offered for nurses at the post-registration stage of their career. In the following section, aspects of nurse education for post-registration students will be discussed.

Developing Courses which are Relevant to Post-registration Students in Nursing

The development post-registration nursing programs that are relevant to the students' cultural and work context are a salient issue for educators involved in this field of work. Significant research has attempted to elucidate the problem of creating learning experiences for students who bring a base of work and practical experience to their work context. Eraut (1985), Cevero (1992) and Hager (1996) warn of the limitations and dangers that arise when formal continuing professional education programs give legitimacy to the dominant 'front-end' approach which values the formal, abstract and general. This approach tends to favour the positivistic paradigm where theory is considered to be a settled, definitive and an uncontentious body of knowledge. The experience and knowledge that practitioners gain through their practice is in comparison considered to be superficial and inferior.

These sentiments were voiced by Schon (1987) who expressed concern about the disjuncture between theory and practice. His contention is that university based courses traditionally begin with a starting point of theory that favours pure science, then applied science and finally attention is paid to their practical application to the particular discipline. In his own words, professional schools in universities take the 'high and hard' ground based on theory but this has little resemblance often to the pragmatics of practice that are often relegated to the 'swampy lowland' (Schon, 1987,3).

To a large extent, the dynamics of the Chinese culture are such that a positivistic, approach to learning is strongly favoured. According to Robinson (1999), the Chinese system of education still highly values knowledge transmission based on a uniform and centralised curriculum that is controlled by the edicts of a socialist ideology. Cheng (1994) asserts that the emphasis of education is on ideas and social relations rather than practical skills. This leads to an education system that is conformist and competitive and in the case of nursing programs in Hong Kong under the strict control of the Bureau of Manpower. There is limited evidence of creativity and divergent thinking and therefore minimal risk to challenge and questioning. This in turn sits comfortably with a society that values stability, harmony and order.

A similar criticism in respect of the notion of control has been pitched at the professionalisation of nursing that has been occurring universally. It is the emphasis on technical rationality and the institutionalisation of formal knowledge that allow professions to promote themselves as having the qualities of 'service, collegiality, objectivity and autonomy', (Atkinson & Delamont, 1990, 98) as also having characteristics that are tantamount to a cartel (Horowitz cited in Friedson, 1988). As Habermas (1974, 255) argues the emphasis of education and the professions on positivism and the technical rationality of science makes no attempt 'to attain a rational consensus on the part of citizens concerning the practical control of their destiny'. Schon (1983, 344-345) concurs with this notion by suggesting that 'the traditional epistemology of (professional) holds a potential for coercion' and once 'we accept the criticisms of technical rationality we will no longer uncritically accept the professional's claim to mandate, autonomy and licence'.

Furthermore, the reality for practitioners, especially those involved in the human service professions, is that the solving of technical problems found in the practice setting through rational decision making procedures based on predictive knowledge is often not appropriate. The situations that practitioners face in their everyday practice are often ambiguous and uncertain and theory appears remote, irrelevant and threatening as the means for resolving professional dilemmas. There is a strong argument therefore for other ways of knowing in the education of professionals that place less emphasis on technical rationality.

Cevero (1992, 98) advocates that a 'model of learning from practice should become the centrepiece of systems for continuing education for the professions'. In his view, professionals are often unaware of the processes they use to make meaning of their professional experience in the practice settings and he proposes the role of formal education become one of helping the practitioner 'make these processes more explicit and thereby open them up to evaluation and improvement'. This view is supported by Benner (1984) who argues that students, particularly those enrolled in postgraduate programs in health, bring with them a wealth of experience which is local, culturally specific and based in practice.

Increasingly, credence is being given to the notion that the professional and cultural knowledge and experience that students bring to formal education programs need to be at the forefront of the learning context. These offer rich 'materials' upon which further learning can be built. A very valuable learning resource is likely to be lost if this experience and knowledge is ignored or underestimated by those who are involved in the design and implementation of courses in higher education (Eraut, 1985).

In the case of educators involved in the development and design of programs for overseas students especially at the postgraduate level, many authors (Schon, 1983; Kolb, 1984; Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985; Boud & Walker, 1990) argue that the students' experience needs to be considered as a valuable resource for future learning. Such authors have emphasised the importance of experiential education. They have consequently proposed models for utilising and harnessing pre-existing skills and knowledge which adult learners bring to the learning context and for processing this knowledge in order to gain in-depth understanding and critical thinking skills. Reflection-in-action and reflection on action (Schon, 1983; Boud & Walker, 1990) are considered to be integral components for bringing learning experiences to a conscious level and facilitating learning from those experiences.

Reference to the notion of experience is also made by Schon (1983) who suggests that knowledge acquired through professional experience may be 'knowledge in action' or 'personal knowledge' and not necessarily within the conscious realm of the professional nor is it generalisable or predictable from a body of theoretical information. Knowledge in action allows people to carry out actions and judgments without really having to think about them either prior to or during the experience and furthermore is determined by the context in which the practitioner is practicing.

Yates and Chandler (1991) refer to mental schemata that professionals in a field accumulate through experience. They believe these schemata are drawn upon by practitioners to recognise, classify and deal with work related problems that may have been encountered. In their work with teachers of varying levels of experience, Yates and Chandler (1991) identified that the novice's way of conceptualising problems is quite different to that of the more experienced in that the former rely on general principles learned in their teacher education while the latter 'automatically perceive

new problems as reformulations of the old ones and quickly fashion an appropriate response' (Hager, 1996, 7). Similarly a study by Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) showed that when expert pilots tried to use the rules they were teaching to apprentice pilots, their performance regressed.

This approach is learning towards fostering understanding in the learning process and integration of theory and practice is a significant movement away from the positivistic approach. It gives credence to the value of the learner's experience and the subjective meanings that arise from that experience. It is consistent with what Habermas (1987) has termed a hermeneutic approach to knowing and is concerned with practical interests.

The adoption of such a hermeneutic approach has however been subjected to considerable criticism because it fails to acknowledge the much broader context in which learning happens. As Ewert (1991) suggests it is too dependent on the subjective experience of the learner and is consequently foiled by the assumptions that the learner's personal experience and the meaning they attach to it is the only reality. It discounts any possibility that there may be conflicting interpretations of social reality. This creates a false consciousness that suggests to learners that their world is fixed and unchangeable.

Concerns related to issues such as power, gender, local conditions, language and discourse, power/knowledge, and their relationship to knowledge and experience are ignored in this way of knowing (Garrick, 1996; Usher et al., 1997). Similar concerns are voiced by Carr and Kemmis (1986, 100) who argue

> the interpretive approach cannot assess the extent to which any existing forms of communication may be distorted by prevailing social, cultural or political situations.

These types of concerns give rise to a need on the part of educators to be cognizant of the limitations inherent in the notion of experience as the starting point for learning. Garrick (1999) suggests that no professional can stand outside of the circulating external discourses that shape that person's day to day experiences and this renders the authenticity of 'experience', which is fundamental to the experiential/hermeneutic

learning model, questionable. Their social/cultural environments inevitably shape learners.

From a Habermasian perspective neither the positivistic nor the hermeneutic approaches to the way of knowing facilitate for learners freedom or emancipation. There is no liberation of a learner's personal autonomy which is only made possible once individuals understand that 'the source of subjective meanings lies outside the actions of individuals and, hence that the intentions of individuals may be socially constrained or redefined by external manipulative agencies' (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, 136-137). According to Habermas (1988, 170) learners need to adopt a type of reflection that

> is condemned to operate after the fact; but that operating in retrospect, it unleashes retroactive power. We are not able to reflect back on the internalised norms until we have first learned to follow them blindly through coercion imposed from without. But as reflection recalls that path of authority through which the grammars of language games were learned dogmatically as rules of the worldview and action, authority can be stripped of that in it that was mere domination and dissolved into a less coercive force of insight and rational decision.

Fundamental to the application of Habermas' social critical theory is for learners to come to appreciate the social, cultural and political influences that manipulate their interpretations and understandings of their world. Hence while their experience is essentially important in itself it can be argued to be superficial and needs to be interpreted more deeply through the lens of the cultural, social and political forces that exist.

This is the concern of this thesis. It uses as a starting point the reflections of educators involved in designing and delivering courses for practitioners however it argues that for practice to be significantly improved there needs to be an acknowledgment that professional practices are socially and culturally constructed and framed by the dominant discourses of the contexts within which they are located. Such a position is advocated by Usher et al. (1997) who state that the theory and practice need not exist as separate entities. They refer to 'informal theory' that links the intentions of practitioners with practice. They describe each practitioner as being confronted with a unique work context and with dilemmas that are specific to that context. Every context of practice

has its own particular characteristics that provide possibilities but also impose constraints on what can be done. The differences, which arise in these contexts, mean that concerns, meanings and objects are framed differently depending on the context.

The area of course development, particularly for students in post-registration needs to be considered in the light of the current forces in higher education. The possibility for an alternative based on a social critical perspective is strongly counterbalanced by a tendency for the workplace and academia to become increasingly interrelated as has been highlighted by Jakupec and Garrick (2000). Education has become a commodity and knowledge is 'legitimised in so far as it will enhance productivity, improve economic competitiveness and personal effectiveness representing a shift in focus on skills' (Gibbons cited in Garrick 2000, 241). Along with universities being expected to be the purveyors of theoretical knowledge there is an emphasis on lifelong learning where higher education is considered as having a 'performative value' measured by the extent to which graduates are prepared to be effective and competent employees.

In the field of nursing this has been evident in the introduction in the past decade of competency standards mandated by State Registration Boards both in Australia and Hong Kong. Young (1996) asserts that such standards sit comfortably in a positivistic framework since they offer a technical solution to practical problems that are perceived to exist in the profession. This goes further to reinforce the technical rationality that it has been argued, has been the dominant epistemology of the nursing profession and has been

> implicit in the institutionalised relations of research and practice and in the normative curricula of professional education (Schon, 1983, 300).

Thorpe (2000) suggests there is a risk posed by this emphasis on producing 'knowledge workers' and its focus on outcome. She suggests that the place universities have been accorded in determining what is considered 'valid knowledge' for a profession will soon come under pressure especially in the in the current economic climate. As universities are subjected to greater pressure to improve the impact of their teaching and research, increased emphasis is placed on outcomes in the form of training for employment. In Habermasian terms these are the system-maintenance skills. Increasingly, academic skills and knowledge that Habermas (1979) termed life-world

skills are 'seen merely as underpinning workplace competence' (Thorpe, 2000, 185) rather than having a justification for their own intrinsic value. Again, this reinforces the positivistic models of learning.

Using a Habermasian analysis, the purpose of education should define which of these approaches are adopted. If the purpose is to serve instrumental interests – in other words to predict and control - then certainly a scientific approach that objectifies the world is valid. However, this approach would serve to perpetuate the status quo and would do little to empower nurses to be change agents in the system wherein they work. Similarly if the intention of education was that it be a means of understanding the meanings inherent in human experience and interaction, then the hermeneutic interests would be served. Again, this would do little to bring about change (Habermas, 2001b).

If however the intention of education is to lead to greater self understanding with the ultimate goal of freeing individuals from the controlling forces in their lives then surely emancipatory interests need to be the fundamental concern of education. These three interests according to Habermas need to co-exist and become integrated. One is not superior to the others. More importantly, once the potential for integration is lost, a destructive competition is likely to arise between the three types of interests

Conclusion

This chapter has identified a number of historical and sociological occurrences that have impinged on the professionalisation of nursing. It has highlighted some of the constraints that have subjugated the evolution of nursing in its own right. It is argued throughout the chapter that the hegemony of positivism and the legitimacy of medicine have to a large extent placed limitations on the development of nursing as a profession.

The chapter has used Habermasian concepts to debate a case for the fact that while nursing education remains in the realms of empirical-analytical or historical-hermeneutic conceptions of knowledge there will be little chance for nurses to become successful in achieving their goal of professionalisation. It argues for the adoption of

Habermas' critical theory as the basis for proposing alternatives to nursing education at post-registration level.

CHAPTER SIX: EMERGING THEMES FROM THE ACADEMICS' EXPERIENCES

Introduction

The previous chapters have explored the current status of higher education with a particular focus on education that is delivered in a cross-cultural context. The colonial practices of the past decades and the more recent post-colonial changes that have occurred under the guise of globalisation have been critiqued. These practices have given rise to dominance of certain cultures over others and the ascendancy of particular forms of knowledge. It has also been argued that the evolution of nursing as a profession has been subjected to a number of socio-political forces that have resulted in nursing being dominated by the more hegemonic discourses of medicine. In this study, social critical theory has been used as the theoretical framework to debate the manner in which this dominance has emerged.

There are a number of manifestations of the ideology of dominance that are evident in the context of this case study. These manifestations need exploration and critique because they perform a colonising role in what is emphasised and has pre-eminence in the debate concerning higher education in this cross-cultural context. Dominance is manifested in a number of ways including the dominance of the medical profession over the nursing profession, the infallibility of the scientific paradigm in determining what is given ascendancy in nurse education, the dominance of one culture over another and the manner in which economic rationalism predominates current economic discourse including the supremacy of management in decision making processes (Habermas, 2001a).

This chapter will explore how each of these dimensions of dominance is reflected in the responses provided by the academics involved in this research. In that sense it is an exploratory case study because the experiences of the academics to date have been unheard and have not been documented. Therefore they have remained an unexplored

phenomenon. This case study is also descriptive because it allows the voice of the academics to be revealed and for their experiences to be interpreted to identify dominating contextual factors that are beyond their awareness but affect their practices. Points of resistance to the dominance that has been exerted on them are also identified.

Economic Rationalism and the Dominance of Management

As was argued in earlier chapters, that Australian higher education system until the mid 1980's embodied values such as equity and equality entitling everyone to a free education. It came under scrutiny however because of its perceived inefficiency and the increased demands funding higher education placed on the government purse.

During the mid 1980's this ideology was superseded by one that emphasised economic rationalism (Pusey, 1991). The adoption of this ideology brought about a new form of higher education where the entitlement to a free education was no longer part of the prevailing practice. Higher education was consequently restructured with the intention of contributing to economic recovery and future growth based on free market principles. The emphasis was on economic survival and university courses that did not contribute to the 'economic' agenda of the government were scalded down and some disbanded (Jakupec, 1996).

The pressure was consequently applied on universities and the students who had to contribute to economic restructuring so as to lighten the burden on the government for the responsibilities of paying for higher education. Jacupec (1996) argued that while such changes were not necessarily acceptable to the society, they were legitimised by the government and made implicit in policies. A number of universities responded to the pressures that came to bear on them as a result of the economic reform through offering courses to fee-paying students in overseas markets (Rizvi, 1997; Davis et al., 2000; Shipman, 2002). Subsequently, the economic agenda of the universities was to look closely at their programs and market profitable and cost effective programs abroad. Because of the increased focus on the economic agenda, greater decision-

making power was vested in the management and marketing arm of the university hierarchy.

Management and Administration

The management and administrative components of any educational program sets the tone for communication flow and is an indicator of where power is located and how it is exercised (Barnett, 1994). One of the issues that were explored in this study is the degree to which both Hong Kong and Australian academics are involved with the administrative role of the program. In Hong Kong, program administration is the exclusive mandate of one senior academic, the non-academic project manager and two administrative staff. In Australia administration is the responsibility of a senior academic, two junior academic staff who have a dual role that entails administration as well as teaching in the program and two clerical support staff.

Program administration assumes a breath of responsibilities. For the purposes of this study, the aspects of administration that will be addressed are policy formation and implementation and the day-to-day running of the program. Academics were surveyed to identify their level of involvement and decision-making in these areas of administration.

Day-to-Day Administration

Most of the academics had some positive comments to make on the efficacy of the day-to-day administrative function of the program for the students, even if their own role was quite 'hands off'. In particular, there seemed to be an acknowledgement that the project manager in Hong Kong was supportive and accessible to students and considerate of the students' work schedules. Some of the comments made included

> *I think the administrative staff is doing as well as they can. (Aust 3)*

> *Students can contact administration via numerous means: fax, phone, mail and email. (HK 1x)*
>
> *Yes I think there is adequate accessibility to administrative support for students considering their work demands. Leniency towards unexpected demands of the health system is generally exercised. (Aust 3)*
>
> *There is encouragement of an open door policy by way of telephone communication between students and the Hong Kong administrator. (Aust 3)*

Several academics commented

> *some improvements in the way the administrative function is performed could be obtained by soliciting feedback from students. (HK 1x, HK 3x, Aust 2, Aust 4, Aust 5)*

This demonstrates awareness on the part of the academics for the students to have a voice that would empower them as consumers (Habermas cited in Held, 1980).

In terms of the relationship between the project manager and academic staff in Hong Kong, one of the Australian coordinators commented extensively on the way the administrative role is managed. In particular, reference was made to specific communication styles

> *More flexibility is required - too rigid with policies and procedures. The administrative style tends to be very 'black and white'. (Aust 1)*
>
> *Another factor that relates to communication between Australia and Hong Kong is cultural differences in the way we communicate. Staff in Hong Kong when posed with a question will not return your call/email until they have an answer. They are usually very punctual in their responses. We tend to send a message saying we are looking into it. (Aust 1)*

This academic also had several comments to make that are pertinent to relationship, status and culture and their effects on communication in the Hong Kong context

> *Hong Kong is a very status conscious society and right protocol needs to be followed. Respect for people of higher status is essential. Sometimes decisions are made by higher levels of management and not communicated down. (Aust 1)*
>
> *The administrators in Hong Kong seem to have more problems communicating with the local facilitators who are not of Chinese origin. It seems that the Hong*

> *Kong lecturers do their work and then go home. The Western lecturers seem to be more demanding of the administration system and when they speak up it causes problems (Aust 1).*
>
> *Admin staff in Hong Kong don't waste their time with you if they think you have no authority. (Aust 1)*

These comments highlight the perceptions of cultural differences that underpin the way the administrative function is handled across cultures. In Australia, the student support roles are performed by the academic co-ordinators or academics who have moved into management while administrative roles are performed by administrative staff under the supervision of the academics. In Hong Kong where the program is delivered there seems to be a less clear-cut separation between student support and administrative roles than is evident in Australia. The support staff in Hong Kong attends to both roles and they seem to feel empowered to ignore academics who in turn allow this to happen. This observation mirrors the practices that have emerged in the management of higher education as well as the health system not only in Hong Kong but also in Australia. Academics have tended to become alienated from those who assume management roles, they perceive management to be dismissive and discounting and therefore find it difficult to engage with those who manage the program (Barnett, 1994). Of course it must be realized that this view of management is uni-dimensional and confined to the perceptions of academics only and a more comprehensive account would be obtained through the examination of the experiences of administrators and managers as well.

Policies

Policy development has been an on-going process and, as mentioned in an earlier chapter, a number of academic policies pertaining to the conduct of the programs have been developed. The student handbook includes sections on academic policy that are relevant to students. The views of the academics were canvassed to ascertain their awareness of the existence of policies and their involvement in policy development and implementation.

Awareness of Development and Existence of Policies

Staff in Hong Kong generally tended to be aware of policies that pertain to the students' academic performance including those on

attendance (HK 3x, HK 4, HK 6, HK 1x, HK 2),

plagiarism (HK3x, HK 1x),

late submission (HK 1x, HK 6) and

assessment (HK 4, HK 2).

Amongst the Australian cohort, the program co-ordinators were familiar with these policies and where they are documented.

Many policies from Australian University exist. (Aust 1)

All usual policies re enrolment, assessment etc exist in Australian University calendar. (Aust 2)

Policies regarding entry criteria, course administration, assessment, marking grievance etc are all laid out in the student handbook that is renewed every year. (Aust 3)

As to who developed the policies, most of the Hong Kong staff said they were unsure *(HK 4, HK 3x, HK 2).*

One staff member commented that

As casual staff I haven't had contact with the processes of policy development. (HK 1x)

Two academics in Hong Kong stated they thought the policies were developed by

local culture and market needs (HK 6) or

Government and University Council (HK 5).

The Australian coordinators however, agreed that the policies were developed by Australian University (Aust 1, Aust 2, Aust 3) and then adapted for HK use by course coordinators then benchmarked through quality committee up to Senate. (Aust 2)

Other academics in Australia appeared to have little familiarity or even interest in the area of policy development

> *I am not sure who developed the policies. (Aust 5)*
>
> *We did have meetings of the international team from time to time but attendance varied and lecturers were not consistent in their commitment. As an academic who is not involved in the management of the course I have had little to do with policy development and am not all that interested. (Aust 4)*

While policy formation is a broad mandate and academics would not want to be involved in the development of all policies, the above comments suggest that there is a lack of involvement of both Australian and Hong Kong academics who do not play an administrative role in academic policy development. In Hong Kong academics do not seem to be given the option while in Australia, academic staff is invited to participate in academic policy development but seems to be disinterested. The question these comments raise is why the nursing academics choose to disempower themselves from academic policy development. It seems to suggest that the oppression and fatalism endemic amongst nurses in practice settings (Roberts, 1983; Attridge & Callahan, 1989) has transferred to the academic context as well.

Because of the nature of the marketing relationship between the two institutions, policies for the program in Hong Kong are ratified by the Australian coordinators usually with limited input from staff in Hong Kong. This suggests another example of the dominating stance taken when one culture develops programs for another. Instrumentalism in policy making as is seen here is one of the manifestations of such dominance (Barnett, 1994).

There is some attempt to redress the disempowerment that occurs for staff in Hong Kong as a result of them being uninvolved in policy formation. One Australian co-coordinator who referred to a collaborative approach to policy review highlights this.

> *Each semester there are a number of meetings in Hong Kong between Australian course coordinators and Hong Kong program administrators. It has often been that policies have been generated and reviewed as a result of these meetings. It is quite a collaborative process by which policies are laid down. As far as possible these policies are inline with Australian University policies. (Aust 3)*

This practice partly redresses the potential imbalance however, as only the project manager in Hong Kong who is non-academic participates in policy review with the Australian coordinators. There is no input from academic staff in Hong Kong who deliver the programs. Academic input in the policy review process is therefore limited.

Transparency of Policies

The policies appear to be transparent and readily accessible to staff and students. Several Australian and Hong Kong based academics were aware that written policies were spelt out in

> *student hand books/calendar (HK 1x, HK 6, HK 4 HK 2, Aust 1, Aust 2, Aust3, Aust 5,*
>
> *website (Aust 2) and*
>
> *letters and announcements in class. (HK 4, HK 2)*

When policies need to be administered or enforced however, it seems that several staff in Hong Kong left it to the administration to direct them and to implement the policies.

> *When I need to call on policies they are available and the administration assisted me to implement them. (HK 1x)*
>
> *The program administrator mainly enforces policies. (HK 6)*

Such behaviour reinforces the already dominant role the Hong Kong project manager who manages the program is taking. The academics by divesting themselves of responsibility for the implementation of policy particularly on academic matters are giving away power that would be consistent with their academic role. They are therefore colluding with the centralisation of power at the management level (Barnett, 1994).

Similarly, Australian academic staff deferred to the coordinators in Australia and in Hong Kong on matters of policy. Once again, this highlights a tendency on the part of academics to defer from taking a holistic role in program participation. This is evident from the following statements

> *Policies are spelt out in a policy document although I rarely refer to it. I find it easier to liaise with the local coordinator if I have a problem. (Aust 5).*
>
> *It seems that policy enforcement becomes the mandate of people managing the course. (Aust 4)*
>
> *Policies are enforced by the strong arm of Asian University and Australian University – program coordinators in Hong Kong and Australia. (Aust 3)*

What is noteworthy is that these academics are much more autonomous in their academic role when the program is delivered in the Australian context where they are less likely to rely on program co-coordinators to implement policy on student matters.

Appropriateness of Policies to Work Context

There was some disparity between the perceptions of academics in Hong Kong and Australia regarding the appropriateness of the policies for the work context on the students particularly in respect of attendance.

Two academics in Hong Kong commented that the policies were

> *culturally neutral (HK 2)*

and had

> *no cultural bias (HK 4).*

Others considered the policies to be cognizant of the cultural context as seen by the comments below. One academic referred to the extent to which market rather than

academic demands drive the policies hence emphasising the product orientation (Jakupec & Yoon, 2000).

> *Policies are negotiated to fit the Asian University context. (Aust 2)*
>
> *Education is not purely for 'education'. Nowadays the university needs a guaranteed market. Hence they tend to be lenient on the students for example students are allowed to do supplementary work to compensate for insufficient class attendance; reassessment to make up for poor assessment results; negotiate for exemption for late submission of assignments. These policies ask the local facilitators to compromise certain principles due to organization policies. (HK 6)*

Some of the academics in Hong Kong indicated that the policies recognise the workload of the students and their time constraints.

> *Yes they recognise the workload of students in Hong Kong. (HK 2, HK 4)*
>
> *The current policies are very considerate to the working nurses in HK.*
>
> *Some students actually take advantage of the system. (HK 6)*

Other academics commented that more could be done to tailor the policies to the work context of students.

> *Need to incorporate the work context e.g. lateness. (Aust 1)*
>
> *Sometimes inflexible for example the attendance requirements. (HK1x)*
>
> *This is essential since students are paying a lot of money for their study and unless the policies are mindful of this it will create bad feelings between the two universities. Some of the policies for example attendance are rigid. I don't mind if the students arrive late and I won't penalise them. They are adult learners. (HK 1x)*

There seem to be two issues emerging from these comments. One pertains to the emphasis on the need for academic policies to accommodate the work constraints of the students who for the most part are employed in hospitals. The nature of the students' employment requires them to do shift work that often restricts their flexibility for class attendance. Several academics identified that the policies on attendance lacked appropriateness in that they did not account for the constraints imposed on the students by their work demands. The other emerging issue relates to the Hong Kong culture and

wider contextual issues such as the value and role of education and cost factors that impact on students.

The perceptions of the academics in Hong Kong seemed to be in contrast to those of the Australian coordinators who were of the opinion that attempts had been made to make policies relevant to the students' work context

> *Attempts are made to make policies relevant and this is an ongoing process. Policies are negotiated to fit the Asian University context. (Aust 2)*
>
> *Yes I think they do reflect an awareness of the work context in Hong Kong. There is provision for students who are shift workers especially if it means they are unable to attend class. (Aust 3)*

These comments again highlight the shortcomings that arise when academics who are directly involved in the delivery of the programs are excluded from policy making. The Australian staff are convinced that the policies are meeting the work needs of the students in Hong Kong. The feedback from the lecturers in Hong Kong in contrast was more ambiguous with some believing that the policies recognised the work context while others thought this was not necessarily the case.

Need for Policies to be Responsive to Hong Kong Context

The Hong Kong health system is in a state of transition for several reasons and it is necessary for educational policies to respond accordingly. One of the significant changes that has occurred in the past was mentioned by one Australian academic

> *It took years for HK to be persuaded that the program should be offered entirely in Hong Kong in spite of the fact that HK students were disadvantaged by the costs of coming to Australia, living here for 6 months and obtaining leave from their work, which lost them seniority. (Aust 4)*

However, there is a need for future changes to be ongoing and current, taking into account market forces and shifting health care demands. This must be recognized and reflected in policies that relate to course content. The following comments highlight some of the views of the academics in Hong Kong.

> *They need to stay abreast with the development and/or changes in the Hospital Authority so that appropriate changes can be made to meet student needs. (HK 2)*
>
> *The university program always responds to the health system needs. It may cater more for market demands than for professional development. (HK 6)*
>
> *They need to reflect the changes in the health system. The students see when the policies of the educational institution do not match the policies of their work context. (HK 4)*
>
> *The students are under a lot of pressure to go back to school and get more education and training in order to be more competitive and get a promotion. (HK 4)*
>
> *Train more infectious control nurses. Train more PHC providers and community nurses. Include gender sensitivity in provision of health care services in particular working with mainland China. (HK 5).*

These comments suggest awareness on the part of academics in Hong Kong for education to be part of a much wider agenda including systemic, industry and market demands. Consistent with the assertions of Jakupec and Garrick (2000) an expectation is increasingly placed on universities to provide what the work place and markets determine as knowledge that really counts. The academics in Hong Kong are emphasizing that higher education policies need to legitimate knowledge that will increase productivity, personal marketability and economic competitiveness.

However there is some tension in the extent to which this can be achieved practically, because of the overriding policy whereby

> *Course content in Australia and Hong Kong needs to be the same. (Aust 3)*

It appears that while the academics were aware of the existence of policies, unless they played an administration role, their role in policy formation was limited. Furthermore, their appreciation of who developed the policies tended to be cursory or misinformed. While it may well be the case that some policy development and implementation is best left to those who have an administrative role, there are other areas, especially those related to academic and student performance, that would usually benefit from academic staff input. The fact that academic involvement in this area is limited raises concerns

about the autonomy academics have in performing their role and their commitment to implementing policies. The identified reluctance by academics to adopt and implement the policies could be due to their lack of participation in the policy development process.

Medical Dominance

Medical dominance is evident in the way health has traditionally been delivered. This has resulted in the medical profession taking the overriding role in decisions relating to health care resulting in a disempowerment of other disciplines such as nursing. The impact of medical dominance has pervaded many aspects of the programs that are the focus of this study.

Medical Dominance Within the Hong Kong Health Context

In the context of higher education, one of the salient questions raised is - What constitutes valid knowledge? As argued thus far in previous chapters, in many disciplines, science has subscribed itself with rationality and has consequently become the dominant form of knowing (Keat, 1981; Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

Nursing has been no exception to this tradition. Throughout the history of the profession's development, nursing has been subjugated to the oppressive and patriarchal forces of medicine and the scientific underpinnings upon which medicine is validated (Hall, 1980) and the voices of nurses have not been encouraged (Clay, 1992). Delivery of health within the Hong Kong health context (Grant & Yuen, 1998) is also based on the scientific model where medical dominance is fostered and perpetuated. Many academics made comments describing the extent to which the Hong Kong health system is medically dominated and paternalistic with health care being delivered from a biomedical model.

> *The health system is medically dominated. There is something kindly about such a system but it also engenders an attitude of 'You must do it this way'. (HK1x)*

> *The work relationships in Hong Kong are hierarchical with the nurses playing a subservient role to the doctors. (Aust 1)*
>
> *There are times when nurses have difficulty implementing what they have learned and since they are disempowered, they have little say in the system. (HK1x)*
>
> *The nurses need to survive in the system which is slow to acknowledge that nursing is a profession and medical dominance is rife. (HK4)*
>
> *The health system in Hong Kong is very medically dominated. The nurses often feel they have to acquiesce to the doctor. Acceptance by the doctor becomes a priority. (HK4)*

In spite of pressures on the health system to embrace other approaches to health delivery such as those recommended by the Harvard Report conducted in 1999 (Harvard University, 1999) that advocated the adoption of principles more consistent with P.H.C. within the Hong Kong health system, there has been little change. The recommendations of the Harvard Report were largely ignored. Rather, attempts have been made to mould the recommendations to fit with the existing structures that perpetuate the practices of medical dominance so that the stronghold of the power in Hong Kong continues to lay with the medical profession. Despite initiatives designed to challenge the biomedical model it has nonetheless retained its hegemony. This is confirmed in a number of ways.

One of the ways in which the dominance of the biomedical model is reflected in Hong Kong is in the way health care is delivered. Predominantly, nurses practice in hospital settings where decision-making powers are with the medical hierarchy (Hedin, 1987; Delaclour, 1991). One academic commented on the delivery of health care being hospital rather than community based.

> *Courses are not culturally sensitive i.e. students are hospital based and will always be so. Therefore their interest in primary health care and community development is limited. (HK3x)*

Tension results because the programs that the students are studying challenge the taken for granted assumptions that the medical model and the emphasis it places on diagnosis and treatment in health care delivery are superior. The programs for students in Hong

Kong emphasise a community approach to care delivery that is inconsistent with the students' frame of reference as suggested by the following comments.

> *The content is confronting to students - they have been used to thinking in a treatment mode and the material requires them to change to thinking about prevention. That is a big leap for them. (HK4)*

> *The students want to have material that informs their practice in a large hospital where they are likely to work for their entire career. (HK3x)*

There were also a variety of comments that highlighted the traditional role of nurses in providing 'hands on care' (task oriented care) within the hospital setting. This emphasis in the delivery of health care is again consistent with the biomedical model where treatment takes precedence over attention to prevention (Hedin, 1987). Reference was also made to the manner in which the patient or rather the patient's medical condition is the focus of the nurses' work. Academics described the way nursing care depersonalises patients and inhibits nurses from taking a holistic approach.

> *There has been a different history of delivering nursing care in Hong Kong. They are under intense work pressures and their role is very task oriented. They are not encouraged to speak with patients as we do in the west. It has only been in the last few years that the patient's name was displayed at the head of the bed. Prior to that the patients were referred to as for example bed 6. Some concepts for example in respect of communication and patient care are foreign to them. Things are changing but there are still enormous work pressures. (Aust 1)*

> *Local culture is still under strong influence of traditional care which emphasizes hands on care skills. (HK6)*

> *I am not sure if something needs to be done to make the course more technical and practical but that seems to be what the students ask for. The nursing profession in Hong Kong demands hands on clinical work and does not encourage a more holistic approach that might involve for example speaking with patients and their families. The students believe that such interaction with patients would be considered a waste of time and a sign that you were not working hard enough. The system does not give the students time or other forms of encouragement to utilize certain skills they learn throughout their course. (HK2)*

One situation where this is evident is in the participation of extended family in the delivery of health care. This participatory care is frustrated by cultural norms in Hong Kong where families resolve their problems within the family rather than drawing on external intervention and support.

> *In the area of family nursing students feel a tension between becoming involved with the family and the pressure from their peers who say that you are making the family dependent on you. (HK4)*
>
> *In the family unit one student told me that they were speaking with the family of a patient who was suicidal. Her supervisor did not like it and told her not to spend so much time speaking to the patient and family. (HK2)*
>
> *Some students commented that families in Hong Kong tend to be more private and less willing to share their problems than those in Western countries and this becomes a barrier for the nurse who tries to intervene at that level. (HK2)*

Within this context, nurses struggle to be recognised as professionals in their own right (Roberts, 1983). This was confirmed by the academics who identified that students experience difficulties implementing what they have learned and, as nurse graduates, they feel dominated by the medical profession. As a result, the nurses are acutely aware of the oppression in the system where they work, they feel disempowered and perceive themselves as having little to say or contribute to the care of the patients and to the health system. This is exemplified in the following statements.

> *The students could not conceive of anyone except the physician being the head of the team. e.g. I taught team building and referred to the nurse as the head of a team. They were interested but couldn't see it working. (HK1x)*
>
> *The health system is medically dominated. There is something kindly about such a system but it also engenders an attitude of 'You must do it this way'. (HK1x)*
>
> *The work relationships in Hong Kong are hierarchical with the nurses playing a subservient role to the doctors. (Aust 1)*
>
> *There are times when nurses have difficulty implementing what they have learned since they are disempowered and have little say in the system. (HK1x)*
>
> *The nurses need to survive in the system which is slow to acknowledge that nursing is a profession and medical dominance is rife. (HK4)*
>
> *Nurses need more empowerment and this needs to occur through learning. (HK4)*

Given this scenario, it is understandable that in time nurses identify with the ideology of medical dominance and come to see themselves as a disempowered group that is immobilized to effect change (Hedin, 1987). They become socialised into this existing health system very quickly. Others in the health system, including their peers,

colleagues from other health professions and patients constitute significant forces that reinforce the ideology of medical dominance and therefore contribute to the socialisation process.

Nurses prefer to maintain the status quo and acquiesce to the demands of the system rather than become proactive change agents. Several authors (Fay, 1987; Lather, 1991; Davis, 1993) suggest that nurses can only become change agents if they become empowered and emancipated to do so. Students studying in this program experience a dialectical tension because change and the development of skills to become effective change agents are fundamental to the emancipatory educational philosophy on which the program is based (Habermas, 1987) yet the work context is one that to date does not support nurses to take this role. Several of the Hong Kong based academics commented on change and the extent to which nurses are reluctant to embrace change given their work context.

> *The change needs to happen at a wider societal level. Students are often reluctant to bring about change even if they want to. They are not bold enough because they are young and they fear their older colleagues will see them as trying to show off and flaunting their degree. (HK4)*
>
> *The health system in Hong Kong is adverse to change and there is little encouragement to rock the boat. The socialization process for nurses is very strong. (HK4)*
>
> *Change needs to happen from within the health system and society generally by giving nurses more power for example if a doctor says something it is believed, if nurses say it the patient doesn't believe them. (HK1x)*
>
> *Creativity does not seem to be valued or rewarded in the system where the students work. The students therefore have little incentive to think of creative answers to problems. (HK1x)*
>
> *They want to know what is the best answer rather than experimenting with and considering alternatives but there does not seem to be safety in the system that allows this to happen. (HK1x)*
>
> *The content will become more relevant once there are changes in the health system. This is evolutionary and occurs in a health care society over time. (HK1x)*

It can be concluded that medical and administrative dominance in the health system in Hong Kong is endemic and is evident in the way the system is structured and heath care

is delivered. While this is not unique to Hong Kong, it appears that the health system in Hong Kong continues to be particularly medically dominated and health care delivery primarily hospital based (Young, 1990; Grant & Yuen, 1998; Harvard University, 1999). Nurses as part of that system have tended to acquiesce to the hegemony of the medical profession. In turn, this has implications for nurse education.

The Implications of Medical Dominance for Nurse Education

The implications of medical dominance to nurse education include that practice of the medical profession making decisions as to what is valid knowledge for nursing (Hedin, 1987). Lawler (1984) and Feyerabend (cited in Barnett, 1994) both contend that this is reinforced by the incorporation of nursing studies into the higher education sector that foreground scientific and theory based traditions. While this situation is not exclusive to Hong Kong, it is the case that the Nurse Registration Ordinance (Hong Kong Government, 1992) has established a set of competencies that are based on a scientific paradigm. Such initiatives centralise control at the hands of bureaucracies rather than allowing individual institutions to have autonomy over their own self-determination and quality control of the courses they offer. This centralisation of control in Hong Kong has been documented by several authors (Cheng, 1994; Robinson, 1999.).

For a host of reasons it becomes evident that the values and norms of the medical profession as exemplified through the biomedical model have become internalised and accepted as par for the course by nurses in nursing programs as well as in the practice context. The educators impressed the extent to which the biomedical model is fundamental to nurse education.

> *The medical system in Hong Kong is very much from a biomedical model where there is a strong medical dominance and the concepts of PHC and health promotion which are espoused in the course are the antithesis of what is practiced in Hong Kong. (Aust 3)*

> *Students have limited opportunities to put their newly acquired knowledge into practice because of the structure of the workplace that is medical model. (HK6)*

> *The students sometimes minimise the importance of the social science units because of the strong emphasis on the biomedical model used in the Hong Kong health context. (Aust 5)*

Given these approaches to health delivery and consequently nurse education, alternative educational philosophies confront the status quo. Some academics considered that the material that pertains to other approaches to delivering health care such as health promotion and P.H.C. that are the fundamental theoretical constructs of the programs, are irrelevant to the work experience of students.

> *PHC is important because nurses tend to be disease oriented and blindly adopt the medical model. (HK5)*

> *The students told me that PHC is an interesting theory but there are not enough resources in Hong Kong to support this theory. (HK2)*

Others however identified that this perpetuation of the scientific model need not be accepted as the status quo and therefore taken for granted. Emphasis on the scientific model has discounted the other forms of knowledge upon which nurses have historically based their practice and has marginalised the key body of knowledge that arises from practice that has traditionally been the cornerstone of nursing. Several authors have contested this position and argued for recognition of other forms of knowledge in nursing. Feyerabend (cited in Barnett, 1994) makes a case for acceptance not only of the empirical but also alternative theoretical traditions in nursing. Carper (1978) also documented the manner in which science has assumed a dominant position in nurse education and wrote of four ways of knowing – empirics, aesthetic knowledge, self-knowledge and ethical/moral knowledge - empirics being only one.

Some academics thought that the concepts presented in this joint program that fostered a more emancipatory approach (Habermas, 1987) were relevant to nurse education in Hong Kong particularly if the practice conditions were in place for them to make meaning of the theory. There is a sense amongst some academics that this alternative approach is an empowering strategy that is likely to help students move forward from the oppressive situations they have found themselves and advance towards professionalism. The crucial point here seems to be the creation of appropriate practice conditions where learning can be applied in the workplace. To date, based on the description of the health system provided earlier there is a disjuncture between the

theoretical concepts that are presented in the programs and practice in the majority of workplaces (Schon, 1987). Furthermore, the current pressure for competency-based learning reinforces the scientific model.

> *Patient education, and health promotion are most relevant to our daily nursing duties. Students found them most useful. (HK6)*
>
> *On the long term it is helpful for students to know the importance of the bio-pychosocial model and view health and illness from multiple perspectives. e.g. cultural, gender, post-modern. (HK5)*
>
> *The theoretical concepts are relevant but students may not have encountered them before - so I encourage the students to network with health settings where the ideas are being used - for example the Edinburgh Scale is not used everywhere and it is easy for the students who are not familiar with its use to discount it as not important. (HK4)*
>
> *Theoretical concepts broaden nursing vision and advance professionalism but the right practice conditions are necessary to facilitate this. (HK 6)*

Responses from the academics indicated that they believe that one reason to explain why the material was irrelevant to the students' current work context is a lag in the maturity of the health system compared to developments that have happened in other countries. Therefore while the material currently taught may not have immediate relevance to the students, it is probable that they will find the material useful at some time in the future. Interestingly, there is little recognition that the nurses themselves might bring about the change; suggesting that oppression and fatalism seem to be endemic amongst nurses (Roberts, 1983; Attridge & Callahan, 1989). Rather there seems to be an assumption in the following statements that the system will change and the nurses will acquiesce to the changes using the material they have acquired through their studies.

> *Some of the material I presented to the students in management seemed irrelevant. However, I don't think it was irrelevant but rather foreign to the students because the health system here is perhaps not as developed as it is in other cultures and is so medically dominated. (HK1x)*
>
> *Clinical settings are less advanced than Australia therefore some concepts may be new and applicable for future reference. (Aust 1)*
>
> *While the students may not see the relevance of some material immediately I tell them they may do so later in their careers. (HK2)*

> *The hospitals generally are 30 years behind western social movements in terms of community health. (HK3x)*

The picture that emerges is that medical dominance is very much manifested in the education of nurses and the scientific paradigm is preferred in nursing curricula. Hence, while there is some acknowledgement that it need not remain the status quo, it also seems that nurses are not yet ready to make the transition to become proactive agents who facilitate systemic change.

Cultural Dominance

Cultural dominance is clearly evident in the educational relationship between the two universities. This is manifest both in respect of content but also in the modes of delivery of the programs.

Dominance of One Culture Over Another

Throughout history there has been an abundance of examples where one culture has colonised another (Tomlinson, 1991). This has often resulted in the imposition of cultural values and practices of the colonising culture on the other and, in the process, the worth of the colonised culture is undermined. As discussed in earlier chapters, one of the theories developed to explain this practice is provided by the concept of cultural imperialism (Carnoy, 1974; Tomlinson, 1991).

More recently, post-colonial theories that provide alternative explanations have evolved, specifically those emanating from the discussion of global effects on culture. Implicit in these theories is a debate as to whether globalisation is leading to cultural homogenisation (Usher et al., 1997; Ritzer, 1997) or having the opposite effect of strengthening local cultures and identities (Lather, 1991; Bauman, 1998). Another theory that has evolved is the hybridisation theory that suggests the indigenisation or incorporation of global flows into the local culture resulting in a hybrid culture (Appadurai, 1996).

Western Bias of Material

It is the case within higher education particularly in respect of courses offered in a cross cultural context, that to a large extent a colonising attitude in the way courses are developed and delivered still exists. This is often justified under the guise of technical interests (Habermas, 1987) that the same courses need to be offered across all participating educational institutions if there is to be standardisation of qualifications. In Hong Kong for example there is an over-riding policy that requires the content that is prepared from any university abroad to be superimposed onto Hong Kong without any modification. Several authors are critical of the way courses are offered in a cross-cultural context regardless of the implications of cultural difference (Spivak, 1990; Falk, 1993; Lather, 1991; Jakupec & Yoon, 1999). Yet there is also a competing view as proposed by several writers (Bordieu, 1984; Urry, 1994; Usher et al., 1997) that students seek such an education because it demarcates a particular social space for them.

The responses from three of the Australian academics indicate that they are aware of the policy mandate of uniformity and one recognised it as a source of tension. None of the Hong Kong academics referred to this, which could possibly reflect their identified lack of involvement in policy aspects of the program or an indication that it is information that it is taken for granted

> *Policy requires same course and units to be offered in Aust and HK. (Aust 4)*
>
> *The material in Hong Kong needs to be the same as that in Australia. (Aust 5)*
>
> *Tension arises, as one of the pre-requisites of the HK Government was that the program was exactly the same as in Australia. Therefore learning packages and reading materials need to be the same. (Aust 3)*

A final but relevant reason as to why the staff in Hong Kong might not have raised cultural relevance of the material as an issue is because they perceive that such questions are not in the students' interest. Reference was made to a number of contextual forces that the Hong Kong academics perceive impinge on students' decision making about enrolling in the programs. These include the competitive nature

of options, the cost of the program, the perceived 'easiness of the course' and the pressures the students feel in order to be seen as successful through securing a degree. This is evident in the following comments made by four Hong Kong academics

> *They need more information that helps them decide to choose this program over its competitors. (HK 4)*
>
> *I am of the impression that other factors such as the cost of the course and the reputation the course has for its 'easiness' are important factors. (HK 5)*
>
> *The health system in Hong Kong is very competitive. There is a lot of pressure to succeed and be secure. Going to university is a security. (HK 2)*
>
> *They just want a degree and don't know what to expect. (HK 3x)*

The Australian academics, in contrast, did not identify such broad contextual demands that impinge on students and made no comments about contextual issues that might impinge on the students' decision-making.

These differences in the positions of the academics from the two countries suggest that those from Hong Kong are aware that the students are conscious of the broader social conditions and they have a need to prepare themselves for a competitive market place. Through their choice to further their studies, the students seek legitimacy and a definition of their social space by strengthening their position and economic security (Bordieu, 1994). The Hong Kong academics perceive a void in what the students need and what they receive in order to make an informed decision. In the opinion of the academics in Hong Kong students are not provided with the information that elucidates their decision to enroll nor does it adequately prepare them for the demands of the program. Many staff in Hong Kong seemed to be of the impression that acceptance into the program was haphazard without adequate information or screening and that students required more information to help them make an informed decision about choosing this particular program over its competitors. The academics also identified that students seem to seek information that will position these programs favourably in comparison to those of competitors i.e. other Australian universities offering similar programs. They perceive that students are seeking information will expedite them securing a degree (Bordieu, 1994) rather then information that is of a more academic nature. The Hong Kong academics in part, through their comments, avert a possible legitimation crisis by

making recommendations that what the students seek is information that legitimates competitiveness, economic prowess and financial gain (Habermas, 1984).

The implementation of the policy that the same material is presented in Hong Kong as it is in Australia means that the academics from the two countries work in isolation of each other. Several of the Australian academics expressed concerns about their limited working relationship and contact with their Hong Kong colleagues who deliver the programs. Such lack of communication fosters a culturally dominant stance, which Rizvi (1997) suggests comes from the perspective of the Australian academics and may lack understanding of the Hong Kong culture. There was mention of limited opportunities for collaboration between the staff from the two universities.

> *I am surprised that the lecturer in Hong Kong rarely contacts me so there is little communication between the designer and the person who delivers the programs. (Aust 5)*
>
> *Local facilitator [Australia] designs the program in minute detail but never interacts with the local facilitator. It is vital and difficult to manage contact with local designer of program. (Aust 4)*
>
> *Sometimes I think it is hard for another person to get inside my head and facilitate and make come alive what I have created in terms of the course and unit content. I used to prepare a resource to support my unit - It was a document that really tried to provide rationalisation for why things were done the way they are and it served as a resource manual. (Aust 3)*

From the perspective of the Hong Kong academics, several made comments to the effect that they felt they were there simply to implement the Australian curriculum with little power to bring about change or have input into the programs. There is a suggestion from the following comments that the flow of power is perceived to be one way and the powerlessness they feel results in inaction and a sense of fatalism (Roberts, 1983). This lack of power that was expressed by the Hong Kong academics could in part be an explanation for their decision not to initiate contact.

> *Understanding the curriculum and program objectives, implement the program according to [the Australian University's] guidelines. (HK6)*
>
> *It is hard as a facilitator because I represent [the Australian University] but the students don't realize I have no control over anything. (HK3x)*

This policy constraint has implications for the material contained in the programs. Being developed principally by Australian academics for Australian students, the material has been filtered through their Western frame of reference with little appreciation and lack of familiarity of the culture where it is delivered (Rizvi, 1997). There is a risk that it will promote Western knowledge and ways of learning (Foucault, 1981; Lather, 1991; Usher at al., 1997) as hegemonic therefore reinforcing the homogenizing effects of globalization. The responses provided by academics identify that for the most part, the material has been written from a Western perspective and therefore has a strong Western bias.

> *Study guides are not culturally specific – they are written from a western perspective and are generic. (Aust 2)*
>
> *Written materials have mostly been from a western perspective as there are many seminal resources from the western perspective. (Aust 3)*
>
> *Most books/articles are from U.S. or Australia. (HK 3x)*
>
> *Textbooks for [the unit] Contemporary Issues are excellent but neither address Chinese nor Hong Kong issues. (HK 3x)*

Some academics, particularly from Hong Kong, identified concerns that specific dimensions of the material had a Western bias when in fact equivalent Hong Kong material exists but was not referred to. Practices of this nature further compound the discounting of the Hong Kong context and lead to a neutralizing and homogenising of cultures (Thiong'O, 1986; Spivak, 1990; Burbules, 1997). Material that academics identified as specific to Hong Kong but overlooked by those developing the programs includes concepts, statistics, references to health conditions and case studies.

> *Study guides that include only material including statistics that is Australian based. (Aust 1)*
>
> *Concepts are completely Western for example the concept of empowerment and standing up to fight for what you want and your rights is not part of the Asian way. Therefore it is sometimes hard to come up with Hong Kong examples. Ethics is another topic that has little relevance for the Hong Kong context - people from eastern cultures tend to be situational and non sentimental - the only issue they see as involving ethics is active euthanasia. (HK 3x)*

Case studies used are on Australian aged care issues and community development in Korea and India. They are considered to be foreign to local students, cause the social and cultural contexts are different. (HK 6)

Discussion on emancipation, empowerment, elderly rights are not culturally relevant. (HK6)

Concept of class inequalities in receiving health services is irrelevant to local context. (HK5)

There are some diseases not seen in Hong Kong e.g. Paget's Disease where as other diseases such as diabetes mellitus and hepatitis B are more prevalent. (HK1x)

Some health issues are relatively less concerned in Hong Kong, eg. euthanasia. (HK2)

Discussion on the prevention and control of health problems may not be as strongly researched as in Australia. The health concerns in HK are on the treatment and intervention. (HK2)

The concept of social change is generally relevant to Hong Kong although the health concerns in HK are on the treatment and intervention. (HK4)

Significant in nursing education programs is the health setting that provides the context for the students to apply the content of their learning. One of the ways in which cultural dominance is manifested by authors of programs from a culture different to the one where the material is delivered is through the unproblematic advancement of certain (usually Western) institutional structures and systems that deny the complexity of the receiving culture and at worse have the effect of annihilating it (Thiong'O, 1986; Spivak, 1990). There were significant differences in the responses of the academics from the two countries regarding the extent to which the material covered aspects of the health system in Hong Kong including government legislation, registration requirements for nurses and hospital and community nursing practices and standards. Several Hong Kong academics commented that these areas were not adequately addressed in the material and they found it necessary to supplement the material provided with their own research and resources.

Not much in the material but I added extra information based on my own research particularly in the management course. (HK1x)

The only material in these areas i.e. government legislation, local standards and registration requirements is what I introduce. (HK4)

> *No particular examples referring to the Hong Kong health system mentioned in the teaching package. (HK6)*

On the other hand, as the subsequent comments suggest there seemed to be awareness on the part of many Australian academics of this risk of including material that is culturally biased and insensitive to the culture where it is delivered and of imposing Western material on students in Hong Kong (Rizvi, 1997). Hence, in spite of comments by many of the Hong Kong academics that suggest a definite Western bias in the content of the material, several Australian academics communicated their attempt to be culturally inclusive by sourcing articles, demographical data, statistics and policies that they considered relevant to Hong Kong and including them in the program. They also commented that they believe there is a paucity of material written exclusively from the Hong Kong perspective. This suggests that there may be a false consciousness (Habermas, 1987) on the part of the Australian academics given the earlier comments made by the Hong Kong academics that the material is available but not included.

> *Mixture of articles from both contexts but most from west. (Aust 2)*
>
> *Some articles relevant to HK/Asian context included when they are available - I make the effort to locate such materials. (Aust 5)*
>
> *Major efforts have been made to acquire articles from within the Hong Kong context. These have sometimes been sought out with assistance of local lecturers. (Aust 3)*
>
> *Analysis of HK policies in Policy, Power, Policies in Health Care Provision unit. (Aust 2)*
>
> *Research articles in HC 813A and NU312A selected for critique are of studies undertaken in HK. (Aust 2)*
>
> *There has been a paucity of articles and resources written exclusively on Hong Kong context however data, demographics and statistical information has been incorporated into the learning materials especially in units concerning epidemiology and public health and community health. (Aust 3)*
>
> *In units about research at Master and Bachelor level all attempts have been made to use research articles that have been based on research in Hong Kong. (Aust 3)*

The Australian academics were also of the view that the material they prepared was sensitive to the practice environment where the students work. However, their belief

that these areas were covered in the content again constitutes an example of their false consciousness (Habermas, 1987). In particular, two made reference to the accreditation process where by materials need to be approved at the governmental level, seemingly believing that any gaps in content would be identified by this body. However this seems to suggest a misunderstanding, as it is the program more generically rather than specific program content that is accredited.

> *Specific HK legislation is included as well as standards. (Aust 1)*
>
> *Aged care policies and epidemiological aspects of HK population are addressed. (Aust 2)*
>
> *Course materials are submitted to an official HK government office. If any change is made to the course, it must be notified to this office. (Aust 3)*
>
> *Registration requirements are a baseline pre-requisite – the programs need to be approved by an accrediting body in Hong Kong. (Aust 5)*

The Australian academics also seemed to think that relevance to the Hong Kong health system could be achieved by designing assessment tasks that required the application of material to the student's local context. Hence they place the onus on the student to establish relevance and to make links to the practice context. This is consistent with findings of Kember and Gow (1993), which suggests that for Western academics, transmitting basic knowledge was considered less important and students were expected to demonstrate autonomy and intellectual independence in their learning as compared to academics in an Asian culture, who place greater value on providing content. This illustrates the imposition of the expectation of the Australian academics that is based on their experience of teaching in Australia and placing that expectation on students in Hong Kong.

> *Assessment questions ask students to apply material to HK context. (Aust 1)*
>
> *Students are required to complete a research proposal for the HK context specifically some area of the workplace. (Aust 2)*
>
> *There has been a major focus to ensure application of concepts and principles to the Hong Kong health context especially in assignments. (Aust 3)*

Redressing Dominance to Make the Material More Relevant

A number of academics from both Australia and Hong Kong expressed concerns about the relevance, particularly the Western orientation, of the material for the students and the difficulties the students experienced applying material to the work context. Assessment tasks were identified by a number of academics as one way to establish relevance. There were a number of other comments that highlighted the responsibility that falls on the local lecturers in Hong Kong to create relevance or 'indigenise' the material for the students (Appadurai, 1996; Burbules, 1997). Several of the Hong Kong lecturers clearly saw it as their role to 'value add' to the material that had been prepared by the Australian academics even though it is not written into their work contracts. This is a realisation by Hong Kong academics of a disjuncture between the material that is provided and the needs of the students and an empowering move on their behalf to resist what has been imposed on them to teach. There were numerous comments to this effect from staff in Hong Kong.

> *I see my role as placing in context the Western constructs that are presented and normalizing that the material for Western society is not necessarily relevant to Hong Kong e.g. the concept of community in the West does not translate to Hong Kong where for example family is paramount. (HK3x)*
>
> *The students need to be reassured that the concepts from the West are not necessarily 'right' for Hong Kong. (HK3x)*
>
> *I try to bring in as many Hong Kong based examples as I can. (HK3x)*
>
> *Finding other resources such as articles to supplement the course. (HK1x)*
>
> *Bridge the gap between the "two sides of the world" i.e. to expose the international perspective and to adapt to local context. (HK6)*
>
> *Review the teaching materials and assess its relevance to local learning. Suggest local supportive learning resources. Develop supportive learning materials to make the program more relevant to local use. (HK6)*
>
> *I always tried to include examples and cases from Hong Kong. (HK2)*
>
> *I try to make the classes interesting by giving information on current trends, examples, statistics and lots of stories. (HK1x)*

Local facilitators assist students to understand material and apply it to H.K. context. (Aust 1)

I placed a lot of emphasis on the hospital authority - its organizational structure and function. This helped create relevance of the material for the students to their work context and gave concrete examples. (HK1x)

I look for what is happening locally e.g. in the news or internet and then I used my discretion and emphasised those components that were relevant to Hong Kong and placed less importance on what was not relevant. (HK1x)

The theory is relevant although I often had to make the links for the students for example in the management course, many of the students told me they were not interested in working in management. I had to point out to them that even working with an individual patient involves management skills. Skills such as time management conflict resolution, motivation and working in teams are relevant no matter what the role. (HK1x)

It is the facilitators' role to make reference to our local practice. (HK6)

My goal is to help students find the content useful to the Hong Kong context for example post-natal depression. (HK4)

It is interesting to note that several of the Australian academics also saw this as the role of their Hong Kong colleagues even though it was not overtly expressed nor is it recognized or rewarded as part of their role. Nonetheless it would be assumed that putting knowledge in context is a fundamental role of an academic and many in Hong Kong seem to embrace this as part of their role and are more proactive and empowered to contextualise material than their Australian counterparts.

Facilitator is required to contextualise material in HK. (Aust 2)

The facilitator in my courses is a value added - that adds local input and helps students apply material to local context. (Aust 5)

Local lecturers have brought specific cultural scenarios and fables to the classroom and made application from these to facilitate relevance i.e. to draw out principles. (Aust 3)

Local lecturers asked to contextualise to HK context. (Aust 2)

The local support is crucial to the students engaging with the material. (Aust 4)

Eliciting the experiences of the academics in Hong Kong is an initial step in moving towards an ideal speech situation (Habermas cited in Held, 19981) by drawing from

those who are involved at the grassroots in the development and delivery of the programs strategies for improving their content. Specifically, the interpretation of the experiences of the academics has intended to identify areas where cultural dominance is present. The academics proffered a number of suggestions for improving the cultural relevance of the material and making it more responsive to the cultural needs of the students where it is delivered. These suggestions need to be acknowledged while respecting the policy constraints mentioned at the beginning of this section and the underlying philosophy of this program that the same courses must be offered in the two contexts. This philosophy in the light of the comments begs challenge. Namely an equivalent program does not mean an equal program and recognition needs to be given to the fact that different and culturally appropriate learning experiences can lead to equivalent learning outcomes.

Notwithstanding these suggestions, one Australian academic made a comment that illustrates a resistance to change with a fear of what it might bring. Interestingly from the disempowered space that the academics have identified, this academic perceives that any changes to the program would be in the direction of a biomedical model that would only serve to reinforce the disempowered status of nursing.

> *If changes were to be made, they could be to add more from a biomedical model of health but this would be in direct opposition to the philosophy of the courses we offer. Therefore nil changes are suggested. (Aust 3)*

Other comments that were made by the academics about improving content so that it is more relevant for Hong Kong pertain to a number of specific dimensions of the program including the study material, the readings and the involvement of the Hong Kong facilitators in program development. Their responses identified a need to reduce the existing focus on Western literature and include Hong Kong related material. Regarding the study guide material including the book of readings some of the comments made included

> *Study guide could include more questions and activities that invite students to answer questions as they relate to HK context. (Aust 1)*

> *Include more HK specific policies, articles etc (Aust 2)*

Book of readings includes articles written for HK context and nurses in H.K. (Aust 1)

Develop local supportive learning package, which uses local literature and resources to support learning. (HK6)

A chapter that reviews and examines HK health system, challenges the tunnel vision of the system and recommends possible ways in which the system can be improved. (HK5)

One academic suggested the use of alternative medium in the form of video support

Video support from Australian staff, which discusses some of the key concepts. (Aust 5)

Other suggestions for improving the content included involving local lecturers in program development or investing more resources for Australian lecturers to develop greater familiarity with the Hong Kong context. This highlights a perceived need of academics to have a deeper understanding of the cultural contexts of their students (Robinson, 1999) and to increase their openness to difference (Burbules, 1997). These changes would go some way towards challenging some of the false consciousness (Habermas cited in Held, 1981) on the part of the Australian academics that limits their capacities to be able to see other cultural perspectives. The Australian academics seemed particularly conscious of this need as seen in the following comments.

Employ local lecturers to provide input into package design to apply generic material to HK context and to identify philosophical orientation and contrast it to HK philosophical orientation. (Aust 2)

Pay staff in Hong Kong so they have time to explore the local context and then involve them in course development with the Australian lecturers. (Aust 5)

Suggestions from staff in Hong Kong or feedback from accrediting body would be helpful since my knowledge of the system in Hong Kong is limited. (Aust 5)

Give academics more time to explore Hong Kong work context (ideally) as well as more time to develop the packages. (Aust 1)

Maybe some extra input from local people about the HK work context at the stage of development. (Aust 3)

Closer links with local staff and serious time allocation for the preparation of packages. (Aust 4)

Australian academics who develop courses often have little exposure to Hong Kong - they have little idea of what the students are like as nurses, what nursing is like in Hong Kong and what the education system in Hong Kong is like. They would benefit from spending some time living in the culture - this becomes a resourcing problem and the university is frightened to spend that sort of money. (Aust 1)

Material that is Relevant to Hong Kong Culture

While there might be an argument that some of the material is written exclusively from a Western perspective, that is not to say it is the case for all the material. Some material is relevant because it generalizes across cultures. Several of the academics commented that there is material that is appropriate for students in Hong Kong as the ideas and theoretical components are culturally neutral and transferable.

The material of some subjects is more or less the same across cultures and is culturally relevant. (HK1x)

Theoretical components of some subjects is culturally neutral – for example principles of Primary Health Care, community assessment and development. (HK6)

Many worldwide health issues are also relevant to Hong Kong, such as HIV, SARS (HK2)

The material of some packages for example life span development applies across cultures. (Aust 5)

Furthermore, given the current global forces which encourage the movement of capital including human resources around the globe (Capling et al., 1998) higher education is seen as an important medium for preparing nurses to work in contexts that require them to be aware of other cultures (Readings, 1996). Several academics commented that if students are to be equipped to work in a global context, it is beneficial for them to be exposed to issues and values that extend beyond their own culture.

Although cultural relevance is important, Hong Kong is a multicultural society and exposure to other cultures is necessary if students are to be responsive to the needs of immigrants coming to Hong Kong or if they are to travel and work elsewhere in the world. (HK1x)

Management content gives students a global perspective. Globalisation is a reality of the current world context. Being exposed to material from other cultures is relevant and important if students are to develop a global perspective.(HK1x)

I think it is also good for the students to have some exposure to global issues figures and statistics so they can compare across cultures. For example the trends that are happening globally in gerontology. (Aust 1)

The courses can be awfully narrow if all we give them is Chinese work. (Aust 1)

Certain material for example prescribed texts for PHC and WHO guidelines are ideal because they fill the knowledge gaps in the nurses' previous training and encourage the students to think globally and critically. (HK5)

One of the generic skills that would transfer across cultures is critical thinking. However it would be expected that critical thinking would be an unfamiliar skill to students who have been exposed primarily to didactic teaching and learning, as has been the case for students in this program. A significant number of academics perceived the students' past learning experiences as shaping their expectations of the teaching and learning strategies that the programs might adopt. This past experience according to the academics has to a large extent encouraged the students to be passive recipients of didactic teaching and they have limited exposure to other teaching and learning strategies that encourage more participation and critical thinking (Bond, 1991; Lee, 1999). Many academics used lecture format and referred to the students being comfortable with traditional teaching strategies.

The students have been used to using memorization, rote learning in secondary school and it is a big leap for them to switch to be critical in their thinking once they come to university. (HK4)

From the school system students have been taught to sit circumspectly and not to disrupt the class. The students find it hard to change their learned behaviour once they come to university. (HK4)

Nursing graduates are educated in a traditional education system.
Majority of the students lack learning autonomy independent learning skills. (HK6)

The students seem to want to passively take in information while I prefer a participatory format with active learning on the part of students. One student said on an evaluation 'Don't waste your time asking us - just tell us'. That was a big challenge. (HK1x)

> *In the early days I thought they liked a very traditional mode of learning i.e. being lectured at. (Aust 1)*
>
> *Students see me as the expert and want a lecture. They seem to like the lecture format. (HK3x)*

The experiences of the academics seem to be inconsistent with the body of literature that has explored the approaches to learning adopted by students in the Asian context (Kember & Gow, 1990; Marton et al., 1996; Tang & Biggs, 1996). This research has used Learning Process Questionnaire and has taken the constructs – surface, deep and achieving approaches to learning – and applied them to the Asian context. The findings of these studies suggest that for Asian students the approaches to learning are not discrete and that memorisation or taking a surface approach to learning is a precursor to students in Hong Kong later adopting deep approaches.

The adoption of a deep approach to learning by the students is not borne out by the responses of many of the academics in this study. In particular, critical thinking skills would be an illustration of students embracing this approach. Many academics considered critical thinking to be an important skill for students to acquire, however there was a range of difference in the extent to which they believed the students actually mastered this skill as seen by the following responses.

> *The students have been used to learning by rote and critical thinking skills do not come easy to them. The students need to develop the skills of critical thinking. (HK4)*
>
> *Lecturers need to stimulate students to think why and how learning can be used and modified to their personal context. (HK5)*
>
> *Course is not all that helpful in teaching general nursing theory or critical thinking. (HK3x)*
>
> *A part from the theoretical concepts, I see thinking skills as being important to the work context in Hong Kong. They need to learn 'how to think outside the box'. (HK1x)*
>
> *Students need to be guided through discussion and critical reflection in class to apply concepts to their professional setting and wider community experiences. (Aust 5)*

A significant factor that may be inhibiting the development of critical thinking is the students' limited capacity to express themselves orally and in written format in English.

As the literature (Pennycook, 1994; Scallon, 1994; Bowden, 1996) highlighted it is problematic for many students to develop arguments and express themselves coherently when they do not have a strong mastery of the language even though it is widely used in Hong Kong having been a British colony.

Another significant factor that could be deterring the promotion of critical thinking amongst the student body is that the academics themselves appear to be limited in their ability to model these skills in their decision making in respect of program development and delivery. The students' attitude to learning seems to mirror the academics' attitude to their work where there appears to be a reluctance to implement strategies that resemble the deep approaches to learning expected from students. Hence the academics' perception that that the students are not engaging with deep approaches to learning may be more reflective of the academics' approaches rather than a criticism of the students.

One of the learning strategies that the academics identified as fostering the development of critical thinking skills is the use of participatory forms of learning. This is consistent with the findings of Tang (1996) who advocated that the process of participating in group discussion and collaborative learning increased the extent to which students adopted a deep approach to learning. As will be discussed later, there is some student resistance to this for cultural reasons. Nonetheless, the academics agreed that the development of critical thinking skills is fostered by group discussion and debate supporting the findings of Chan and Watkins (1994) and Tang (1996).

> *The discussion format helps students develop critical thinking skills - its helps students talk about topics in different ways and helps create relevance of the material for the students. (HK4)*
>
> *Once the students start participating in the discussions they begin to realize that learning is more than getting the facts. (HK4)*
>
> *I saw a direct correlation in the quality of the work of those students who stayed for the group discussions and those who left. The group discussions gave students the chance to take an active part in their learning and also to learn from each other. (HK1x)*

These comments have important implications for establishing classroom activities that are culturally relevant and it would be essential that they be heeded in future course development and design.

Group Work as Culturally Appropriate Strategy

Notwithstanding this expectation on the part of the students that academics deliver programs using traditional forms of delivery, the following comments highlight that many Hong Kong academics adopt a practice of taking students out of their comfort zone and introducing student participation to facilitate learning.

> *Group work seems to encourage more participation. It is the only way to get students to speak up in the class. (Aust 1)*
>
> *Students need to take a leading role in discussion of articles during the sessions It is not the role of the lecturer to do everything while the students do not participate. (Aust 4)*
>
> *I don't believe in spoon-feeding students they need to be adult learners and self directed. (HK4)*

There appear to be two divergent points of view that emerge from the literature in respect of group work as a culturally appropriate strategy for students in Hong Kong. On the one hand some authors cite that the students have had a history of learning that is not interactive (Bond, 1991; Liu In-moa cited in Lee, 1999; Lee, 1999) and the role of the teacher in Hong Kong has traditionally been seen as hierarchical with the students demonstrating respect through attention and silence (Lee, 1999). Yet on the other hand, the literature addresses the value of collectivism in the Chinese culture and the way this promotes the students' positive response to co-operative learning contexts (Yu, 1980; Salili, 1996).

Group work is strongly recommended as part of the philosophy upon which the programs that are the focus of this study have been designed. It is noteworthy that there was considerable variation in the perceptions of the academics as to how the students responded to the use of group work that reflected the different viewpoints rose in the literature. Several academics commented that students resisted more interactive

learning strategies unless the teacher creates a classroom context where this is facilitated. It. would seem this is not unique to the Hong Kong context. The need for academics to be proactive about creating such an environment is suggested by Lee (1999) who advocated that teachers need to build group trust and acceptance before introducing activities that are more interactive in nature.

> *Some learning strategies center around group discussions and experiential learning. My experience is that the Chinese students do not easily warm to this type of learning strategy and resist them. I find that if I ask the students to move into groups to discuss an issue, I have needed to very directive in getting this process going. (Aust 3)*
>
> *Some of the students did not engage with the group discussion exercises. I don't know if they did not see it as valuable or if they felt threatened. One student said 'it was too much work'. (HK1x)*

Others considered that the students enjoyed group work and that they feel culturally at ease with such an approach to learning. Several academics commented on the collectivist nature of the Hong Kong culture and how this favors working in groups.

> *The Chinese are group-oriented people and they work well together. They know how to share and they take care of each other. I like to get the students to work together in the same group for the semester. They often select a group leader who often takes care of the people in the group and raises issues on the group's behalf. This often tends to be the strongest member in the group or the one who can express themselves best. (HK3x)*
>
> *When they do work in groups they are quick to decide who does which tasks and they break the work into little tasks and tend to be quite organized. The students excel at task allocation. They break the job into segments, each does their share and the whole comes together. (Aust 1)*
>
> *As our culture encourages collectivism, students do not have confidence in individual assessment. They found peer review very uneasy. (HK6)*

There was more agreement amongst the academics' responses regarding students' attitudes towards reporting their group discussion back to the class. Many commented that students were uncomfortable with this practice. The literature suggests that is likely to have more to do with other cultural values that are related to respect (Liu, 1986) and restraint (Gao, 1998) or saving face and not being seen in a negative light (Lee, 1999).

The academics offered a number of similar cultural explanations for this including saving face, being seen as inadequate or a class show-off.

> *The students are reluctant to feedback their discussion to the large group. To speak up is to be seen as a show off or trying to get the teacher's attention. (HK4)*
>
> *The students need to feel safe before they will talk in class – it takes time before they're safe enough to voice their opinion. They do not like to look dumb in front of others or to be put on the spot. (HK3x)*
>
> *It is about saving face - if a person speaks on behalf of the class and is presenting the group's ideas, then they don't feel so bad if they are not exactly right. If they stand up and present their own ideas and they are not right they may feel people are laughing at them and think all sorts of things about them. There is more safety in the group. (Aust 1)*
>
> *The students feel uneasy about speaking in the large group and providing feedback on group discussions because they don't know if they are asking the right question or answering correctly - they feel it would be a shame to lose face. (HK5)*
>
> *I encourage student group participation and demand feedback from the students to check their understanding even though the students do not like it because they feel embarrassed if they answer a question incorrectly. (HK1x)*

Several academics perceived the students' reluctance to give feedback on their group discussion as being compounded by language difficulties and embarrassment resulting from their inability to express themselves in English. They suggested that students would be more inclined to participate if they were permitted to use Cantonese. This raises an issue that will be discussed in the next section, regarding the extent to which learning is inhibited when a program is offered in English in the context of a culture where the students struggle with this as the mode of instruction.

> *I find the students are more likely to discuss if I give them the option of speaking in Chinese or English. (HK2)*
>
> *I find the students express themselves in the group discussion more readily when they can speak Cantonese. (HK4)*
>
> *Learning with a second language is especially difficult for those who are educated and trained with Chinese as the instruction media. These students become very dependent and passive, non-contributing and non-participating in class discussion. Students need to overcome the psychological barrier of speaking out in class. (HK6)*

> *Support needs to be given to students to encourage them to present and discuss since there is little chance in Hong Kong for students to use English. (HK5)*
>
> *The students used Cantonese in their group discussion. They would translate the question I gave them into Cantonese, discuss it in that language and then feedback in English. (HK1x).*

One of the areas where group work did not seem to suit the students was in respect of assessments involving group work. While it might be the case that students enjoy working in groups, the logistics of the students' work commitments at times make it impractical for this to actually occur as part of the assessment.

> *Group assessments are used and sometimes the students find this difficult to manage. They say that in terms of location – i.e where they live, it is difficult to get together [to organise] for a group assessment out of university times. (Aust 3)*
>
> *Group assessments are difficult because students have demanding jobs and it is hard for them to organise themselves to meet. (HK5)*
>
> *Discussion and activities in classes are helpful, but group project is not appreciated because of the difficulty in getting together for preparation. (HK1x)*

Cultural Relevance of English as the Mode of Instruction

It is expected that the academics in Hong Kong deliver the programs in English. One of the manifestations of cultural dominance is the way in which English has become the dominant language (Pennycook, 1994). The completion of courses of study in English has performative value and gives students from non-English speaking countries greater marketability that is recognised by the Chinese authorities (Bordieu, 1984; Baudrillard cited in Jakupec, 1999). One Australian academic pointed out the expectation that the course be delivered in English has a contractual base.

> *However, this is bound by the agreement that is signed and submitted to the Chinese authorities. (Aust 3)*

There is a requirement that students have passed an English proficiency test before enrolling in the program. This provides an assumption that the students have mastery of English to a level that enables them to engage with the material. The realities of the

program as reported by the academics highlight that the students struggle to understand both the spoken and written English that is used to deliver the program.

> *Essential but some students struggle with English in spite of minimum English language requirement. (Aust 1)*
>
> *Even though the students have to pass a certain standard in terms of IELTS, some students do not have a good grasp of English. (Aust 3)*

Apart from resorting to plagiarism, which will be addressed later, the responses of the academics suggest that the students become frustrated and disillusioned with being immersed in a class where English only is spoken or when they are expected to read copious volumes of material written in English. They consequently adopt other learning strategies such as translating essential reading material either in the texts or in the book of readings that is provided with each unit word for word.

> *Now there is a tendency to come late, leave early and they don't necessarily want to participate so much. Maybe this is due to being overwhelmed by three hours of lecturing in English. (Aust 1)*
>
> *Students complain if lectures are not in Cantonese since about 50% of the class cannot understand a lecture delivered completely in English. (HK3x)*
>
> *Reading long journal articles is especially challenging to students. They have to read the articles, translate them and make sense of them - this is hard if the articles are long. (Aust 1)*
>
> *This makes it somewhat difficult for these students especially when it comes to reading set articles. Many students translate every word from English into Mandarin/Cantonese. (Aust 5)*
>
> *Sometimes the students have to read the material several times but I encourage them that eventually they will master it. It also takes them a long time to write so that they can express their ideas effectively (HK4)*
>
> *It could be difficult for some students. Particularly the articles on research where the students not only need to understand English but also a particular way of thinking. (Aust 2)*
>
> *Students tend to put in long hours to understand the readings, but have difficulties understanding them. Long non-productive hours of reading are very discouraging. Hence, the majority of our students become burnt-out quickly in the course of study. (HK6)*

It is understandable that the student feel anxious and overwhelmed by the reading that tends to be voluminous, a situation which seems to be the case when the program is offered in Australia as well. To add to the students' anxiety in Hong Kong however it is highly likely that they consider the material that is provided to them as 'must read' literature based on their past learning experience that what is provided by the teacher is essential (Chan, 1999). In reality many of the articles that are supplied in the book of readings are supplementary rather than critical to achieving the learning outcomes and this distinction has not clearly been made to the students.

> *Articles are too lengthy and take a lot of the student's time for what they get from them. (HK 1x)*
>
> *There is a lot to read and sometimes it is very complex material. (HK4)*
>
> *There is too much to read, much of which is not relevant to the students' experiences. (HK 3x)*
>
> *I find that the volume of reading frightens some of the students. (HK2)*

As a way of dealing with English deficiencies amongst the student group, the Hong Kong academics who could speak Cantonese delivered some of the lecture in Cantonese, particularly if the students were struggling with their comprehension of material.

> *I was one of the few instructors who did not speak any Cantonese. The students told me they wished I spoke some Cantonese. Informally the students told me that although all the classes are supposedly in English when the students don't understand the local instructors switch over to Cantonese. I observed this - I noticed an instructor speaking to the class in Cantonese and writing in English on the blackboard. (HK1)*
>
> *Again there is a requirement that English is the mode of instruction however, many facilitators in Hong Kong occasionally break into Chinese language for part of the lectures. This maybe one of the reason why students in Hong Kong seem to prefer the Chinese speaking lecturers. (Aust 5)*
>
> *A lot of Cantonese slips into the instruction. This seems to allay some of the students' feelings of frustration and allows the students to not fall behind what the lecturer is saying. I can't do that so I put everything on an overhead. (HK3)*
>
> *It is all English. Maybe 1/2 English and 1/2 Cantonese would be less arrogant in HK as both languages are used. (Aust 2)*

In terms of written English, Hsu (1985) has highlighted that written arguments in the Chinese culture are developed in different ways to the West. This is likely to create two diverse sets of expectations - one based from a Hong Kong and the other from an Australian perspective - amongst the academics in respect of the standards they have for the quality of students' work.

To compound difficulties with the students' capacity to express themselves in English Johnson (1994) argued that little emphasis has traditionally been placed on written English in Hong Kong. Johnson (1994) suggested that when it is used, more importance is given to students demonstrating they have the knowledge rather than accuracy in the way they write English. Responses from the academics suggest a disparity in their expectations of the student's written level of English and their marking standards. The Hong Kong academics placed less importance on the grammatical and expression aspects of written English than their English-speaking colleagues. This is likely to send a mixed message to students regarding what is a satisfactory piece of work.

> *There seems to be considerable disparity between the various facilitators and their expectations of written English. (Aust 5)*
>
> *For academic writing, I tend not to focus on the use of grammar and encourage students to freely express their ideas within their language abilities. (HK6)*
>
> *Little feedback is given in Hong Kong regarding referencing, grammatical and syntax errors. (Aust 5)*

Academics considered feedback on assignments to be an example of an area where there was some cross-cultural collaboration. Two Australian academics referred to the practice of cross marking some of the students' assessments. The timing of this practice after the students' work has been returned was questioned however in terms of its helpfulness to students.

> *Local facilitators mark some of the students' work. (Aust 3)*
>
> *At the completion of the unit Australian facilitators are given a selection of assignments to read and comment on. Feedback is too late at this point. (Aust 4)*

Assessment

It has been argued earlier that in the case of nurse education in Hong Kong, the context is one where there is evidence of the hermeneutic and emancipatory interests overridden by the dominance of empiricism. The traditions within the wider education system (Kelly et al., 1999) in Hong Kong have favoured a scientific approach in terms of teaching and this is also reflected in the assessment strategies to which the students have become accustomed.

However in this educational endeavour the Australian academics are principally responsible for setting assignment tasks and they are firmly committed to more emancipatory approaches to assessment strategies including assessment tasks that require critical thinking consistent with the philosophy of the program. This provides another example of the way in which dominance is manifested both from the points of view of the nature of the assessment tasks and their relevance for the students in Hong Kong. Only one Australian academic commented that there is any liaison with colleagues in Hong Kong regarding the setting of assessment tasks.

> *I often ask the lecturer or a student to read the assessment questions to see if they are able to be understood by the students before I set them. (Aust 5)*

The following statements from Australian academics reflect a range of views on assessment items including oral and written assessment completed either individually or in groups as well as exams. This disparity in agreement in the academics' views possibly reflects a range of content material that lends itself to certain forms of assessment over others.

> *There is a balance of individual and group assessments which I think is a good and balanced thing. Exams are sometimes set. If this is the case, the logistics of the exam can be difficult to arrange. (Aust 3)*

> *Oral assessments are not used and that is a good thing. (Aust 3)*

> *Already tailored to suit H.K. Less presentations, only some written examinations. Group work assessment generally doesn't seem to be favoured particularly the idea of one group mark. Therefore assessments are mainly individual assignments. (Aust 1)*

> *My assessments are either exam or individual assessment - no group assessment. (Aust 5)*
>
> *Much assessment is in English and requires written work. (Aust 2)*
>
> *Many of the students found understanding the questions under exam conditions difficult. (Aust 5)*

A number of comments from Australian academics related to the need for assessment items to facilitate the development of critical thinking skills. This reflects the emancipatory educational philosophy that underpins the program. However, it could pose some tension for Hong Kong academics and students who according to Johnson (1994) have been exposed to more objective forms of assessment that include examinations.

> *Formal academic writing is a problem for some students and their poor written expression at times stands in the way of them being able to develop a good argument to answer the questions, particularly under exam conditions. (Aust 5)*
>
> *Encouraging critical analysis in assessment is difficult and on the whole not well done. (Aust 2)*
>
> *Critical analysis needs fine-tuning. (Aust 4)*

There seemed to be little agreement between the Australian and Hong Kong academics as to what were the most appropriate forms of assessment for the cohort of students. Like their Australian colleagues who set the assignment tasks, the Hong Kong academics provided a range of opinions on the use of various assessment strategies. There seemed to be little consensus as to what was considered the most appropriate form of assessment.

> *The students like the assignment only assessment because they think it is easier. (HK4)*
>
> *Students do not like exams and I am aware it is one of the factors that they talk to each other about. The lack of exams makes this course attractive. (HK4)*
>
> *Majority of the students found formal academic writing especially the use of references very difficult - and not compatible with Chinese culture. (HK6)*
>
> *Due to language barrier, misinterpretation, or misunderstanding of the*

> *assessment questions always resulted in poor assessment outcomes, particularly if exams are used. (HK6)*
>
> *Students don't like the examination, as it requires too much preparation. The students found the assessments that required them to do a taped interview difficult. (HK2)*
>
> *Students do not know how to write university level papers and are not taught to do so. (HK3x)*
>
> *Essays that relate material to the Hong Kong context or generalised to global levels is a good form of assessment. An individual presentation of 8-10 minutes which improves presentation skills is also good. (HK5)*

One academic commented that exams reduced the incidence of student cheating and was a way of ensuring that the students were responsible for their own work.

> *Some exam assessment is recommended. Take home assessment does not ensure it is the student's own work. (HK5)*

Along with these objections that were raised about various assessment options, one academic felt pressured to pass the student on work that was sub-standard.

> *I don't want to be pressured into passing mediocre work from students who have no idea about the concepts presented in class. (HK3x)*

One of the concerns that were recognized by the academics in respect of written assessment related to the incidence of plagiarism. Plagiarism has been identified by many authors as having a different meaning attached to it within the Asian culture compared to Western cultures. The emphasis on collectivism, the respect for the opinions of the collective over personal opinions (Gao, 1998), the respect for authority (Lee, 1999) and the public ownership of intellectual property (Deckert, 1992) all of which it has been suggested are germinal to the fabric of Asian cultures place a different lens, some authors argue, on how plagiarism is construed in Eastern cultures. Hence while in Western cultures plagiarism as an academic crime, the question arises is this a Western construction that is not necessarily culturally appropriate in Hong Kong. Nonetheless, many of the academics identified it as an area of concern.

> *Plagiarism was the most shocking aspect of teaching the course. In the first paper at least 95% of the students had plagiarized to some extent. The students seemed*

> *to be surprised that I detected the plagiarism and that I did something about it. (HK1x)*
>
> *Cheating is rampant with a lot of plagiarism and collusion. (HK3x)*
>
> *Assessments are changed every semester to minimise the chances of cheating, although it is not always successful. Many students plagiarise and others collude. (Aust 5)*

The apparent lack of student understanding (Kam-cheong & Cheung, 1999; Lim & See, 2001) as to what constitutes plagiarism was identified by one academic.

> *It seems difficult in the Hong Kong culture for the students to understand plagiarism. For them an idea is not something you can hold, it is not tangible and therefore taking someone else's idea is not condemned. I have spent considerable time showing students what constitutes plagiarism even though I do not consider this to be my role (HK1x)*

Another perspective on plagiarism that challenges the cultural explanations that have been offered so far was raised by two Hong Kong academics, who saw plagiarism as a coping strategy for students struggling with their English proficiency.

> *A small group of students, usually those with relatively poor English proficiency, are tempted to commit plagiarism. Deep down these students are very frustrated, as they find themselves unable to articulate their thoughts in a "foreign language". (HK6)*
>
> *Plagiarism is rife in Hong Kong - because the level of English is so poor. Students are skilled at cutting and pasting and pinching stuff and they can't believe that the teachers pick up their plagiarism. (HK 4)*

The academics' responses in respect of plagiarism raise the students' need for work which will assist them and provide on-going support and practice to develop additional writing skills. This in turn will build their confidence in expressing their points of view in a sound academic manner. Furthermore, input on plagiarism and help to understand its complexities are required.

Role of the Facilitator

Much has been written about the role of the teacher in the Asian context. The literature suggests that there is a risk of polarization as teachers in the Asian context are seen as different to their Western colleagues by virtue of culture (Said, 1993; Ang & Stratton, 1995). This create an emphasis on differences in they way the academics perform their role as educators rather than emphasizing commonality. In this context many of the Hong Kong academics described the ways in which they attempt to facilitate student learning, to be no different to the role of an academic in any other context. This is consistent with the findings of Kember and Gow (1993) and Kelly et al. (1999). Many academics mentioned their concern with encouraging critical thinking.

> *I am concerned to keep a high standard in the quality of education through teaching the students how to think differently and more critically. (HK1x)*
>
> *To give theoretical input, highlight strengths and limitations of various perspectives and encourage students to fill in the gaps by their own research. (HK1x)*
>
> *Encouraged to interact with student to demonstrate critical analysis. (Aust 2)*
>
> *I see my role as sorting through the materials, organizing, talking about and giving leading questions for the students to think about. (HK2)*
>
> *I see my role helping students to analyse all they have around them and what they have experienced and making sense of all that is happening. (HK4)*
>
> *My role is to remove the 'scales from their eyes'- the blinkers that make them blind to what the system does to them. (HK4)*

Other comments referred to modeling learning skills, valuing the life experience of students, building the students' confidence, helping with writing skills, facilitating discussion and providing some input particularly that based on professional experience.

> *Provide academic supports to facilitate learning. (HK 6)*
>
> *Evaluate and feedback to the program and learning outcomes. (HK6)*
>
> *I try to help them with direction in their thinking. I need to model critical thinking and must feel comfortable with that myself. The life experience of the student is important and I need to value that as an adult educator. (HK4)*

I try to help students with their writing. (HK4)

When the students are reluctant to feedback their group discussion I try to summarise what they have to say. I try to encourage them to speak up and ask questions - help them to see that no question is a stupid question. (HK4)

I have an advantage because I am out in the field as a clinical nurse and can bring lots of examples to the students. (HK4)

Having been a clinician I see my role as giving examples and cases from my own experience e.g. one class I spoke about my management of an aggressive client who I had worked with just before coming to the class. (HK2)

One academic referred to the holistic role she perceives herself adopting in an attempt to facilitate student learning.

My role is multifaceted – as a moderator to stimulate student learning and encourage active participation, educator to give theoretical input and highlight limitations and strengths of various perspectives, active listener to assess student needs motivation and give feedback, director to ensure positive learning environment, gatekeeper to ensure academic integrity and maintain high standards and learner to learn from the students. (HK5)

Aside from the facilitating student learning, the academics made a number of comments about their role that pertained to developing interpersonal relationships between students and academics. The literature suggests that one of the areas of difference between academics from the East and West lies in relationships they build with students, specifically that teachers in Asia adopt a more student directed approach (Stigler & Stevenson, 1991; O'Connor cited in Kelly & Ha, 1998; Ho, 2001). There seemed to be awareness on the part of academics from both countries that students felt more comfortable with academics in Hong Kong who were of Asian descent. Certain sensibilities that included sense of humour and respect were considered important by these academics.

The sense of humour of the Chinese lecturer seems to be different so I have to be careful not to offend students with my use of humour. (HK3x)

I don't demand respect from the students because I am teacher. I have to earn respect. I also need to give students respect - that everyone can learn -it may take different time for everyone - but in the end there is no difference in the learning (HK 4)

> *I believe it is essential for the facilitator to be approachable. From my own experience students learn best when teachers are encouraging and take on a positive attitude. I also see myself as playing a reassurance role for the students as they sometimes get scared about their studies and they need support and encouragement. (HK2)*

Mention was made by several academics of differences they perceive in the students responses to Hong Kong academics as compared to academics who are expatriates living in Hong Kong.

> *Teaching is carried out by local lecturers and these people may be Chinese or westerners who are living In Hong Kong. Students seem to prefer the Chinese born facilitator. (Aust 5)*

> *There is also a cultural way of being - when I am with the Hong Kong students I find I need to behave in a way that could be considered patronizing in Western culture. My behaviour tends to be more child like - the class is mainly women, and they seem to like me relating to them in that way. Finding a satisfactory level of communication is essential. (Aust 1)*

> *Being a foreigner, I find the students have better rapport with lecturers who have Cantonese sensibilities. I find it is better to address this up front. I tell the students that being a foreigner I see things differently - some like it some don't. (HK3x)*

This section has addressed issues related to cultural dominance in the way the programs are developed and delivered in this cross-cultural context. It has explored aspects of the programs including content and modes of delivery and has identified ways in which dominance seems to have been manifested. It has also identified situations where there has been resistance on the part of the academics and students to cultural dominance.

Conclusion

The experiences of the academics and Hong Kong and Australia suggest that in the course of performing their duties a number of themes of dominance emerge. Dominance is found in several quarters. There is dominance in respect of the administrative and policy decisions where administrative and managerial staff, tend to have power over the academics. There is dominance in the health system of Hong Kong

where the hegemony of the medical profession is pervasive. Then there is cultural dominance potentially inherent in the practice when one culture develops courses of study for delivery in another. However the experiences also reveal that the academics are not exclusively subject to forces of dominance and that there are areas where they have attempted to usurp and resist the dominating factors as they perceive them.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The intention of this study was to explore the issues faced by a group of nursing academics that are involved in a cross-cultural partnership that involves two universities one in Australia and the other in Hong Kong. The Australian academics have been responsible for developing the programs that are philosophically aligned with a perspective transformation approach. The programs are delivered by academics employed in Hong Kong where the student body is accustomed to empirical approaches to health care and education delivery. The issues that arise were examined in respect of a number of dimensions to the programs including the content and mode of delivery, administration, policy making and implementation and resources. This study also investigated how the programs could be made more relevant to the needs of the students employed in the health care system in Hong Kong. This study has used critical social theory as the theoretical framework for analysing and interpreting the experiences of several nurse academics employed in the programs, whose experiences to date, had been revealed in respect of the above mentioned issues.

In the previous chapter, the analysis of the academics' experiences regarding these issues was subsumed under three major themes of dominance: namely, the cultural dominance of the Australian academics over their counterparts in Hong Kong, that of the hegemony of medicine and the scientific paradigm over the nursing profession and nursing theory and finally that of university management and administration over academics.

This chapter makes final conclusions in respect of issues related to program content and modes of delivery appropriate for the Hong Kong health and education context in particular when education is offered in cross-cultural context as well as issues pertaining to management and administration of the programs. Implications for further work deriving from this previous discussion will be elaborated at the end of this chapter.

Issues Related to Program Content and Modes of Delivery: Application to the Hong Kong Health and Education Context

There is a strong sense from the literature surveyed, that the empirical approach to education is inadequate in preparing nursing graduates to fulfill their role as practitioners, whatever their context. It is an approach that epistemologically advances the legitimacy of certain forms of knowledge that might be valid in their own right but have limitations when they are advocated as the sole legitimate form of knowledge (Carper, 1978; Hall, 1980; Feyerband cited in Barnett, 1994). A number of authors in nursing have acknowledged these limitations, calling for an alternative to the scientific paradigm (Lather, 1991; Holmes, 1991; Street, 1992). They have argued for different ways of knowing in the profession.

Theoretically there has been some acknowledgement of the need for more critical approaches to nurse education leading to emancipatory (Habermas, 1972) outcomes or transformative practice (Mezirow, 1991) for nurse graduates. This is argued on the basis that, if nurses are to become agents of social change and achieve the professional aims of making a difference in the health system, programs that emphasise technical interests, will not achieve these ends. Such interests are espoused by the empirical-analytical sciences.

In practice, the architects of many nurse education programs including the one that is the focus of this study, have realised the shortcomings of nurse education that is based on the scientific paradigm and attempts have been made to adopt an alternative epistemology that is more in keeping with emancipatory interests. In the case of the programs that are offered by the universities featured here, this is consistent with the P.H.C. philosophy on which the programs are based. This philosophy is concerned with the empowerment of nurses to become more autonomous and self-determining in their role in the health care system.

This thesis has argued that higher education is inevitably shaped by the prevailing economic conditions that currently reflect an economic rationalist ideology and draws parallels between what is happening in higher education and the health care system.

The manner in which higher education has interpreted and responded to these changes is in many cases through a furthering of technical interests. The resulting environment in higher education is concerned with cause/effect relationships, instrumental rationality and goal directed activity. This ideology is manifested in educational practices such as the commodification of knowledge, the objective measurement of teaching outcomes, competency based education and standardised curricula. This is a tension that has been highlighted by many authors including Thorpe (2000), Young (1990) and Jakupec and Garrick (2000) who have identified a shift in higher education away from an emphasis on transformative outcomes towards building skills that meet economic ends. In the discipline of nursing, this is seen in endeavours such as the ones that have been the focus in this study where nursing programs are packaged and marketed and the shift both in Hong Kong and Australia towards competency-based standards set by nursing registration boards (Young, 1995) with a focus on learning outcomes and standards that are subsequently monitored by quality assurance initiatives.

The interpretation of the experiences of the academics that participated in this study reveals that they sense incongruence between the transformative approach and the emancipatory outcomes sought by the programs and the educational/health context where they are delivered. Hence, although the programs were developed by Australian academics with the intention to nurture more emancipatory and transformative outcomes for graduates in Hong Kong through an emphasis on P.H.C. and critical thinking, the students find the philosophies on which the programs are based, lack relevance to the work context where they practice. It needs to be recognised that even though the intention of academics might be to impart emancipatory outcomes for students through the learning process this is not necessarily the way in which the students will interpret their learning.

In reality, the academics acknowledged that one of the mitigating factors that possibly inhibit the students from being able to interpret and implement emancipatory outcomes in the workplace is the current wider economic and health care climate in Hong Kong. According to the academics this climate acts to inhibit the extent to which students can apply this knowledge to their workplace, where health care delivery tends to be based on the scientific paradigm. Unfortunately, it is problematic to infer why students do not

apply this knowledge to the workplace based on the limitation of the study that the students' experiences have not been canvassed directly. It is possible that one of the major problems students have with the program is not that it promotes practice which can't be implemented in Hong Kong but that by its nature it denies the lived experience of students whatever that might be.

Some of the academics who participated in this study have recognized that graduates find the task of bringing about change consistent with emancipatory learning outcomes within the health system that is modeled on technical rationality daunting and challenging. Many expressed frustration that such learning outcomes would not transfer to the practice setting where the students work. Other academics in Hong Kong and Australia acknowledged that the status quo does not necessarily have to be accepted. They were not beyond trying to encourage graduates to cast away the subservient positions in which they find themselves particularly those resulting from a history of medical dominance in the health system. However, given the characteristics of the health system, particularly as identified in Hong Kong, which are strongly advocating for a preservation of the medical model, medical dominance and competency based education, this transformation is even less likely to be practical in the future.

On a more personal level there seems to be a failure on the part of the Australian academics in particular to live out an emancipatory philosophy in their own work environment and this may be another contributing factor to the apparent failure of the curriculum. The Hong Kong academics seem to be enacting this approach more effectively than their Australian colleagues by their willingness to speak to the student in Cantonese and contextualise the curriculum.

This places academics in a vexed position of not knowing how to proceed with the future development nursing programs. To accede to the current trends serves to reinforce medical dominance and the preservation of the medical model thereby perpetuating the status quo and leading to less possibility of nurses becoming agents of change. To maintain the essence of the alternative proposition and persist with programs that have more emancipatory outcomes seem important if conditions conducive to the continued professionalisation of nursing are to be fostered.

Issues Related to Content and Models of Delivery in a Cross-Cultural Context

The nurse education programs that have been the focus of this research are not tailored for the culture where they are delivered. These programs are not alone in this respect as the literature suggests that many programs delivered in a cross-cultural context (Davis et al., 2000) are not modified for local needs. Furthermore, in this instance the lack of attention given to integrating material from Hong Kong is a result of the policy mandate that has been made at government level that the programs offered in Hong Kong are identical to those delivered in Australia where the programs were developed. This tends to be a very narrow and logistic interpretation by the particular institutional managers who are directly involved in this program and is not the case for all programs offered in a cross-cultural context.

It highlights however in this case study the extent to which policy is driven by the program managers and by their economic agendas in a context where education has become a commodity in trade in a global context. Such a requirement may seemingly serve technical interests, which, according to Habermas, (1971) are consistent with instrumental rationality and the economic demands of globalisation. However, complicit with the ethos of capitalism, the needs of consumers it could be argued must be satisfied in order for programs to survive. In the partnership involving the two universities in this study, this is not necessarily the case and there is little acknowledgement of the academic needs of the students in Hong Kong or of the academic freedom of academics embedded in which is a responsibility to facilitate student learning. Very possibly this reflects a certain complacency that has been established by the long term nature of the partnership that was instituted long before the level of competition from other nurse education providers that exists today was present.

There are different schools of thought regarding the effects on culture of education offered in a cross-cultural context. Some argue that the current globalising forces that have heralded changes in societies such as the dominance of Western institutions, knowledge and culture and attempts to create a global culture, (Ohmae, 1995; Soros, 1998; Capling et al., 1998) have led to a homogenisation of cultures (Ritzer, 1993;

Usher et al., 1997). Education offered cross-culturally in this context therefore has the potential to become yet another mechanism for attaining worldwide integration. Through an emphasis on a single global culture, complexities of cultural difference that exist in other cultures are being denied or annihilated (Thiong'O, 1986; Spivak, 1990; Lather, 1991; Falk, 1993; Jakupec & Yoon, 1999) while Western culture dominates (Foucault, 1981). There is not a universal acceptance of this stance however and another school of thought argues that there is a resurgence of local identities and cultures in response to these globalising forces.

In the case of this study, the practices that arise from policies such as the one mentioned above which mandates that certain knowledge, namely that from the West, and that particular languages, specifically English, are advanced at the expense of local culturally bound knowledge and languages perpetuate a homogenisation perspective. At face value, the material that is presented in the programs perpetuates Western nursing theories and epistemologies. The content of these programs is framed within a Western context and has been developed unilaterally by Australian academics.

Many of the Australian academics suggested that they were confidant that they were accommodating needs in Hong Kong. In their opinion, they had been cognizant of these needs and had included material that was culturally relevant. Yet, this had been done in isolation of colleagues in Hong Kong and with little cultural familiarisation. There was no evidence of collaboration between the two groups even where group work features so prominently as a strategy for facilitating student learning in Hong Kong. While some material does generalise across cultures, it is problematic when one culture assumes a dominant position that generally fails to account for cultural specificity or relevance for the culture where it is delivered.

In contrast to the position of the Australian academics there was a concern identified by many of the academics in Hong Kong that the material was lacking in cultural relevance and they therefore resisted these homogenising forces in the program. Their perception that there had not been sufficient attempt to tailor the programs to local conditions constituted a serious limitation for them. Many made reference to their efforts to redress this limitation and to include more culturally relevant material even though this was not factored into their contract with the university.

Several Hong Kong academics expressed the need to make the material more culturally relevant while the expectations of students was that they were more interested in the performative value of acquiring a degree from an Australian university and for whom the content did not seem to be all that important. From the point of view of these academics, and again it is recognised that the students views on this were not canvassed, the students adopted more of a cultural hybridisation attitude taking what was relevant for them and in addition being conscious of obtaining a qualification that would advance their marketability. This was identified by some of the academics as a strong motivating factor for students to enroll in the programs on the basis of expeditiously seeking a route to acquire a degree.

This presents a counter proposition to that presented earlier in that the Australian culture is being imposed on Hong Kong, which passively accepts the material that is delivered. The responses of some of the academics in Hong Kong indicate that it is the desire of some students to adopt what is Western because it constitutes a form of cultural capitalism and that in fact it positions graduates favourably. It is highly probable that the delivery of the program in Hong Kong does not exclusively imply a form of colonialism but that it constitutes knowledge gathering on the part of Hong Kong which is then used to value add to their own body of knowledge on health and nursing. Given the comments made by some academics that the health system and the nursing profession in Hong Kong are considerably delayed in their development compared to Australia, it may well be the case that the body of knowledge that is being imparted will inform future developments in that country.

Another area that was raised by the academics as a source of tension was in respect of culturally appropriate modes of delivery. The programs that have been the focus of this study have been developed by Australian academics, who revealed that they have limited exposure and knowledge of the learning context in Asia. The modes of delivery and teaching strategies or techniques that are recommended throughout the learning packages have a strong Western bias. There have been no identified attempts on the part of the Australian academics to familiarise themselves with the Hong Kong context or to collaborate with Hong Kong academics to include in the learning packages suggestions for the delivery of the material that are more 'user friendly' for the cohort of students in that culture. Hence while there are some teaching strategies that transfer

across cultures, there are certain subtleties of learning in the Asian culture that warrant acknowledgement if a program is to have integrity in meeting student needs.

There are several examples identified in this study of incongruence between what the literature suggests as ways to facilitate students learning in an Asian context and the practice observed by the academics employed in these programs. Firstly, there is a body of literature that explores teaching and learning practices in Asian compared to Western cultures using an East/West binary approach (Huntington, 1993; Ang & Stratton, 1995; Robinson, 1999). Although Burbles (1997) argues that such a stance is problematic since binaries of this nature are arbitrary, they suppress difference and ultimately become agents of control, there is a considerable body of literature on deep, surface and achieving approaches and their application to learning in the Asian context reinforces the East/west binary (Biggs, 1990; Biggs, 1992; Biggs, 1996). The conclusions reached by these studies suggest that, compared to students from the West, there are differences in the way Asian students use memorisation as part of the learning process. For Asian students, memorisation is more likely to be a step that leads to later adopting a deep approach rather than as an end in itself. The issues raised by the academics in this particular study suggest that students struggle to master learning strategies such as critical thinking that are more compatible with adopting a deep approach. The academics perceive their role as facilitators of learning to be one of stimulating and modelling the development and mastery of such strategies.

One of the factors that possibly contribute to the struggles the students experience in adopting a deep approach arises from the use of English as the medium of instruction. While this is a requirement of the program, it is questioned by some academics in Hong Kong who perceive the students to be struggling with the presentation of material exclusively in English. Several academics indicated that they compensate by delivering some of their presentations in Cantonese. Many academics referred to the student preference for this practice even though students should have had a satisfactory level of English comprehension and expression mastery before being accepted into the programs.

In addition to the difficulties with oral comprehension, it also appears to be a challenge for the students to master the written readings, which are provided to them. There were

reports from the academics that the students engage in behaviours such as translating the material word for word into Chinese. Perhaps more clarity needs to be provided to students as to what constitutes essential reading. Although authors such as Robinson (1999) contend that, given the current trend towards the hybridisation of cultures, the distinction between East and West has become poorly differentiated, the experiences of the academics in this study suggests that this may not necessarily be the case. The issues they have raised in respect of the use of a non-native language as the mode of instruction do need to be recognised as an important contextual factor that impinges on how Asian students perform academically. Without this recognition, there is likely to be a level of frustration and anxiety associated with learning and therefore a considerable compromise to the learning outcomes.

Another area of incongruence identified by the academics concerns assessment strategies. The assessment tasks have been written from an Australian perspective and tend to emphasise English expression and the development of a critical argument. The criteria for assessing a piece of work as satisfactory are based on Western standards. These expectations fail to take into account the students' academic history. The literature suggests that the nature of the education system in Hong Kong tends to minimise the emphasis placed on written expression in assessment tasks (Johnson, 1994). Even when written tasks are required, synthesis rather than analysis is sought (Regimi, 1991; Salili, 1996). Furthermore, the literature highlights issues related to the student's mastery of English namely that the manner in which Asian students, whose first language is based on logographic script, learn to express themselves in English, is different from their English-speaking counterparts (Vernon, 1985). There is a mismatch therefore between the programs' emphasis on written skills that need to be reflected in assessment tasks in order for a piece of work to be satisfactory and the preparation that is offered to the students to develop those essential skills. It is suggested by some of the academics that these limitations in English expression may be one of the factors that exacerbate a student's inclination to plagiarise. Whatever the case, students need additional support in helping them develop sound academic writing skills.

A final area of incongruence between what the literature suggests and the experiences of the academics in this study is in respect of group work and its meaning in a collectivist culture. A number of authors have referred to the collectivist nature of

Asian societies (Hofstede, 1983; Salili, 1996; Tang, 1996) and the preference for Asian students to work in groups. This preference is not necessarily reflected in the experiences of the academics who have identified a number of issues relating to the use of group work. It could well be that other contextual factors such as the student work commitments and availability to meet with each other need to be considered alongside any cultural values that favour working in groups.

Other literature regarding the Asian learner from Hong Kong has explored Confucian philosophy as underpinning the way Asian students approach their learning (On, 1996). While little accommodation for this philosophy is made in the way the programs have been designed, some of the academics in Hong Kong suggested that they 'value add' and their capacity to do this appears to be related to their understanding and familiarity with the culture arising from their own Chinese roots. The importance of the notion of understanding the culture was also acknowledged by the academics who identified that the students have a better rapport with the Hong Kong born academics than those who are expatriates living in Hong Kong.

Issues Related to Management and Administration

This ideology of dominance is also evident in the management and administration of higher education. At the management level, it is evident in decision-making practices that silence the academics' and students' voices. In this study this has been manifested in the way decisions pertaining to the management, policymaking and marketing of the programs have been the mandate of management and administration staff largely at the exclusion of the academics. These roles seem to have been enshrined into the working relationship that was established between the two universities where there appears to have been a history for program managers and coordinators to make decisions in isolation of the academics.

The interpretation of the experiences of the academics suggest that they in turn have responded to this lack of ownership in the management, administration and policy making of the programs by a distinct lack of motivation, an abdication of their

responsibility in these areas and giving greater authority to the administrative and management staff for program implementation including decisions of an academic nature. Such practices have been identified by the academics as endemic in both the Hong Kong and Australian cultures wherein this study is set. In Hong Kong, partly because of cultural reasons but also due to the fact that academics are employed to facilitate the courses on a casual basis, the level of academic involvement in program management and policy formation and implementation is even less.

To date this thesis has presented a rather critical view of management as being dominant and hierarchical perhaps even more so in Australia than in Hong Kong. However, given the complexity of the economic and cultural environments that have been described throughout this thesis, it may well be that even if management practices were more equitable and collaborative, there would still be difficulties and problems similar to those that have been described. The nature of the relationship of management with the academics has possibly only compounded the difficulties that would have otherwise occurred.

Implications for Future Educational Practice

This study has identified a number of issues that have implications for the future of higher education in health in a cross-cultural context. It has revealed that there is a need for a raised consciousness on the part of academics to persist in presenting alternative epistemologies of a more critical nature if nursing is to advance as a profession. This ideally would lead to a process of enlightenment and ideology critique through collaborative discourse, resulting in actions that counter the hegemonic forces to which nurses have been subjected (Street, 1992). As a result, empowerment of nurses, their colleagues and their patients would ensue.

A critical approach such as suggested by Street (1992) evokes actions that in Thompson's (1987) view, would confront institutionalised power relations and domination in the nursing profession and consequently engage individuals to become involved in new emancipatory patterns of practical action. Raising consciousness is a

precursor to such transformative social action. In the case of nursing, given the socialisation of nurses which for the greater part has precluded them from experiencing learning outside the domain of the empirical sciences and their consequent socialisation in the health system where they have assumed a subordinate role dominated by medicine, change is likely to be slow in forthcoming. Nurses, therefore who historically have been blinded by the false consciousness that the hegemony of medicine is supreme, will need time to operationalise their raised consciousness into concerted strategies for action.

As Habermas (cited in Held, 1981) suggests, the way forward once consciousness is raised, is for nursing academics to create 'dialogue chances' in order to address 'ideological dominance' which has pervaded nurse education and practice. By making the ideological constraints more explicit and by becoming involved in collaborative acts of practical action and a rational critique of social life, nurse academics are more likely to question the taken for granted assumptions that are implicit in the scientific paradigm of education and the hegemony of medicine. Essential to this process is on-going collaboration. Given the forces of Western capitalism, such changes are much more likely to occur if nurse academics become agents of change through integration, rather than through attempts to overrule.

The genesis of this change will need to start with open dialogue between those at the grass roots of the nursing profession such as academics and practitioners, and others in the health and education systems. This would mean direct involvement as equals with medical personnel, policy makers and government representatives in the health system, while at the higher education level, collaboration with university administration and participatory research initiatives with other disciplines is called for. Such collaboration needs to occur across all facets of education programs including management, policymaking, content and mode of delivery. The way forward thereafter is for nursing academics to use their newfound sense of empowerment and to break their silence in order for their voices to be heard, thereby allowing them to assume greater autonomy.

It might be argued that the creation of such a level of empowerment as is proposed by a critical social theory framework is idealistic and not grounded in reality. The current forces including structural and resource constraints that exist in the environment in

which this study is contextualised certainly do provide some barriers to what realistically is possible in terms of change. Greater levels of collaboration have time and cost implications that could be problematic considering the pressures that impinge on workers in the health system as well as in higher education. While these constraints need to be acknowledged they need not circumvent action and change.

From the cultural perspective, the identified mismatch between the perceptions of the Australian academics who thought that they had accounted for cultural differences and the observations of the Hong Kong academics that this had not occurred is significant. It highlights a need for greater awareness on the part of the Australian academics to recognise the 'difference beyond' (Burbules, 1997). For this to occur, it is necessary for academics to acknowledge Robinson's (1999) proposal that asks for a critique of the language and understandings that underpin practice and realise that what enables us to make meaning in one culture may not be relevant for another culture. It also heralds the need for greater collaboration between the academics from the two cultures and more awareness on the part of the Australian academics who seem to be blinded by some false consciousness that they are currently developing programs that are tailored for the local needs in Hong Kong. The presence of the academics in Hong Kong and the cultural input they provide including the rapport they have with students by virtue of their cultural understanding has significant practice implications.

This study also signals possibilities for future research. It has focused on the academics alone. However in order for a more comprehensive view of this educational partnership to be obtained the voices of the students and managers have to be explored. The academics have on several occasions recommended greater student input into decisions to do with their education. Furthermore, the voices of management who have been portrayed as dominant need to be reflected in future research as it may well be that they are unaware of the power that has been attributed to them by the academics.

Finally, this study has also intended to reveal the views of the academics with the intention of analysing their experiences. To this point the experiences of the academics have only been presented, but they have not been actively involved in any concerted processes of change. It is hoped that this study provides some impetus for the input of academics into the education of nurses in a cross-cultural health setting to be revealed.

There is now scope to take the findings of this study further to work with the academics in bringing about the suggested changes.

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APPENDIX ONE: QUESTIONNAIRE INSTRUMENT

This questionnaire has been developed as part of a doctoral study that explores the experiences of educators involved in developing and delivering educational programs in nursing. These programs have been developed by the Australian University* for delivery in both Australia and in Hong Kong by educators employed at the Asian University*.

The research addresses the following questions:

* What are the academic, administrative, policy and resource issues faced by educators involved in developing and delivering nurse education programs in Australia using a perspective transformation approach for a market in Hong Kong that values empirical approaches to health care and education?

* How can the courses be made more relevant to the needs of the students employed in the health care system in Hong Kong?

I am interested to hear about your experiences as an educator who is involved in the programs through your responses to the questionnaire. The questionnaire identifies number of educational issues and practices that are relevant to students at a microscopic and macroscopic level. The questionnaire will therefore cover questions that explore issues at a cultural/academic and work level. It will also explore issues at a systemic level. Some of the issues canvassed by the questionnaire may be more relevant than others to you but I would appreciate your response as far as you are able to answer.

Some cues for details about each of the issues are listed in the comments section.

It would be appreciated if you could complete the questionnaire and accompanying ethics form and return them to me at your earliest convenience. At a later stage I would like to follow up your responses to the questionnaire with an interview to elucidate any points you may have made. For this reason I would appreciate if you provide your contact details below.

Thank you for your willingness to take part in this research.

Lucia Vardanega

Please provide your contact details here:

Name_____ **Email address:**_____

* Information which would identify universities has been omitted.

QUESTIONNAIRE INSTRUMENT

ISSUE: CONTENT	
Practice	Comments
Appropriateness of learning material for the cultural context in Hong Kong	Please provide detailed comments on aspects of the content of the learning material i.e. lectures, written packages that are culturally appropriate to the context in Hong Kong. Give specific examples Comment on aspects of the content of the learning material that are culturally exclusive and/or culturally inclusive. Provide specific examples Give any suggestions of changes that could be made to the content of the learning material, so that it becomes more culturally inclusive.
Relevance of the material for the work context of students in Hong Kong	Please comment on the ways in which the content of the material makes links between theory and clinical practice for the students. Provide examples where relevant. Comment on the appropriateness of the theoretical concepts covered in the material to the work context of the students in Hong Kong. Provide any specific examples. Comment on aspects of the content that encourage students to explore and apply different theoretical models to their work context. What suggestions do you have for making the content more relevant to the work context in Hong Kong
Relevance of the material to Hong Kong health system	Please give examples of where the content addresses the following requirements of the wider health system in Hong Kong Government legislation Registration requirements for nurses Hospital and community nursing practices/standards Provide any suggestions for changes to the content of the material that would make it more relevant to the health system in Hong Kong

ISSUE: MODE OF DELIVERY	
Practices	Comments
Appropriateness of the mode of delivery for cultural context in Hong Kong	Please comment in detail on the following aspects of the mode of delivery and their suitability for students in Hong Kong. Give examples where relevant Teaching and learning strategies Assessment strategies Use of English as the language of instruction Role of facilitator to deliver programs Comment on whether the modes of delivery used in these programs are appropriate for the student cohort in Hong Kong. What suggestions would you make to change the modes of delivery that would make them more congruent with the learning needs of the students in Hong Kong?
Relevance of the modes of delivery for the work context of students in Hong Kong	Please comment on the appropriateness of the following aspects of delivery for students Frequency of classes/tutorial sessions Attendance requirements Times when class/tutorial sessions are scheduled Comment on any changes that could be implemented to make the delivery of the courses more responsive to the demands of the students' work contexts.

Relevance of the modes of delivery to Hong Kong health system	Please comment on how relevant the modes of delivery are to the context of the Hong Kong health system. What changes can be made to the modes of delivery to make them more responsive to the needs of the Hong Kong health system.
ISSUE: **RESOURCES** Practices Appropriateness of the learning resources for cultural context in Hong Kong	Comments Please comment on the following aspects of the resources designed to meet the academic needs of the students What are the deficits of the library? What are the limitations of the I.T. facilities? What are limitations of the written print material? How could the resources be improved to become more responsive to student needs?
Relevance of the resources for the work context of students in Hong Kong	Please comment on the following: How accessible are the library resources to the students considering their work demands? How accessible are I.T. resources to the students considering their work demands? How effective are these resources in facilitating student learning? How can the resources be tailored to the needs of the student's work context more?
Relevance of resources to the Hong Kong health system	Please comment on the relevance of the learning resources to the specific needs of the Hong Kong health system

ISSUE: EDUCATIONAL POLICY	
Practices	Comments
Appropriateness of the educational policies for cultural context in Hong Kong	Please comment on the following What educational policies exist at the University level? Who developed these policies? How accessible are these policies to staff and students? How are these policies enforced? To what extent are these policies tailored to the cultural context? What changes could be made in these policies to make them more relevant to the cultural context?
Relevance of the educational policies for the work context of students in Hong Kong	Comment on whether the existing university policies reflect awareness of the work context of students in Hong Kong What changes could be made to these policies to keep them relevant to the work context?
Relevance of the policies to the Hong Kong health system.	Comment on whether the demands of the Hong Kong health system are reflected in the university policies What improvements could be made to the policies so they show greater recognition of the needs of the Hong Kong health system

ISSUE: **ADMINISTRATION**	
Practice	Comments
Appropriateness of the administrative services for cultural context in Hong Kong	Please comment on the following aspects of the administrative support available for the students. Give examples where appropriate What changes could be made to improve pre-enrolment support? How can enrolment support be improved? How could the level of post-enrolment support for the students be improved?
Relevance of the administrative support for the work context of students in Hong Kong	Comment on the accessibility of the administrative support to students considering their work demands? How could administrative support services for the students be improved?
Relevance of the administrative support to the demands of Hong Kong health system	Please comment on the responsiveness of the administrative support to the specific demands of the Hong Kong health system.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX TWO: CONSENT FORM

I _____ agree to participate in the research project "Delivering Distance Learning Programs in Hong Kong: 'Lessons' from the Experiences of Health Educators and Students" being conducted by Lucia Vardanega, [...]* who is currently enrolled at the University of Technology, Sydney in the Doctorate of Education.

I understand that the purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of educators from the University of [...]* and the [...]*. I understand that the study will investigate the experiences for educators both in Australia and Hong Kong who are designing, developing and implementing courses in a cross cultural context.

I understand that my participation in the project will involve completing a questionnaire and a follow up interview over a period of time. I will also be invited to read the researcher's interpretation of the material I provide for my comments.

I am aware that I can contact Lucia Vardanega or her supervisor Dr. Viktor Jacupec (Telephone 02 – 9514 3846) if I have any concerns about the research. For any enquires from participants in Hong Kong please contact Dr. [...]* - Academic Dean, [....]*. I also understand I am free to withdraw my participation from this research project at any time I wish without giving a reason. Any other relationship e.g colleague/colleague which exists between me and the researcher or me and any other research participant in this study will not be jeopardised by my decision to withdraw from participation.

I agree that Lucia Vardanega has answered all my questions fully and clearly.

I agree that the research data gathered from this project will be treated confidentially and may be published in a form that does not identify me in any way.

Signed by_____ Date___/___/___

NOTE:
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, Ms Susanna Davis (ph: 9514 1279). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome. Ethics approval has also been gained from the University in Sydney and Hong Kong Ethics Committees to approve this research.

* Information identifying both universities has been deleted for reasons of confidentiality.