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A Classroom Experience in Australian Universities

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to investigate Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of the teaching and their interactions (or lack thereof) with their educators in the Australian classroom. The knowledge of how Chinese students perceive the teaching is of paramount importance in an attempt to further understand how they cope in a foreign land with a foreign language. As part of a study on students' tertiary educational experience, this paper only focuses on the issues surrounding overall teaching quality in undergraduate accounting studies as perceived by Mainland Chinese students. While subsequent papers will address other areas of the learning context and the changes students made in response to their perceptions. In this study, focus group interviews in Mandarin were conducted on first, second and final year undergraduate accounting Chinese students across two universities. Drawing from Ramsden's (2003) student learning context model, the results show that the classroom experience of the teaching and teacher/students relationship are poorly perceived by most Mainland Chinese students across all year levels. It is noted that students' lack of English proficiency may have contributed to their unsatisfactory tertiary experience in Australia. Further, it is found that the teaching, perceived by students as inadequate, has also played a part in students' absenteeism from classes. However, as they continued through their studies, the students found themselves adapting in various ways to the Australian educational system.

Keywords: Chinese students, teaching, teacher/student relationship, student perceptions, learning