Afterword: Responses to Internationalization in the UK and the International context and a survey on responses to Intercultural Communication teaching

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1. The context of internationalization

This afterword considers the context of internationalization in the UK and in China. In this we will consider the aspect of students numbers and types in the UK and of some responses to the changing situation in China. This author also presents and comments on a small-scale survey and research project which looks at one way of helping the international student to adapt, through the teaching of intercultural communication. The conclusion is that this and the other means of responding to the needs of the Chinese learner proposed by our authors in this book can contribute to a positive outcome for the students in our care.

This collection of chapters/book has shown how the issue of internationalization has permeated universities in East Asia (China and Hong Kong) and in the UK. It also shows the strategies applied at different institutional levels in Higher Education contexts. Universities in China such as Shandong University and the Chinese University of Hong Kong demonstrate the commitment to internationalization at a strategic level, as does the work of a range of universities in China referred to here. Academic staff in China are keenly aware of how their society is changing, and how this affects the values of students in this society, as can be seen in the chapter from the China University of Mining and Technology (Yang, this volume) as well as the insight contributed by changing metaphors for the role of students and teachers (Jin, Cortazzi & Wang, this volume). Other authors from the UK and from China have contributed ideas to this volume on how managers, teaching staff and students come to terms with their new situation and problems. They demonstrate the need for management of the experience through the intervention of teaching staff inside and outside the classroom (Devlin & Peacock, this volume, the sharing of quality assurance procedures to level the playing field for all international students in any country (McNaught & Curtis , this volume), the application of new teaching techniques (Littlewood, this volume) and the contribution of support service staff.

In the UK internationalization was for a long time seen from the point of view of sending British students to study in other European countries. Now, fewer "home" students from Britain are studying European languages and the reach of UK university courses has extended to other Francophone or Hispanophone areas, as at the university of Portsmouth, which sends students to North Africa or Latin/South America as well to the mainland of France and of Spain. In the meantime, the number of students studying Chinese in the UK has risen with more university courses at undergraduate level offered by UK universities, as can be seen in the figures from CILT (2007).

- ***Chinese** and **Japanese** both suffered large decreases in students from 1998/9 to 2001/2, but have experienced large boosts in numbers in recent years, since 2002/3.*

Chinese	*% change 1998-9 to 2001-2*	**2002-3**	**2003-4**	**2004-5**	**2005-6**	*% change 2002-3 to 2005-6*
Chinese	*-16%*	605	685	755	850	*+40%*

Figure 1: number of students studying Chinese in UK HEIs Source: CILT (2007)

Internationalization has been seen in the past in terms of the number of students coming inward (Rastall, 2006) but is now seen increasingly as a two-way process. More and more Chinese students are now self-funding. Both Don Olcott and Lin Zheng (this volume) make us aware of the mixed motivations for the support of university management for internationalization; however, in the goodwill on the part of the academic authors writing here, the desire to be truly international is apparent. This volume has tried to redress the balance found in much literature in this field which looks at internationalization from the perspective of Western universities by including many contributions from China which share insights not previously available such as those from Wang, Yang and McNaught & Curtis (this volume).

Previous authors have articulated the idea that we cannot categorize one type of student as "the Chinese Learner" (Coverdale-Jones and Rastall, 2006). The type of course or student or university affects the motivations at institutional level or at the level of personal choice. (Zheng, this volume). The different perspectives of the two cultures can be seen in the chapter by Smith & Zhou. As noted by Edwards and Ran "It would be a serious mistake to treat Chinese-speaking students as a homogeneous group". Bill Littlewood also addresses this in terms of teaching methodology which can expand the classroom activity of the reputedly "passive" Chinese learner, rather than conforming to the stereotypical view of the Chinese learner as a mere listener.

The three main dimensions to internationalization within higher education institutions (HEIs) are highlighted by Paul Rastall: internationalization of HEI procedures and practices; impact on the curriculum and the student view of the international learning experience. In their chapter based on the presentation at the conference in Portsmouth "Internationalizing the University", Yvonne Turner and Siobhan Devlin (this volume) focus not only on Chinese students but also on the challenges facing HEIs in handling international students. They note that the concept of internationalization is highly contested. The question is whether internationalization should be seen as a response to globalization or as an agent of globalization.

2. Internationalization in the UK: students from Asia

 The increasing trend in UK Higher Education has been the subject of many observations and statistical measures. According to The Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA, 2005) in 2003/04 there were approximately 90,000 students from EU countries (excluding the UK), whereas in the same year there were approximately 211,000 students from non-EU countries.

The same can be seen in other countries , not only for learning English but also other subjects taught in English– Germany, Finland. Chinese immigration into Europe overall is highest in Italy, Germany and Spain with the UK in fourth place; in terms of study places, however, the UK is the leading destination.

> "In the UK, for example, figures from 2001 show that around 18,000 Chinese students are enrolled in British institutions of higher education, making them the largest group out of a total of 143,000 foreign students. This figure is a 71 percent increase on 2000. Preliminary International Organization for Migration (IOM) figures for 2002 show a further increase of 67 percent, taking the likely total to over 40,000. Other countries in northern Europe have also reported a sharp increase in the number of students from China. In the Netherlands, the number of Chinese students increased by 50 percent between 2000 and 2001. Germany also

saw an increase, from 6,526 in 1999 to 9,109 in 2000. Chinese student numbers have also increased in France. Most Chinese students are pursuing courses in science, technology, and business studies." (Laczko, 2003) http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?ID=144

This rising trend has continued in recent years. In 2005/6 forty-two per cent of non-UK domiciled students were from Asia, 33% from European countries, 9% from Africa, 7% from North America, and 4% from the Middle East (Higher Education Statistics Agency,2005/2006). This gives a total from Asia of 138,633 (42%), whereas UUK figures for 2006 give a total of c. 132,275:

	First degree	Other undergraduate	Higher degree (taught)	Higher degree (research)	Other postgraduate
Asia	52,450	8,990	51,775	15,215	3,845

Figure 2: Numbers of Asain students in UK HEIs in 2006 (Source Universities UK (n.d.))

The Universities UK survey of international student enrolments at UK HEIs in 2006/07 noted that 70% of respondents reported an overall increase in international student enrolments and 64% reported an increase in EU student enrolments, 79% of institutions reported that they had increased their marketing and recruitment efforts this year, 34% of respondents stated that they had exceeded their institutional target compared with 17% last year, The top five increases in relative terms (countries with the most significant percentage increase reported for student numbers) were: Poland, Pakistan, Nigeria, Germany, and India.

3. International partnerships with China

The efforts of UK universities to extend their campus bases into China can be seen in projects such as those in Liverpool Jiaotong and Ningbo Nottingham. Douglas Tallack from the University of Nottingham (2006) believes there will be a change from the current model of internationalization over the course of the next 15 years. By then he sees UK universities as offering offer consultancy for others seeking to develop overseas, with students and staff increasingly expecting foreign opportunities. However, he believes that there will still be a need to making the commitment to recruit abroad a two-way process (Tallack, 2006). In this two-way process, the motivation of students can be crucial. UK applicants are attracted by the guarantee of study abroad, but many do not want to risk their grade averages by going abroad. Nottingham offers the same modules at all three campuses Nottingham, Ningbo and Malaysia) so students have a foreign experience without going to a foreign university. Chinese students are also attracted by the "foreign experience", studying in a British institution and environment. This makes them attractive to Chinese employers while they are still able to keep their local connections, which can be an important factor in gaining employment after graduation. All this is possible for the Chinese students without the expense and upheaval of travelling to the UK for a year's study.

In addition, internationalization in China has important consequences for the area of academic and research partnerships, which is an area attracting government support in the UK. John Denham, Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, speaking in a House of Commons debate on 26 July 2007 demonstrated the UK government support for this two-way process in the academic context:

"The Government support numerous initiatives to promote closer partnerships with China. Following the Prime Minister's initiative, more than 50,000 Chinese students are currently studying in the UK. The UK-China partners in science initiative identifies potential areas of research collaboration and funds networking between scientists. The research councils will shortly open their first overseas office in Beijing. Our relationship is highly productive. In 2005, this country published more papers jointly with Chinese authors than any other European Union country."

(Hansard: 26 July 2007 : Column 1049)

The Chinese approach to internationalization also has the support of government, as referred to in the introduction to this volume. Approval has been given for many universities to open up franchise, articulation or other agreements with Western universities. The third conference in the series "Responding to the Needs of the Chinese Learner" was held at Shandong University in November 2007, in a cooperation between the University of Portsmouth and Shandong University.

4. The student experience of the "year abroad"

This author has conducted a research project, supported by the Higher Education Academy Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies Subject Centre into the benefits of raising student awareness of intercultural issues while they are studying in the UK. This was in the context of a course in Intercultural Communication, offered as an option to final level undergraduate students, many of whom were in the first year of study in the UK. (Their previous studies in China or Hong Kong were credited under articulation agreements with the University of Portsmouth.)

Other research on the "year abroad" has addressed the experience of British students who study in other, mostly European, countries. Current thinking in this area cites the benefits of this experience as a) deep learning, holistic learning (Crawshaw, 2005; Jordan, 2002) and b) an improvement in criticality, self-awareness & problem-solving (Mitchell et al, 2005; Crawshaw, 2005). Many of our undergraduate Chinese students are doing a "top-up" year, effectively a year abroad (but not returning to finish a final year in most cases.) There are clear parallels between the learning which can be achieved by Chinese students in the UK and that of the UK student groups previously studied. The question is also whether Chinese students can integrate enough to gain full benefit from their "year abroad" and achieve equivalent outcomes to those of the European students.

The starting point for the research project (Coverdale-Jones, 2005) was a belief in the benefits of studying abroad and the belief that there was a common thread of experience with British students. The aim of a course in Intercultural Communication was not only the academic study but also to help students to learn from their experience of living in another culture. This would avoid the negative effects which can arise from a period abroad, leading to the "otherisation" of the "other" population (Holliday, Hyde and Kullman, 2004). Students who had previously taken this course had commented informally and in unit feedback that they felt they had increased their understanding and thus had a more rewarding experience, both during and after the end of the course in their working lives or continued studies. The course had the aim of deepening the learning experience, before, during & after the year abroad. Other universities have adopted different strategies such as the English speaking clubs to manage the integration of international students and provide opportunities for deepening linguistic and cultural knowledge (Devlin & Peacock, 2008, this volume). The isolation of Chinese students is also referred to by Edwards

and An Ran (2008, this volume). In this course there was a mix of nationalities, including a group of French students who joined in the second semester. (In the following year UK students were also included.) However, the focus here is on the responses from Chinese (PRC and HK) students.

This theme has been researched on a national scale by the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA, 2007). This looks at how many UK universities are offering orientation programmes and other follow-up activities. They found a highly variable range of "orientation" courses which gives cause for concern:

> "The participation rate in orientation programmes remains not much above 50%, raising questions about whether the non-participating students are missing out on crucial support. Students arriving at times other than the start of term are also missing out, as few institutions offer on-demand orientation at other times. Most institutions could also improve the effectiveness of orientation by offering follow-up sessions throughout the year, rather than simply a one-off event." (UKCISA, 2007)

4.1 A practical approach; enhancing the student experience of study abroad

The questions in the research project were to evaluate the students' perceptions about the benefits of intercultural learning, in terms of personal benefits, academic benefits and their experience of living and studying abroad. The avoidance of stereotyping referred to above A further question linked to this was - what can we do about it? This research was supported by the Pedagogical Research find of the HEA LLAS Subject Centre.

A questionnaire was given in the academic year 2005-2006 to sixty Semester 2 students (39 replies) and to twenty-seven Semester 1 students in Semester 1 (21 replies), on "with English" undergraduate courses[2], plus interviews with a random sample & comparison with later groups. The majority of these students were Chinese (PRC and Hong Kong) with a small number of French students who joined the course in Semester 2.There was a later comparison between Semester 2 & 1 students and a wider discussion in focus groups. The results from the focus groups did not supply any different responses to the interviews and questionnaires. The responses did not vary greatly between nationalities. In looking at the data, a further aim was to compare experiences at mid-point in the year abroad and towards the end of it, in order to see effects of Acculturation process.

There were parallels in this cohort with British and European students who study abroad. Only a small number of students had lived in another country before, mostly for very short stays with two longer stays. This profile is similar to British students doing a year abroad. In the same way, they resembled UK students in that few had worked before, or studied abroad. Some students had studied Intercultural Communication before. The writers in this field they were likely to have heard of were E.T. Hall (20 in Semester 2 group/2 in Semester 1 group), Hofstede (28 /10) & Trompenaars (24/5)

When asked whether the experience of studying abroad had changed their views, students at the end of Semester 2 indicated that this had had some effect on their way of thinking. 55% said they had a different attitude to study now, seventy percent said they saw their home country in a different way. There remained almost forty percent who still preferred the culture in their home country and 17% who still preferred the culture of learning in their home country. This

indicates that the majority of students had learned to see themselves in a different way. Whether this was due to the nature of their stay abroad or the learning in the course remains uncertain at this point, but comments in interviews and answers to later questions indicates that the course had helped them to understand the other culture better. One example comes from a male student aged 21, from Hong Kong:

> As British classmates and hallmates may have expressed their views and feelings on my behaviourand life style, it just provides me a chance to think 'am i really like that?' i have never thought about myself in this way. (Male, aged21, HKSAR)

The next two figures show the relative changes between Semesters 1 and 2.

These responses at different stages of the acculturation process show the effect of acculturation. Unsurprisingly, more recently arrived students miss home more and do not prefer many things about the UK (4%, rising to 19% after a longer acculturation period).
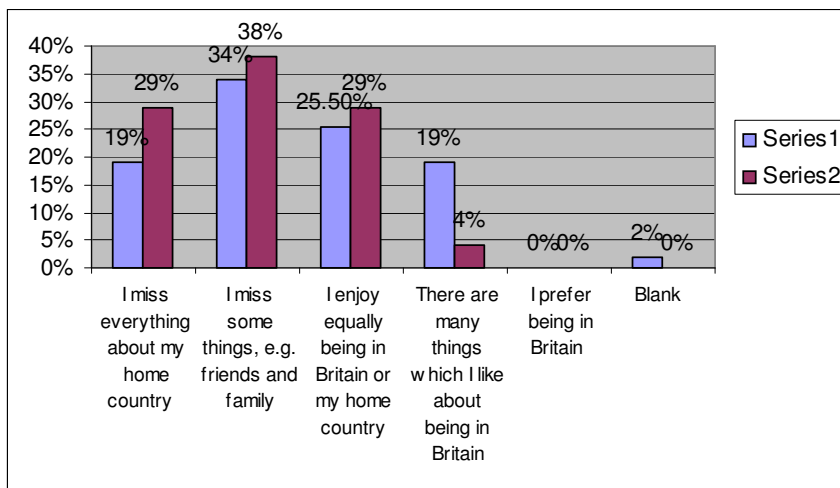

Figure 3: responses to the question "How do you think about your home country now?"

Series 1 = Semester 2 students after eight months in the UK;

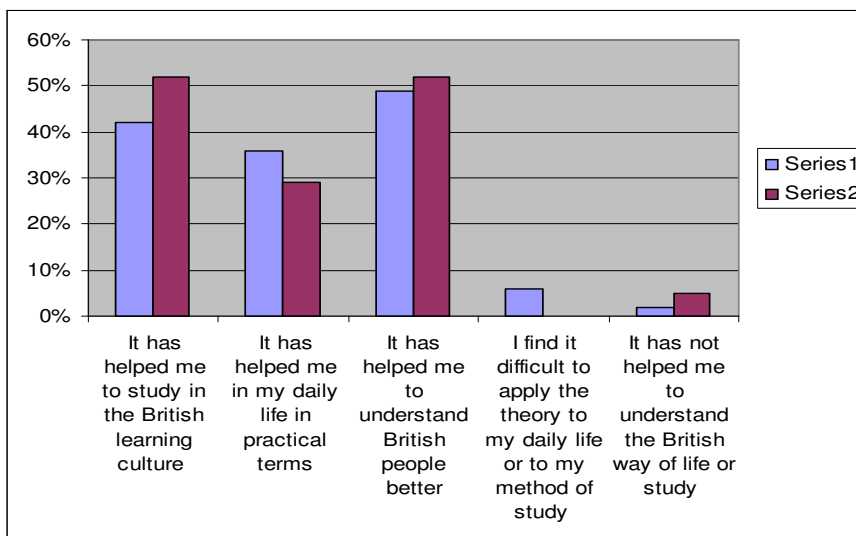Series 2 = Semester 1 students after four months in the UK

Figure 4: Responses to the question "Do you think learning about cultural differences has helped you to understand the new culture more easily?"

> Series 1 students at end of semester 2, after eight months in the UK

> Series 2 students at end of semester 1, after four months in the UK

Whilst these two graphs do not show vastly significant differences between the two cohorts, it can be seen from Figure 2 that the more recent arrivals (Series 2), who may be less confident in the new culture, show a slightly higher appreciation of how the course has helped them to study and helped them in their daily lives. The search for meaning and explanation of the other behaviour is likely to be more important for students at earlier stage of acculturation. One example from an interview comment explains how a student tries to apply what he has learnt:

> **YF, Male, aged 28, PRC**

> YF: yes, there is a lot of experiences I haven't encountered in here. When things happen, I try to apply theory to situations and explain it in theoretic way. I am trying to think of an example…. Oh, yes, just hospitality things I mentioned…do things as a group, which is oriental culture. Once I was in my friends flat, people cook and eat on their own although some of them don't know how to cook. They don't cook together. When I first get there, I don't used to it.

> T: After you have learned this course, will you know their behaviour easier?

> YF: Yes, now I won't think they are selfish or whatever, just their culture.

Another example from an interview with a Beijing undergraduate student who had been in Portsmouth for almost a year:

(M, female, age 21, PRC, paraphrase)

> Sure. I think a very significant difference is China is masculinity country. I think in Britain , people are more considerate about elder people. In China don't care about elder people. Like at Brittany Ferries even supervisor or manager show respect to elder people. In China nobody would employ old people. It is age discrimination. Elder people are not looked after well in society like in family.

These examples show how the academic learning had helped the students to analyze their life experience outside the classroom. In deepening learning, criticality and problem-solving, as referred to above (Crawshaw, 2005; Jordan, 2002; Mitchell et al, 2005), one of the major aims of the course in improving the personal experience for the students was realized.

4.2 Sources of stress

The problems of a lack of integration into the larger student group, noted above can be both a source of and a cause of increased stress levels among international students. Other sources of stress would normally be encountered on international placements for commercial or study purposes. When students in this survey were asked about the sources of stress they

encountered in the new culture, and how they dealt with these, the most frequently mentioned items were in the areas around study and language difficulties. Coping strategies were generally uncontroversial and non-confrontational.

Areas around study	improve language, organize, talk with friends, Get used to new learning style
expenses	spend wisely
racism and unfriendliness	ignore
cultural differences	adapt / be deferential
time attitudes (e.g. hand-in deadlines), shop opening hours	finish work on time & plan
English language	"Study more hard"
Situation in halls of residence	ignore

Figure 5: Sources of stress and ways of dealing with these

Some comments from respondents:

- Eat and Drink and smoke...as a result ,i am 2 stones heavier than I was. (sic) (HK, F)

- Work harder (PRC, F)

- I cry a lot (HK, F)

- Change my learning style: from a passive one to a more active one (PRC, M)

Examples of what students preferred in UK show a range of items, from the perceived material comforts:

(Fresh air and natural environment (HK, F, 23);

clean air, prices of choc cheaper, China, F, 29);

to the more lifestyle aspects

(less people here, can enjoy the quiet environment (China, F, 29);

free living style of Britain (China, M, 24);

I enjoy the life of living on my own here (HK, F, 21);

and life style in Britain is rather relaxing than in China, Britain's infrastructure is more advanced. politeness of the majority (HK, F, 21)

These comments from students show the complexity of their individual experiences and interpretations of these. As they are able to acculturate, they develop strategies which enable them to get more out of their year abroad. The emotional factors clearly have a major influence on the whole academic and life experience.

4.3 Acculturation

Acculturation is generally recognized as a gradual process. The amount of time it takes to acculturate will vary considerably due to variables in personality, context and motivation. In the survey, students who had been longer in the UK (8 months) were asked about where they perceived themselves to be in terms of the well-known acculturation curve (Euphoria or Honeymoon stage, Culture Shock, Acculturation, Stable State). Of the group, two found themselves in the Culture Shock phase, sixteen in the Acculturation phase, whilst twenty-eight rated themselves as being in a stable state. The notable absence of self-assessment as in the Culture Shock phase could be attributed to various reasons such as a wish to see themselves in a positive light, or to avoid offending the tutor (this researcher), or to a lack of full awareness of what this means. On the other hand, informal comments from students suggested that knowing about Culture Shock helped them to see their situation in a wider context and to feel more positive about it as a normal part of the process. Certainly over half of these students felt they had adapted to living in another culture. This is of course self-evaluation, which may have the drawback of varying interpretation, as noted. The well-known phenomenon of Reverse Culture Shock which can arise on return to the home country can be one of the consequences of acculturation. Students may have become de-culturalized or even re-culturalized. This survey did not deal with this phenomenon; however, email messages from students who have returned have confirmed that they had some difficulties in adapting back to the cultural behavior of their home country (e.g. a Japanese who expected people to smile when they saw him!)

There are different views on how long it takes to acculturate. The many variables are noted above. At the University of Manitoba, students in focus groups said it took two years, at the University of Middlesex students said they would stay on for an MA (i.e. a second year of study abroad) as they felt they needed more time (comments from an audience member after SIETAR UK 2005 conference presentation by this author). The transformative approach to internationalization takes into consideration the longer view of acculturation.

5. Conclusions arising from the survey

In the context of internationalization and practical approaches to the enhancement of this in relation to student needs, it appears that awareness-raising through orientation courses or through the inclusion of Intercultural Communication as a part of study does have significance, at least in the perception of students. If students perceive their experience as more positive, this is already an aid to better study and life experience. Students at the end of the second semester in the study above had adapted more culturally and found more positive aspects. It can be argued that these students would have learnt about culture in any case, through living and studying in the UK. However, students showed that they were aware of many issues and felt that they understood British and other cultures including their own better as a result of studying intercultural communication. It should be noted that some continuation of intercultural learning may take place after graduation, on their return to home country. Past students have confirmed this in private emails to this author. A frequently cited effect of Intercultural training in an industrial context, where the benefits for successful commerce and business partnerships carry extra weight, is not only of preparing staff for placements abroad, but also of enabling them to re-interpret past experience.

It can be concluded that this course helps the students to acculturate through understanding the process they are experiencing. As noted above, students felt they had benefited and this may be

crucial. In addition, the "year abroad" experience improves criticality & problem-solving skills; additional intercultural learning can help avoid the confirmation of stereotypes & negative reaction (otherization), which can be the result of a sojourn abroad in educational or other contexts. This contributes to the long-term whole life experience of tutors and learners like.

5.1 What do other universities do to aid intercultural learning?

The UKCOSA (now UKCISA) report Benchmarking the provision of services for international students in Higher Education institutions (2007) surveys the types of services offered to international students by UK HEIs. This survey was supported by the Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education (PMI). These services and activities include pre-departure information; induction and orientation programmes; English language entry levels and in-sessional support; accommodation; activities to encourage home and international students to mix; hardship funding; student representation and collection of feedback for international students; and the employment of international student advisers; finance; employment, graduation and return. (There is also a useful self-assessment tool for HEIs(UKCISA, 2007) available on the website.) The UKCOSA report gives a picture of what is actually happening in UK HEIs, including aspects of intercultural learning and activities such as those undertaken at the universities of Bournemouth and Sunderland (Devlin & Peacock, this volume).

In 2006-7 this author sent a questionnaire via the TEAL (Teaching East Asian Learners) list on Jiscmail [3] asking colleagues who had attended previous "Responding to the Chinese Learner in HE" conferences in 2004 and 2006 at the University of Portsmouth whether they offered courses or guidance on intercultural issues. The sample was very small (N=7) but found that five offered intercultural communication as a separate unit or module; 4 offered intercultural communication within a language course; 4 offered intercultural communication as a support course; no responding universities offered no cultural orientation at all; three gave general guidelines on cultural adaptation; three gave these on paper; four as part of induction, four delivered these to groups of students and two also gave advice on a one-to-one basis, e.g. through the personal tutor.

This showed that there were some efforts to offer guidance to international students; of course the sample was self-selected and therefore represented interested parties. Gradually there is a recognition of the importance of taking active steps to help students in their intercultural learning process.

6. Conclusion

This volume looks at the institutional perspectives, the student and staff perspectives and the practical approaches for the situation we now find ourselves in, where internationalization has become or is becoming the norm in Higher Education. It gives many examples of good practice and evidence of the needs of international students, especially Chinese learners, so that we can improve our practice in the delivery of these courses and the care of our Chinese students. The needs of institutions in a globalized education market are also a focus here. What our authors agree on is the need for interventions on the part of institutions and staff at all levels to fulfil our reponsibilities towards all international students.

There remain questions for further study

What further actions can we take to enhance the experience for all involved?

How do we make sure that the internationalization agenda applies to home and European students as well as international students and staff?

Should we introduce more assessed units, electives, sessions as part of induction, or more guidelines to staff and students?

How do the life experiences of students contribute to their experience in an international study context?

We believe that this volume makes a significant contribution to this debate which will be helpful to colleagues working in this field in the global context and contribute to creating a better understanding between international partners.

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