

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Extending Capabilities

Professor Michael Singh from the Centre for Educational Research with Dr Jinge Han from Charles Sturt University are determining how to extend the argumentative capabilities of Chinese Higher Degree Research students in their research studies. This research was funded through an Australian Research Council Discovery Grant.

'In 2006-07 over 90,000 students from China were studying at universities in Australia – or 23% of Australia's international university students, and by 2007, over 300 students from China were doing higher degree research,' says Professor Singh. 'A particular focus is often placed on addressing international research students' English-speaking capabilities but their ability to engage in scholarly argumentation may be limited by Western approaches to methods, as well as supervisory practices and the general research culture in Australia. For Chinese research students, insufficient focus is placed on the use of their own intellectual cultural heritage and the level of knowledge available to them through international networks. This study will critically investigate ways to recognise and develop in particular, Chinese research students' argumentation capabilities, their funds of knowledge and multiple language use.'

Ten Chinese research students will document the argumentation they engage with as they undertake their research projects. Thirty supervisors of Chinese research students will be interviewed to assess improvement. Survey data will be collected from international research students and academics and forums will gather feedback on international students' experiences to develop a new educational framework. This will include new supervisory approaches. The framework will then be reviewed by university academics, managers and research student supervisors via a survey.



Extending the argumentative capabilities of Chinese research students in Australia and promoting use of their multi-lingual abilities will help to address the needs of a growing trans-national labour market. This study may also contribute to the research capabilities of both China and Australia by enhancing the quality of internationalised research education. This leads to better understanding of Australia's region and an improvement in educational relations between Australia and China.

Project Title: Extending the capabilities of argumentative Chinese students: Enhancing Australia's pedagogical capacity for engaging China through internationalising research education.

Funding has been set at: \$160,000

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