

Comparing Attitudes of Chinese Students when Entering English-medium and Chinese-medium universities on the Chinese Mainland

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The Context

- Uni of Nottingham - First British university to set up its own campus in China (EMU)
- 'Institutional partner' university – Zhejiang Wanli University (CMU)
- In the EMU 1st year (UG Year One, Pre-Masters' Year), credit modules are done in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) – Oral and Written
- In EAP modules, various aspects of autonomous/independent learning are introduced

The Study

- Survey questionnaire administered to sample populations of partner universities
- Adapted from questionnaire in Littlewood (1999)
- 'Means of agreement' and 'orientations'
- What differences, if any, will emerge between the two populations?

Findings

- Both populations are oriented toward:
 - Group work (H1,P1) and group discussion (H1, P2)
 - 'Discovery' modes of learning (H2, P6)
 - Self-evaluation of learning (H2, P7)
 - Looking for practical benefit in classroom tasks (H3, P8)

Findings

- Both groups were oriented against:
 - Speaking up in class for fear of standing out (H1, P4)
 - 'Transmission' modes of learning (H2, P6)
- Both groups were more oriented toward:
 - Self-evaluation than teacher-evaluation of learning (H2, P7)
 - Contribution of achievement to learning than to prestige (H3, P9)

Findings

- Both populations are evenly oriented toward:
 - Effort in classroom performance vs. correctness in performance (H3, P10)
- The two differences:
 - CMU population more likely to view teacher as 'one resource among many'
 - EMU population place more emphasis on practical benefit of learning tasks

Findings – Open Responses

- Both groups: examples of activities in which there is practical value
- EMU: more about role of teachers
- CMU: some about role of teachers, more about interaction with native speakers
- CMU: more comments about other issues

Findings

Why the differences? Possible reasons:

- More exposure to NS teachers at EMU
- Targeted modules in EAP in 1st year at EMU
- Higher tuition fees at EMU
- 'Pressure of progression'

Importance of Findings

- Reinforces readiness of learners in Asian contexts to autonomy in language learning
- Where concerns come in, ask the question – in what reality (realities) are they based? (cf. Littlewood 2000)
- How can learner autonomy be encouraged/developed, in and out of class/modules/programmes?

Thank You

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