



Review

Chinese students studying at Australian universities with specific reference to nursing students: A narrative literature review



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SUMMARY

Objective: To report the current knowledge on the Chinese nursing students' learning at Australian universities. The intent is to provide educators and researchers with a background to the contexts, the methodologies, the emphases of various relevant studies, and to provide recommendations for future research.

Background: Attracting international students has become an important part of Australian universities' business and contributes to their cultural diversity. Teaching international students has received considerable attention in the educational research literature. Experiences of international students can vary greatly depending on their country of origin. This paper critically reviews current literature relating to issues for Chinese students and in particular, Chinese nursing students, the biggest single group of international nursing students at Australian universities.

Design: Narrative literature review.

Method: A comprehensive search of seven electronic databases for literature between 2003 and 2014 helped to identify qualitative and quantitative studies that addressed issues of Asian international students with English as a second language (ESL) (included nursing students) studying in Australia, New Zealand, the UK, the United States and China. Pertinent websites were also searched. The reference lists and bibliographies of retrieved articles were hand-searched to identify other relevant studies.

Results: Fifteen studies met the inclusion criteria for the review. The majority of existing literature claimed that there is a range of challenges confronting international students including Chinese nursing students, in assimilation into their host country. These include issues with English language proficiency, cultural barriers, social problems, different learning styles, academic demands, perceived racism, homesickness, lack of assertiveness and financial problems.

Conclusion: There is limited research about the Chinese students' study in Australia. In particular, the learning experience of Chinese nursing students has not been fully explored nor understood. This paper highlights the need for further research into the lived learning experience of Chinese nursing students studying at Australian universities.

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Background

Attracting international students has become an important part of Australian universities' business and contributes to their cultural diversity. The growth in international student numbers is recognised as beneficial, not only economically, but also in building alliances, sharing

knowledge, enhancing Australia's international influence, increasing cultural awareness, and preparing workforce for the global environment (Australian Education International, 2010; Bhandari and Blumenthal, 2010; Caluya et al., 2011; Hellsten, 2010; Sovic and Blythman, 2012; Wang, 2008; Yen, 2010). The satisfaction and achievements of these students, their Australian peers and institutions are, therefore, of interest and significance to Australian universities.

There are a significant number of international students from China who choose to study in Australian universities (Wang, 2008). China is the country of origin for the single largest group of international students to many education institutions (Jin and Cortazzi, 2011). According to the Australian Department of Education International student enrolments data (2012), the enrolments in 2011 and 2012 of the international students, Chinese students were the biggest single group of

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international students as a whole (29% share of all nationalities) and of nursing students.

Australia's international teaching and learning reputation is, however, at risk due to a range of issues that could potentially affect students' learning outcomes and satisfaction (Caluya et al., 2011; Gunawardena and Wilson, 2012; Ryan, 2011). The competitive international education environment requires educational institutions to ensure their reputation in providing positive learning experience is high in order to retain the advantages of market share.

Teaching international students has received considerable attention in the educational research literature. The experiences of international students can vary greatly depending on their country of origin (Campbell and Zeng, 2006). This paper critically reviews current literature that relates to issues for Chinese students, in particular, Chinese nursing students: the biggest single group of international nursing students in Australia (International student enrolments data, 2012), their nursing study at Australian universities.

A narrative review seeks to "summarise, explain and interpret evidence on a particular topic or question using either qualitative and or qualitative evidence" (Mays et al., 2005, p. 11). It is anticipated that a narrative review, informed by systematic review methodology, could serve to provoke thought and controversy (Green et al., 2006), provides overviews and integrations of an area, pulls together what is known about a particular phenomenon, and allows researchers to address much broader questions than a single empirical study could. Hence narrative review is vital to the scientific field for bridging the gap in interpretation (Baumeister and Leary, 1997). The methodology of a narrative review is congruent with a rigorous, detailed and thorough examination of published literature (Duke and Bennett, 2010).

Aim

This literature review aims to report the current knowledge objectively, and present a broad perspective on the topic. The intent is to provide educators and researchers with a background to the contexts, the methodologies, the emphases of various relevant studies, and to provide recommendations for future research.

Methods

Sources of Information

The search included published studies in the period from 2003 to 2014 September (inclusive). The terms 'international students learning experience', 'international students', 'international education', 'study abroad', 'Asian students', 'Chinese students', 'ESL students', 'nursing student', and 'learning experience' were used in searching. The databases searched included A + Education, Australian Bureau of Statistics, CINAHL, ERIC, Medline, ProQuest and Google Scholar. The relevant worldwide websites were also searched. The reference lists and bibliographies of retrieved articles were also hand-searched to identify other studies.

Search strategy

Search strategy used for A + Education, Australian Bureau of Statistics, CINAHL, ERIC, Medline and ProQuest through Edith

Cowan University (ECU) library host. The Boolean operators "AND" and "OR" were used to ensure maximum inclusion. Initial scoping with the key word 'Chinese nursing international students' considerably limited the available papers; therefore, the search was expanded by using the word 'international students', 'Asian students', 'ESL students' and 'nursing students'. Similarly 'experience' was broadened to include 'voice', 'perspective' and 'student satisfaction'. In addition, the terms 'international students', 'international education' and 'study abroad' were applied to the electronic databases (Fig. 1). The following journals were hand searched for relevant articles: *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, *Communication Journal of New Zealand*, *Cambridge Journal of Education*, *Education and Training*, *International journal of intercultural relations*, *International Education Journal*, *Journal of nursing education*, *Journal of research in international education*, *Journal of Studies in International Education*, *Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, *Journal of transcultural nursing*, *Nursing Education Today*, *Nurse Education in Practice and, Teaching and Learning in Nursing*. Reference lists of relevant articles were also searched to identify related studies. The database searches and hand searches were undertaken following the PRISMA guidelines (Moher et al., 2009).

350 abstracts were screened, and articles that did not include Asian international students with English as a second language (ESL) were excluded (n = 131) (Fig. 2). The remaining full-text papers were retrieved (n = 219) and application of the inclusion criteria further limited the number of articles to 15 (Table 1).

Inclusion Criteria

The review considered qualitative and quantitative studies in the period from 2003 to 2014 September that addressed issues of international students, including nursing students. The participants in this review were Asian international students with English as a second language (ESL), including nursing students studying in Australia, New Zealand, the UK, the United States, and China.

Results and Discussion

Fifteen studies that met the inclusion criteria were included and summarised in Table 1. Seven papers originated in Australia, one was from China, four from New Zealand, one from the UK and two from the USA. Four papers were described as mixed methods and eleven papers used qualitative methods. Ten studies (Briguglio and Smith, 2012; Campbell and Li, 2008; Campbell and Zeng, 2006; Cooper, 2004; Goode, 2007; Guan and Jones, 2011; Holmes, 2004; Ngwainmbi, 2004; Tran, 2011; Xu, 2012) investigated non-nursing students' abroad learning experience, and only five studies (Amaro, 2006; Jeong et al., 2011; Rogan et al., 2006; Sanner and Wilson, 2008; Wang, 2008) investigated nursing students.

The majority of existing literature claimed that there is a range of challenges confronting international students – this includes Chinese nursing students, in their assimilation into the host country. These can include issues with English language proficiency, cultural barriers, social problems, different learning styles, academic demands, perceived racism, homesickness, lack of assertiveness and financial problems (Bonazzo and Wong, 2007; Gunawardena and Wilson, 2012; Olivas

1.	international students OR international education OR study abroad	1,251,175
2.	learning experience OR voice OR perspective OR satisfaction	1,996,528
3.	Asian students OR Chinese students OR ESL students OR nursing student	425,203
4.	1 AND 2 AND 3	5341

Fig. 1. Search strategy used.

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