

## Supporting Student Transition from Glasgow International College

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### Aims for the session

- Recognise the complex nature of transition into UK Higher Education for many international students;
- Identify some of the key challenges that GIC students have surrounding transition into the University of Glasgow; and
- Evaluate your own approach to transition support.

### A little bit about why we're all here...

- To teach international students, to help them fulfill their ambitions for study at the University of Glasgow, and to support **transitions** – to GIC and then to UoG

## International Students in the UK

- Substantially growing numbers in recent years. In 2013-14 non UK students studying in UK HE increased to 435,500.
  - Chinese students far exceed any other nationality at 87,895. Indian students are the next largest cohort (UKCISA.org.uk).
  - Top 4 subjects: Business (36%), Engineering (32%), Computing (22%), Law (22%).



## Kaplan has a wide range of activities with UK universities

- Kaplan International: 1 million students, 23,000 staff, 600 cities in 30 countries.
- Pathway programmes in the UK for international students
- Pathway programmes in China, Japan and Kurdistan for international students coming to the UK
- Partner for in country delivery of university programmes in London, Singapore and Hong Kong
- Partner for the delivery of on-line degree programmes and professionally orientated degrees
- Recruit international students for UK universities through Kaplan's sales and global digital networks

## International Students at GIC and UoG

- International students studying at UoG

- UoG 14th largest recruiter of international students in the UK: 2013-14 data 6,965 total (PG 3,650; UG 3,315)

HESA FTE Data	2013-14	2011-12
Arts	243	207
MVLS	833	703
S&E	548	445
CoSS	2248	1680
<b>Total</b>	<b>3872</b>	<b>3035</b>

- International students studying at GIC

- Currently 734 students
- UG: 56% business, 8% social science, 20% engineering, 16% science.
- PG: 71% business, 16% science & engineering, 13% social science

GIC Data	2013-14	2011-12
Arts	0	0
MVLS*	Incl with Sci	Incl with Sci
S&E	153	97
CoSS	593	363
<b>Total</b>	<b>746</b>	<b>460</b>

## Acculturation and Transition

- International students are:
  - important as a key market
  - Important as contributors to institutional ambitions to encourage diversity and multicultural learning for all (Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003).
- International students face:
  - Greater challenges adapting to social and academic life (Hechanaova-Alampayetal et al 2002) – i.e. *acculturation*.
- Acculturation includes expectations of class size, difficulties studying independently, the need to acquire certain skills for study, understanding social hierarchy and local culture as well as HE cultures.

Cross-Cultural Teaching and Learning for Home and International Students  
Internationalisation of Pedagogy and Curriculum in Higher Education

Edited by  
Janette Ryan

Developing the Global Student  
Higher education in an era of globalization

David Killick



INTERNATIONALIZATION  
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

## College of Social Sciences - Approaches to Date

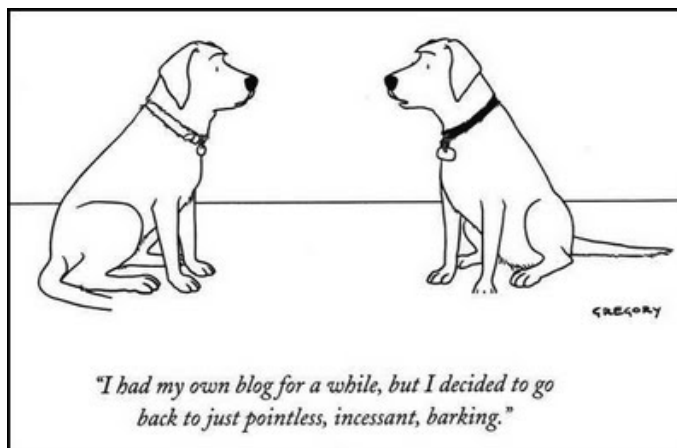
- **Focus primarily on PGT students but more recently also UG include:**
  - Tailored induction
  - Academic practice and study skills courses (online and face-to-face material)
  - Specialised advising (UG)
  - Pre-arrival contact and information
  - Dignity at work guidance
  - Locally organised social activities
- **Example projects since 2006:**
  - Pringle, G. and M. Fischbacher, *Assisting International Students to manage the transition to UK academic culture: development of an e-learning support package. LTDF project.*, 2007, University of Glasgow.
  - Cartmel, F. and G. Pringle, *GIC Student Transition Report 2009/10, LTDF Project*, 2010, University of Glasgow.
  - McEwan, M.P., *Transition into HE: factors affecting attainment and academic strategies to aid the transition*, in *Academic Development Unit 2013*, University of Glasgow: Glasgow.

## Between two worlds

- Steers et al (2010) talk about “cultural friction” leading to “cultural shock”
- Smith and Khawaja (2011) highlight the need to understand holistically the range of adjustments made:
  - Language, sociocultural factors, discrimination, practical considerations
- Learning is compromised through culture shock when strategies are not in place to cope with stressors (Ryan, 2005a; 2005b).



### Non-Staff Intervention & Social Media



### Understanding transition from the students' point of view

**Loneliness**

**Gaps**

**Study vs Free Time**

**Differences in Style**

**Language**

## Loneliness

- *“Firstly we [are] really excited [about] what the life will be in Glasgow, [but when we got here], I think firstly at the university I [was] a lot lonely and scared because I have to do everything by myself and all the people around me are the foreign people... I think the problem is because I’m really young when I [was] here.”*
- *“I think I am the only one person in this world”. “No-one to talk to me and I don’t want to talk to anyone ”.*

## Language & Contributing in class

- *“people think we are shy, no-one is shy, we just don’t know how to organize our words and don’t know what is the right time to speak it out, because the lecturer speak so quickly and the local speakers already speak out their opinions and they do it very well, so most of my friends said, Oh they have already said what I wanted to say and of course it’s better than my opinion, so I just leave it out, I don’t want to speak out.”*
- *“I’m really jealous that foreign students can make jokes with teachers and they can laugh and they can talk about something else that we even don’t understand”.*
- *“Sometimes we just pretend we’re understanding and just laugh with them, but actually, what are they saying? It’s just a “Blah-blah-blah,” to us.*

## Understanding Study

- *“I have ten friends in GIC and we all attend the same and eight of them have failed the exam, because they don’t know the difference between ordinary degree and honours degree, so they don’t know [what is required] to go through the honours degree, so they fail the exam...they don’t even know why and how they have failed, yeah. I think because they don’t know the difference, so they did work so hard to grasp this chance to go to honours degree and also when they fail the exam they are not very upset, but when they know the result and consequence, yeah, they felt very unhappy and there is no other chance to do it again”.*

## Language ‘tensions’

*“when I am studying at university I don’t like my lecturer [at UoG] to pay special attention to Chinese. I don’t like that. One of my lecturers he use the common speech to talk to others, but when it came to my turn and he said, Oh I know you are Chinese and I should s-l-o-w d-o-w-n m-y s-p-e-e-c-h, s-o w-h-a-t’s y-o-u-r o-p-i-n-i-o-n? Why? I can understand you, why are you speaking slowly? Because am Chinese so you should slow down your speech? Why? No matter which country I come from and no matter what language I speak out, yeah, I want the equal treatment”.*

- There are clearly tensions here because on the one hand, language is identified as a barrier to study, but sensitivity in responding to such difficulties is also needed.







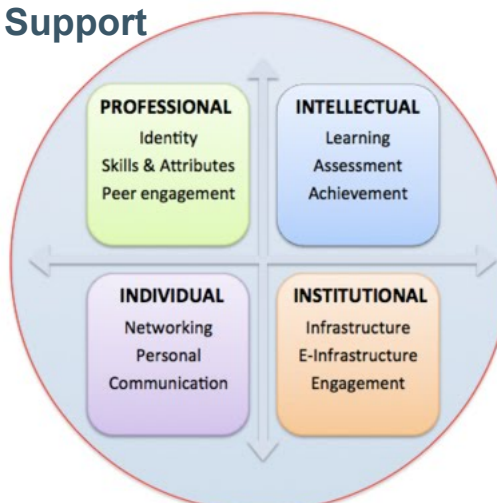
## What we are putting in place in CoSS

- Dedicated UG support (Jenny Deane)
  - One hour per week for transition programme
    - timetabled (e.g “expectations of GU”; lecture skills; student societies).
  - Mentoring with students in level 2 and honours.
  - Support with transition to honours.
- Timetabled inductions (at UoG)
- Some ‘handover’ one-to-one GIC tutor sessions
- Joint CPD for staff (academic & MPA)
- Informal support (PGR Intern, student volunteers, social events)



## Evaluating Transitions Support

- Transition from what to what?
- From whom should information come (authenticity)?
- Is there consistency across academic and MPA teams & services, formal and informal channels of communication?
- Openness about challenges?



Source: <https://sites.google.com/site/transitioninhe/home>  
University of Greenwich & JISC Digital Literacies Project