Asian Students' Perceptions Of How They Are Seen In 'The West': A Case Study At An Australian University

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Abstract: Australian universities attract increasing numbers of students from the Asia-Pacific region. It is important, therefore, that academics have meaningful understandings of these students in order to provide them with a supportive learning environment. This article suggests that part of this understanding is being aware of the ways in which some of these students perceive they are seen by those in the receiving countries and the discourses which may feed these perceptions. The qualitative study reported here outlines the perceptions of 10 Vietnamese offshore postgraduates (VOPs) and nine Asian onshore postgraduates (AOPs) from different Asian countries at an Australian university. All participants were English language teachers. Findings revealed that while both groups perceived themselves to be viewed in appealing ways, they also imagined themselves seen in pejorative ways. They claimed to be affected by this, particularly the offshore Vietnamese students, suggesting the need for strategies to mediate disempowering discourses on campuses.

Key words
Asian students; internationalisation, postcolonial discourses, Culturalism, Asiacentricity

Introduction and Author Positionality

Higher education systems have witnessed an increased international and transnational flow of students. In August 2018 there were 640,362 international students in universities in Australia (with 777,609 enrolled). China and India dominated, followed by Nepal and Malaysia (Australian Government Department of Employment, Education and Training (DET), 2018). It is evident from these figures that academics in Australian universities need to acquaint themselves with Asian students in their care if they are to support these students. This includes research into how the students perceive that they are seen by them, the effects of these perceptions and the discourses behind these perceptions.

The study reported here investigated two groups of Asian postgraduates who were also English language teachers in their own countries. It compared the perceptions of ten Vietnamese postgraduate offshore students (VOPS) with the perceptions of nine Asian onshore postgraduate students (AOPs) enrolled at one Australian university in order to see if there were similarities in students' perceptions in different contexts. It attempted to link certain social and theoretical discourses with these participants' perceptions. Interest in the topic arose from many years of the researcher teaching students from Asia on a postgraduate program onshore in Australia and offshore in Vietnam. Researcher positionality is therefore that of a non-Asian, middle-aged, middle class, female academic who has visited and worked

in Asia for short periods of time and who feels that academics in an internationalised setting need to get to know more about their international students. Chae (2013, p. 82) reinforces this view when he talks about how, as an Asian student, he avoided meaningful relationships with teachers at his school because he felt that their interest in him was 'disingenuous and momentary' and that they did not have a genuine interest in his life or stories. Similarly, as a teacher later in life, he saw students and their parents reject school personnel because they felt them to be 'unknowledgeable' about their needs. Although in a school setting not a university setting, this example demonstrates the importance of developing a community of learning in which there is mutual understanding and knowledge. This relies upon teachers, and in this case academics, being cognizant of the economic, social, educational and political backgrounds of their students and the effects that certain discourses may have had on students' perceptions of how they are regarded outside of Asia. Connell's latest book (2019) has a vision for how universities can become more engaging and productive. One chapter is devoted to 'making the knowledge' – in other words doing the research into how students and academics feel in internationalised settings. The qualitative case study presented in this article continues this focus and investigates how Asian students enrolled in an Australian university course perceived they were viewed by 'The West' in order to be able to raise awareness and understanding amongst academics teaching these students in Australian university settings.

Conceptual Frameworks and Related Discourses

Findings in this article are discussed against a backdrop of a number of competing and overlapping theoretical, social and educational discourses from a range of disciplines in the Humanities, namely the social sciences, cultural studies and education. In particular, the study considers students' responses in connection with postcolonial, essentialist discourses such as Orientalism (Said, 1978) and its converse Occidentalism (Conceison, 2004). The *Oxford English Dictionary* (1971) defines the Orient as incorporating countries such as Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Arabia and later on India, China, Japan and the whole of Asia. Postcolonial studies see Orientalism as representations reinforced by political forces. Many years ago Edward Said (1978) drew attention to Orientalism and the way that the West had created an essentialist image of the East as childlike, dependent, illogical and incompetent. These forces entered Western learning, consciousness and empire and were constructed by the West to reflect what is inferior or "other" to them (Sered, 1996). Of course non-Westerners, just like Westerners, have also been representing others in ways akin to stereotyping for a very long time. The converse of Orientalism is Occidentalism; biased representations of the West by people living in the East (Conceison, 2004). Dikötter identified three salient features of Occidentalism: polarisation (emphasis on the East/ West binary), projection (attributing certain narratives to Western origins) and fragmentation (misrepresentation, ideas taken out of context and inaccurate quotation) (Dikötter, 1992). Occidentalism can manifest itself in hostility towards Western cities which are cosmopolitan and rootless or to the Western scientific mind (Buruma & Margalit, 2004) and presents a 'dehumanizing picture of the West' (p. 5). Such complex interactions are the beginnings of internationalisation and the juggling of benefits gained from globalisation with the reassertion of local norms and self-identity ('Insider/Outsider', 'Self/Other') (Conceison, 2004, p. 56).

More recently, Orientalism can be seen as housing what has been called "new racism" which is really a type of Culturalism in which culture and ethnicity are used to separate and point to difference (Gilroy, 1992). Unlike Orientalism, Culturalism does not necessarily perpetuate deficit images of Asians but rather images of difference. It is still an 'othering'

discourse, however, about 'their' culture, and it thinly veils discrimination (Piller, 2012). Related to this are popular conceptions which reify Asian cultural values, homogenise Asian socio-cultural norms and understate "inter-Asian" cultural heterogeneity in terms of race, class and gender (Matthews, 2002). Moving away from the East/West dichotomy, but still concerned with the perpetuation of a similar mindset to Orientalism, writers such as Connell (2007; 2014) have reimagined and rebadged Post-colonial discourses as created by the Global-North; showing how pervading theories and grand narratives, including the theory of globalisation, are constructed from global-North points of view, focused on North-South history rather than emerging South-South dialogues. Her term, 'Southern Theory' can be loosely defined as a conversation that questions universalism in the field of social theory (Connell, 2007; 2014). It critiques the dominance of Western or Global North perspectives and aims to empower thinking outside of the trans-Atlantic metropolitan centres. It calls for more recognition of voices from the periphery or ex-colonies, highlighting perspectives from Southern social thinkers in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and India amongst other places.

A further dominant discourse emanating from 'the West' has been the vast Western educational discourse of the 70s, 80s and 90s on so-called Asian approaches to learning (e.g. Ballard & Clanchy, 1997; Chan, 1999; Noesjirwan, 1970). During this time, Asian students were described as reproductive learners who were dedicated to studying at the expense of social life and social skills. Many researchers of the 90s and 2000s (e.g. Chalmers & Volet, 1997; Kember & Gow, 1991; Rambruth & McCormick, 2001), also critiqued these findings, however, suggesting that these observations are misrepresentations at worst or only representational in certain contexts at best. Despite all the literature to the contrary, however, there is still a preoccupation with how students from Asia fit in to their new educational setting, in terms of cultural and social experiences and how best to make teaching inclusive (Hellsten & Prescott, 2004; Novera, 2004). In particular, research has shown that Western academics can be quick to over-generalise all Asian students using a Confucian-Western dichotomy and attributing specific individual behaviours to entire systems of cultural practice. This may be due to the large numbers of Chinese people inhabiting Asia as well as the sheer numbers of Chinese students coming to Australia (over 180, 000 in August, 2018 according to Australian Government, DET, 2018).

Perrucci and Hu (1995), some time ago, noted that much research emphasised the need for international students to adjust to the new host culture rather than the other way around. Academics' images of Asian students can be static with students' problems always attributed to ethnolinguistic and cultural backgrounds. Vandermensbrugghe (2004) suggested that Australian academics needed to become more transculturally competent with more exposure to other countries in order to see their teaching practices through a different optic and understand the international student better. This was corroborated by Dobinson (2013) who found that acculturation of Asian students into the new university context was generally only one way, with some academics talking about Asians needing to be shaped in to Western ways in terms of study skills. In the same study, academics seemed undecided in their observations about learning approaches amongst their Asian students. On the one hand, they critiqued the notion of an unreconstructed, static "Asian learner" and, on the other, they suggested that learning approaches in countries in Asia could be attributed to contextual, political, social and pedagogical factors. They admitted doing very little to adapt material and delivery for culturally and linguistically diverse students (Dobinson, 2015).

To only focus on dominant Western social, theoretical and educational discourses would be to ignore the many Asian researchers who have started to have a voice and construct their own analyses and theories to describe what has been happening in Asia since colonial presences departed. Responses of students in this study are considered in light of

these theories, one being the Asiacentric Theory of Identity Transformation and Intercultural Competence (Miike, 2013) (or "Asiacentricity" as it is more widely known). Miike (2013) advocated a move towards Asians being agents in their own culture and called for a rethink of narrow Eurocentric perspectives, and the recognition of a diverse Asia which embraces 'hybridity' and 'fluidity' (p. 201), while acknowledging 'commonalities and continuities' (Miike 2013, p. 201). Miike believes that Asians have transitioned through many stages of identity formation. He outlines what he believes to be the four main stages of an Asian shift to a new identity: *a yearning stage* in which postcolonial Asian countries still try to emulate the colonial culture; *a reflection stage* in which the limitations of emulation become apparent; *a returning stage* in which there is renewed appreciation of the first culture and *an integration stage* where there is neither superiority nor inferiority complexes in the new culture and critique of both cultures in the new space. This literature forms the back drop to any study seeking to investigate Asian students' perceptions of how they are viewed outside of their own cultural settings.

Research Design

The study described in this article was one strand of a much larger intrinsic and instrumental case study (Stake, 1988) conducted at two sites (Australia and Vietnam). It sought to investigate how academics and postgraduate Asian students at an Australian university made meaning from their learning and teaching encounters. The study was interpretative and qualitative in nature (Miles & Huberman, 1994) as it sought to explore and compare the subjective beliefs and perceptions of a small group of Asian postgraduate students at two sites. A qualitative approach allowed participants to describe how they interpreted their encounters (Merriam, 2009) and what the world looked like to them. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the university's Human Research Ethics Committee. The findings described in this article form only one component of the much larger study and outline responses of the students to the research question: What influence has the Western construction of "the Asian" and the related social, theoretical and educational discourses had on postgraduate Asian students and how close are they to occupying a third space in this regard?

Terminology used in the interview questions sought to reflect that used by the students and therefore still made use of the widely contested terms East and West and not the terms Global North or South:
1.   How do you think people in the West see Asians?
2.   How do you think people in the West have seen Asians in the past?
3.   How has the West depicted Asians in Western literature, art, movies and media?
4.   How have your perceived Western views of the "Asian" affected you?

Participants

The MA Applied Linguistics course at the university in question has been running since 1999 onshore in Australia and since 2006 offshore in Ho Chi Min City, Vietnam. At the time of this study, the Vietnam availability utilised fly in, fly out academics from the university for five of the eight taught units and Vietnamese academics taught the remaining three units. An invitation was sent out to two classes of postgraduate students (around 50 students), one in Vietnam and one on campus in Australia, via the Administrative manager of the Vietnam provider and the course coordinator of the MA course onshore. Data was

collected from the two sites in order to compare the responses of Asian students in different contexts. Perspectives gathered only from one group or the other may have been perceptions distinct to that particular group and the circumstances in which they found themselves. By having two groups who reside in different countries but who are still Asian, any common responses they provide can more easily be judged in terms of social and theoretical discourses connected with being Asian and current images on social media. Aside from being Asian, the two groups had in common that they were all English language teachers hoping to upgrade their qualifications.

The nationalities, ages, genders, qualifications and English language teaching experience of the 19 participants are outlined in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Education	ELT experience (yrs)	Nationality
Tina (TI)	20-30	F	First degree	5-10	Vietnamese
Una (UN)	20-30	F	First degree	5-10	Vietnamese
Vera (VE)	20-30	F	First degree	5-10	Vietnamese
Hilda (HI)	20-30	F	First degree	5-10	Vietnamese
Tracy (TR)	20-30	F	First degree	5-10	Vietnamese
Tom (TO)	20-30	M	First degree	5-10	Vietnamese
Andrew (AN)	20-30	M	First degree	5-10	Vietnamese
Hannah (HA)	20-30	F	First degree	5-10	Vietnamese
Valerie (VA)	20-30	F	First degree	5-10	Vietnamese
Nina (NI)	20-30	F	First degree	5-10	Vietnamese

Table 1: Vietnamese offshore postgraduate (VOP) participants

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Education	ELT experience (yrs)	Nationality
Yin Yin (YY)	20-30	F	First degree	1-5	Chinese
Lisa (LW)	20-30	F	First degree	5-10	Indonesian
Andee (AS)	20-30	M	First degree	5-10	Indonesian
Yoko (YO)	40-50	F	First degree	5-10	Japanese
Sahar (SA)	20-30	F	First degree	1-5	Bangladeshi
Wong (WL)	30-40	M	First degree	10-15	Chinese
Nguyen (NN)	20-30	M	First degree	5-10	Vietnamese
Ravinder (RK)	30-40	F	First degree	1-5	Indian
Jane (JW)	20-30	F	First degree	1-5	Taiwanese

Table 2: Asian onshore postgraduate (AOP) participants of mixed Asian nationality.

Investigator

As already explained in the positionality statement earlier in the article, the investigator in this study is a British/Australian, middle-aged, middle class, female academic who had taught the students interviewed for the study previously in a Master's unit focused on language teaching methodologies. It is acknowledged that this may have influenced, to some extent, the lens through which data was reported and analysed.

Data Collection

The two groups of students were interviewed within a few weeks of each other over two consecutive days in each setting. Semi-structured, one on one, face to face, in-depth, recorded, interviews, which utilised closed and open-ended questions (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell & Alexander, 1990), were the main data collection instrument. Closed-ended questions in interviews established information that could support theories and concepts in the literature review (Creswell, 2007), while 'how" and "what" type questions in interviews

encouraged participants' voices (Creswell, 2012). Interviews were conducted in one sitting in a classroom setting (but not during classes) with each group during one half of a year. The interviewer approached each interview with the same set of questions but was also prepared to be "led away" from these questions if, and when, necessary.

Students were invited to take part in the study after the trimester had finished by the Deputy Dean at the Ho Chi Min City provider setting. The decision to take the dual role of interviewer/researcher was influenced by Patton's (2002) claims that personal knowledge of the researcher by the participants can improve participant involvement. There can also be considerable gains from having 'insider status' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 301) and 'prolonged engagement' with the case. Preconceptions unwittingly formed by such closeness were avoided by keeping questions open-ended and non-leading and by retaining participants' voices in stretches of narrative. Documents such as education policy documents, historical documents and current documents found in the social media or in online public spaces were included in the discussion to give further credence to the comments made by participants.

Data Analysis

Participants' responses were categorised very broadly into common perceptions (Miles & Huberman, 1994), but due to the small participant sample (20 participants) it was not appropriate to make grand claims about majority beliefs. It was also important to hear from individuals whose comments were not common. Hence, voices were extensively retained in large tracts of direct quotation. This technique allowed the authentic persona of participants to emerge and their 'multitude of voices' to be heard (Moen, 2006, p. 5), while at the same time ensuring that the positionality of the researcher did not affect the reporting of responses. Credibility (Kelliher, 2005) of the study was established in several ways. The first was triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of all interview data with relevant, related documents, as part of the process of legitimising the overall larger study. Interview data were also confirmed, to some extent, by numbers of participants espousing similar views, although this, obviously, could not be treated as generalisable data in such a small group of participants.

Students' Perceptions of how Asians are seen in the West

Many of the students in the study perceived Asians to be seen as hardworking, persevering, eager to learn, stoic, friendly, easy to talk to, honest and generous. VOPs tended to discuss more gender specific positive images of Asians than the AOPs, with a focus on Asian women being seen as faithful, beautiful and loving. The AOPs identified images of Asian men as being seen as brave, in charge and in the likeness of movie stars such as Jackie Chan. Where the groups diverged a little was in the AOPs' perceptions that Asians were seen as stylish and colourful while the VOPs imagined Asians were seen as traditional and family oriented. As more cosmopolitan Asians, the AOPs may have been more inclined to imagine they were seen as fashionable and urban than the VOPs, some of whom stated they had never left their country and were from rural settings (e.g. the Mekong Delta).

A considerable number of VOPs and AOPs also perceived pejorative images of Asians, however. They felt Asians were constructed by the West as passive, uncritical, unwilling/unable to show emotion and, as one VOP commented, 'unable to start conversations or relationships'; unable to 'express themselves in public or with the family'.

They suggested that even when Asians were outgoing this might be seen as shallow by Westerners. VOPs reported feeling that 'Westerners' see Asians as not wanting to change, feeling safe and 'secure in old things', and 'conservative'. Some AOPs also felt that expatriate workers, in particular, underestimated Asian capability and tended towards images of deficit and difference, especially in the area of English language teaching, echoing Orientalist discourses (Said, 1978). The inclination to create close migrant communities was also commented on by AOPs. They talked about Asians in Australia being seen as 'clickey'; a tendency reported in the research on new migrants (Castles, 2002). Perhaps as newcomers to Australia the AOPs would have been more aware of such images than the VOPs.

On the whole, the VOPs tended to perceive more pejorative images of Asians than the AOPs. One VOP said he thought Westerners saw Asians as being 'cognitively inferior and slow witted'. Another commented, 'When I talk to a Westerner … I always have the feeling that they ... think us, maybe me or Asians, not very fast, quick in thinking'. Some VOPS felt that Asian women might be seen as trapped in a patriarchal system; lacking personal freedom and in need of protection from dictatorial Asian men. These images were particularly prevalent in the past, they said, when Asian men were deemed dominant and predatory by Western colonial powers. This understanding was complex, however, because both VOPs and AOPs believed that Asians had been doubly inscribed (Bhabha, 1994) in mediums such as Western films, art and literature. By this they meant that on the one hand Asian men, in particular, were portrayed as less aggressive and more effeminate than Western men and, on the other, they were depicted as good at martial arts, corrupt, criminal and super hero material. Similarly they felt that Asian women were seen as weak and disempowered but at the same time sensual and strangely powerful, another image prevalent in Orientalist frames (Said, 1978).

The VOPs also claimed Westerners to have an image of Asians as managing in poor living conditions. In particular, they felt that Vietnamese Asians were seen as being in a perpetual state of chaos and war, probably a reference to the Vietnam/American war. VOPs were also concerned that Westerners tended to stereotype all Asians as Chinese Asians, failing to discriminate between the very different cultures and countries that constitute Asia. They felt that Asians from different countries in Asia were all seen through the lens of Confucianism and Chinese traditions, mirroring Ryan and Louie's (2007) observation that academics in Western universities tend to apply a Confucian-Western dichotomy to entire systems of cultural practice and to homogenise diverse regions.

Lee and Rice (2007) suggested that academics may view their Asian students in static rather than dynamic ways and be too eager to attribute problems in learning to cultural background. Corroborating the observations of Lee and Rice (2007), both VOPs and AOPs reported feeling that their lecturers perceived them as 'passive', 'not confident enough' and 'limited' despite all the research to disprove such generalisations (Biggs, 2001 for example). VOPs' perceptions of their academic image reflected Culturalist views which still prevail in many Western contexts and settings, as evidenced in a recent survey in Midwestern University in the US (see Kwon, Hernandez & Moga, 2019). Internet posts closer to home have also proclaimed 'Orientalism still alive and kicking' and described Australian students' racism, fear and jealousy of their 'over-achieving but socially-stunted' 'unassimilated' Asian class mates (Doctor Derpy, 2012); perfect examples of popular conceptions of Asian students as successful and homogenised in their Asian cultural values and norms (Matthews, 2002).

The Effects of Perceived Western Views of the "Asian" on Students

Both AOPs and VOPs felt they had been affected by how they imagined 'Westerners' viewed them. In particular, educational discourses coming from outside of Asia originally had disturbed both groups and made them 'fearful' of expectations in learning and teaching. This was especially apparent in the VOPs' responses. Some of them admitted feeling inferior, incompetent and backward. They expressed feelings of disquiet, worthlessness, being looked down upon, fear and depression. One VOP explained how she felt fatigued by having to 'bounce back between the two rivers' or occupying two worlds in terms of traditional learning/ English language teaching pedagogies and current methodologies emanating from outside of Asia as well as the need to operate in two languages. All of these feelings have been documented in past studies on perceived discrimination (Tummala-Narra & Claudius, 2013; Zhang & Hong, 2013). This was not true for all VOPs, however. Some reported being little affected by, or interested in, what they perceived people outside of Asia thought of them, while others said that 'negative Western constructions of "the Asian"' were actually beneficial to them as they motivated them to overcome and contradict Asian stereotypes.

All postgraduates talked about trying to 'fit in' with, or 'imitate', the new target culture, to a greater or lesser extent (Dobinson, 2015; Gu, 2011), behaviour identified by Miike (2013) in his Yearning Stage in his Asiacentricity theory. Neither the AOPs nor the VOPs considered Orientalist, essentialist images of Asians to have entirely disappeared. There was a sense of a Postcolonial hangover which left some of them feeling sub-standard. AOPs, on the whole, however, were more inclined than the VOPs to perceive that they might be seen as different rather than deficit. This contrasted markedly to the VOP's palpable optimism for the future, however. There was a feeling that globalisation would change the West's image of Vietnam for the good and that contact with "the West" would bring more 'open mindedness' and change, responses perhaps triggered by the fairly relatively recent move to "doi moi", in Vietnam, the rapid development of the Vietnamese economy, and the increase in Vietnamese students going abroad to study. VOPs felt that their image had been overhauled due to a number of circumstances, one of which was the rapidly changing roles and aspirations of women in many Asian countries. They also felt that movies, music and TV from outside of Vietnam and increasing globalisation had impacted positively, generating new images of Asians and Vietnamese, in particular; a view in line with the observations of Yukongdi and Benson (2005). There was also a shared feeling that the interface between cultures, and moves towards greater transcultural understanding via visiting teachers in higher education in Asia (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Seah & Edwards, 2006) have contributed to changing representations of Asians in the West.

Discussion and Conclusions

This study uncovered responses which provide theoretical and conceptual insights, as well as implications for practice. Responses of some participants' suggested that lingering, covert, essentialist, post-colonial and Orientalist discourses were still having an influence on Vietnamese offshore students, in particular. The Western myth surrounding Asian characteristics and the depiction of Asian students as having learning approaches at odds with the latest Western educational discourses seemed to have fed postgraduates' perceptions of how they thought they were seen in learning institutions outside Asia. It would be naive to think Asians themselves have not been privy to, and affected by, discourses which describe them in ways which are stereotyped and constructed from one point of reference, namely the West or Global North as it has been relabelled by Connell (2007). However, the influence of

Occidental representations of the West cannot be ignored either when considering this proposition. Students' comments could have been shaped to some extent by local discourses which 'dehumanize the West' (Buruma & Margalit, 2004, p. 5), making them 'fearful' of not meeting the standards set down by dominant discourses, particularly in the world of education. As Conceison (2004, p. 56) pointed out, internationalisation involves the juggling of benefits gained from globalisation with the reassertion of local norms and self-identity and a readjustment of the tendency to create dichotomies such as 'Insider/Outsider', 'Self/Other'.

Viewing comments provided by the postgraduates through the theoretical framework suggested by Miike (2013), students in this study could be seen to be still expressing a sense of emulation for the West. The point of reference for how the Vietnamese students, in particular, judged they were succeeding was often a Western paradigm of success with comments placing them in the yearning stage of Miike's Theory of Asiacentricity (2013). They appeared to feel compelled to imitate or match the West, especially in terms of their approaches to learning and teaching. Despite this, some movement towards reflective and returning stages of identity formation was also evident in the comments of some VOPs. They recognised and questioned embedded othering and felt confident in their own agency in a globalised world.The AOPs, on the other hand, were, overall, no longer feeling the need to emulate the West. Most had reached the integrative stage of identity transformation. They had moved to a Third Space where they felt they could critique both cultures and feel comfortable in both. Being in a new cultural setting, where some vestiges of Orientalism and post-colonialism are intact, may have been the reason why some AOPs provided responses which placed them back in the reflective stage once more, however. They cited literature, media, films and art in their new environment as sometimes reinforcing Orientalist essentialist images.

The findings in this study do not point to Asian students onshore and offshore being subjected to direct discrimination at the university involved. Ultimately, what has been discussed here are Asian students' perceptions of how they are seen. However, these perceptions have probably been bolstered by students' direct or indirect encounters with prevailing Western discourses, such as Orientalism and Culturalism, as well as educational discourses created by the West or Global North. Moreover, as Liddicoat (2016) has pointed out, inaction by universities will help continue these discourses and, hence, Asian students' anxieties that they may not meet the grade in their new academic setting. This indirect discrimination may be felt even more acutely in offshore university settings where discourses cannot be modified for students by current integrative experiences.

The university in this study has worked hard to create inclusive policies for international students, however, it could be argued that, like most Australian universities, it has not entirely embraced transcultural competence or fostered transcultural empathy amongst academic staff (Dobinson, 2013; Lee & Rice, 2007; Vandermensbrugghe, 2004). Learning and teaching needs to encourage, value and support the voices of those on the periphery as suggested by Southern Theory (Connell, 2007); in this case Asian students on Australian campuses. Cultural and linguistic diversity needs to be visible and integrated into all aspects of campus life, not restricted to tokenistic events. This might be through collaborative and interactive workshops and the facilitation of personalised student contributions to input. Academics, meanwhile, have access to current and historical information on the diverse cultures and ways of life that make up contemporary Asia as never before with social media, film, increased travel and connection between countries, as well as the opportunity for academics to be involved in transnational teaching in other cultural, geographical, economic and political contexts. Increasingly, Asian funding bodies are preferring universities which embrace Asian languages and cultures (Asian Currents, 2010). Focussing on knowing more about the possible perceptions of new to the university Asian

students, especially in offshore campuses, is essential. Academics need to support these students from a position of knowing, being aware of what Han and Shim (2010, p. 468) have called the 'ambiguities' of 'identity', 'desire' and 'aspiration' in Asia that are 'removed from the Western track', especially if there is to be genuine two-way learning between academics and their Asian students.

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