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Changing Conceptions of the International Classroom and the Good Student?

Abstract

The changing conception of international education and the instructors' perception of the' good student' is the focus of this study. Differing teaching philosophies and pedagogies in diverse cultures mean different conceptions of the important qualities and appropriate behaviour of students. As the flow of migrating students increases globally, the classrooms become increasingly intercultural, students bring disparate competences and educational values with them, and traditional views on good teaching and good students are no longer 'givens'.

When international students fill classrooms in countries far from their own, they risk not having their abilities perceived as being as valuable as those of home students. In the Nordic and Anglophone countries, there is a well-established credo of the 'good student' as independent and self-motivated – a belief usually ascribed to Western philosophies and traditions hailing back to Humboldt and his ideas of autonomy, freedom, and critical thinking. By contrast, many Asian cultures purportedly honour and respect the instructor's opinion and established knowledge above the student's. This study investigates the attitudes of instructors in Canada and Denmark towards these cultural perceptions through the lens of changes in internationalisation over time and space.

This study argues that, as a first step, instructors should become better grounded in and more explicit about their own traditions and cultural philosophies, so that they can build upon them for international teaching and learning. On the basis of responses from Canadian and Danish scholars, we aim to explore avenues towards a flexible, dynamic, and transnational conception of the good student.

1. Introduction

With the record flows of international students and the adoption of English as the international language medium in the academy come calls for the internationalisation of curriculum content and a broadening of systems of assessment in order to accommodate these students (Leask 2008; Ryan 2010; Tange/Jensen 2012; Truchot/Bloch 2002). These record flows are astonishing as the absolute number of international students rose exponentially from 2002 to 2009 and well beyond that by 2011/2012:

> According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS), the number of globally mobile students increased to 3.4 million students in 2009, up from 2.1 million students in 2000. [T]he four leading destination countries – the U.S., the UK, Australia, and Canada – witnessed sizable growth from 2002 to 2009. Canada saw the biggest percentage gains, with enrollments increasing by 67% (from 52,650 in 2002 to 87,798 in 2009). Canada was followed by the UK and Australia, which saw increase of 62% (from 227,273 to 368,968) and 43% (from 179,619 to 257,637) respectively. Although U.S. enrollment grew at a slower rate of 13% (from 582,996 to 660,581 students), it remained the leading destination in absolute numbers and enrolled approximately one-fifth of all mobile students worldwide in 2009. The most recent data from the Institute of International Education (IIE Open Doors 2011) showed an increase of 4.7% (from 690,923 to 723,277) in international student enrollment in the 2010-11 academic year compared to the previous year. (WES Research Report 2013: 6).

The greatest number of these international students came from China. In Australia, "China accounted for 29.0 per cent of all enrolments, followed by India with a further 10.5 per cent of all

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enrolments in 2012" (Research Snapshot 2013). According to the Canadian Bureau of International Education, 30% of the international students in Canada were from China (ICEF Monitor 2013). According to the International Institute in Education for the years 2011/12 in the US, China was the primary sender of international students with 25.4%, and India was next with 13.1%. Finally, in the UK for the same years 17% were from China, followed by India with 5% (Institute of International Education 2012).

In the past, the top receivers of international students have been the native-English-speaking countries of Australia, Canada, the US, and the UK because most international students have wanted to study in an English-fluent environment. This tendency has put pressure on educational systems throughout Europe and other places as far flung as China to offer English-medium programs so that they do not lose out on this international flow.[1] This has typified practice in Denmark in the past decade and even in China where selected universities such as Sun Yat-sen University have established English-medium programmes to attract exchange students, though China also has many Chinese-language programmes to attract those who want to study Chinese culture and Mandarin language. Indeed, China has been increasingly popular as an international study destination, and by 2012 was in third place behind the US and the UK (Slethaug 2015).

Nybom (2007) and Marginson (2000) maintain that this change has been thrust upon universities from the outside[2] by the seemingly unstoppable forces of globalisation. Marginson (2000:25) argues that:

> Not only are many of the effects of globalisation manifest somewhat earlier in higher education than in most other sectors, but the leading universities around the world are key players in structuring global relationships; for example in relation to systems of knowledge and its exchange, in the evolution of languages and communications, and in the formation in people of the attitudes and sensibilities required in a global environment. The effects of global systems are so powerful that they leak into our other systems and daily practices. […] Large, complex institutions such as universities no longer operate in sealed zones.

The fact is that structural changes have taken place in Europe, North America, and beyond (Leask 2005; 2008; Webb 2005), but the long-term effects of internationalisation in higher education seem under-explored and the outlines of the trajectory blurry.

Due to the pressure from the outside and because universities have taken on internationalisation so quickly, a key area that has attracted less awareness and attention is the classroom environment. The governing philosophies and practices in presenting and assessing course content (Tange/Jensen 2012) or the possibilities of their systemic redefinition (Olsen/Maassen 2007) especially need attention. Writing about Australia, one of the first countries to experience an influx of Asian students, Marginson (2000: 26) finds that "because Australian universities relate to more and more diverse cultural, linguistic and pedagogical traditions than before, this has created an imperative to rethink and rework curricula and pedagogies, particularly in relation to international education. This is invasive, disruptive, and also enormously stimulating." It is not clear that this curricular and pedagogic revision characterises tertiary education in other countries, but many scholars argue that it does not (Ryan 2010; Coverdale-Jones 2012). By and large, they argue, this 'lack' has left the cognitive frame and pedagogical philosophies, visions, and expectations unchallenged and unchanged. Consequently, our purpose is

- to find out whether the development of internationalisation over time and space has re-

1 According to the OECD (2011:323), countries that offer many programmes in English include Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Those who offer some include Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Japan, Korea, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Switzerland, and Turkey. Others offer almost none.

2 Nybom (2008) talks about "the technocratic phase" (mid-60s to late 1970s) and the rise of new public management (1980-2006). He warns against seeing the Bologna process as a solution to all problems, and in his concluding remarks states that "most European universities neither seem to have a formative idea nor are they adequately supported or trusted by their formal political owners and masters" (74).

sulted in a revision of the concept of the 'good student';

- to discover if institutions – due to the financial aspect of internationalisation or out of principle – have imposed procedures on lecturers to accommodate international students;
- to investigate if there has been a process of awareness-raising or democratic debate about faculty expectations and classroom practices in the wake of internationalisation; and
- to see whether the lecturers have experienced and been affected by changing curricula and classroom practices, and, if so, adapted to these effects of internationalisation.

This paper, then, seeks to investigate the impact of internationalisation on perceptions and behaviour by university lecturers from Humanities and Social Sciences in one university each in Canada and Denmark with regard to their expectations of students and their own practices and reflections on teaching and educational beliefs. The Canadian 40,000-student university represents what Kachru/Smith (2008) call an inner-circle country (i.e. native English speaking), and the Danish 25,000-student university an expanding-circle country (i.e. non-native English-speaking country but increasingly English medium). Canada is interesting because of its long-time involvement in the internationalisation process, while Denmark is interesting because it is small, has the Danish language as a barrier, but, due to membership in the EU and subscription to the Bologna process, enrols Erasmus students from all over Europe in addition to other international students. The OECD numbers indicate that in Canada 13.2% of all tertiary students are international students, whereas in Denmark international students only make up 9.6% of all tertiary students. In both cases the largest group comes from Asia, especially China (OECD 2011: 327, 333). The fact that Asian students go abroad in such numbers might prompt reflections on content, teaching methods, and assessment by lecturers everywhere. As part of this reflection, van den Bos and Brouwer (referencing Trigwell and Prosser 2004) maintain that "to achieve change in teaching behaviour, teachers' conceptions must first be made explicit" (2014: 773). Previous research has demonstrated in several, mainly Western contexts that challenging teacher beliefs and perceptions are instrumental in educational change (Borg 2003; 2006; Chen et al. 2012; Petek 2013). Similarly in Taiwan, Chen (2014: 35) found that to avoid a mismatch between student expectations and teaching methods,

> longer-term action should be taken to help teachers examine their existing conceptions of learning and teaching, as previous research has demonstrated a correlation between the academics' conceptions of teaching and their approaches to teaching […she concluded that] by understanding their own and their students' educational beliefs, teachers will be more aware of the potential differences in student experience of their teaching, and hence more able to make informed pedagogic decisions appropriate to most of their learners.

The present study builds on these views in exploring changes in international education and lecturers' beliefs in construing their views of the 'good student'. This matter is occupying educators in East and West as they seek to find ways to make student abilities and expectations meet those of their own because "the changing landscape of internationalisation is not developing in similar ways in higher education throughout Europe and the world as a whole" (de Wit 2010: 5). In the following we will present the debate on the issues in international educations as background to our study. The study will be presented with a section on the methodology, followed by the findings themselves, and concluding with a discussion of the same.

2. Method

It is a prevalent opinion that the first step towards improvements and changing beliefs and practices is to find out what teacher perceptions are (Barnard/Burns 2012; Basturkmen 2012; Borg

2003/2006; Chen et al. 2012; Chen 2014; Petek 2013). We considered two qualitative approaches to our data collection. One was to construct statements and ask lecturers to indicate agreement or disagreement on a Likert-like scale; the other approach was to ask lecturers to fill in a questionnaire using their own formulations. We decided on the latter approach as we estimated this method to be the best suited for a varied and complex data set which could bring forward valuable new knowledge.

To this end, we asked lecturers at a Danish and a Canadian university to fill in a questionnaire consisting of 34 questions (see Appendix 1). The questionnaire was constructed with open-ended questions inviting extended comments and shared experiences. The aim was to probe whether they adhered to local/national values and/or pedagogical philosophies or converged towards some international platform in teaching and learning. Lecturers are in a unique position because they are the locus of implementation of university policies and administrative practices even as they are in the forefront of the classroom. The perceptions of lecturers and the classroom implementation of their beliefs are therefore crucial to understanding influences from inside and outside the classroom.

The 34 questions in the questionnaire invited respondents to give extensive comments in three areas of interest: a) Teaching beliefs/philosophies (personal and institutional); b) Practice; and c) Assessment. Questions in each of the three sections were different, yet would approach the same issue from slightly different angles to get a better and more varied response pertaining to particular topics. For instance, question 6 in Teaching beliefs asked "What are the beliefs and/or philosophy you bring to your teaching?" and question 3 in Practices asked "How do you realise your teaching philosophy in the classroom?" This technique was meant to enhance the possibility of making sound evaluations of responses and heighten the validity of our conclusions (Dörnyei 2010).

Altogether, 7 Danish and 5 Canadian university lecturers from the humanities and social sciences returned the questionnaires. All respondents were experienced lecturers and researchers. The questionnaires were delivered by e-mail, and most of them were returned in the same manner, although some responses were written in long-hand and delivered personally. The respondents were not anonymous, and this may be a weakness of the data, as some respondents may have been guarded in their statements.

For reasons of space detailed answers cannot be included with each item, so the results will be clustered around the basic areas of interest, rather than each individual questionnaire item, allowing for an overview of the commonalities and significant differences between Canada and Denmark. Significant and illustrative sample quotes of these commonalities and differences will be given in the Findings section.

3. Ongoing debates on internationalisation of education

An important place to begin this discussion is with the changes in international education over time for it is not one thing or one dimension. In his report on internationalisation commissioned by the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders, De Wit (2010:5) cites Frolich and Vega's comment that "the internationalisation of higher education is a complex, multidimensional and often fragmented process." The influx of international students with disparate backgrounds and languages have occasioned changes in both East and West: some changes driven by a need for English as a common language of communication and instruction; some by institutional changes occasioned by political processes (e.g., the Bologna process and the Hong Kong structural reform making the BA a four-year enterprise); and some by internally driven desires to enhance outcomes for both students and universities through better support systems and more accommodating curricula. De Wit (2010: 10) sums up the approaches in the following words:

> [T]he activity approach which describes internationalisation in terms of categories or types of activity; the rationale approach which defines internationalisation in terms of its purposes or intended out-

> comes; the competency approach which describes internationalisation in terms of developing new skills, attitudes, and knowledge in students, faculty, and staff; and the process approach which frames internationalisation as a process that integrates an international dimension or perspective into the major functions of the institution.

From the perspective of the classroom, internationalisation has involved issues relating to the language of communication and instruction, institutional structures, learner behaviour, and curriculum development – in this historical order. We propose to direct our attention to the lecturers, their perceptions and attitudes towards their own role and their beliefs on teaching philosophy, academic behaviour and the resulting consequences for the conception and assessment of the 'good' student. The importance of this latter aspect was demonstrated by Tange/Jensen (2012), but it is one that is still under-developed.

3.1. Focus on the language

One important strand in internationalisation concerns English as an international language and the lingua franca of higher education (Jenkins 2014; Truchot/Bloch 2002), and it was the lure of being fluent in this global language that was one of the first to interest international students. In the Canadian context, international students in Humanities and Social Sciences in this initial phase of global education were predominantly Chinese, who were regarded as having a low level of communicative competence, necessitating special resources to lift achievements in English as a prerequisite for educational advancement. Those who came into science were highly regarded for their technical skills and scientific knowledge. At this stage the great influx was into the inner circle of English-speaking countries and in particular Australia, the UK, and the US.[3] As the number of students grew – 3.7m in tertiary education in 2009 up from 0.8m in 1975 (OECD 2011:320) – the group of outer-circle countries with English-medium courses expanded (OECD 2011:322), and often both teachers and students were non-native speakers of English struggling with English-medium instruction, raising new problems (Jensen et al. 2011). As Kachru/Smith (2008: 64) point out: "One may have the vocabulary and be able to attach some meaning to what has been heard or read and still not be sure of the intention of the speaker/writer." Moreover, solutions to this problem are not found in the lessons learned by the inner circle of English-speaking countries (Slethaug/Vinther 2010), though in most of these countries, including Canada, universities have added new courses in English speaking and writing to assist international students. In Europe remedial English courses have been placed in frameworks outside the university systems, and various universities have found disparate solutions to the issue which is real and continues to affect student achievement.

3.2. Focus on the learner

Closely related to the focus on English, and to some degree overlapping, was the concept of the so-called deficit learner (Ryan/Louie 2007; Tange/Jensen 2012). Because these international students were not fluent English speakers and were quiet in class, they were considered academically challenging. This notion was linked to a Western self-image of the learner as independent, a quality that the incoming non-Western students presumably lacked (Gram/Jæger/Liu/Qing/Wu 2013).

Chinese and other Asian students were especially stereotyped by this deficit metaphor (Coverdale-Jones/Rastall 2008; Ryan/Carroll 2005), perceived as having limited abilities in autonomous work and critical thinking (i.e., being unable to prioritise, discuss, and contribute to an academic milieu). The bulk of research on these students tried to account for their lack of immediate academic success, issues of plagiarism, and new demands made on the lecturers as arising from their Confucian-heritage culture (CHC). A more recent stereotype, and quite contradictory to the first said to arise from the Confucian heritage, is, in the words of Ryan (2010: 47), the 'surplus' theo-

3 In 2011, the USA received the highest number of international students (16.5%), followed by the UK in second place with 13%, and Canada in sixth place with a modest 4.7% (HM Government 2011).

ries that "seek to identify more positive aspects of Chinese 'cultures of learning' . . . and to explain the 'paradox of the Chinese learner . . . who achieves 'good' results despite 'bad' teaching and learning habits". Ryan (2010: 47) goes on to note that surplus theories "often portray CHC students as being cooperative, deep learners who are diligent, hard-working [with] . . . a high regard for education". Needless to say, these stereotypes have been less than helpful in understanding the Chinese and other Asian learners or the new conditions of higher education (Sulkowski/Deakin 2009; Freeman et al. 2009). As Ryan has recently pointed out, Chinese education has absorbed new international ways of doing things in the classroom and changed so rapidly in the past few years that previous perceptions and realities are hopelessly outdated (Ryan 2015).

Another indication of the weakness of these cultural stereotypes is the learning situation in Europe. Increasing global mobility coincided with greater mobility within Europe, making the differing traditions of Northern and Southern Europe more apparent (Vinther 2010). However, the North-South dimension was not really factored into the West-East global divide, even though southern European students were having problems with the northern European expectations of independence, autonomy in learning, and English-language proficiency in much the same way as Asian students.

3.3. Focus on institutional structures

Educational border-crossing spurred a surging market for university and college income (British Council 2014),[4] even if the increase in students was troubled by exam failures, delayed completion times, and higher drop-out rates. The concern about failure and dropout rates resulted not only in a search for ways to prepare students for study abroad and help adjusting to university routines but also for new forms of induction and assessment. Many receiving institutions of higher education realised that better orientation schemes had to be initiated with welcoming fellow students ('buddies') from the local student body pairing up with international students (Middlehurst/Woodfield 2007; Coverdale-Jones/Rastall 2008). This has created a friendlier environment where international students have a better chance of preparing to be a 'good' student.

Coverdale-Jones/Rastall (2008: 7) depict the effects of internationalisation in higher education in its many realisations in the following way:

> Western universities have typically responded by improving the means of accepting students into their institutions through summer English programmes, induction, international student support, adaptation of programmes and teaching, and an internationalisation of the curriculum, as well as by setting up international offices and administrative procedures and ways of promoting programmes to institutions and students.

International offices now offer psychological counselling and assistance with visa regulations, accommodation, banking, and tax systems. They are also required to explain exam and grading systems and administrative requirements. However, when it comes to the assessment methods and evaluations attached to individual study programmes, the support systems fall short, and internationalisation of grading and assessment has made few inroads so far (Ryan 2010; Coverdale-Jones 2012).

3.4. Focus on the curriculum

While they worry about dropout and failure rates, universities are not certain how to solve this complex problem which arises from at least two different causes: one is the vast increase in the number of migrating international students; the other is the concomitant growth of the mass university and the admission of students from disparate backgrounds and differing educational tra-

4 The British Council (2014) in the latest data from Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), and UNESCO mentions that International students "contribute over £250,000 each day to the UK economy. The total value of UK education exports is nearly double this amount." See also Universities UK Blog (2014) and HM Government (2011).

ditions with dissimilar skills and levels of achievement. From a planning point of view, both of these impact on curriculum and assessment (Ryan 2005). The inner circle of English-speaking countries, especially Australia, the UK, and also Canada to some degree, has been in the forefront of internationalising the curriculum and adopting guidelines which have internationalisation as one of the standard measures (de Wit 2002; Leask 2005; 2008; Webb 2005), but that is generally not the case in Denmark. From the viewpoint of the humanities, the explanation for this is quite straightforward in that the Danish-language requirement related to curricula limits the number of potential international students. This is beginning to change, and thus the need for a debate about consequences and alternatives is becoming imminent. Along with other non-English speaking Europeans, the Danes need to reflect on how they can accommodate internationalisation to improve higher education and the humanities.

3.5. Focus on lecturers, teaching philosophies, and practices

As the number of international students expands, the need for English-language competency (for student and instructor alike) and review of classroom practices and approaches becomes increasingly obvious. The basic question in this paper and guiding query in the underlying survey is how professional views and the classroom are impacted and the 'good' student defined and served by these radical changes.

Worldwide, there has been research on English-language competency, but little on lecturers, teaching philosophies, and practices with a view toward defining and serving the 'good student.' In recent years, the students' perceptions of the difficulties of being an international student have been presented in a number of research projects (Ryan/Slethaug 2010; Jackson 2010; Ellwood 2011; Slethaug/Vinther 2012; Coverdale-Jones 2013), but we know little about lecturers' perception of their place in the international classroom.

Our questionnaire, comprising detailed yet open-ended questions (see Appendix 1), was aimed at answering the overarching question: "given the lecturers' teaching and learning philosophy, their perceptions of appropriate learning behaviour, and the increasing diversity in the classroom, what now is thought to be a 'good' student"? Since internationalisation is more pervasive and longer established in Canada than in Denmark, we were also looking for differences in perceptions held by lecturers in two countries with different backgrounds and experiences. As an illustration, Tange/Jensen found "that there is a special, 'Danish' way of doing things" in education (2012: 186) and that lecturers relied on a general level of knowledge acquired in pre-university education. Their findings also made it clear that Danish lecturers' perception of the 'good student' was modelled on expectations of Danish student behaviour:

> Because the Danish educational system has provided native lecturers and learners with shared experiences of 'attractive' and 'deviant' practices, this 'good student' is often, if not exclusively, found among the Danish students, who are set up as a benchmark against which any alternative conduct can be assessed. (Tange/Jensen 2012: 187-188)

However, both the Danish and Canadian traditions of autonomous researchers/lecturers in a self-governing university have developed from the Humboldtian Enlightenment goal of fostering independent and critical-thinking students encouraged to query authority and participate in the democratic process (Vinther/Slethaug 2013). This tradition common to Northern Europe and native-English-speaking countries does not extend everywhere, and the differing educational beliefs and expectations resulting from the transnational movement of students should be examined and thoughtfully incorporated in practice. The present paper intends to open a discussion about the impact of internationalisation in the classrooms and an examination of our own beliefs and unspoken expectations (and those of others), which is essential if we are to ensure that all lecturers and students alike may enjoy the full benefits of globalisation.

We know from previous research that students from different cultures behave in different ways (Slethaug 2007; Vinther 2010; Jin/Cortazzi 2013), and that, regardless of official university state-

ments or the cajoling of lecturers, it may take some time (if ever) before they actively participate in class. For instance, students from CH cultures in contrast to Western cultures invariably prefer to remain silent in class until they have a good understanding of the material or until they find the confidence to speak out without knowing the instructor's opinion (Duff 2010). As Scollon et al. point out, the great respect for authority that CH-culture students are taught directly contradicts the philosophy of so-called Western utilitarian discourse systems that promote deductive thinking and writing, independent learning, and individualism (Scollon et al. 2012)[5] As a result, it takes some time for these Asian students to feel comfortable in the Western classroom where students are encouraged to express personal opinions and are evaluated on that. These students not only find the discussion intimidating because it goes against the value of respect in their culture but also, as Wu (2002: 389) notes, because it seems so chaotic. Wu mentions how the perceived lack of discipline in UK classrooms comes as shock to incoming Chinese students who find the discussion uncomfortable but who cannot express their sense of bad taste in the presence of the Western student majority. Many students from the East (e.g. Chinese) also give weight to relationship-building over personal expression of opinion (Tran 2009). Finally, Leathwood (2006: 612, 613) points out that the prevailing construction of the independent learner is "inappropriate for many students" because it is sexist and racist: "not only a masculine one, but specifically western, white and middle class". However, it is important to note that the independent learner is not a wholly organic and monolithic western ideal, for within the European tradition there is a pronounced difference between Northern and Southern Europe (Llmas 2006; Vinther 2010). Though students in Southern Europe are well aware that the official ideal is the independent student, Llmas (2006: 672-673) argues that unofficial classroom demeanour may dictate against it: students are expected to listen quietly in class while learning to be critical and internally compare their ideas to the teacher's.

In our study we wanted to clarify whether the diversity in student behaviour has led to instructor self-reflection and whether the occasional schism in the explicit and implicit expectations of lecturers would appear in statements from the Canadian and Danish respondents and prompt new conceptions of the ideal classroom and a 'good student'. We find these issues especially important as they inevitably affect appraisals of student achievements.

3.6. Philosophies and ideals of higher education institutions

Every workplace and institution embrace a working philosophy or vision based on personal and institutional values that guide self-perceptions and actions. It is this basis that is simultaneously at work and affected when fundamental currents of change impact the execution of duties. Since interplay of tradition and transformation affects self-image and the perception of participants, there is bound to be conflicting interests at play. As Llmas (2006: 666) notes, the university tradition of personal and institutional independence now comes into conflict with calls for its relevance to the market economy:

> A strong tradition of self-government justifies the idea of a liberal and autonomous 'academy', with a commitment to independence, neutrality, impartiality and the advance of knowledge. The essence of the liberal academic model is the development of the student as a person or citizen and not so much as a consumer or potential worker. It is the needs of the State that bring into question the meaning of the university institution while its characterization as a marketable good makes possible the substitution of the ideal of the student as a cultivated person for the model of the skilled student prepared for work.

This quotation also points to the 'good student' as a construct under re-definition. The traditional Western perception of the university as an independent, autonomous institution is reflected in the self-image of lecturers who believe in their self-determination, and this is further extrapolated to

5 Scollon et al. argue that the Western preference for deductive argumentation in scholarship began with nineteenth century utilitarian thinkers who identified it with strong and assertive capitalism. Thus, the discourse of a rhetorical form became aligned with other social and economic discourses.

the 'good student' as active, independent, and able to take initiative. This traditional view is under pressure in the marketisation of both universities and students with student demands likened to clients' rights or customers acquiring a product, rather than a process of growth, formation and transformation, and character-building (Skelton 2012). As demonstrated above in section 3.5, it is important to point out that, despite a common Western intellectual and pedagogical heritage of intellectual autonomy arising from Humboldt in the Enlightenment (Vinther/Slethaug 2013), there are significant variations in interpretation and implementation among contemporary universities. Thus, while both Denmark and Canada embrace the egalitarian tradition of research-based university instruction, the particular Canadian institution under study is more utilitarian and job-oriented than is the Danish university.

4. Findings

The analysis of our respondents' detailed commentaries made it clear that some themes pervaded the discussion across the board. These themes are significant because they illuminate common concerns and beliefs adding new understanding of the 'good student' as embedded in internationalisation and changing realities for higher education. Our data grouped around the themes of lecturers' self-image, philosophies of teaching, pertinent ideas of the 'good student', perceptions of international students as both positive contributors and a difficulty, a contradictory inclination to treat every student the same while aware of differences, and claims of having made no changes to their classroom practices combined with statements about changing conditions in higher education that affect their teaching. The sections below unfold the themes and their conclusions supported by comments from the respondents.

4.1. Lecturers' self-perception

In keeping with the Humboldtian idea of a liberal and autonomous institution, **lecturers see themselves as free agents**, able to choose teaching styles, methods, and materials (if not always preferred courses), but it becomes clear that this is not always the case. Comments such as "Most definitely" and "No prescriptions" come from both the Danes and Canadians in confirming their freedom to choose methodology and style, though these same lecturers acknowledge that course descriptions and *studieordninger* (study regulations governing course content and examination requirements in Denmark) do not always leave lecturers free to teach exactly as they might wish. Their self-professed freedom accords with the traditional Western ideal of the autonomous academic free of influences and constraints beyond the higher purpose of enlightening students to the best of their abilities and with a view to serving the interests of the students as agents and learners in an educationally transformative process. Some constraints of change and power structures among the responding lecturers in the questionnaire are noted but brushed aside.

4.2. Lecturers' ambiguity about their philosophies of teaching

Although lecturers also admit to being **free to follow their philosophy of teaching**, they are **very unclear about, or perhaps even unaware of, this philosophy** and practically unable to formulate it beyond general and imprecise statements. The Danes speak of "student centred learning" that the university administrators promote, but then say that there is neither clarity about nor guidelines for such advice. The Canadians also talk about "student-centred learning," as well as "interaction/collaboration," "deep learning," and the "development of practical skills". One respondent specifically refers to a belief in "'Universal Design of Education – the design of teaching to make the classroom accessible to the broadest possible range of students, regardless of linguistic and cultural background, ability, literacy or learning style, class, race, ethnicity, gender, or age." Even with the last comment, these are all declarations of tacit purpose rather than philosophies arising from specific knowledge and governing pedagogical goals. The values embodied in this tacit knowledge are not unlike Raz's comment (1990: 7) that "[…] our societies share a rich

enough common culture consisting in principles accepted by all as valid. We have a public culture and a public reason which can be appealed to as standards whose validity is, in spite of the fact of pluralism, beyond dispute." Since serving students is part of a received set of values, it is not an object of discussion, elaboration, or dispute. However, the current transitional state of affairs with international education might require an informed discussion of personal, regional, and national teaching philosophies in light of increasing diversity. The first step towards renewing the international classroom might be that lecturers make it clear to themselves and their students what their philosophy is. This would help international and home students who find the tacit foundations and expectations of knowledge vague and ambiguous.

4.3. Lecturers' vague perceptions of 'the good student'

When lecturers are so imprecise or implicit in their own understanding of teaching philosophy and expectations of students, they also have **vague perceptions of the 'good student'**. The respondents in our survey say they expect the same teaching for, and work from, all students but are not explicit about these expectations. Thus, it is unclear whether their expectations consist of a traditional accumulation of knowledge through a **presentation** and **examination** of contents or through the **process** of the students' learning. Is the good student one who is able to excel in the transmission of knowledge, or one who can handle uncertainty and independence in the construction of knowledge? The lecturers give few indications in their answers whether their expectation and classroom management will include both or only one type of learning and what their preference might be. The data leave it ambiguous to what degree, if any, the learning spaces have expanded to accommodate new approaches of both teaching and learning for international students.

4.4. Lecturers' perception of international students as both lacking and contributing

Even with increasing internationalisation in the classroom, lecturers frequently see **international students as somehow lacking, and yet as hard workers and good contributors to the classroom and university atmosphere**. This seems like a paradox, but, if one considers what qualities the international students bring, perhaps the statement is not so surprising. International students are usually eager to learn and benefit from the experience of studying abroad, though their efforts may not be wholly appreciated. Sometimes their initiative is perceived as a respect and enthusiasm for learning that home students are not thought to possess because they take education for granted. As one Danish instructor remarks about the presence of international students, "I appreciate their being here, as they tend to raise the bar on an overall basis. What they may not have at some levels may be balanced by the usefulness of everybody communicating mutually in English, and by the frequently high motivation and industry of our guests." Sometimes, however, their attempts are taken as an impediment to constructive critical thinking and classroom discourse. As one Canadian comments, "In my experience, many international students are quiet and do not overtly influence the atmosphere." One Dane puts it this way:

> Chinese students . . . from the old east bloc as well as from south-east Asia . . . know next to nothing of English phonetics (pronunciation), have a mechanical approach to English pronunciation and to . . . English grammar. . . Many of these foreign students exhibit a serious lack of knowledge of history, current social affairs, and politics. That is, they dare not discuss such subjects.

Some, then, find that the international students simultaneously raise and lower the bar; that is the basic paradox. The further explanation of the paradox may be that international students bring different types of knowledge and, therefore, do not meet local expectations while at the same time supplementing what home students lack. One Danish instructor comments, "I realize that different cultures may produce different qualifications (i.e. that some competencies we rate highly or rather less so may be less so/more so elsewhere). In my experience, the differences are stimulating, as they force students to reflect upon cultural diversity." In other words, the mixture of home

students and international students constitutes a fruitful mix of abilities conducive to a rich learning environment.

4.5. Lecturers' belief in equal treatment of all students while aware of differences

For the most part, lecturers say they make **no distinction in teaching-expectations between home and international students** because, as one Canadian lecturer finds "I am unaware whether or not a student is an international student. I would only know if they went out of their way to tell me." Almost to a person the Danes believe they make no distinction, though two mention they are more lenient about the lower English-language abilities of some international students. Despite this kind of predominantly innocent view, there is again a paradox because how can the lecturers make statements about difference in their classrooms, if they acknowledge none? One Canadian lecturer says he has the same expectations of all students, but then goes on to note that he "listens for differences, unique features based in pre-university experience and background," which suggests attuning to difference. Another Canadian lecturer means to say that he sees no difference in teaching international or local students –"I definitely want to empower international students to become independent learners, to develop enthusiasm for learning, to understand their own learning goals, and to develop habits for success: the same things I want for all students"– but in saying this he places the lack he hopes to fill first in the international student. Yet another Canadian lecturer is more direct in expressing a need to explore the differences in the classroom: "Through teaching courses with high international student enrolments, I'm starting to become aware of how many culturally-based assumptions are embedded in course content and assignments. I'm finding places where it's necessary to be lenient towards the student's misunderstandings on those grounds." Still another Canadian said she had the same expectations of both groups, but is "willing to direct international students to resources that can help." There is, then, an affirmation of identical treatment and at the same time recognition that with cultural difference comes the need for special understanding and help. If a lecturer believes in equal teaching to all students regardless of condition or origin and yet compensates for (or, at the other end, penalises) language difficulties and differences in ability and aptitude, what does that mean for the integration and well-being of international students and for the process of international teaching and learning? Could it be that due to cultural rather than intellectual differences, any international student would be perceived as not quite observant of standard conduct at a given location and yet still be seen as a contributor to classroom activities? It seems that there is something here that universities need to address.

Taking a cultural rather than academic perspective on this matter carries evidence of the different dimensions of culture that have been articulated and classified by Geert Hofstede (1997) and others, who make it clear that a single dimension is not enough to explain differences in values and behaviours. Both Canada and Denmark have universities and institutions of higher education that come out of the Enlightenment with its values of reason, freedom, and rights for the individual. Both national systems expect students to be critical and active contributors in the learning process, but, even though the two systems are individualistic, they may have different power-distance dimensions with greater informality in the Danish classroom than in the Canadian one. The Canadian classroom is more diverse than the Danish one and, consequently, more formal in some respects as more considerations of diversity have to be observed.

It could be useful to remember Man's analysis (2008) of an interactional situation in which a teacher's instructions are misinterpreted and a learner comes across as a *'*rule violater*'* and consequently snubbed or ignored by the teacher. In classroom interactions in which cultural identities are at play, misunderstandings of this sort are hardly rare, but in the international classroom the situation is compounded by the interaction taking place in what is a foreign language for at least one of the parties and sometimes for everyone. Referencing Gee (1996), Man (2008: 124) points out communication problems occasioned by "changing discourse patterns due to the acquisition of a new form of literacy, or the learning of a new language, or when a different language is used

as the medium of learning." Some or all of these problems happen to every international student in a new classroom context.

4.6. Lecturers' lack of awareness about effects of internationalisation on students

Lecturers say they have **not really made changes or adjustments to their treatment of diverse students** over the years, other than what you would expect as resulting from experience; they seem to have taken little notice of internationalisation as such, and they report no specific awareness of, or concerns about, the different cultural traditions and philosophies of international students. That may well have happened because university administrators have not seen fit to intervene in the classroom on behalf of international students. The Canadian co-author of this article has spent the last 20 years teaching in universities in Hong Kong, mainland China, Denmark, and Canada. In none of these institutions has the policy taken into account neither the educational consequences of the mix of international and local students nor the way it affects staff and teachers. It is basically an ignored topic, except for possible requirements that non-native-English speaking students may have to take additional English language courses or pass some kind of university examination. Perhaps the very idea of the academic freedom of the lecturer and the need for equality in the classroom has meant that academic questions of the international mix of students are seldom raised. Orafi/Borg (2009: 244) report that "The literature on educational innovation has identified mismatches between curricular principles and teachers' beliefs as a major obstacle to the implementation of change." So, it might well be that the idea of a liberal and autonomous university and the lecturer as the primary sign and symbol of that mean that questions about the effect on global education in the classroom remain unexpressed.

In our data from Denmark and Canada, we find a similar lack of debate about this question in addition to values and expectations that are fairly aligned. However, because of greater social diversity in society and more rapid internationalisation in their universities, the Canadians may be moving to a dialogue on those effects in the classroom. In part that could also result from their being more utilitarian than Danish counterparts in their approach to education and in seeking resources to remedy some basic language and integration issues among the international students.

5. Concluding discussion

The conclusion to the question of lecturers' conceptions of a 'good student' in Canada and Denmark is that their views adhere to the traditional, liberal, egalitarian ideals of independence and active participation. Lecturers think of themselves as autonomous, free to choose teaching methods, material and assessment, but our data also suggest that reality is not always aligned to this ideal self-perception. However, the image lecturers have of the 'good student' mirrors the qualities of independence and critical thinking that they judge themselves to be in possession of. The gist of the responses is that these are general academic proficiencies aspired to by everyone in higher education.

Both the Canadian and Danish respondents to our questionnaire belong to a western utilitarian and egalitarian discourse system, but with the Canadians promoting more utilitarian features in university education than the Danes. When asked about his/her teaching philosophy, one Canadian lecturer explicitly states, "I tend to emphasize practical skills that I know are in demand in the job markets." Within the classroom, this discourse idealises students who put forward arguments even before the matter has been completely thought through or understood. The western student who follows the deductive argumentation style would be met with understanding, while the student adhering to a mainly inductive style would run the risk of being perceived as diffuse and missing the essential points. Our data also suggest that those from non-western cultures who have special respect and deference for the teacher and readily accept received knowledge are assumed to fall short of the ideal. In other cases it becomes clear that there are different perceptions of what constitutes 'academic behaviour', expressed by one Danish lecturer in this way about a

particular non-Western group of students: "[They bring] quasi-oral-society standards of argumentation to their task that are – within our culture – experienced as unacademic." So even though the expected learning behaviour is defined as "focussed attention, preferably active participation" (Danish lecturer), there are standards of expectations related to the format of that participation.

The lecturers report that the mix of international students in the classroom has not led them to change their teaching approaches or discourse strategies other than what follows from normal changes over time, experience and course requirements; nor has internationalisation led to any particular engagement with reflections on potential effects it should have with regard to pedagogy and planning. Perhaps we can interpret this to be connected to the conception they hold of the 'good student' which seems to be a relatively stable and unchanging ideal in accord with the western heritage, even though, when asked to be explicit about it, they have vague ideas of the qualities of the 'good student'. This is true of both the Canadian and the Danish respondents. Tange/Jensen (2012) found that Danish lecturers had certain expectations that the Danes modelled and served as a benchmark. Therefore, it is interesting to see that there is not much difference between Danish and Canadian responses. Our results indicate that the general model is rooted in the western liberal heritage as mentioned above and that this applies in both Canada and Denmark.

It seems that so far internationalisation at the tertiary level has not occasioned deeper reflection on the competencies of students from disparate cultural backgrounds and ways that these values could be incorporated in a truly internationalised pedagogy. There is a marked need for further research into this complex area. Our data demonstrate the high degree of tacitness of expectations and conceptions in the western classroom, so we suggest that lecturers need to reflect on their philosophies of education, rethink their pedagogies, develop new approaches, and find new ways of embracing the globalisation of education from their own perspective and with the qualitative infusion of research into the ownership of the curriculum and didactic standards. We see it as essential to become aware of our own beliefs and unspoken expectations to incorporate appropriate changes in a new reality of higher education. That way we can be better prepared to meet the international mix in the student body so that we and they may enjoy the full benefits of globalisation.

We conclude that with internationalisation important decisions need to be made by educators about the way forward for curriculum development and university infrastructure, but the first step is to raise awareness of current practices. If institutions, administrations, and lecturers are to embrace and enjoy the potential for growth in internationalisation, then an explicit conversation needs to be initiated about depictions of the 'good student' and ways in which diversity can be embraced at the level of practice to reflect the international dimensions of students and faculty members in the classroom.

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Appendix 1

Research questionnaire

NAME OF RESPONDENT:_____

Categories:

1. Teaching beliefs/categories (personal and institutional)
2. Practice
3. Assessment

Teaching beliefs/philosophies:

1. Does your institution promote or prescribe particular teaching styles or methods?
2. Are you asked to base your course work on particular set books and publications?
3. If yes to either or both of 1 and 2, please indicate the beliefs and/or philosophies your institution wants to promote in order to profile the university/institute.
4. Do you feel you are free to choose your own method and materials?
5. Do you feel you are free to conduct your classes in the way you believe to be right?
6. What are the beliefs and/or philosophy you bring to your teaching?
7. Do institutional expectations of you differ from your expectations of yourself?
8. If you have experienced a discrepancy between your own beliefs and those of your institution, how have you handled it?
9. Do you have the same expectations of international students as you have of home students?
10. If no, how do your expectations of the two groups of students differ?
11. Do you feel you are able to deal with all kinds of students?
12. If you think there are different kinds of students, could you please try to categorize and describe these groups?
13. From an ideal point of view, what qualities do expect a university student to have?
14. Are these qualities something you experience as being present in the students you meet?
15. In what way do international students influence classroom activities and atmosphere?
16. Have you experienced a need over the years to change or adapt your teaching style/approach and, if so, has it had implications for your fundamental beliefs of teaching and learning in higher education?
17. Do you believe that students, home as well as international, should adapt to and adopt a particular philosophy prevailing in higher education and leading to a range of competences unique to higher education?

Practice:

1. Do you believe your teaching approach is equally useful for all kinds of students?
2. If you perceive a lack of particular abilities among the students, in tools or support facilities, what are they, and how would like to see the situation remedied?
3. How do you realise your teaching philosophy in the classroom?
4. Describe a typical course of events in your classroom.
5. What kind of learning behaviour do you expect from your students in the classroom?
6. What kind of learning behaviour do you expect from your students outside the classroom?
7. In your opinion, is there a connection between teacher behaviour and student behaviour?
8. Do you feel that home and international students function well together?
9. Do you feel that instructions are perceived in the same way by home and international students?
10. How do you identify and attempt to integrate international students in your classroom?

Assessment:

1. Who decides how your courses are assessed?
2. If you do not decide the form and time of assessment of your course, do you find it problematic?
3. If you decide on the form, content and time of the assessment, how have you decided what the components should be?
4. Do you think assessment will impact on your teaching approach and student behaviour?
5. Do you find a good match between your teaching philosophy and assessment in your course(s)?
6. When students evaluate your courses, do you believe they understand what you are trying to accomplish by the content, classroom assessment, and style of teaching?
7. Do you have general comments or thoughts on the international and intercultural classroom?