Identifying Thesis Supervisors' Attitudes: Indications of Responsiveness in International Master's Degree Programmes

Kalypso Filippou*

Department of Education, University of Turku, Turku, Finland

Abstract

This study reports on an interview-based study of thesis supervisors' attitudes on initiating discussions on students' expectations and prior thesis writing experiences in international master's degree programmes. One aim of this study is to identify the various practices which supervisors implement and the reasoning they use to foster a supportive environment for their students during the students' studies and master's thesis process. This paper contributes to existing research on English-medium master's degree programmes in non-English speaking countries. Twenty interviews were conducted with thesis supervisors from five Finnish universities. Two main attitudes were observed regarding initiating discussions concerning students' expectations and previous thesis writing experience: diagnosing and adjusting supervision, and resisting and relying on students' initiative. Supervisors' responsiveness varies in intercultural supervision contexts, and more opportunities for reflection and collaboration between supervisors should be provided.

Keywords: international master's degree programmes, responsiveness, intercultural supervision

* *Email:* kalypso.filippou@utu.fi

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to identify master's thesis supervisors' responsive pedagogies during intercultural supervision. Specifically, this paper contributes to the field of master's thesis supervision in English-medium programmes; it examines supervisors' attitudes to initiating discussions regarding students' prior writing experience and expectations of the thesis process as well as activities supervisors initiate to develop a supportive environment. In 1989, the first English-medium international degree programmes in Finnish higher education were established (Välimaa et al., 2013). The international master's degree programmes (IMDPs) were created primarily to attract international students to Finnish universities. These two-year programmes are run separately but parallel to local programmes; the admission process and criteria are different, tuition-fees are charged for non-EU/European Economic Area students and the English language is used, in contrast to the exam-based admission for the tuition-free-Finnish or Swedish-speaking programmes. The number of international degree programmes has now grown to more than 400 (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2018), with 21,061 international students in Finnish universities and universities of applied sciences in 2016 (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2017). That year, international students constituted 12% of master's degree students in Finnish higher education (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2018). The most common nationalities of international degree students were Russian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Nepalese, Indian, and Pakistani (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2016).

In this culturally diverse environment, and given the general aim to increase students' learning opportunities and improve university teachers' practices, it is important to acknowledge students' previous experiences and prior knowledge (Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2012). A recent study on students' expectations in IMDPs indicated that more than 50% of the respondents already had a master's degree (Filippou, Kallo & Mikkilä-

Erdmann, 2017). With this in mind, this study examines whether thesis supervisors in IMDPs learn about their students' prior thesis writing experiences and their expectations of the thesis process and the reasons behind these supervisors' practices. The supervisors were chosen as participants in this study, since some are also directors and/or teachers in the IMDPs. Another reason for this choice is the importance of the thesis process, representing one-third of the whole master's degree.

Literature review

In the international education context, it is recognised that international students bring their prior experiences, competences and skills to the new university and learning context (Acquah & Commins, 2018; Stier, 2003). Researchers have highlighted the importance of being aware of and supporting students' personal resources and coping strategies while also considering former education and knowledge during teaching and learning, since new knowledge will be constructed on students' prior knowledge (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Savicki, Downing-Burnette, Heller, Binder, & Suntinger, 2004). A study in Finland showed that students' prior experiences and background supported their learning; therefore, it was suggested that international degree programmes such as IMDPs can include global topics in their curricula, contexts and practices, for example reflections on previous experiences, consequently increasing students' sense of global connectedness (Lehtomäki, Moate & Posti-Ahokas, 2015).

The diversity of international students includes diversity in their previous '(educational) experiences and knowledge of different contexts and their own frames of reference' (Hahl, 2016, p.86). Hence, in universities with strong culture-related practices, the values, beliefs and assumptions of masters' students can be challenged (Acquah & Commins, 2018).

Considering IMDPs as new learning environments for most students and as a new teaching environment with multiple possibilities for university teachers, reflection on and development of intercultural teaching strategies are recommended (Robson & Turner, 2007). But despite continuous recommendations of responsive and inclusive pedagogies in international education (Robson & Turner, 2007), it is still common for teachers to implement teaching practices they are familiar with and also expect their students to have similar skills and competencies (Chavez & Longerbeam, 2016). In the IMDP context, a study indicated that international degree students share multiple expectations of the thesis process (Filippou et al., 2017), even though many supervisors tend to exercise a traditional thesis supervision model (Filippou, Kallo & Mikkilä-Erdmann, 2018).

Intercultural supervision requires a responsive attitude towards students' prior knowledge, experiences and needs but also awareness, acceptance, respect and support of various learning approaches and styles, expectations and behaviours (Wisker, Robinson, & Jones, 2011). Having new students with diverse backgrounds also increases the need for thesis supervisors to provide clarification regarding research aspects and practices (Pearson & Brew, 2002). Adapting supervision to students' needs has also been identified as an important aspect of supervision in various studies (de Kleijn, Bronkhorst, Meijer, Pilot, & Brekelmans, 2016; McClure; 2005; Pearson & Brew, 2002).

Regarding students' academic writing experience, the study of Harwood & Petrić (2017) demonstrated that students' previous educational experiences include diverse academic writing experiences and expectations. For example, one master's degree student struggled to 'adjust' to his/her new university's academic standards, to new teaching styles, to learning a different type of writing and to citation practices as well as to the plagiarism concept (Harwood & Petrić, 2017). The transition to the British system was challenging for another participant due to the written exams. The student believed that some of the challenges she

faced could have been reduced if her supervisor or the department had recognised her needs 'in the context of her previous background and research experience' (Harwood & Petrić, 2017, p.141). The same study also included the case of a student who had met the IELTS requirement and was therefore admitted into the programme but had no academic writing experience in English before going to the UK; achieving the score requirement for English language skills is not an indicator of academic writing skills. For these reasons, some IMDPs have obligatory academic writing and English language support courses or services, even though it is still unknown whether the supervisors are aware of their students' writing skills and prior supervision experiences.

Regarding expectations, it is argued that doctoral students' study experience relies heavily 'on how well their expectations and needs are mediated by supervisors and other members of the academic community within their institutions' (Kidman, Manathunga, & Cornforth, 2017, pp. 1217–1218). Master's students' experiences similarly depend on their supervisors. Students in McClure (2005) perceived a close supervisory relationship as one which included cultural and informal events. Skyrme (2010) reported that students highly valued talking to teachers outside the classroom and having teachers help them reach their *'*content, process and affective goals*.'* (p. 218). Many university teachers also recognise the importance of outside class time, for example by having an open-door policy and being available right after class (Zepke & Leach, 2007). The importance of informal curricula, which reveal the campus's culture to the students and include extracurricular activities, is similarly highlighted (Leask, 2009).

Supervisors can positively influence students' self-efficacy by supporting their socialising and contact with each other and with local students (Telbis, Helgeson & Kingsbury, 2014). Having courses with both international and local students can ensure learning and cultural exchange (Stier, 2003). Kidman et al.'s (2017) work on intercultural

supervision argued that local students were less open in establishing friendships with international students. Several faculty initiatives were left to academics to organise individually. Academic staff both created opportunities for students to interact with each other and organised meetings between faculty and students, for example through reading groups, discipline-related 'book clubs', discussion groups and day-to-day support on postgraduate studies. These were important to international students, providing the opportunity to develop their intellectual and social networks and create a 'home-base' inside the faculty. But despite these positive results, these meetings were not part of the staff's regular workload and due to the faculty's restructuring process and extended work hours, some of these groups therefore struggled to survive.

Given these considerations and the increasing number of international students in Finnish higher education and many other non-English-speaking European universities (cf. Urbanovic, Wilkins, & Huisman, 2016), this article investigates whether and why master's thesis supervisors consider their students' expectations and previous writing experiences during the thesis supervision process.

Methods

The aim of this study is to deepen our understanding of supervisors' responsiveness towards international degree students during the master's thesis process. The study addresses the following research questions: (1) How responsive are the IMDP supervisors to their students' prior thesis writing skills (if any)? (2) How responsive are the IMDP supervisors towards their students' expectations of the thesis process? (3) What kinds of activities do they organise to create a supportive environment in the IMDPs?

Participants

Twenty thesis supervisors (8 females and 12 males) from five Finnish universities were interviewed by the author in the spring semester of 2016. At that time, eight participants had attended formal supervision training. Eight participants had supervised more than 50 master's theses, seven participants had supervised 16–50 and five had supervised a range of 0–5. The participants' fields of study were distributed as follows: five in social sciences, five in business, three in humanities, three in IT, two in natural sciences, and two in technical sciences. The participants in this study were anonymized and pseudonyms were given to them.

Data procedure, collection and analysis

Through the IMDP' websites and by contacting IMDP coordinators, a list of possible supervisors was created by the author, who then emailed the supervisors, informed them about the research and invited them to participate. The author and supervisors had no relationship or contact prior to this study. To ensure interviews' reliability, two pilot interviews were conducted and the interview questions were not given to the supervisors in advance (Neuman, 2012). Twenty semi-structured interviews were conducted, 14 face-to-face and 6 through Skype. During the interviews, the supervisors were asked to share their experiences, practices and expectations of master's thesis supervision in the IMDPs. The supervisors were specifically asked whether they discussed with their students' the students' own expectations of thesis supervision and whether they discussed their students' previous writing experiences (if any) regarding developing of a thesis. The author analysed these two questions for this article. The transcripts related to activities and events were also selected for analysis. Each interview was audio-recorded digitally and lasted 35–70 minutes.

The audio interviews were transcribed in written form, and a content analysis was performed, following Miles and Huberman's (1984) steps of qualitative data analysis. The

author read the interview transcripts multiple times, underlined phrases, took notes for possible themes and compared the phrases according to similarities and differences. In a later stage, the author connected the phrases and formed sub-categories which consequently created higher categories and then, combined these categories to form concepts. To establish reliability, responses from 10 participants were given to another researcher from the same department as the author to code the responses to the established categories. The inter-rater reliability was 86.7%, and disagreements were resolved through discussion.

Key findings and discussion

During transcript analysis, two main categories of supervisors were identified, indicating the reasons for their responsiveness or lack of it: (a) diagnosing and adjusting supervision; and (b) resisting and relying on students' initiative. There were participants in both categories who acknowledged the importance of having these discussions. However, participants were allocated to each category according to the explanations they gave for why they did or did not initiate these discussions. The findings regarding activities and events were categorized as (c) initiating social and pedagogical activities and are discussed in a separate section.

Diagnosing and adjusting supervision

Regarding discussions about students' expectations of master's thesis supervision, nine supervisors claimed they always initiated discussions, while two applied this strategy sporadically. The supervisors' transcripts reveal that using this discussion assisted in establishing an open supervisory relationship with clarified responsibilities, where they were

responsive to the students' skills and needs, but it also brought the students closer, thereby enhancing their overall studying experience. For example, at the beginning of supervision, Carlo asked students what their expectations were of him as a supervisor, to know: 'whether I should be sending them reminders or whether they would prefer to work independently… what do they want to achieve, what is the quality they try to target, and then I make clear what would be my expectations of their contribution.' This practice of adapting supervision to students' needs is frequently highlighted as a significant aspect of supervision (de Kleijn et al., 2016; McClure, 2005; Pearson & Brew, 2002).

Ulla always asks students about their expectations and ambition for the future, since it helps her regulate how she will perform as a supervisor: 'If they dream of continuing their studies, that's something that I need to know, because some students just want to graduate as soon as possible'. This data combines the approach of adapting supervision with responsiveness towards the students' future career and development goals. Being aware of students' future goals and initiating discussions can also increase students' awareness of their own learning goals (Hu, van der Rijst, van Veen, & Verloop, 2016).

Two supervisors reported that using forms and documents assists their supervision planning and discussion of expectations. For example, before supervision starts, Paula gives her students information about what she expects of them; she also gives them a form in which they further discuss the thesis topic, create a tentative plan for the thesis project and negotiate the frequency of meetings, deadlines and time allocation. Considering that the IMDPs are two-year programmes, time seems to be a focus for many supervisors. Olavi follows a similar process, discussing students' expectations at initial meetings, during which he presents a document illustrating what writing a thesis consists of and requests that students send questions or meet him to talk, if necessary. Contracts and checklists have previously been developed and discussed by researchers (see Grant & Graham, 1994; Ryan, 1994) and are

perceived as a means of establishing good communication from the beginning of supervision (Grant & Graham, 1994). Providing these forms can assist supervisors who need to explain institutional practices and research topics to new students with diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences (Pearson & Brew, 2002).

A different strategy was explained by Bea, who greatly appreciates a close relationship with her master's degree students and who actively tries to get to know them and their previous experiences. Having a close professional relationship is also perceived by students as essential to supervision (Filippou et al., 2017). As Bea explained, this was attributed to her personality:

> I am a person that likes to talk and we are usually sort of discussing quite a lot so you know a little bit more things for the student than what you necessarily need to know just for supervision, but then a better relationship grows.

When the master's thesis supervisors were asked whether they had discussions with their students regarding their previous thesis writing experiences (if any), only 5 out of 20 said yes. These supervisors explained that the reasons behind this strategy include recognising students' skills, being responsive and adjusting supervision according to the needs of each student. Through this strategy, they wish to be prepared but also to increase students' confidence and indicate what they expect from the students. For instance, through interviews, Ramona discusses students' thesis writing experiences during the application process, since students' expectations regarding 'writing and academic writing and that can be very very different from where the student comes from'. Another reason these supervisors gave for initiating discussions is that some students come from a different field of study, where the thesis 'might look very very different*'* (Simo). Both Ramona and Simo recognise the diversity found in different cultural and educational contexts which is an indication of their responsiveness and cultural awareness (Wisker et al., 2011).

Another supervisor (Harri) explained that he initiates this discussion in the thesis seminars to encourage his students by showing them that even though it is difficult to conduct and write a master's thesis, it is not impossible to complete it. His own expectations also adjust according to students' experiences, since he believes students who have not graduated from another master's degree programme are more motivated during the thesis process, since they have not experienced it before. This finding reveals supervisors' multiple preconceptions of their students.

Resisting and relying on students' initiative

The results showed that nine master's thesis supervisors never discuss students' expectations, or if they do, they do it very rarely. These supervisors explained that they have these discussions only if students initiate them, since they do not consider this information significant for the thesis process. This finding indicates a lack of responsive attitude towards the students' expectations as well as lack of awareness regarding students' personal resources, which are significant elements of intercultural supervision (Kidman et al., 2017; Wisker et al., 2011). A common characteristic that supervisors with resistant attitudes shared was that none of them attended thesis supervision training.

In the same vein, some supervisors acknowledged that some students have already graduated from other master's degree programmes, but they do not discuss their expectations unless the students raise the topic. For instance, Jaakko and Ari revealed that they have not thought of using 'this kind of self-reflecting questions' (Ari). Jaakko highlighted that this is even more important in IMDPs, since 'the international students… are not coming from the same academic culture as the Finnish ones.' Admittedly, the above participants are aware of the diversity in their students' backgrounds and experiences, but they expect their students to

initiate these discussions. Despite the lack of initiative, these supervisors found these questions useful for their future supervision, highlighting the need to have more support and reflection time regarding master's thesis supervision.

It was also noticed that some supervisors had strong assumptions regarding their students' lack of previous thesis experience, which 'prevented' them from having discussions regarding previous writing and supervisory experience. It was also evident that not negotiating each other's expectations left the supervisors in a challenging state. For instance, Teresa recognised that her students graduated from universities with different practices and less focus on research methods compared to Finnish degree programmes. As she noted, her master's students are not aware of what is expected of them, which can be stressful; therefore, she initiates frequent meetings so she can direct them step-by-step.

Most supervisors who do not initiate discussions about previous writing experiences reported that their students have never experienced thesis supervision, that this issue does not come up or that they did not think of this question. The claim of 'not knowing', observed in very few supervisors, could be considered resistance or a challenge for them. Some respondents' lack of open discussions about expectations and previous experiences highlights the need to develop collaborative and reflective practices in supervision as well as more intercultural strategies (Robson & Turner, 2007).

Initiating social and pedagogical activities

Some supervisors described several practices and events, which they either have established or attended, which have assisted them in knowing and understanding their students better, in building a supportive community within the IMDP and in expanding students' social networks. For example, two supervisors (Ari and Ramona) mentioned the creation of informal

gatherings, cooking evenings and events, especially during the first semester. These informal social settings can show the campus culture to the students (Leask, 2009) but also foster a close supervisory relationship, which is expected from the students (Filippou et al., 2017; McClure, 2005).

Outdoor excursions were also organised in an IMDP, allowing students to spend time together and become members of the department's student club, which increased the students' feeling of belonging in a student community and assisted in their academic and non-academic life (Ari). Initiating outside class time but also keeping an open-door policy and being available after class could be maintained and developed further in the context of international education and, hence, the IMDPs as suggested by Zepke and Leach (2007). These events were also perceived as valuable spaces for expanding students' social networks through introducing alumni students, student organisations and new students to each other (Ulla). Consistent with Kidman and colleagues' (2017) activities, Carlo introduces his doctoral students to his master's students to encourage peer-support and the 'social aspect of learning'. Socialising and bringing students into contact inside and outside the classroom was a priority for the aforementioned supervisors. These initiatives and practices support their students' learning and cultural exchange (Stier, 2003) but also their self-efficacy (Telbis et al., 2014).

Building a supportive community was an indirect aim for a supervisor who described in detail how he included a debate activity in his mandatory course:

> I give them a short lecture at the beginning, maybe 35 minutes introducing the topic and the next half of the lecture is a debate … one team starts to defend this argument and the other one is against … usually there are more students so there has to be a third team, that's the referee team ... I give these questions already beforehand; they have at least one week time to be prepared for this and I randomly select team members … They have to prepare pro and con arguments and then they are just randomly picked in teams ... they get really carried away by the team… this method doesn't fit all the courses and all the

> types of teaching but it fits this kind of very general type of introductory course ... the benefit of this kind of teaching is to make students interact and they become a team. Because this is the first-year student, the first lecture basically, and we want them to become active members of the community, learn, become a team … and through this way, they get to know each other much better. (Ari)

Social media were also used in another IMDP for sharing educational content and announcements and communication about academic and nonacademic issues but also for overseeing students' interests and concerns. As Feeliks explained, the online Facebook group helped attendance rates, because when students joined this group, they saw 'actual people', both those currently attending and alumni.

Conclusion

This study provides insights into thesis supervisors' initiatives in intercultural supervision contexts. Acknowledging students' previous experiences and prior knowledge increases their learning opportunities (Lehtomäki et al., 2015; Merriam et al., 2012), and while aiming for mutual understanding in the context of intercultural supervision, it is important to link knowledge and experience on linguistic, cultural and contextual levels (Hahl, 2016). Therefore, the two main questions were deemed important for knowing and understanding students' previous experiences and expectations. This understanding can lead to the adjustment of supervisors' practices. Students might not be familiar with master's thesis supervision and the input needed from both sides at the beginning of the process, so these discussions can give some direction to the process and then can be renegotiated midway to completion.

Exploring supervisors' practical knowledge and experiences while working in international programmes may be useful for other educators in similar contexts. The analysis of the supervisors' experiences highlights the importance of more collaborative and learning opportunities regarding their responsiveness and awareness in the context of intercultural supervision. Similar to what was seen in Kidman and colleagues (2017), many events and activities were additional to the supervisors' busy workload. Therefore, universities could consider providing more support and possibilities for attending or creating informal and formal events while adjusting the supervisors' schedules accordingly. Lastly, future studies can investigate the connection between supervisors' attitudes and formal thesis supervision training.

Notes on contributor

Kalypso Filippou is currently a doctoral candidate at the Department of Education, University of Turku. Her dissertation investigates thesis supervision in English-medium international master's degree programmes in Finnish universities. Her research interests include postgraduate thesis supervision, intercultural supervision and academic experiences.

References

Acquah, E. O., & Commins, N. L. (2018). International students' perspectives of a diverse class on multiculturalism. *Journal of Further and Higher Education, 42,* 193–204. doi: 10.1080/0309877x.2016.1224328

Biggs, J. B., & Tang, C. (2011). *Teaching for quality learning at university*. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press

Chavez, A. F., & Longerbeam, S. D. (2016). *Teaching across cultural strengths: A guide to balancing integrated and individuated cultural frameworks in college teaching*. Sterling, Virginia: Stylus Publishing, LLC.

de Kleijn, R. A. M., Bronkhorst L. H. , Meijer P. C. , Pilot A., & Brekelmans M. (2016). Understanding the up, back, and forward-component in master's thesis supervision with adaptivity. *Studies in Higher Education, 41*, 1463–1479. doi:10.1080/03075079.2014.980399

Filippou, K., Kallo, J., & Mikkilä-Erdmann, M. (2017). Students' views on thesis supervision in international master's degree programs in Finnish universities. *Intercultural Education, 28*, 334–352. doi: 10.1080/14675986.2017.1333713

Filippou, K., Kallo, J., & Mikkilä-Erdmann, M. (2018). Supervising master's thesis in international master's degree programmes: Roles, responsibilities and models. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Finnish National Agency for Education (2016). *The 10 most common nationalities of international degree students in Finland 2014.* Retrieved from http://www.cimo.fi/instancedata/prime_product_julkaisu/cimo/embeds/cimowwwstructure/163254_UTO_most_common_2016.pdf

Finnish National Agency for Education (2017). *Statistics of the month: Number of international applicants fell in higher education institutions.* Retrieved from: https://www.oph.fi/english/current_issues/101/0/statistics_of_the_month_number_of_international_applicants_fell_in_higher_education_institutions

Finnish National Agency for Education (2018). *Many study programmes in English.* Retrieved from http://www.studyinfinland.fi/destination_finland/many_study_programmes_in_english

Grant, B. M., & Graham, A. (1994). ‘Guidelines for discussion’: A tool for managing postgraduate supervision. In O. Zuber-Skerritt & Y. Ryan (Eds), *Quality in postgraduate education*, (pp.165–177). London: Kogan Page.

Hahl, K. (2016). Co-constructing meaning and context in international teacher education. *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca*, *5*, 83–105.

Harwood, N., & Petrić, B. (2017). *Experiencing master’s supervision: Perspectives of international students and their supervisors*. London, U.K.: Routledge.

Hu, Y., van der Rijst, R. M., van Veen, K., & Verloop, N. (2016). The purposes and processes of master's thesis supervision: A comparison of Chinese and Dutch supervisors. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *35*, 910–924. doi:10.1080/07294360.2016.1139550

Kidman, J., Manathunga, C., & Cornforth, S. (2017). Intercultural PhD supervision: Exploring the hidden curriculum in a social science faculty doctoral programme. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *36*, 1208–1221. doi:101080/07294360.2017.1303457

Leask, B. (2009). Using formal and informal curricula to improve interactions between home and international students. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, *13*, 205–221. doi:10. 1177/1028315308329786

Lehtomäki, E., Moate, J., & Posti-Ahokas, H. (2015). Global connectedness in higher education: Student voices on the value of cross-cultural learning dialogue. *Studies in Higher Education*, *41*, 2011–2027. doi:10.1080/03075079.2015.1007943

McClure, J. W. (2005). Preparing a laboratory-based thesis: Chinese international research students’ experiences of supervision. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *10*, 3–16. doi:10.1080/1356251052000291530

Merriam, S. B., Caffarella, R. S., & Baumgartner, L. M. (2012). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1984). Drawing valid meaning from qualitative data: Toward a shared craft. *Educational Researcher, 13*, 20–30. doi:10.2307/1174243

Neuman, W. L. (2012). Basics of social science research: Qualitative and quantitative approaches. (3rd ed.). Great Britain: Pearson.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2018). Education at a glance 2018: OECD indicators. Paris: OECD Publishing.

Pearson, M., & Brew, A. (2002). Research training and supervision development. *Studies in Higher Education, 27*, 135–150. doi:10.1080/03075070220119986c

Robson, S., & Turner, Y. (2007). 'Teaching is a co-learning experience': Academics reflecting on learning and teaching in an 'internationalized' faculty. *Teaching in Higher Education, 12*, 41–54. doi:10.1080/13562510601102115

Ryan, Y. (1994). Contracts and checklists: Practical propositions for postgraduate supervision. In O. Zuber-Skerritt & Y. Ryan (Eds), *Quality in postgraduate education* (pp. 165–177). London: Kogan Page.

Savicki, V., Downing-Burnette, R., Heller, L., Binder, F., & Suntinger, W. (2004). Contrasts, changes and correlates in actual and potential intercultural adjustment. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 28*, 311–329. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2004.06.001

Skyrme, G. (2010). Is this a stupid question? International undergraduate students seeking help from teachers during office hours. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 9*, 211–221. doi:10.1016/j.jeap.2010.02.012

Stier, J. (2003). Internationalisation, ethnic diversity and the acquisition of intercultural competencies. *Intercultural Education, 14*, 77–91. doi:10.1080/1467598032000044674

Telbis, N. M., Helgeson, L., & Kingsbury, C. (2014). International students' confidence and academic success. *Journal of International Students*, *4*, 330–341.

Urbanovič, J., Wilkins, S., & Huisman, J. (2016). Issues and challenges for small countries in attracting and hosting international students: The case of Lithuania. *Studies in Higher Education, 41*, 491–507. doi:10.1080/03075079.2014.942267

Välimaa, J., Fonteyn, K., Garam, I., van den Heuvel, E., Linza, C. , Söderqvist, M. , Wolff, J. U. , & Kolhinen, J. (2013). *An evaluation of international degree programmes in Finland.* The Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council.

Wisker, G., Robinson, G., & Jones, J. (2011). The culturally inflected voice: Negotiation and recognition without dumbing down. In V. Kumar & A. Lee (Eds.), *Connecting the local, regional and global in doctoral education* (pp. 101–122). Kuala Lumpur: University Putra Malaysia Press.

Zepke, N., & Leach, L. (2007). Improving student outcomes in higher education: New Zealand teachers' views on teaching students from diverse backgrounds. *Teaching in Higher Education, 12*, 655–668. doi:10.1080/13562510701596190