# Understanding International and Domestic Student Expectations of Peers, Faculty, and University: Implications for Professional Communication Pedagogy

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## Introduction

Increasing populations of international students are entering Canadian universities, and instructors of Professional Communication must rapidly adapt to a changing student population. At the studied Maritime Canadian university, numbers of international students increased by 300% between 2009 and 2013.  These numbers necessitate a review of our pedagogical approach to ensure student learning, success, and satisfaction in Professional Communication classrooms.

Student expectations are linked to their satisfaction and, therefore, retention.  We know little about the expectations incoming international students have of the university, their Canadian peers, and their instructors.  We also know little about the reciprocal expectations held by domestic students and faculty of these incoming students.   By surveying both domestic and international students, we sought to understand their expectations and determine if international student expectations differ from those of their domestic peers and from those of faculty.

Understanding student expectations will contribute substantially to our ability to adapt pedagogy, to manage the gap between expectation and satisfaction, to develop appropriate intervention strategies, and to improve retention.

Our study revealed that the experiences and expectations of this generation of students from China, the greatest foreign contributor of new students to business schools in the Maritimes, differ in experience and expectations from previous generations of Chinese students.  This generation has been exposed to Western educational styles, creating a generation of Eastern learners increasingly similar to their Western counterparts (Kingston, 2008).  The results indicate that domestic and international students have similar expectations and that the gap in

expectations is greater between all students and the teaching staff than between international and domestic students.

Further, the results indicate a philosophical split among the teaching staff.  This split may reflect differences in views of the internationalized classroom and a lack of philosophical agreement on approach.  While many universities have incorporated internationalization into the mission of their schools, this split indicates that in the classroom, this mission may not be actuated. The purpose of this paper is to illustrate the similarities and differences in student and staff expectations and to propose methods of addressing these findings in the professional communication classroom.

## Literature Review

The extent to which expectations are met influences the rate of satisfaction; retention rates are affected by the degree of student satisfaction (Appleton-Knapp & Krentler, 2006).  Gibson's (2010) review of the literature on business school satisfaction reports that "academic staff/teaching" and "classes/curriculum" play a significant role in business student satisfaction. As Gibson notes, students' pre-enrolment experiences contribute to student expectations and satisfaction.  But as Gibson also notes, the relationship between pre-enrolment expectations and satisfaction is an area in need of further study.

Because international student numbers are increasing in North American universities, it is essential to understand students' expectations and degrees of satisfaction.  Several studies have shown that international students select a host institution primarily based on the university's reputation and educational excellence (for an overview of these studies see Russell, 2005). Azmat et al. (2013) identify several "pull factors" in attracting international students to Australian universities, including university reputation, quality and choice of programs, and staff quality.  A study conducted in the UK, however, has found that international students are less likely than domestic students to be satisfied with the quality of teaching and their learning experiences (Ryan, 2011).  A gap exists, then, between international students' expectations and their actual experiences.

Instructors often expect international students to adapt to the academic expectations and conventions of the university (Ward, 2001).  This view is founded on the belief that students come to a Western university to receive a Western education.  According to this view, adapting pedagogical approach or course content for international students is unnecessary since the students' goal is to learn the same material in the same way as domestic students.  Ward cites Smith's (1998) study of instructors of international students in the United States that found that instructors tended to adopt an assimilationist approach.  These instructors maintained the importance of a uniform (and culturally situated) standard by which to measure understanding and achievement.  Ward's (2001) literature review reveals that "for the most part educators (particularly those at the tertiary level) make few, if any, changes in either the process or content of classroom activities" ("Impact in the Classroom: Section Summary", para.1).  According to several studies, the burden of adaptation is placed on the international student (e.g. Campbell & Li, 2008; Tran, 2011; Ward, 2001).  As Holmes (2004) asserts, the "onus is on these Chinese students to reconstruct and renegotiate their primary culture learning and communication styles

to accommodate another way" (p. 303). Anecdotal accounts reveal that this assimilationist approach persists today despite an increasing awareness of international student issues and needs.

While instructors may expect students to accommodate to the university, students may have different expectations of the host institution. If, as Russell (2005) claims, students select a host institution primarily based on the university's reputation and educational excellence (Russell, 2005), what does this selection mean for student expectations? And are these expectations at odds with instructor expectations of students? For example, if professors act on the belief that students should assimilate into Canadian educational culture but students define quality by the extent to which education is customized and individual needs are addressed, a gap occurs between expectation and delivery.

The gap between expectations of the students and the educational approaches at the university may lead to a failure to address the needs of students in the classroom and to attrition. Kingston (2008) explores this gap in a study of UK graduate students. Kingston affirms that although international students arrive in the UK expecting a purportedly high quality of education, marketing research reveals that this expectation is not met, a discrepancy that must be addressed. Kingston states that this gap indicates that "the need for rapid empirical development that informs practice is becoming ever more pressing" (p. 210). We conducted a study of student expectations to address this need for research that informs pedagogical practice in the business communication classroom.

## Methodology

The purpose of this study was to understand student expectations so that we can identify gaps between expectations and experience and then adjust pedagogy accordingly to improve student satisfaction and retention rates. While this study primarily sought to understand the expectations of international students enrolled in the Commerce program, it also sought to understand the expectations of domestic students entering the program. As a result, we surveyed all incoming students into the program on their expectations of the program, their peers, their instructors and their intentions to continue in the program and graduate with a Bachelor of Commerce degree. At the studied university, courses in business communication are taught in the Commerce program. Two courses in Professional Communication are required of all students in the program. Faculty members in the Commerce program were also surveyed about their expectations of the incoming students, including instructors of Professional Communication and instructors who reach the same cohort. Comparison of these survey results allowed us to better understand both student and faculty expectations and needs and create an improved learning environment.

We conducted surveys of students from the class of 2016 entering into the Bachelor of Commerce program. We embarked on the study in the Fall of 2012. The sample was a convenience sample of incoming students. The Commerce program is the flagship undergraduate program in the business school, and typically enrollment numbers are between 285 and 320. International students typically compose 30-35% of the international students in the School of Business; each year, approximately 28% of the cohort is Chinese.

The only eligibility requirement for completing the survey was year in school. To minimize the effect of limited English language skills, students were given the option to complete the survey in either English or Chinese. Interestingly, a few of the Chinese students apparently felt that the survey should not have been administered in Chinese as it made them feel different, with one student overtly stating this. These students likely completed the survey in English. The survey was administered in the first twenty minutes of the cohort's first class so that we could capture their expectations as early as possible in their university careers. For the first survey conducted at the beginning of the Fall 2012 semester, we had a final usable response of N=237. Approximately 33-35% international students were in the surveyed cohort, indicative of the nature of the student demographics entering the Bachelor of Commerce program at the university.

The survey included demographic information such as year in school; citizenship, permanent residency, or international student status; country of origin; sex; and age. The surveys also consisted of a 26-item questionnaire across various dimensions and including four open-ended questions. By design, the first 21 items (presented in Table 1) acted as independent variables and the last 5 were outcome variables. The survey items were on a 5-point Likert Scale (1 being 'completely disagree', 3 being 'neutral' and 5 being 'completely agree').

Table 1

*First-year student survey questions*

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I expect my professors to adjust course content and styles of presentation to accommodate learners of English as a second language. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I expect to socialize with students whose cultures (i.e. country/language of origin) are different from mine. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I expect my instructors to accommodate me when I need extra help, for example, extra time to complete a test. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I expect to participate in class discussion. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I expect to receive feedback from professors on my written work throughout the writing process, from first to final draft. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I will attend most or all of my lectures. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| Ideas belong to the individual that expresses them | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Knowledge belongs to the community, not an individual. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I will have to adjust my study habits in university. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I feel comfortable with students whose first language is not my own. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I expect all students to be treated the same way. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| At university, I will have the opportunity to share my cultural heritage. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I expect my first year courses to prepare me adequately to obtain a co-op position. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I have received adequate training in academic conventions, for example on referencing and forms of written communication, to prepare me for university. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I will take advantage of student support services such as the Writing Centre and international student services. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My family depends on me to succeed in university. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| It is important to maintain harmony in the classroom and not to do or say things that disrupt this harmony. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I have the language ability to achieve academic success in this university. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I have the skills in mathematics to succeed to my satisfaction in numeracy-focused courses at this university. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I have the speaking skills to succeed to my satisfaction in group presentations, in class discussions, and in question and answer periods in class. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Overall, I expect to be happy that I have chosen this university. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Questions were designed based on findings from existing research and on issues identified through anecdotal accounts from academic staff.  Brinkworth, McCann, Matthews, and Nordstrum (2009) compared the results of their survey of first-year Humanities and Science at the University of Adelaide with Crisp et al.'s (2009) university-wide survey of students.  Both studies found significant differences between expectation and experience in quantity of feedback from academic staff.   Therefore, we asked students to agree or disagree on the statement "I expect to receive instructive feedback from professors on my written work." Brinkworth et al. also asked students to agree or disagree with the claim that studying at university differs from studying at the high school level.   Similarly, our study asked students whether they expected to make adjustments in their study habits for university.  These similarly designed questions were selected to establish a base of comparison.

We also designed questions to ascertain the realities of commonly held assumptions about Chinese students, the majority of international students in the Commerce program at the studied university. Shi (2006) states that some researchers define Chinese learners as imitative and reproductive rather than analytical, and passive rather than active, and regard these learners as unable to think critically. Shi's study investigated the reality of these stereotypes through a survey of junior middle school students in China. Shi's study debunks many of the myths of the Chinese learner. The study showed that the students were active learners who preferred interaction to passivity and who used critical thinking strategies. Shi states that "Chinese students are showing many characteristics in common with their Western contemporaries" (p.139). In response to commonly held assumptions about Asian student passivity, therefore, we asked students whether they expected to participate in class discussion and in activities inside and outside the classroom to enhance their experience in the program and university. We also asked whether they believed it is important to maintain harmony in the classroom and not to do or say things that disrupt this harmony. Shi also found that contrary to other research, Chinese students seek to study for individualistic reasons rather than for the honour of the family. We therefore asked students whether their success in university was important to their families.

Because universities seek international students not only to fill seats but also, supposedly, to internationalize their programs in a global economy, and because Canada prides itself on its policy of multiculturalism, we asked students whether they expected to have opportunities to share their cultural heritage. We also asked whether students expected to socialize with students whose cultures were different from their own.

We asked several questions about what students expected from instructional staff since academic staff and classes are significant for student satisfaction and retention. We asked whether students expected professors to adjust course content and styles to accommodate learners of English as a second language, whether they expected to be accommodated when they need extra help, and whether they expected all students to be treated in the same way. Faculty often complain about students' lack of preparedness for academic study, so we sought to determine the extent to which students felt prepared and whether this perception of preparedness changed after beginning university classes. We therefore asked students whether they had received adequate preparation in academic conventions, language, mathematics, and speaking skills to succeed in university. Business faculty place emphasis on the importance of group work and its educational benefits through collaboration, so we also asked students whether they expected that working with classmates would help them in developing new knowledge.

Finally, we asked students whether they expected to have a satisfactory learning experience in the program, whether they expected to stay in the Bachelor of Commerce program, and whether they are happy to have chosen this university.

We administered the second survey (Winter 2013) to a convenience sample of the same cohort of students on the first day of classes in the students' second semester of university. For the second survey, we had a final usable response of 196. This cohort was again surveyed during their third semester in the program, at the start of their second year, and we had a final usable response of

N=142.  In the second and third surveys, students were asked the same questions in the past or present tense.  Rather than "I expect…", the survey asked what the students' experiences were.  For example, "I expect my first-year courses to prepare me adequately to obtain a co-op position" became "My first-year courses have prepared me adequately to obtain a co-op position."

In addition, all faculty members in the Commerce program were asked to participate anonymously in the study.  Requests for participation were solicited through email and in face-to-face conversations.  Faculty were asked to complete the survey through Opinio, which ensured anonymity.  Faculty were asked versions of the same set of questions as the students.  For example, parallel to the question "I expect course content and styles of presentation to accommodate learners of English as a second language", faculty were asked to express agreement or disagreement on the statement "I adjust course content and styles of presentation to accommodate learners of English as a second language".   The one exception regarded the expectation to socialize with students from other cultures.  Students were asked whether they expected, in the first survey, or whether they did, in the second and third surveys, socialize with students whose cultures are different from their own.  Faculty were asked to agree or disagree with the statement "I facilitate cross-cultural relationships between students through activities and projects." Thirty-one faculty members responded to the survey.

## Results

The results confirm Brinkworth et al.'s (2009) and Crisp et al.'s finding of significant difference between the level of feedback students expected to receive from academic staff and the level of feedback experienced.  In the first survey of Fall 2012, 51.3 % of students strongly agreed with the statement "I expect to receive instructive feedback from professors on written work".  Another 35.3% agreed with the statement, for a combined total of "strongly agree" and "agree" of 86.6%.  Among international students, 93.9% of Chinese students and 85.3% of students from other nationalities agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.  A significant number of total students, then, expected to receive instructive feedback, with a higher percentage of Chinese students expecting feedback.

In contrast, 13.33% of instructors reported that they strongly agree with the statement "I provide instructive feedback on written work" with 43.3% agreeing, for a total of 56.6%.  These numbers reflect a large gap between all students' expectations and the feedback received from instructional staff and an even larger gap between instructors and Chinese students' expectations.  After one semester of study, the total number of domestic and international students expecting feedback dropped to 61.7%, with only 11.2% strongly agreeing with the statement "I receive instructive feedback from professors on my written work." Among the international students, this numbers dropped to 46.2% agree and 16.9% strongly agree for a total of 63.1%.  The domestic and international students' experiences, then, are similar, but the gap between expectation and experience for Chinese students is far greater.  The results show that after one semester of school, students' expectations have not been met and that student experiences are aligned with instructors' reported behaviour.

In response to the statement "Students have to adjust their study habits in university", 100% of instructors agreed. However, only 76.1% of students expected to have to adjust their habits for university work. As students progressed in the program, they reported a greater need to adjust study habits, with 86.9% reporting the need to adjust. The increases parallel Brinkworth et al.'s (2009) findings, though the total numbers in agreement are lower than in the Brinkworth study. There were no measurable differences between international and domestic student responses. While previous studies determined that Chinese learners are passive recipients of knowledge, our study found that Chinese students came to university expecting to participate in class discussions. In fact, 48.5% strongly agreed and 36.4% agreed with the statement "I expect to participate in class discussions." Interestingly, results for Canadian students show 20.1% for strongly agree and 51.8% for agree. Chinese students, then, come to university expecting, to a higher degree than their domestic counterparts, to participate. By Fall of 2013, one year later, 23.5% of Chinese students strongly agreed and 51% agreed that they do participate in class discussion, while 9.2% of Canadian students strongly agree and 57.3% agreed that they participate in class discussion. Among academic staff, 53.3% strongly agree and 33.3% agree with the statement "I expect students to participate in class discussion". Both students and professors, then, expect students to participate, yet students report less participation than expected.

Domestic and international students also arrive at university expecting to participate in class and outside class in curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities to increase their experience in the program and university. Forty-two percent of students strongly agree that they expect to participate in activities while 46.6% agree. Instructor expectations are about the same. However, one year later all students report a drop in levels of participation down to 25% for strongly agree in the winter of 2013. In the fall of 2013, the numbers reporting strongly agree are higher at 32.4%. The increase in percentile from the previous semester and the lower number of total students surveyed may indicate that students who were not engaged had left the university after the first year. International and domestic students do not differ significantly in the expectation or experience of participation in class or university life. This study supports Shi's claim that Chinese learners prefer interaction to passivity and confirm Chinese students' similarity to their Western contemporaries.

Shi (2006) also claimed that, contrary to the view expressed in previous research, Chinese students sought to study for individualistic reasons rather than the honour of family. We asked students to indicate whether their success in university was extremely important to their families. Over 80% of students, regardless of origin, considered their studies to be important to the family and most said their failure would negatively affect the family. These findings show that Chinese students are no different from their Canadian peers or other international students in the importance of their academic success for the family. These results seem to conflict with Shi's finding.

The results for the question on the opportunity to share cultural heritage revealed that 73.3% of academic staff expected students to share their cultural backgrounds. Of the internationals, 74% strongly agreed or agreed while 46.4% of Canadian students strongly agreed or agreed. One year later in fall of 2013, 38.7% of domestic and international students reported having had the

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opportunity to share their cultural heritage with no significant difference between domestics and internationals. Academic staff, then, presume opportunities that students do not experience. In response to the statements that they expect to socialize with students from cultures other than their own and that they do socialize with students from other cultures, students reported that their interactions exceeded expectations, with the number agreeing or strongly agreeing rising from 71.2% in Fall 2012 to 78.7% in Fall 2013 and no significant difference between domestic and international students.

In response to the statement "I expect my professors to adjust course content and styles of presentation to accommodate learners of English as a second language", 37.8% of Canadian students strongly agreed or agreed, 33.5 % neither agreed nor disagreed, and 27.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed. In contrast, 63.5% of international students strongly agreed or agreed, 21.6% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 13.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed. In answer to "My professors adjust course content and styles of presentation to accommodate learners of English as a second language" after one year of study, 26.4% of Canadian students strongly agreed or agreed, 56% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 17.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed. International students responded with 80% strongly agreeing or agreeing and 20% neither agreeing nor disagreeing. These numbers indicate positive disconfirmation.

In terms of whether or not students expected to be accommodated when they need extra help, there was no significant difference between domestic and international students. In the first term, 64.7% of students said they strongly agree or agree that they expected accommodation. This number dropped to 41.3% in the second term and reflects negative disconfirmation. In response to "I expect all students to be treated the same way," 91.2% stated that they do expect students to be treated the same. In fall of 2013, however, 65.8% report that students are treated the same way. There was no significant difference between domestic and international students. This number of students reporting that professors adjust teaching content and style for international students from international students is remarkable considering the professors' responses to the question. Instructors responded with 16.67% strongly agreeing, 33.33% agreeing, 10% neither agreeing nor disagreeing, 33.33% disagreeing, and 6.67% strongly disagreeing. These numbers illustrate a great divide in educational philosophy. This division is further illustrated in response to the statement "I accommodate students when they need extra help, for example extra time to complete a test." Instructors were equally divided between strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, and disagree, with one respondent strongly disagreeing. Over 80% of instructors answered that they expect all students to be treated the same way, with just over 13% disagreeing with the statement.

Responses to statements on preparedness for university indicate that students arrived at university confident in their mathematical, speaking, and linguistic skills and in their understanding of academic practices. In response to "I have the mathematical skills to succeed to my satisfaction in numeracy-focused courses at this university", 79.4% strongly agreed or agreed. This number dipped slightly after one term of study to 75% and then went up to 88% in the third survey. Faculty had a very different view, with no faculty indicating strong agreement, 13.79% in agreement, 62.07% neither agreeing nor disagreeing, and 24.14% disagreeing.

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Similarly, 78.2% of students selected strongly agree or agree for the statement "I have the speaking skills to succeed at this university in group presentations, in class discussions, and in question-and-answer periods in class." After one semester this number dips to 76.5% and then rises to 87.3% in the third term. Of the professors, on the other hand, 20.69% strongly agree or agree that students have these skills and 44.82% disagree or strongly disagree.

Students also indicated confidence in their language abilities. Just over 91% of all students said they have the language skills to succeed at university in the first survey. International students were less sure of their skills, but 74.3% indicated that they had the skills necessary. Students remained sure of their abilities in the following terms, with 93% stating they have the language ability necessary for success in the third survey. International students also remained confident with 80% indicating they have the skills needed. In dramatic contrast, academic staff say that only 17.24% have the language skills to succeed and 44.83% strongly disagree or disagree with the statement. The results indicate a very wide gap between professor and student views of preparedness.

The greatest gap between students and faculty occurred in response to the statement "I have received adequate preparation in academic practices, for example in referencing and in forms of written communication, to prepare me for university." In the first term, 71.9% say they had these skills while 80% of faculty said they did not. The number of students indicating they entered the university with the background in academic practices to succeed decreased in the second term to 56.3% and dipped again to 51.6% in the third term.

The statement "I expect my first-year courses to prepare me adequately to obtain a co-op position" prompted 87.8% of students to strongly agree or agree, with the remaining students neither agreeing nor disagreeing. This number drops by 10% after one term and another 10%, to 66.7% in the third term. Only 13.33% of faculty believe the courses in their program adequately prepare students to obtain a co-op position; 30% disagree or strongly disagree that the courses provide adequate preparation.

Students reported high levels of expectation that they would be happy in the commerce program, that they would graduate with a degree from the program, and that they would have a satisfactory learning experience in the program. In reporting their expected levels of happiness with the program in the first term and their reported levels of happiness in the second and third term, declining numbers occur among both domestic and international students. Numbers also declined in response to the statement "I expect to continue with the program and graduate with a Bachelor's degree in Commerce". The most precipitous drop was in response to the question I expect to have a satisfactory learning experience in the program." The number of students agreeing with this statement drops from just over 90% to just over 75% over the year. There was no significant difference between international and domestic students. One hundred percent of faculty believe students will have a satisfactory learning experience.

The next section outlines the implications these results have for pedagogical practice.

# Implications for pedagogy

Increasing numbers of international students, particularly students from Asia, are coming to Maritime universities. Understanding student expectations will help our understanding of international student needs and contribute to our ability to satisfy these needs in the professional communication classroom. Rather than assume what students seek from their Canadian university experience, we have conducted a study that directly asked what their expectations are. The study revealed that the experiences and expectations of this generation of students from China, the greatest foreign contributor of new students, differ in experience and expectations from previous generations of Chinese students. This generation has been exposed to Western educational styles, creating a generation of Eastern learners increasingly similar to their Western counterparts (Kingston, 2008). The study also indicates that domestic and international students have similar expectations and that the gap in expectations is greater between all students and the teaching staff than between internationals and domestics.

Like previous researchers, our study found a significant difference between students' expectation and experiences of receiving feedback. Gibson (2010) identifies attributes of an academic program including feedback as significantly contributing to students' overall satisfaction with their university experiences. Arambewela and Hall's study of Asian international postgraduates (2009) confirms the importance of feedback from lecturers, along with good access to instructors and quality of teaching, as "the most important variables influencing student satisfaction" (p. 561). Brinkworth et al.'s study of Humanities and Science students (2009) found that feedback is a major point of discrepancy between expectation and experience and noted that students expect feedback. The study reports that despite the significant role feedback plays for transformative learning, students receive limited and often delayed feedback from instructional staff.

In our study, the expectation for feedback was very high among both international and domestic students, but slightly higher for international students from China. The actual experiences of all students are similar, and all report a discrepancy between expectation and experience. Given the material we teach and the high concentration of written and oral deliverables from students in our classrooms, instructors of professional communication are well-positioned to provide the feedback that contributes to transformative learning. Student expectations of feedback may be unreasonable or may be based on experiences of teacher/student ratios in high school. However, feedback is a significant factor in the internationalized classroom and contributes to the quality of experience. The interaction through feedback in the professional communication classroom provides an opportunity to contribute positively to the student experience. As Arambewela & Hall (2009) state, "While the continuous review of academic programs in terms of their content and quality and the international research profile of the universities are major requirements, it is clear that universities need to recognize the contribution made by the academic staff in terms of student retention and satisfaction with the study destination" (p. 564).

The similarity between domestic and international students in response to the question on the need to adjust study habits and the gap between all students and academic staff indicate that all students in professional communication classrooms can benefit from discussions of study skills

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for university level work.  In the professional communication classroom, these discussions might include, for example, time management for larger writing projects or group case studies.  The finding that all students, whether domestic or international, expect to a high degree to participate in class discussions and the finding that they participate less than expected indicates that students do not have the opportunities for participation they expected.  The finding that Chinese students expect to a higher degree to participate is a striking contrast to the myths associated with Chinese learners' passivity.  Interestingly, Chinese students' expectations (48.5% strongly agree and 36.4 % agree) are more aligned with academic staff expectations (53.4% strongly agree and 33.3% agree) than the expectations of domestic students.  The assumption of Chinese student passivity must, then, be abandoned, and instructors must find ways to engage students and capitalize on the expectation of active participation.

This finding may indicate that there are not enough opportunities to participate in the university classroom, particularly at the first-year level where class sizes are larger.  The finding also indicates that the conditions for participation are not in place.  Anecdotal accounts reveal that international students' efforts to participate in the classroom are thwarted by the pace of the discussion and the speed of domestic students' speech.  A classroom setting in which students face the professor at the front of the room prevents students from seeing students speak and aligning sound with lip movements.  Students using English as a second language require more time to process the instructor's questions and develop a coherent response in English.  In the professional communication classroom, we can facilitate participation by presenting the questions for discussion in advance to allow non-native speakers to develop responses.  We can also present the questions for discussion at the start of class and give students a few minutes to formulate responses and write down some ideas.  The high levels of student expectations to participate indicate that classroom practice, not cultural background, inhibits the participation that instructors expect.

The finding that all students, regardless of origin, considered their success to be important to their families also indicates that some commonly held assumptions of difference between Chinese and domestic students are no longer valid.  Kingston and Forland's study (2008) confirms Shi's claim that East Asian educational practices have become more individualistic as seen in the Western traditions.  Kingston and Forland argue that teaching practices must "be constantly monitored and modernised" for a diverse student body.  Our study supports the view that the assumptions of difference do not reflect the reality in an internationalized classroom.  Although myths of the international learner continue to be propagated in universities as a way to understand these new arrivals in the classroom, these myths assume a difference that no longer exists in a rapidly changing and globalized world.

Internationalization of the university requires a mutual sharing of ideas and experiences that would enable students to enter a global marketplace.  A majority of faculty surveyed for this study apparently believe that diverse experiences are shared in the university setting while approximately the same majority of students indicate that these experiences are not shared.  The results indicate that while 73.3% of faculty assume that students have opportunities to share their cultural backgrounds, after one year of university, only 38.7% of students report having had this opportunity, a nearly 40% drop from their expectations a year earlier.  This gap is astounding,

and an illustration of the failure of the ideals of internationalization to move into classroom practice.

The editors of *The SAGE handbook of international higher education* define the internationalization of higher education as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (p. 29). Professional communication classrooms provide a space for internationalization. The professional communication classroom provides an opportunity to reinforce the cross-cultural skills required for communication in an internationalized global environment. Practice should allow for the sharing of cultural experience to inform discussion. Since language reflects culture, we have a unique opportunity to address how language can be used to deliver culturally informed messages. Issues of audience in a global environment can be addressed. Internationalization requires both sharing of cultural traits as well as mutual adaptation. Professional communication classrooms provide an arena in which to discuss the use of language to deliver messages as well as the need for adaptation of language for diverse cultures. This process of adapting messages to various audiences develops the cultural sensitivity necessary for internationalization.

According to Asmar (2005), who studied international and domestic students in Australia, some academics view domestic students as "a relatively monocultural, monolingual group, having little in common with international students" (p. 292). Asmar points out that this dichotomous view no longer works in a modern world in which local communities have global populations; universities overlook the diversity among domestic students. Canada's multicultural domestic environment makes a dichotomous view even more inappropriate.

The responses to the questions on whether instructors adjust course content and styles of presentation to accommodate learners of English as a second language and whether instructors provide extra help when needed indicate negative disconfirmation among the students and a philosophical division in the faculty. The philosophical split in the faculty is a serious concern since 1) the faculty lacks a uniform approach to the internationalization that the university promotes and markets, and 2) adjustment in classroom practice is essential for the success of international students.

The philosophical divide amongst the faculty illustrates a lack of institutional commitment to internationalization. While the university may promote internationalization, the implementation of internationalization is not fully realized in the classroom. Friesen (2012) notes that universities assume a common understanding of the word "internationalization" and that faculty are not necessarily aligned with institutional internationalization strategies despite their central role in the process. At the studied university, seminars and workshops that address international student needs are attended by advisors and administrative staff and by far fewer academic staff. Even among those faculty willing to adopt practices that internationalize the classroom by inculcating global perspectives and adapting to international audiences, there is no clear methodology. Faculty must, therefore, engage in dialogues that define "internationalization", identify techniques that ensure accessibility of content for all students, and address the discomfort that some faculty feel in managing the new classroom dynamics with a diverse

population.  Faculty views on internationalization should align with the vision of the university as well as departments.

In the professional communication classroom, the adjustment of content to an audience that includes students with diverse backgrounds and experiences is essential.  Adjustment of style during class discussions might include creating an atmosphere in which diverse opinions, experiences, and examples are welcomed and incorporated in the discussion; repeating or rewording language that may be inaccessible to some students and addressing the alienation of audience that occurs when culturally-specific language is used; and monitoring the pace of discussions to incorporate pauses that allow participants to structure responses.
All students reported a high level of preparedness in mathematic, linguistic, and speaking abilities for university level work.  This confidence in their own preparedness increased by the third term.  While both domestic and international students recorded high levels of preparedness, the level of linguistic ability among international students was lower but still high at 80%. Attrition may account in part for the high numbers since students who did not have the ability to succeed may have left the university.  The difference between the perceived levels of preparedness and faculty views of this preparedness is dramatic.  These results may indicate that professors' expectations of students are not well defined.  Or the results could indicate that the marks of student work are high and indicate a level of achievement that does not align with faculty views.  To rectify this problem, professional communication instructors can delineate expectations more clearly.

Alarmingly, the faculty do not demonstrate confidence in the first year courses to prepare students adequately for the co-op term.  The students' responses indicate negative disconfirmation with levels of agreement in the courses' ability to provide adequate preparation diminishing.  Students report the same levels of agreement regardless of nationality.  The gap again illustrates a greater gap between academic staff and students than between international and domestic students, who largely share expectations of the university and their program. Faculty wholeheartedly agree that students will have a satisfactory learning experience in the Commerce co-op program while students record declining levels of satisfaction.  The similarity in responses between international and domestic students confirms their generational viewpoint and the minimal differences between international and domestic students.

## Conclusion

This study was limited in several ways.  The study was done at one Maritime Canadian university over three semesters.  Although evidence from previous research indicates that some findings at the studied university are consistent with findings elsewhere, future studies might survey students across universities to determine prevalence.  In addition, the third survey of the same cohort occurred in the Fall 2013 and followed the only summer break students have in the co-op program.  This survey was conducted on the first day of students' courses in Business Communication, which fell on the Wednesday or Thursday prior to a long weekend.  In addition to attrition, the lower return rate on the surveys may indicate that a significant number of students had not yet returned to university.  Results may also have been affected by the inability to survey all students at exactly the same time after the first term.

The faculty survey was conducted of instructors from a range of disciplines in the Faculty of Management—Marketing, Finance, International Business, Entrepreneurship, and Accounting as well as Business Communication.  The results reflect issues in the faculty as a whole and may not specifically reflect the attitudes of professional communication instructors.  Understanding of issues in the broader business faculty, however, can help in moving toward institutional change.  Despite these limitations, this study has revealed that international and domestic student expectations align and that these groups have similar experiences.  The study also reveals that the gap in expectations between faculty and both domestic and international students may adversely affect the process of internationalization of the classroom.  The lack of strategic guidance from administration in developing practices for the classroom may enable this gap to persist.

This study debunks commonly held beliefs about both international and domestic students.  Generations Y and Z have grown up in a globalized environment.  As a result of this globalized view, the commonalities among students as a generation significantly outweigh the differences.  Rather than adjust our pedagogical practice to suit our perceptions of the needs of international students, we must adjust practice to suit the needs of a globalized generation.  The similarities within this generation of students indicate that internationalization, the integration of perspectives, has occurred in this cohort.  The gap, then, is not between international and domestic students or between international students and faculty, but between generations who have grown up with international perspectives and those who came of age before globalization.  Professional communication courses are uniquely situated to confront the issues that a globalized world presents and to model the communicative practices required in a new era.

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