

**International postgraduate students' perceptions and experiences of peer
assessment in a UK university: a case study**

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Abstract

Internationalization of the curriculum has become the subject of a significant body of research and debate, and demands new ways of teaching, learning and assessment in higher education (Ryan, 2013). Since Ecclestone and Pryor (2003) indicated the impacts of assessment on learner identity, this study investigates postgraduate international students' experiences of an innovative assessment approach, 'peer assessment', to provide a new perspective from which to perceive the implications of assessment for internationalization of the curriculum. This empirical case study research focuses on five postgraduate taught modules (Business, Education A, Education B, Chemical Engineering and Computer Science) in a UK university in two academic years (2010-2011 and 2011-2012). The study uses a qualitative dominant mixed methods approach with four data collection techniques, including interviews, questionnaires, observation and diamond ranking. The research has identified both the benefits and problematic aspects of applying peer assessment in the international classroom, and proposed conditions that influence the implementation of this assessment approach. Paying attention to dialogue during the assessment process, the study has developed a social cultural model that contributes to the understanding of how assessment associated with Bernstein's (1996) concepts of classification and framing impacts on the international student's learner identity and the implications for consideration relating to assessment in the internationalization of the curriculum. It is hoped that the results will contribute to understanding about the challenges for international students' learning and support the development of successful assessment practice.

Abbreviation

The abbreviation of some specific terms used in this research is given below.

International students	ISs
Higher Education	HE
Peer assessment	PA
Weak classification	C-
Strong classification	C+
Weak framing	F-
Strong framing	F+
Business Module	BUSI
Education Module A	EDUA
Education Module B	EDUB
Chemical Engineering Module	CEM
Computer Science Module	CS
Faculty of Humanity and Social Sciences	HASS
Faculty of Science Agriculture and Engineering	SAGE

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Contents

Abstract	i
Abbreviation	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Contents	iv
List of Figures and Tables	x
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
1.1 Introduction	2
1.2 Background to the research	2
1.3 Rationale of the study	4
1.4 Research questions	8
1.5 Organization of the thesis	10
1.6 Conclusion	11
Chapter 2. Literature Review	12
2.1 Introduction	13
2.2 Internationalization of the curriculum	14
2.3 Assessment in UK HE	16
2.3.1 Summative and formative assessment	16
2.3.2 Peer assessment	19
2.3.2.1 Definitions	19
2.3.2.2 Previous research focuses on PA	21
2.3.2.3 Effects of PA on learners	21
2.3.2.4 PA in UK HE	23
2.4 Dialogue in education	24
2.4.1 Bakhtin’s dialogic talk	24
2.4.2 Peer discourse	24
2.4.3 Bernstein’s pedagogic discourses	27
2.4.4 Hermans’s dialogic self theory	30
2.5 Assessment, dialogue and learner identity	32
2.6 The contribution of this study to the research field on international students	34
2.7 Conclusion	36
Chapter 3. Methodology	37
3.1 Introduction	38
3.2 Considerations of philosophical underpinnings	39
3.3 Mixed methods approach	40

3.4 Case study	42
3.4.1 Justification of case study research	42
3.4.2 The context of the case study	43
3.5 Overview of research methods in previous studies on PA.....	44
3.6 Instruments of data collection	45
3.6.1 Sampling	45
3.6.1.1 Questionnaire sampling.....	47
3.6.1.2 Student interview sampling.....	50
3.6.2 Self-completion questionnaire.....	51
3.6.2.1 Justification of questionnaire.....	51
3.6.2.2 The design and development stage	52
3.6.2.3 Piloting the questionnaires	52
3.6.2.4 Administrating the questionnaire.....	53
3.6.3 Semi-structured interviews	53
3.6.3.1 Justification for the semi-structured interview.....	53
3.6.3.2 Student interviews.....	54
3.6.3.3 Staff interviews.....	54
3.6.4 Observation	55
3.6.5 Diamond ranking	56
3.7 Methodological issues.....	57
3.7.1 The quality of the study	57
3.7.2 Triangulation.....	57
3.7.3 Ethical considerations.....	57
3.7.4 The role of the researcher	58
3.8 Data collection procedures	59
3.9 Conclusion.....	61
Chapter 4. Analysis and Findings.....	63
4.1 Introduction	64
4.1.1 Analysis procedure.....	64
4.1.2 Qualitative analysis	65
4.1.3 Quantitative analysis	67
4.1.4 Integrating qualitative and quantitative findings	67
4.2 The Business Module (BUSI)	68
4.2.1 Description of the module context.....	68
4.2.1.1 The procedures of PA	68

4.2.1.2	Classification and framing	69
4.2.1.3	Staff's expectation of using PA	70
4.2.1.4	Participants and research methods	70
4.2.2	ISS' perceptions of using PA	71
4.2.2.1	Satisfaction of using PA	71
4.2.2.2	Benefits of PA	73
4.2.2.3	Problematic aspects of PA	73
4.2.2.4	Conditions of implementing PA	74
4.2.3	Implications of using PA for ISSs	75
4.2.3.1	Implications for academic transition	75
4.2.3.2	Implications for intercultural learning	76
4.2.4	Conclusion	77
4.3	The Education Module A (EDUA)	78
4.3.1	Description of the module context	78
4.3.1.1	The procedures of PA	78
4.3.1.2	Classification and framing	79
4.3.1.3	Staff's expectation of using PA	79
4.3.1.4	Participants and research methods	80
4.3.2	ISS' perceptions of PA	81
4.3.2.1	Satisfaction of using PA	81
4.3.2.2	Benefits of PA	82
4.3.2.3	Problematic aspects of PA	82
4.3.2.4	Conditions of implementing PA	83
4.3.3	Implications of using PA for ISSs	83
4.3.3.1	Implications for academic transition	83
4.3.3.2	Implications for intercultural learning	84
4.3.4	Conclusion	84
4.4	The Education Module B (EDUB)	85
4.4.1	Description of the module context	85
4.4.1.1	The procedures of PA	85
4.4.1.2	Classification and framing	86
4.4.1.3	Staff's expectation of using PA	86
4.4.1.4	Participants and research methods	86
4.4.2	ISS' perceptions of PA	87
4.4.2.1	Satisfaction of using PA	87

4.4.2.2 Benefits of PA	88
4.4.2.3 Problematic aspects of PA	88
4.4.2.4 Conditions of implementing PA	88
4.4.3 Implications of using PA for ISs	89
4.4.3.1 Implications for academic transition	89
4.4.3.2 Implications of intercultural learning	89
4.4.4 Conclusion	89
4.5 The Chemical Engineering Module (CEM)	90
4.5.1 Description of the module context	90
4.5.1.1 The procedures of PA	90
4.5.1.2 Classification and framing	91
4.5.1.3 Staff's expectation of using PA	91
4.5.1.4 Participants and research methods	91
4.5.2 ISs' perceptions of PA	92
4.5.2.1 Satisfaction of using PA	92
4.5.2.2 Benefits of PA	92
4.5.2.3 Problematic aspects of PA	92
4.5.2.4 Conditions of implementing PA	93
4.5.3 Implications of using PA for ISs	93
4.5.3.1 Implications for academic transition	93
4.5.3.2 Implications for intercultural learning	93
4.5.4 Conclusion	93
4.6 The Computer Science Module (CS)	94
4.6.1 Description of the module context	94
4.6.1.1 The procedures of PA	94
4.6.1.2 Classification and framing	95
4.6.1.3 Staff's expectation of using PA	95
4.6.1.4 Participants and research methods	95
4.6.2 ISs' perceptions of PA	96
4.6.2.1 Satisfaction of using PA	96
4.6.2.2 Benefits of PA	96
4.6.2.3 Problematic aspects of PA	97
4.6.2.4 Conditions of implementing PA	97
4.6.3 Implications of using PA for ISs	97
4.6.3.1 Implications for academic transition	97

4.6.3.2 Implications for intercultural learning	98
4.6.4 Conclusion	98
4.7 Cross analysis	98
4.7.1 ISs' perceptions of PA	99
4.7.1.1 Perceptions of PA by country (ISs VS UK students)	99
4.7.1.2 Perceptions of PA by gender	100
4.7.1.3 Perceptions of PA by framing	100
4.7.1.4 Perceptions of PA by forms of assessment	102
4.7.1.5 Perceptions of PA by age	106
4.7.1.6 Conditions for successful implementation of PA	106
4.7.1.7 Outcomes of using PA	108
4.7.2 Staff's practice of applying PA in the international classroom	109
4.7.2.1 Assessment policy	110
4.7.2.2 Assessment practice	111
4.7.2.3 Staff education	114
4.8 Conclusion	115
Chapter 5. Final Discussion	116
5.1 Introduction	117
5.2 Micro level: ISs' experiences of PA	119
5.2.1 Academic transition	119
5.2.2 Intercultural learning	121
5.2.3 Implications for the implementation of PA	124
5.3 Meso level: staff practice in the international classroom	128
5.3.1 Classification and framing	128
5.3.2 Recognition and realization rules	130
5.3.3 Dialogic talk	131
5.3.4 Assessment and intercultural learning	132
5.3.5 Suggestions for teaching and assessing ISs	133
5.4 Macro level: internationalizing the curriculum	136
5.5 Conclusion	137
Chapter 6. Conclusion	146
6.1 Introduction	147
6.2 Conceptual links between the research findings and original contributions to knowledge	149
6.3 Implications for practice and theory	151
6.4 Limitations of this study	153

6.5 My learning through this research	154
6.6 Future research	154
Appendices.....	156
A. Letter to module leaders	156
B. Research consent form	157
C. Questionnaires	158
C.1 Questionnaires in phase I	158
C.2 Questionnaires in phase II.....	162
D. Interview questions.....	166
D.1 Student individual interviews	166
D.2 Teaching staff interviews.....	168
D.3 Assessment policy maker interview	169
D.4 Staff educator interview	170
E. Observation form.....	171
References.....	172

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of stage I.....	13
Figure 2: Convergent and divergent formative assessment—adapted from Torrance and Pryor (1998, cited in Pryor and Crossouard, 2005, p. 4).....	19
Figure 3: Country of origin in phase I.....	49
Figure 4: Country of origin in phase II.....	49
Figure 5: Organisation of diamond ranking—adapted from Clark (2012).....	56
Figure 6: Research timeline	61
Figure 7: Conceptual framework of stage II.....	62
Figure 8: Themes for integrating qualitative and quantitative findings	68
Figure 9: Procedures for conducting PA in BUSI in phase I.....	69
Figure 10: Procedures for conducting PA in BUSI in phase II	69
Figure 11: Comparison of satisfaction of PA in BUSI.....	72
Figure 12: Procedures for conducting PA in EDUA.....	79
Figure 13: Procedures for conducting PA in EDUB.....	86
Figure 14: Procedures for conducting PA in CEM.....	90
Figure 15: Procedures for conducting PA in CS.....	94
Figure 16: PA by framing.....	100
Figure 17: Significance 1 by framing	101
Figure 18: Significance 2 by framing	101
Figure 19: Significance 3 by framing	102
Figure 20: PA by forms of assessment	102
Figure 21: Significance 1 by forms of PA	103
Figure 22: Significance 2 by forms of PA	104
Figure 23: Significance 3 by forms of PA	104
Figure 24: Significance 4 by forms of PA	105
Figure 25: Significance 5 by forms of PA	105
Figure 26: Significance 6 by forms of PA	106
Figure 27: An example of diamond ranking.....	107
Figure 28: Analysis of diamond ranking	107
Figure 29: Conceptual framework of stage III.....	118
Figure 30: A social cultural model of the impacts of assessment on international students' learner identity	138
Figure 31: Fluid pattern I of the social cultural model of the impacts of assessment on international students' learner identity	142
Figure 32: Fluid pattern II of the social cultural model of the impacts of assessment on international students' learner identity	143

Table 1: Summative and formative assessment	18
Table 2: Overview of data collection methods by PA researchers in university courses	45
Table 3: Demographic characteristics of the post-questionnaire respondents in phase I	48
Table 4: Demographic characteristics of the post-questionnaire respondents in phase II	48
Table 5: General demographic characteristics of participating students in semi-structured individual interviews.....	51
Table 6: Dimensions of the observation	55
Table 7: Research objectives and relevant data collection instruments	60
Table 8: Coding framework.....	65
Table 9: Personal information of participants being quoted	66
Table 10: Hypotheses of inferential analysis	67
Table 11: Participants' country of origin in BUSI in phase I.....	70
Table 12: Independent variables of participants in BUSI in phase I.....	71
Table 13: Participants' country of origin in BUSI in phase II	71
Table 14: Independent variables of participants in BUSI in phase II	71
Table 15: Participants' country of origin in EDUA in phase I.....	80
Table 16: Independent variables of participants in EDUA in phase I.....	80
Table 17: Participants' country of origin in EDUA in phase II	80
Table 18: Independent variables of participants in EDUA in phase II	81
Table 19: Participants' country of origin in EDUB.....	87
Table 20: Independent variables of participants in EDUB.....	87
Table 21: Participants' country of origin in CEM.....	91
Table 22: Independent variables of participants in CEM.....	92
Table 23: Participants' country of origin in CS.....	95
Table 24: Independent variables of participants in CS.....	96
Table 25: Interviewees' outcomes of using PA.....	108
Table 26: Similarities and differences of using PA in the five modules.....	112
Table 27: Framing and modules crosstabulation.....	113
Table 28: Framing and types of assessment crosstabulation.....	113

Chapter 1. Introduction

This chapter has been divided into six sections:

Section 1.1 provides an introduction to the chapter.

Section 1.2 discusses the background to the research.

Section 1.3 discusses the rationale for the research.

Section 1.4 proposes the research questions.

Section 1.5 outlines the organization of the thesis.

Section 1.6 provides a conclusion to the chapter.

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the thesis, outlining the focus and main areas of inquiry relevant to the research. It concludes with the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Background to the research

The concept of the internationalization of Higher Education (HE) has been given a great deal of attention and is debated across the world. In the HE sector, Robson (2011) has regarded internationalization as a process that involves an increasing range of international activities within or between HE institutions, and within or between academic staff and international students (ISs), through which staff and students particularly acquire new knowledge about other cultures and countries. In the last decade, the internationalization of HE has become an increasingly important phenomenon in many countries (ibid). As one of the four leading English-speaking countries (the US, the UK, Australia and Canada) for recruiting overseas students (OECD, 2004), the number of ISs, who are normally non-UK domiciled, is on the rise in UK HE. For instance, within the UK HE context the number of ISs increased by 15.2% between 2008 and 2012; ISs accounted for 17.4% of the total student population in the academic year 2011-2012, with the percentage varying across institutions (HESA, 2013). The feature is more prominent at the postgraduate level in UK HE, as 36.9% of postgraduate students were ISs in 2011-2012 (ibid). Thus, ISs are no longer a 'minority group' within the classroom, and teaching to meet the needs of all students is becoming more crucial for academic staff (Ryan, 2013).

UK institutions have seen expanding numbers of ISs coming to undertake postgraduate studies. However, there have already been a number of critiques of postgraduate programmes, highlighting issues such as the lack of a culturally inclusive pedagogy (Robson and Turner, 2007). In terms of assessment within the international classroom where students from a variety of nationalities and cultures meet and learn in English (Harrison and Peacock, 2010), a number of sources explore a range of issues, such as confusion regarding assessment criteria and various perceptions of correct answers (e.g. De Vita, 2002; Hills and Thom, 2005). How to provide an appropriate assessment experience for ISs challenges staff, especially for those students whose previous assessment experiences are highly different from those in the UK; as a result, we are urged to rethink and design our pedagogic activities and assessment approaches with different learning opportunities, to ensure that the learning is

accessible to the largest number of students (Robson, 2011).

With the increase in multinational work placements during the era of globalization, employers claim that awareness of other cultures and mastery of more than one language are significantly important and desirable graduate skills (Fielden, Middlehurst and Woodfield, 2007). Archer and Davison (2008, cited in Jones, 2013) also argue that holding a global perspective is highly valued by employers so that graduate employees can work across the world. These requirements from employers have given university staff a new focus on improving the intercultural competence of the ever-increasing number of ISs on UK campuses. Freeman, et al. (2009, p. 1) describe intercultural competence as ‘a dynamic, ongoing, interactive self-reflective learning process that transforms attitudes, skills and knowledge for effective and appropriate communication and interaction across cultures’. This can help to deliver a key function of HE: ‘to produce graduates capable of solving problems in a variety of locations with cultural and environmental sensitivity’ (Aulakh, et al., 1997, cited in Jones, 2013, p. 97). Thus, how staff can foster ISs’ intercultural competence to develop their global employability is a critical rationale driving our efforts in designing curriculum.

Ecclestone and Pryor (2003) argue that assessment procedures are seen not only as tools for crediting students with recognized qualifications, but also as being valuable for monitoring students’ progress and promoting learning, and even having impacts on learner identity, which is a construction of learners’ perceptions of and approaches to learning influenced by the cultural, ideological, economic and political context over time. Identifying the kinds of assessment that can help ISs in the UK with learning and intercultural competence for their future careers may attract the attention of assessment policy makers, designers and practitioners. Previous studies on the internationalization of HE have often considered what ISs in UK academia lack with the development of relevant skills, along with activities such as pre-arrival induction, group work and mentoring schemes, to support both their living and academic needs in many UK institutions. However, there are few studies that particularly consider the impacts of assessment on ISs in UK HE and the implications for internationalization of the curriculum.

1.3 Rationale of the study

Assessment determines student learning progression and ultimately graduation, so ISs, who have made a significant investment to study abroad, can be significantly stressed by assessment (Brown and Joughin, 2007). ISs from different cultural backgrounds have been influenced by different assessment systems in their earlier learning experiences, which may differ from with the UK assessment system (Robson, 2011), particularly in this time of assessment innovation in UK HE. As a result of a growing dissatisfaction with traditional forms of assessment, formative assessment, in contrast with summative assessment, encourages deeper engagement with learning and enhances autonomy and motivation; for this reason, it has attracted the attention of educational researchers. At the same time, a variety of assessment approaches, such as portfolios, peer assessment (PA), and self-assessment, has been advocated as major innovations to promote student learning (Kvale, 2007). However, there has been relatively little research on how ISs perform in innovative assessment and what the effects are on them.

HE has become one of the biggest export earners for the UK; for example, ISs contributed £7.9 billion to the UK economy in 2009 (HEA, 2012). Therefore, the recruitment of this growing number of ISs can help many UK universities earn income (Altbach and Knight, 2007), especially in a climate of budgetary constraints, since the government has cut public funding. However, there is increasing global competition for the international education market from English speaking countries like the US and Australia, countries in Europe offering programmes in English, and more recently from countries in the Asian region (OECD, 2004; Gu and Schweisfurth, 2011). Thus, UK universities have become more aggressive in competing for overseas fee paying students. Along with the reputation of a university, ranking, fees, and teaching and learning are the main basis for marketing activities. Well-designed curricula and assessment can provide students with rich and active learning experiences abroad, and help their future careers. Hence, studies on ISs' experiences of assessment in UK HE could contribute to the future recruitment of ISs.

As an increasingly diverse student population emerges on UK campuses, financial benefits are no longer the main motivation for the internationalization of HE. Academic staff also wish to increase research and knowledge capacity across cultures and deliver a culturally inclusive curriculum for all students (Robson, 2011). From this, both staff and students can acquire international perspectives in their subject field and develop the ability to engage

positively with cultural others in both their professional and private lives (Leask, 2007). Clifford and Montgomery (2011, cited in Jones, 2013) suggest that the internationalization of the curriculum challenges current course design and pedagogy, and has the potential to offer a transformative education experience. Although the notion of internationalizing the curriculum has been a growing topic in recent years, and there have already been articles discussing it at abstract and conceptual levels (e.g. Jones, 2013; Ryan, 2013), we need further empirical research on actual practices to internationalize the curriculum in real UK HE settings. Since the current assessment policy advocates assessment for learning, we may consider assessment for intercultural learning allowing students to discover and understand cultural differences through authentic intercultural experiences (De Vita and Case, 2003) in order to develop intercultural competence as a way of internationalizing the curriculum.

Ecclestone and Pryor (2003) argue that assessment has important impacts on learner identity. Thus, we may expect that UK assessment experiences are a way to develop or transform ISs' learner identity in order to help their adjustment to UK education or even develop their international perspectives, rather than merely providing challenging learning experiences. PA as a participatory assessment can engage students in discussion and make a fundamental contribution to students' personal development through involving students in marking and/or feedback on the work of other students (e.g. Boud, Cohen and Sampson, 2001). Ideally, this approach provides an opportunity for students to participate in the assessment process through evaluating the work of their peers' and thereby acquiring new knowledge about other cultures and countries through discussion. Nonetheless, there is little empirical evidence to support this argument.

My interest in PA comes from my assessment experience as an international student in UK HE. I met formative PA for the first time in a UK university when I studied on a postgraduate course. I was not familiar with PA, formative assessment or feedback at that time. Thus, I was reluctant to engage in the process. However, after this experience I realized that it was useful to me. Personally, I had a better understanding of assessment criteria and procedures in UK HE through evaluating my peers' work, which benefited my future assessment practice; I had the chance to self-reflect through critiquing their work and receiving peer feedback, which improved my own work before submission. In my earlier assessment experiences, I had hardly gained these benefits, and rarely felt that assessment was a benefit for learning, instead regarding it as just a tool for obtaining qualifications. When I shared this positive experience

with other ISs either in this module or other modules, however, not all of them had similar experiences to me. Hence, I became interested in inquiring into the reasons why ISs have different experiences of PA, and under what conditions PA is effective and transformative for an individual international student's learning.

As a Chinese student¹ receiving Confucian education² for over twenty years, my recognition of learning was that teachers did the most talking in the classroom to transmit knowledge that the National Curriculum demanded the students master; students were silent in the classroom and could not question teachers' authority, otherwise they would be labelled as 'bad students'. My recognition of assessment was as a tool to measure how much students master the knowledge delivered by teachers in the classroom, and to determine whether they could obtain certificates or not. I had mixed feelings about assessment: on the one hand, I was scared of assessment as it brought too much stress; on the other hand, I valued assessment as many qualifications were determined by one assessment, so if I did not take assessment seriously I could lose qualifications. To gain qualifications I always tried to be a 'good student', listened to teachers and memorized the knowledge. I rarely asked questions even when I did not understand or had a doubt. To pursue a higher degree, I came to study in UK HE. Indubitably, the teaching and learning environment seemed highly different from that in China. For example, keeping silent was not a label of a 'good student' any longer; instead, it meant you might not understand the teaching, or even worse your intellect might be questioned. My beliefs about learning and assessment were suddenly challenged. When I was involved in discussion or oral feedback, I heard various voices that I had never heard before, and I had opportunities to express my thinking that I had never had before. I gradually recognized the importance of talking in the learning process. Hence, I became interested in exploring the implications of talk for ISs' learning.

The international classroom is composed of three interacting agents: home students, ISs and

¹ The term 'Chinese students' in this study refers to those who have received most of their education in mainland China before coming to the UK for postgraduate study. Other ethnic Chinese groups are not called Chinese students in this study; for example, ethnic Chinese students from Malaysia are called Malaysian students.

² Hu (2002) argues that 'Chinese conceptions of education have been much influenced by Confucian thinking' (p. 96). Education in China emphasizes 'maintaining a hierarchical but harmonious relation between teacher and student' (ibid, p. 98), and 'the focus of teaching is not on how teachers and students can create, construct, and apply knowledge in an experiential approach, but on how extant authoritative knowledge can be transmitted and internalised in a most effective and efficient way' (ibid, p. 99). Under the influence of Confucian education, Chinese learners are passive in class, lack critical thinking and respect authority (Kumaravadivelu, 2003).

academic staff (Harrison and Peacock, 2010). Although home students are not the focus of this study, we cannot ignore the interaction between home and international students and those academic staff who are working at the frontier of the design and delivery of curricula in the international classroom. Robson (2011) argues that it is difficult for educational institutions to become internationalized unless policy is accompanied by staff commitment. Internationalization is among many universities' key strategies. Educational researchers advocate that we need new ways of teaching, learning and assessment to internationalize the curriculum, and we need to rethink and design the curriculum in relation to future global employment, but the extent to which staff understand and reflect on these strategies in practice is undefined. In addition, with regard to assessment in UK HE, the change from traditional to innovative assessment approaches has been shown in assessment policy. However, what needs to be determined is the extent to which assessment reform is reflected in staff practices, and how staff can best design assessment to foster intercultural learning. Ryan's (2011) review shows that the focus of investigations into teaching and learning has slowly shifted from the micro or student level, to the meso level, the staff, and then to the macro level of the institution. Therefore, just exploring ISs' experience is not enough, as investigating staff practices is also important, and then we may find ways to internationalize the curriculum at the macro level.

While exploring new ways of teaching, learning, and assessment to internationalize the curriculum, we also need to understand and evaluate what happens in classrooms in order to take advantages of these approaches. Bernstein's (1996) theory was developed to reflect the complexity of curriculum practices, and may help us not only to investigate how well ISs are associated with the curriculum within the international classroom, but also to determine what it is that they actually learn. Classification refers to the strength of the boundaries between the content of different subjects or between divisions of labour in educational settings, while framing refers to the strength of the social rules and is concerned with how knowledge is transmitted and received in the classroom (ibid). Thus, Bernstein's classification and framing are important concepts to drive this study to explore how knowledge is structured and transmitted to ISs. In order to perform effectively within a particular cultural group, Bernstein (1996) proposes that the individual needs to understand the 'recognition rules' that determine people's awareness both of what is expected and legitimate in the context, and the 'realization rules' that concern how we put meanings together and behave legitimately within that social environment. Therefore, these recognition and realization rules assist us to understand

whether ISs have been successfully integrated in the curriculum, and improve staff awareness of possible communication difficulties with ISs. This knowledge may bring new understanding and insights into the workings of the international classroom to help staff to decide the practicalities of various curricula and assessment approaches for internationalization.

1.4 Research questions

Although many postgraduate students in the UK are now international, fewer studies have been conducted on their learning experiences than on undergraduate students. Moreover, assessment is an essential part in the learning process, but less research has specifically considered its implications for internationalization of the curriculum. Exploring postgraduate ISs' assessment experiences including the pedagogical and sociocultural challenges that they have encountered in UK universities by deploying Bernstein's (1996) classification and framing will contribute to the field of knowledge of assessment in HE and understanding of implications of assessment for internationalization of the curriculum.

As a result of a growing international dissatisfaction with assessment in HE, assessment for learning has received much praise and little criticism, and has thereby become influential in many educational settings. PA, an alternative method of engaging students in the development of their own learning (Falchikov, 2007), can be a way to help ISs' learning. Since it can involve students in discussion, dialogue plays an important part in PA to facilitate learning. Different types of dialogue may occur in peer discussion, such as Vygotsky's (1978) dialectic talk and Bakhtin's (1981) dialogic talk, which may have different impacts on students' learning. Vygotsky's theories have until recently dominated the educational research area (Kravtsova, 2007, cited in White, 2011), by addressing the acquisition of knowledge from more knowledgeable others. Fisher (2011) found that Bakhtin's dialogic talk, which values meaning-making and mutual enrichment through difference, has recently been addressed by Alexander and other researchers in primary and secondary school settings in the UK; however, it has not yet gained much attention in a HE setting. Thus, it is promising to explore whether dialogic or dialectic talk may take place in PA and what impacts they have on ISs.

Hence, the overall aim of the project is to explore ISs' experiences of PA and the

implications of their experiences to inform considerations about assessment and internationalization of the curriculum. The project addresses two research questions:

- 1) What are the views of postgraduate ISs in relation to their experiences of PA in the international classroom in a UK university?
- 2) What are the implications of these views for considerations about assessment and internationalization of the curriculum?

The specific objectives are:

- to investigate the benefits and problematic aspects of PA as perceived by ISs
- to evaluate strategies and conditions for implementing PA in the international HE classroom
- to evaluate classification and framing in different international HE classrooms and ISs' recognition and realization rules in relation to the implementation of PA
- to investigate the impact of classroom dialogue on ISs
- to identify PA's implications for intercultural learning in HE
- to explore staff beliefs and practice of teaching and assessing ISs in relation to the internationalization of the curriculum in HE.

Many factors could affect students' performance in PA, but this study was more concerned with how dialogue impacts on ISs' learning in the international classroom. In attempting to address the questions, the current study explores PA practices by ISs and staff across five different postgraduate programmes, including Business (BUSI), Education A (EDUA), Education B (EDUB), Chemical Engineering (CEM) and Computer Science (CS), over two academic years 2010-2011 (phase I) and 2011-2012 (phase II) in a UK university. Intentionally, this study investigates ISs' experiences of PA mainly from the perspective of Bernstein's (1996) classification and framing and the implications for internationalizing the curriculum. The results provide a new perspective for UK universities and staff to focus their efforts on issues of international students' learning, and lead to suggestions for assessment policy makers to further develop successful practices. Universities in other countries which intend to internationalize the curriculum and pedagogy may also be interested in the results. It is hoped that the thesis will be shared with others who are experiencing similar challenges,

and prompt and inform debate amongst those wishing to internationalize their teaching, learning and assessment policies, practices and programmes.

1.5 Organization of the thesis

This thesis is arranged in the following six chapters:

Chapter One: Introduction

The current chapter proposes a rationale and outlines the general interest of the study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The literature review explores various issues related to the topic of the study. The key issues covered in this chapter are: 1) the internationalization of the curriculum, 2) assessment and PA in HE, 3) dialogue in education, 4) assessment careers and ISs' learner identity.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The design and methodology of this study are presented in this chapter. It provides a rationale for the ontological and epistemological positions taken, discusses the use of a case study and mixed methods approach, explains the chosen tools of data collection, and provides information about the data collection procedures.

Chapter Four: Analysis and Findings

Chapter four deals with the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires and diamond ranking, and the qualitative data obtained from the interviews and observations, as well as the open-ended questions in the questionnaire. The chapter separately presents findings from each of the modules and then presents a cross analysis of all five modules.

Chapter Five: Final Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings from the previous chapter and relates them to previous studies. The attention then moves to the research questions to make conceptual links between the findings.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

This chapter contains a summary of the research undertaken. It addresses the limitations of

this study, offers suggestions for future research and highlights my reflections on the research process.

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter presents the research questions, and the context and rationale for the research. In the following chapter, chapter two, the literature review presents the context which is relevant both to the research questions and the research undertaken for this thesis.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

The literature review is divided into seven sections:

Section 2.1 provides an introduction and conceptual framework to the review.

Section 2.2 reviews the internationalization of HE, and places assessment as a strand of internationalizing the curriculum in HE in relation to the fostering of intercultural learning.

Section 2.3 discusses assessment in HE and particularly examines research on PA.

Section 2.4 considers theories of dialogue in education, including Bakhtin's dialogic talk, Bernstein's classification, framing, recognition and realization rules, and Hermans's internal and external positions.

Section 2.5 considers the notion of assessment careers in relation to ISs learner identity.

Section 2.6 indicates the study's contribution to knowledge.

Section 2.7 provides a conclusion to the literature review.

2.1 Introduction

The research aims to explore ISs' experiences of PA and the implications for consideration relating to assessment in the internationalization of the curriculum. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the main areas of research which have informed and are relevant to the present study.

Conceptual frameworks, according to Smyth (2004), are structured from a set of broad ideas and theories in order to identify the problem a researcher is looking at, search suitable literature, make methodological choices, and select research techniques of data collection and analysis. A conceptual framework acts as a guide for the research, and it is often progressively refined during the research process (Davison, 2011). The main concepts summarized below constitute stage I of the conceptual framework for the present study. It was developed and revised several times in accordance with emerging themes from data gathered in this study. Figure 1 illustrates how this chapter was finally framed. The relationships between these ideas will be discussed at section 2.6.

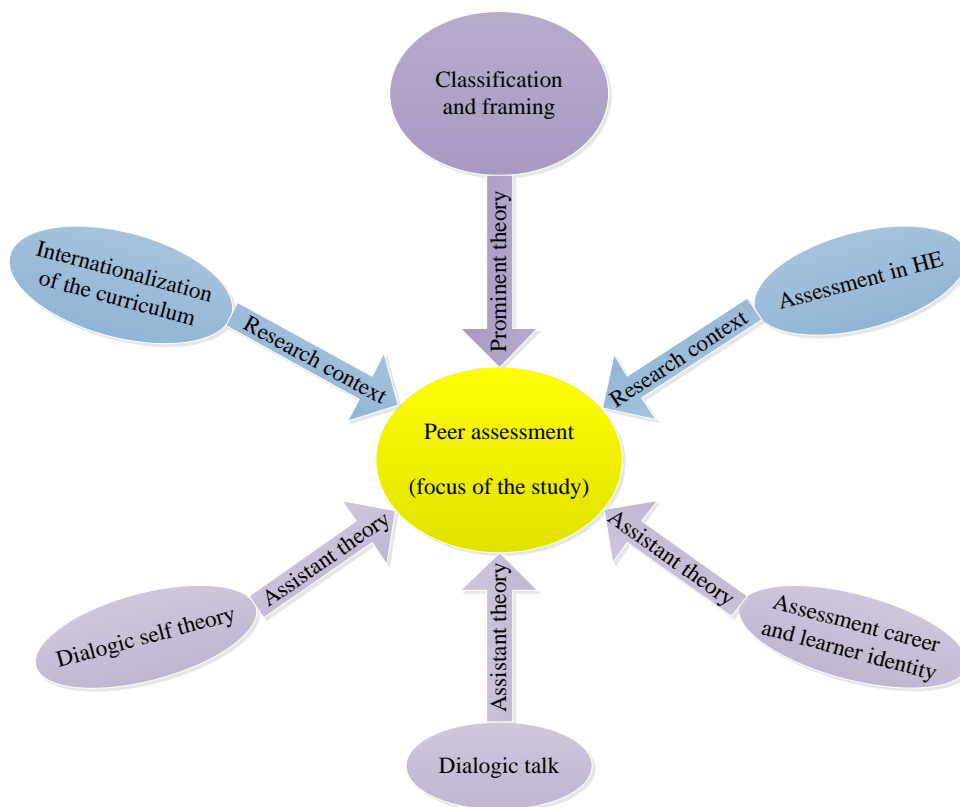


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of stage I

2.2 Internationalization of the curriculum

Internationalization has ‘a wide range of interpretations depending on geographical location, national context, institutional mission and purpose, or on thematic understanding of the concept of internationalization’ (Jones and de Wit, 2012, cited in Jones, 2013, p. 95). In the HE sector, internationalization has become a popular word, generally regarded as a process that involves the increasing range of international activities within or between HE institutions, and within or between academic staff and ISs (Robson, 2011). In the last decade, internationalization has become a more and more important phenomenon for the HE sector in many countries. As one of the four leading English-speaking countries (the US, the UK, Australia and Canada) for recruiting foreign students (OECD, 2004), UK institutions have recruited almost double the number of ISs, with an increase from 216,560 to 405,805 between 2000-2009 (HEA, 2012). The number has been increasing continuously, with a 15.2 per cent rise between 2008 and 2012 (ibid). Thus, internationalization is high on the agenda for UK HE.

Fielden, Middlehurst and Woodfield (2007, p. 16) propose that ‘for many overseas students, international experience is seen as an essential part of their CV in an increasingly competitive global employment market’, because graduates with first-hand experience of living and working among other cultures and mastery of more than one language (mainly English) are preferred by employers, particularly in large multinational corporations. Their idea accords with Rizvi (2000, p. 214), who argues that the international education experience is highly valued by employers in that it can offer ‘exposure to different people and cultures, to different ideas and attitudes, and to different ways of learning and working’. Seeking an international element to HE experiences and developing intercultural competence in an authentic real world are advantages for ISs, and providing international currency is fundamental to graduate employability (Robson, 2011). Therefore, intercultural learning is a key motivation for many ISs to study abroad.

De Vita and Case (2003, p. 388) define intercultural learning as ‘the discovery and transcendence of difference through authentic experiences of cross-cultural interaction that involve real tasks and emotional as well as intellectual participation’. Leask (2007, p. 91) ideally considers that intercultural learning is beneficial for both ISs and home students to:

- gain knowledge of other cultures and an appreciation of cultural diversity
- gain international perspectives on the field of study

- develop the ability to work effectively in settings of social and cultural diversity
- develop the ability to think globally and consider issues from a variety of perspectives
- develop the ability to communicate across cultures
- develop the ability to engage positively with cultural others in both professional and private life
- gain awareness of their own cultures and perspectives and how and why those are similar to and different from other cultures and their perspectives.

In actual practice, however, intercultural experience ‘encompasses both domestic and international contexts and implies cultures interacting’ (Landreman, 2003, cited in King and Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 572). Naturally, clashes may be created through interactions between different cultures. New educational experiences may lead to tension when the expectations of ISs differ from the implicit rules that govern the academic and social environments of UK HE (Robson, 2011). Thereby, an important and growing focus on the internationalization of HE has explored ways to help ISs and staff overcome various challenges in the international classroom in the past decade (Turner and Robson, 2008).

Ryan (2011) has reviewed the literature on the internationalization of HE and concluded three phases of research: in the first phase, from the early to the late 1990s, studies often focused on how ISs were different from local students or how they were lacking in certain (Western) academic skills which needed to be remediated (e.g. Watkins and Biggs, 2001); in the second phase, from approximately 2000 to recent times, the research emphasis was on how lecturers should accommodate ISs and make teaching and learning practices more explicit to give ISs a greater chance of success in their new learning contexts; in the present and third phase, universities’ internationalization agenda has launched heated debates about internationalizing the curriculum for both home and ISs and the broader internationalization of HE (e.g. Robson, 2011; Montgomery, 2013).

Although the internationalization phenomenon is well-accepted in HE, there is a lack of consensus on the implications for curriculum development and delivery (Slade, 2013), particularly for encouraging the intercultural learning that many ISs are seeking from their HE experience abroad, and that many HE institutions are aiming to foster as part of their strategic framework for internationalization. For Leask (2009, p. 209), the internationalization of the curriculum is ‘the incorporation of an international and intercultural dimension into the preparation, delivery and outcomes of a programme of

study'. As intercultural learning does not automatically take place when students are placed in international groups (De Vita, 2001; Carroll and Ryan, 2005), new approaches to teaching, learning and assessment are required to promote intercultural learning to internationalize the curriculum (Ryan, 2011) so that students can be provided with global perspectives of their disciplines and given a broader knowledge and skills base for their future careers.

For ISs who have made significant financial, emotional and family commitments to study abroad, the assessment stakes can be especially high, in that a student's ultimate degree is determined by assessment (Brown and Joughin, 2007). Assessment is essentially important to ISs studying away from their home learning environments in UK HE, and often problems stem from the approach of staff being to take for granted the UK academic culture in the international setting (e.g. Hills and Thom, 2005). In other words, there are often cultural mismatches between the staff assessors' expectations about accepted behaviours or ground rules for assessment and students' previous experiences, skills, and familiarity of assessment formats (Brown and Joughin, 2007). As Ryan and Carroll (2005) pointed out, the impacts of cultural factors on ISs' assessment are often not anticipated by staff. Teacher-student relationships, the valuing of effort versus achievement, and respect for the authoritative nature of the teacher's views are problems that may particularly arise when students are confronted with unfamiliar formats or challenging tasks in assessment (ibid). The arrival of an ever-increasing number of ISs on UK campuses has given the area a new focus. However, what needs to be determined is the kinds of assessment which can help ISs' learning in the UK, and foster intercultural learning for their future careers. Additionally, we need to know how staff at UK universities can support ISs in terms of assessment to prevent cultural factors from negatively influencing ISs' assessment experience. Therefore, assessment in UK HE is an important area to explore from the perspective of ISs.

2.3 Assessment in UK HE

2.3.1 Summative and formative assessment

Assessment, judging whether students have met sets of intellectual and professional standards in programmes they are studying, for selection is the primary function in HE (Messick, 1999). Nowadays, assessment in HE is progressively changing, in that the approach to assessment has to be in harmony if the goal of HE is changing. Since the goals of HE have been directed towards lifelong learning, it is clear that the main goal of HE has moved

towards supporting students to take up positions in modern organizations, being able to analyze information, improving their problem-solving and communication skills, and reflecting critically upon their own role in the learning process or professional practice (Kwan and Leung, 1996). As a consequence, HE should contribute to the education of students as lifelong learners. Since assessment is a necessary feature of HE (Barnett, 2007), and the nature of assessment influences the approaches which students adopt for learning (Beckwith, 1991), assessment in HE should accordingly be adapted to that goal.

Summative assessment, a traditional assessment form, refers to assessment of learning and measures the achievement of learners at a particular time (Harlen, 2005). However, as a result of a growing international dissatisfaction with traditional assessment, the assessment of students' achievements is not simply happening at the end of a process of learning (Dochy, et al., 2007). In fact in recent years, the role of assessment in HE has been expanded: assessment functions have not solely been about measurement or selection but also student growth; assessment procedures are seen not merely as tools for testing and crediting students with recognized qualifications but also as tools for monitoring student progress, directing learning and remedying learning problems (e.g. Dochy and McDowell, 1997; Messick, 1999). Therefore, summative assessment has been increasingly criticized by educators in HE.

Contrasted with summative assessment, formative assessment has attracted considerable attention over the last two decades (Crossouard and Pryor, 2012). Having a good fit with constructivist learning theories, formative assessment is seen as a progressive force in learning and an interactive pedagogy (Black and Wiliam, 1998; Ecclestone and Pryor, 2003). Rather than only accrediting learning (summative assessment), formative assessment aspires to support learning, which is 'the process used by teachers and students to recognize and respond to student learning in order to enhance that learning, during the learning' (Cowie and Bell, 1999, p. 101). A comparison between summative and formative assessment is shown in Table 1. Gaining much praise, however, formative assessment has been criticized for the slower emergence of a parallel shift in relation to feedback within HE (Nicol and MacFarlane-Dick, 2006). Furthermore, Ecclestone and Pryor (2003) argue that formative assessment itself cannot be assumed to be advantageous, but depends on the learning culture in the classroom and the specific constructs applied by teaching staff in formative assessment.

Summative assessment	Formative assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessment of learning • grading students for credits/qualifications • focusing on the products of learning • teachers as assessors and authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessment for learning • providing feedback for further improvement • focusing on the learning process • teachers as assessors and learners

Table 1: Summative and formative assessment

Torrance and Pryor (1998, cited in Pryor and Crossouard, 2005, p. 4) characterize two types of formative assessment as convergent assessment and divergent assessment, and the description is shown in Figure 2. Pryor and Crossouard (2005) continue to discuss that in convergent assessment, staff determine what constitutes a correct answer and whether the learners know or understand transmitted knowledge through raising closed questions, then giving authoritative, judgmental or quantitative feedback on what the learners say or do, particularly where errors are contrasted with correct responses. This feedback focuses on the successful completion of the task in hand, so it has a primary concern for the transmission of knowledge (ibid). In divergent assessment, staff have a more open concern to know what the learners know, understand or can do, and to ask about what they have done; feedback is exploratory, provisional or provocative prompting further engagement rather than just correcting mistakes (ibid). Hence, divergent assessment involves a more open engagement with what the student can do, addressing the learner's agenda with a more dialogic, conversational form of language with stronger concern for the learner (ibid). Pryor and Crossouard (2005; 2010) suggest that divergent assessment seems to fit with the criticality dominant context that HE desires to be, but convergent assessment becomes imperative when the successful completion of tasks is addressed. Although convergent assessment seems to have some similarities with summative assessment, the distinctive difference is whether the purpose of assessment is for learning or of learning.

CONVERGENT FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT	DIVERGENT FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT
<p>Assessment which starts from the aim to discover <i>if</i> the learner knows, understands or can do a predetermined thing. This is characterised by:</p> <p>Implications</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. precise planning by the teacher and an intention to stick to it; b. recording via check lists and can-do statements; c. closed or pseudo-open teacher questioning and tasks; d. a focus on contrasting errors with correct responses; e. authoritative, judgmental or quantitative feedback, f. feedback focussed on performance and the successful completion of the task in hand. g. formative assessment focused on communicating criteria usually closely related to those used in summative assessment h. involvement of the learners as recipients of assessments. h. an analysis of the interaction of learners and the curriculum from the point of view of the curriculum; i. may conform to either a behaviourist or a constructivist view of education; j. an intention to teach or assess the next predetermined thing in a linear progression; an interaction usually embedded within an Initiation –Response -Feedback (IRF) sequence. l. a view of assessment as accomplished mainly by the teacher. 	<p>Assessment which starts from the aim to discover <i>what</i> the learner knows, understands or can do. This is characterised by:</p> <p>Implications</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. flexible planning or complex planning which incorporates alternatives; b. open forms of recording (narrative, quotations etc.); c. primarily open tasks with questioning by teachers and learners directed at ‘helping’ rather than testing; d. a focus on miscues - aspects of learners’ work which yield insights into their current understanding - and on prompting metacognition. e. exploratory, provisional or provocative descriptive feedback aimed at prompting further engagement from the learners; f. discussion prompting reflection on the task and its context with a view to constructing understanding of future situations in which new knowledge might be applied. g. formative assessment focused on a holistic view of criteria, the learners’ understandings of them and how they fit into wider notions of knowledge and competence. h. involvement of the learners as initiators of assessments as well as recipients. h. an analysis of the interaction of learners and the curriculum from the point of view of both learners and the curriculum; i. conforms to a socio-cultural view of education with an acknowledgement of the importance of the context for the assessment; j. an intention to teach in the zone of proximal development; k. part of an on-going dialogue between and amongst learners and teachers where learners initiate as well as respond, ask questions as well reply; l. a view of assessment as a collaboration between and amongst teachers and students.

Figure 2: Convergent and divergent formative assessment—adapted from Torrance and Pryor (1998, cited in Pryor and Crossouard, 2005, p. 4)

2.3.2 Peer assessment

2.3.2.1 Definitions

Since the application of assessment as a tool for learning is advocated in HE, educators are interested both in seeking assessment models that can both evaluate and promote student learning, and in exploring the extent to which they develop lifelong learning skills (e.g. Boud and Falchikov, 2006). When investigating assessment approaches that enhance student learning, studies have revealed the importance of providing rich learning opportunities and social support to involve students in the assessment process (Falchikov, 2007). As emphasis

in HE has switched from teaching to learning and from teacher management to student self-direction (e.g. Rogers and Freiberg, 1994), attention has also been paid to the educational advantages of students assessing other students (PA), which is a means of involving students in the assessment process.

In navigating the literature, it is important to acknowledge different conceptions of PA. Falchikov (1995) defines PA as the process through which groups of individuals rate their peers. Explicitly, PA can be seen as an arrangement for peers to consider ‘the amount, level, value, worth, quality or successfulness of the products or outcomes of learning of others of similar status’ (Topping, 1998, p. 250). Van der Pol, et al. (2008, p. 1805) regard PA ‘as a method in which students engage in reflective criticism of the products of other students and provide them with feedback, using previously defined criteria’. Somervell (1993) proposes a more flexible definition and considers whether this exercise may or may not entail previous discussion or agreement over criteria, or involve the use of rating instruments or checklists which have been designed by others before the PA exercise, or designed by the user group to meet its particular needs. Wen and Tsai (2006) give a more comprehensive definition of PA in university courses as being an alternative evaluation arrangement involving students assessing the quality of their fellow learners’ writings, presentations or other performance, then providing feedback or mark to each other. Thus, the form of PA can be summative involving students in marking to measure the products of learning, or formative involving feedback of a qualitative nature to improve learning. Based on Torrance and Pryor’s (1998, cited in Pryor and Crossouard, 2005) notions of convergent and divergent formative assessment, formative PA can be further categorized as convergent focusing on the completion of tasks and divergent involvement with a more open engagement in the discussion of peer feedback.

Studies on PA demonstrate that students can learn from peers through collaborative study and assessing each other’s work, so PA has been increasingly used as an innovative method of engaging students in the development of their learning (e.g. Davies, 2006). Somervell (1993) emphasizes that PA is an integral part of the learning process through which students have an opportunity to observe their peers, and notes that their skills are often developed. In addition, peer feedback as a component of PA has grown considerably within HE (Gielen, Dochy and Onghena, 2011). Peer feedback leading to enhancing student performance can be a positive experience for students (e.g. Sluijsmans, Brand-Gruwel and Van Merriënboer, 2002; Fund,

2010). Therefore, PA can be a tool of assessment for learning.

2.3.2.2 Previous research focuses on PA

In the past two decades PA has become a progressively common topic in HE publications, and the diversity of studies in this area is vast. Researchers have explored the validity, reliability and practicalities of PA, and generally have agreed on its acceptability in HE (e.g. Kwan and Leung, 1996; Dochy, Segers and Sluijsmans, 1999). For example, Conway, et al. (1993) reveal that students feel that the PA is a good method and sufficiently fair. Topping (1998) has reviewed 31 studies on PA and concluded that the majority of these studies (18) show an acceptably high validity and reliability in a variety of applications. However, studies investigating the accuracy of PA do not show consistent results. Fry (1990), and Rushton, Ramsey and Rada (1993) found that peer and teacher assessments were equally reliable. Specifically, Oldfield and Macalpine (1995) presented high correlations between student marks and lecturer marks for individual essays and presentations. In contrast, the results of a study by Orsmond, Merry and Reiling (1996) are less positive regarding accuracy of peer assessment. In addition, much of this work is concerned with the effect of PA on learning processes and outcomes from cognitive and affective perspectives (Kim, 2009). Some studies especially look at the HE literature on peer feedback. For instance, Fund (2010) points out that peer feedback can be a positive experience for many students but not for all. Thus, the following section 2.3.2.3 summarizes the reported positive effects as well as some critiques of PA.

2.3.2.3 Effects of PA on learners

PA can have different functions depending on the learning environment, the needs of the learner, the purpose of the task, and the particular feedback paradigm (Evans, 2013). The supposed benefits attributed to PA are diverse, and mainly include:

- PA increases the students' responsibility and autonomy through involvement not only in the final judgments made of student work, but also in the prior setting of criteria and the selection and evidence of achievement (Dochy, Segers and Sluijsmans, 1999; Van Den Berg, Admiraal and Pilot, 2006)
- it helps students to develop certain skills in the areas of self-evaluation, observation, self-efficacy, higher order thinking, meta-cognitive self-awareness and self-criticism (Dochy and McDowell, 1997; Topping, 2000)

- it increases a range of social and communication skills, including presentation, negotiation, and verbal communication skills (Falchikov, 1986; Topping, 2000)
- PA enhances student learning performance, as findings reveal that students involved in peer assessment performed better than those who had not participated in (Falchikov, 2007)
- personal motivation is increased as a result of active engagement in the assessment process (McDowell, 1995)
- PA requires students to make independent judgments and provide comments on the work of their peers, so it can be an appropriate arena for independent learning (Falchikov, 1986)
- it enhances collaboration between teacher and student, which is of particular value when the learners are adults (Leach, Neutze and Zepke, 2001)
- PA provides an opportunity to compare and discuss assignments, and an opportunity to gain knowledge and develop a greater understanding of the assignment content and assessment process (Topping, 2000). It initiates scrutiny and clarification of the objectives and purposes, criteria and marking scales of assessment, and the objectives of the course itself (Rayner, 2007)
- the experience of PA within HE is thought by students to be likely to have relevance for their professional development and lifelong learning skills (Sluijsmans, et al., 2001).

Although PA has many potential benefits for learners, there are nevertheless some critiques of PA. For instance, it is hard to compare studies and to assess the effectiveness of PA due to the diversity of PA practices and multiple research techniques used to evaluate student attitudes (Van Zundert, Sluijsmans and Van Merriënboer, 2010). Moreover, for some students, peer feedback is perceived as ineffective (Boud, 2000), unpredictable (Chen, et al., 2009), or unsubstantiated (Strijbos and Sluijsmans, 2010). A specific criticism of peer feedback research is that the many variables underpinning the complexity of PA have not been thoroughly and independently evaluated in relation to outcomes (Topping, 2010). Gielen, Dochy and Onghena (2011) point out that student performance can be improved, but that it becomes more difficult to determine if those students with high-ability show improvement with PA. Nicol (2008) reveals that not all students favour and feel comfortable in group work with PA. Additionally, reliability and validity issues might arise given the

social context of PA, such as a lack of trust in the self and others as assessors, being over-marked as a result of friendship marking, or collusive marking, which causes a lack of differentiation within groups (e.g. Falchikov, 1995; Dochy, Segers and Sluijsmans, 1999). Marks play a prominent part in the assessment process. It is common for students to question their own competence in relation to awarding marks, or for them to express concerns about marking fairly and responsibly (e.g. Sluijsmans, et al., 2001). This anxiety is especially amplified when marks account for a significant proportion of the overall mark for the module. Hence, the results of the effects of PA on learners are still inconclusive, and it is unclear under what conditions PA is effective.

2.3.2.4 PA in UK HE

In UK universities, there is a growing emphasis on the development of skills such as communication, scholarship and critical analysis (DfES, 2003). An awareness of such skill development by the individual requires innovative approaches to learning, teaching and assessment. According to McDowell and Mowl (1996), PA is one form of innovation which aims to improve the quality of learning and empower students, in contrast to more traditional methods which disengage students from the assessment process. In the process of PA, students are able to inquire into learning through active engagement in dialogue and collaboration with the tutor and other course participants. This innovative assessment meets the requirements of the development of essential skills.

With regard to studies on ISs, there are few which have reported on students' perceptions of PA techniques. Similar findings were reported (e.g. Williams, 1992; Cheng and Warren, 1997): although the students in general felt that they had made a fair and responsible assessment of their peers, many of them did not feel comfortable about carrying out PA. For instance, Gatfield (1999) investigated students' satisfaction of PA in Australia. His results showed that home students (Australian) and ISs have significantly varying perceptions of PA and group work, and he supposed that the differences expressed by the home and overseas students may be related to cultural differences in the students' country of origin. However, the coverage of studies focusing on ISs' experiences of PA in UK HE is somewhat sparser, especially in the time of the internationalization of the curriculum.

2.4 Dialogue in education

Barnes (2008) argues that the function of talk in organising the individual's understanding of the world was firstly acknowledged by psychologists such as Vygotsky: talk does not simply represent the meanings and purposes of the words and sentences that we learn, but also implies the social relationships in which we are embedded. In the field of education, researchers have been interested in studying dialogue primarily because it is an essential medium in the classroom, which facilitates the transmission and construction of knowledge (Cooper, et al., 2012). With regard to the current study, talk is a critical component in PA, as students need to talk to conduct group work, and they particularly need to do so when using formative PA or divergent PA to discuss peer feedback. Thus, the following sections review some theories of talk that relate to the current study.

2.4.1 Bakhtin's dialogic talk

The study of classroom discourse has received increasing attention that 'appeared to coincide with the enthusiastic reception of Bakhtin's and Vygotsky's works in the English-speaking world' (Cooper, et al., 2012, p. 76). Vygotsky (1978) considers that there is an end point that can be achieved in the process of activity mediated by discourse, and he values the acquisition of knowledge and development (White, 2011). The application of his theories offers much to pedagogical practice, since Kravtsova (2007, cited in White, 2011, p. 1) states, 'it is hard today to find a system of education that is not based, at least in theory, on the ideas of Lev Vygotsky'. Attracting the attention of educational researchers in the late 1980s, Bakhtin (1981, cited in Cooper, et al., 2012) proposed that people exist in dialogue and meanings are created in the processes of reflection between our dialogic interactions. He values meaning-making and the various discourses that comprise learning and learner, and particularly emphasizes mutual enrichment through different voices (Matusov, 2010, cited in White, 2011). Thus, researchers and practitioners who are dissatisfied with the transmission pedagogic approach in the classroom are particularly drawn to Bakhtin's work (Cooper, et al., 2012). For instance, 'dialogic education' as termed by Wegerif, et al. (2009, cited in Fisher, 2011, p. 35), does not aim to reach a complete agreement, or to construct knowledge, but to enable speakers 'to be more open to other voices, more able to question and to listen and so more able to allow new unanticipated meanings to emerge'. It seems that there is potential to improve learner attainments when students take an active part in the classroom discourse.

A few researchers are interested in comparing the roles of dialogic and dialectic talk in education. For instance, Matusov (2010, cited in White, 2011, p. 9) argued that ‘a dialogic pedagogy emphasises “questions of immediate concern” that may or may not be answered but will undoubtedly provoke inquiry and debate...while dialectic teaching is viewed as an activity that inevitably leads towards prescribed a priori outcomes’. ‘In seeking to appreciate language and its communicative role, then, a Bakhtinian teacher might look for subtle gestural cues and nuance in embodied forms of communication that convey potential meaning and promote dialogue’, as interpreted by White (2011, p. 7), ‘while a Vygotskian might focus on seeking buds of oral language with a view to further promotion of learning’. The novice is often positioned by dialectic talk as one who develops his/her understanding of the world via more knowledgeable or intelligent others (Karasavvidis, 2007, cited in White, 2011), so Vygotskian teachers are the complete authority on their subjects. On the other hand, dialogic talk emphasizes the different positions of teachers as supporters in the learner’s learning process. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to examine both in detail, in comparing both talk genres roughly, dialogic pedagogy has been selected to bring a new perspective to internationalizing the curriculum in this thesis.

In addition, dialogic talk has impacted on interpersonal communication research, especially when people are related in terms of culture (Kim, 2004). According to Bakhtin, culture closely links to communication in that our understanding of the world generated through communication is based on our cultural backgrounds and experiences. Therefore, meanings created in any dialogic interaction are influenced by the speaker and listener’s individual socio-cultural background. Kim (2004) states that ‘culture as Geertz and Bakhtin allude to can be generally transmitted through communication or reciprocal interaction such as a dialogue’. In my opinion, therefore, different cultures may meet when students communicate in the international classroom, and intercultural learning may take place if students are more open to other voices, more able to question and to listen to other voices, rather than aiming to reach complete agreement. Moreover, Haworth (1999, p.101) suggests that in dialogic talk, a speaker may ‘resist, reshape and reaccent a speech genre so that it becomes half-ours and half-someone else’s’. Hence, this thesis investigates whether dialogic pedagogy can support the transformation of ISs’ learner identity, to facilitate a more internationalised perspective.

2.4.2 Peer discourse

Peer learning is an educational practice in which two or more students learn a great deal through interacting with each other (Boud, Cohen and Sampson, 2001), so it is construed as a two-way reciprocal learning activity. Vygotsky (1978, p. 186) argues that such a collaborative approach has ‘benefits on cognitive development over learning in isolation’, because the interaction between peers facilitates a less able peer to enter a new area of potential development through working with more competent peers. Boud and Lee (2005, p. 509) claim that ‘an emphasis on students learning with and from each other has been one of the key trends over the past two decades’ in HE, and a variety of approaches has been applied, such as collaborative learning, peer tutoring and PA. These practices all reflect the idea that in HE ‘there are considerable educational benefits in students working with each other, often apart from teachers, to assess and to learn from each other’ (ibid), and thereby peer learning has become a pedagogical tool.

The case in postgraduate programmes in the UK is that teachers expect students to develop critical and academic thinking skills, whereas in some other educational contexts students rarely have the chance to develop such skills. One main reason for this is that, traditionally, most of the talk in the classroom has been made by teachers, who take ‘responsibility for the content, pacing, and style of students’ contributions’ (Barnes and Todd, 1977, cited in Edwards, 2005, p. 3). To develop student potential, teachers in HE should consider letting students take responsibility for the knowledge gained, and so that in doing so they promote their own independent learning skills. Talk can be used as a tool of thinking, so teachers may consciously provide more opportunities for students to talk in the classroom and encourage peer talk based on peer learning, particularly when there is lack of teacher instruction. Accordingly, peer discourse can support students to attain at a higher level (Boud and Lee, 2005).

Since peer discourse for peer learning has been construed as a pedagogical discourse by Boud and Lee (2005), investigating the postgraduate ISs environment as an explicitly pedagogical space can be feasible. Pearson and Brew (2002, cited in Boud and Lee, 2005, p. 504) assume that the peer learning environment is ‘intellectually, socially and geographically complex and dispersed’. In the international classroom, this feature becomes more obvious and serious. Talk in the classroom is often identified by active learner constructions as an indicator of student engagement (Shaw, Carey and Mair, 2008). In the student-centred learning context,

therefore, pedagogic activities based on ‘oral communication as a key mechanism’ for peer student interaction have been recommended, such as group work (Buswell and Becket, 2009, cited in Turner, 2013, p. 227). Ollin (2008, cited in Turner, 2013) argues that the pedagogical foundations of such constructions of learning are culturally rooted, so in other social learning contexts talking may be seen to have different functions, which may cause confusion or a cultural clash for ISs from teacher-centred learning contexts.

If learners are to make the best use of peer discourse as a tool for learning, then they need some driving force to use it, and PA may provide such an opportunity. When PA is conducted by students who are at the same or similar academic levels they will tend to learn much themselves through the processes of cognitive rehearsal, such as developing skills of evaluation and the giving of feedback. In addition, open talk between peers from different cultural backgrounds may help students to have a better understanding of other cultures and develop mutual respect rather than cultural clashes. Therefore, this thesis is interested in exploring whether dialogic and dialectic talk will take place in PA and what outcomes these will bring in the international classroom. Since there has been little theorization of peer discourse as a pedagogic tool and little documentation of its application to postgraduate education (Boud and Lee, 2005), especially in the context of the internationalization of the curriculum, investigating peer discourse in the postgraduate international classroom has become appealing, and the answer may further develop and establish Bakhtin’s dialogic talk by adding the international setting in HE.

2.4.3 Bernstein’s pedagogic discourses

Bernstein’s work provides a framework for ‘conceptualising the production and reproduction of knowledge, associated pedagogical practices and related power issues’ (McAlpine and Grotorex, 2000, p. 4). The main concepts from this framework (Bernstein, 1996), ‘classification’ and ‘framing’, are adopted in this study to explore how knowledge or messages are constructed and transmitted to the learner through the implementation of PA in different curricula in the context of the international classroom. In Bernstein’s concepts, classification refers to the strength of the boundaries between contents of different subjects such as maths, economics or English, or between divisions of labour such as student, teacher, or policy makers in the educational setting (ibid). Where classification is strong there are insulated boundaries between the contents of the different disciplines or different labour, and

we can use C+ to represent this situation (ibid). Where classification is weak there are blurred boundaries between the contents of the different disciplines or different labour, and we can use C- to represent this situation (ibid).

The concept of framing means the strength of the social rules in the educational setting, and is concerned with how knowledge is transmitted and received in the classroom or what is and is not allowed in the pedagogical relationship between the teacher and the learner (Bernstein, 1996). As Nyambe and Wilmot (2008, p.5) construed, 'while classification translates power relations, framing is underpinned by the principle of control which regulates relations within a context'. Where framing is strong, the locus of control lies with the transmitter and there are sharp boundaries between what could be transmitted and what could not be transmitted, so we can use F+ to represent this situation; there is visible pedagogic practice, and the transmitter has explicit control over the selection, pacing and criteria in the classroom (Bernstein, 1996). Where framing is weak, the locus of control lies with the acquirer, and there are blurred boundaries between what could be transmitted and what could not be transmitted; in this case, we can use F- to represent the situation as the pedagogic practices are likely to be invisible and the acquirer has more apparent control in the learning process (ibid).

Power relationships, such as the creation of boundaries between groups of people or between different categories of discourse, are relevant to define the acceptable culture of people in a particular group (Bernstein, 1996). It is believed that students who are part of the culture can easily recognize the displayed power in the context, and then understand the culture of the curriculum that is based on this power structure (ibid). The concepts of classification and framing can provide a deepened insight into the power structures that are in play within the environment and assist in developing appropriate strategies for any change. Thus, knowledge of Bernstein's ideas in relation to classroom culture and curriculum practice could be a useful tool to broaden both ISS' and staff's experiences and concepts of the internationalization of the curriculum, whilst also developing their awareness of the ongoing learning and assessment in the international classroom.

Chien and Wallace (2004, p. 2) argue that 'Bernstein's idea was that our culture could grow and change by the spread of habits and values within the educational experience', so it would be helpful to understand these aspects of the culture for developing appropriate curricula. In

order to perform effectively within a particular cultural group, the individual needs to understand the 'recognition rules' and 'realisation rules' of that social environment, (Bernstein, 1996). According to Bernstein, recognition rules are the means by which the acquirer is able to recognize the specialty of the context he or she is in, to help him or her to perceive the demands of the context. Unless students have these rules, they 'will not be able to read the context and will remain silent or ask inappropriate questions' (ibid). Realisation rules refer to people's ability to communicate with others about what they know and make others accept and understand within the culture (ibid). Hence, recognition rules determine people's awareness of what is expected and what is legitimate in the context, while realization rules concern how we put meanings together and behave legitimately in the context (ibid). Bernstein (1996, p. 31-32) found that 'not all students shared an understanding of the pedagogic discourse of school settings' and 'a student's performance is influenced strongly by the extent to which he or she shares recognition rules and realization rules', but if the student possesses appropriate recognition rules for the culture in the classroom, it will be seen in his or her successful orientation within that culture.

It is suggested that these two terms can be useful in the international classroom in UK HE. Staff in the international classroom, for example, may not possess the recognition and realization rules of ISs, and therefore may have a completely different perception of what is happening within the classroom, so that misperceptions or misunderstandings can be generated. Alternatively, if ISs do not have appropriate recognition rules for the culture in the classroom, then inappropriate realization rules will make it difficult to demonstrate suitable behaviours or successfully orientate within that culture. Further, ISs might find themselves in a challenging environment which constrains their acceptance of new approaches to the curriculum and assessment. According to Bernstein's (1996) suggestions, to determine the extent of the recognition rules that ISs possess, staff may observe how ISs navigate themselves in the international classroom, and respond and behave in classroom communications. To perceive ISs' realization rules, staff may observe their ability to communicate what they know in a manner that is acceptable and understandable to others within the international classroom. Thus, an understanding of recognition and realisation rules could assist in enhancing staff and ISs' awareness of potential difficulties in communication, especially from a cultural perspective in the international classroom.

To investigate how staff and ISs interpreted and practised PA in UK HE, Bernstein's (1996) concepts, especially classification and framing, were adopted to assist understanding of the associated pedagogical practices and related power issues for a large part of the data collection and analysis in this study. The pedagogic discourses of Bernstein which refer to socially constructed meanings are often ignored in the classroom, but these are a useful tool to observe and reflect how well students relate to the curriculum within the classroom and what they actually learn. By deploying Bernstein's framework, it is hoped to offer new perspectives on the culture in the international classroom in UK HE. This is because the complexity of pedagogic discourses reflects the complexity of classroom culture and relevant curriculum practices. Bernstein studied in primary and secondary schools, but his terms are applied here to explain phenomena in the international context of HE. In doing so, it may be possible to reveal multiple voices and enable a broader perspective, considering students' cultural and educational backgrounds as equally important to the content in curriculum development. These insights will deepen understanding of the practices in the international classroom.

2.4.4 Hermans's dialogic self theory

Hermans (2001) conceptualizes the self as a dynamic space comprised of a multiplicity of positions. He considers that each position can be endowed with a voice to establish dialogical relations with other positions, and these positions can move from one to another to be congruent with changes in situation and time. He conceptualizes these positions in terms of internal and external positions: the former are felt as part of oneself (e.g. I as a diligent Chinese student), and the latter are felt as part of the environment (e.g. my peer is a UK student who criticizes my work in PA). Hermans does not consider positions as isolated from one another; instead, he conceives that specific internal and external positions are relevant to one another as part of a dialogical process at some particular point in time (e.g. I as an international student and an assessor when I conduct PA with other ISs or UK students). Thus, he proposes that the individual is involved in an active process of positioning in which these internal and external positions will meet in processes of 'negotiation, cooperation, opposition, conflict, agreement and disagreement' (ibid, p. 253). He also indicates that sometimes we adopt positions but we are unable to realize the existence of these positions during that time. However, some changes can facilitate the similar co-ordination of positions on subsequent occasions, so some internal positions can be pushed forward once an external position occurs

and activates them; new positions merging between internal and external positions from mutual transaction over time become obvious and dominant, and thereby new habits can be shaped and become stronger (ibid).

Linking culture and positions, Hermans considers cultures as ‘collective voices that function as social positions in the self’ and as ‘expressions of embodied and historically situated selves that are constantly involved in dialogical relationships with other voices’ (ibid, p. 272), and he argues that ‘the movement of positions and their mutual relation is dependent on cultural changes’ (ibid, p. 255). With regard to education, he proposes that if students received education in one culture, they can be placed in a context where their two or more heterogeneous internal positions (e.g. I as a Chinese student and I as a UK student) have interactions with a variety of heterogeneous external positions (e.g. in the international classroom I work with UK students/Chinese students/other ISs) when they come to study in another culture. These positions ‘may be felt as conflicting or they may coexist in relatively independent ways or even fuse so that hybrid combinations emerge in the form of multiple identities’ (Hermans and Kempen, 1998, cited in Hermans, 2001, p. 258). This conception can assist us in construing why ISs diversely adjust to studying in the UK, which is a significant phenomenon of internationalization in UK HE. In the process of studying in the UK, ISs develop dialogic relationships with others, which impact on the organization and reorganization of their self-system, and the cultural elements that they share with other students may be highly divergent. Thereby, they may generate multiple identities and become a different person after graduation.

The growing interconnections between cultures in the accelerating process of globalization involve an unprecedented challenge to international HE. Hermans’s (2001) dialogical self theory conceives of the self and culture as multiple positions among which dialogical relationships can develop. According to Hermans, we may understand how ISs’ positions evolve and develop in a new learning environment through conducting PA and evaluating the impacts of this experience. Although the gap between this theory and research has received some criticism, it is interesting that the notion of dialogue contains ‘the possibility of studying self and culture as a composite of parts’ (ibid, p. 243). Thus, it may assist to understand ISs’ learner identity in their home countries and in the UK in the current study.

2.5 Assessment, dialogue and learner identity

Learning is a culturally situated, contextualized performance, involving students' construction of identities and 'becoming a different person' influenced by the cultural, ideological, economic and political context (Lave and Wenger 1991, p. 53). In the international classroom, staff narrate their own identities in teaching and interactions with ISs, whose learner identities have been shaped in their home countries. Therefore, it is inevitable that there are tensions between the different identities in play in the international classroom. Educational settings may offer very different possibilities for ISs' learning and for the development of their identities. For some students, learner identities may be easily shifted to adjust to the UK academic context, whereas others may struggle to retain the learner identities constructed in their previous learning contexts or home countries, as adjustment into a different academic culture is often more challenging than adjustment into a new social environment (Gu, Schweisfurth and Day, 2010). Those ISs who have little transformation of learner identity may find it more difficult to learn in the UK if their earlier experiences of learning create a clash with the teaching in the UK. Thus, we need to find ways to assist ISs' transition to UK HE so that they can have a comfortable and successful learning experience.

The concept of learning careers 'seeks to illuminate students' attitudes, dispositions and decision-making as they progress through formal programmes' (Ecclestone and Pryor, 2003, p. 473). Career here is a 'metaphor', argued by Crossan, et al. (2003, cited in Ecclestone and Pryor, 2003, p. 474), providing 'a way of theorizing the course of the self over time, mediated between institutional structures over time'. The student's learning career is socially constructed and context-specific, developing from their early education to post-compulsory education and beyond. Thus, learning careers influence students' learning dispositions when they are exposed to new situations, and shape or transform learner identities over time. Rooted in learning careers, Ecclestone and Pryor (2003, p. 472) argue that 'different assessment systems have an important impact on learning identities and dispositions as children become young adults and then adult "returners" in an increasingly long life of formal learning'. Thereby, they propose the notion of assessment careers and they believe assessment is an important strand of learner identity. In the international classroom in UK HE, ISs from different cultural backgrounds have been influenced by different assessment systems in their earlier learning experiences which form their learner identity. When they come to study in the UK, their learner identities may be affected by the UK assessment system. ISs bring complex dispositions in the international classroom, which interact with the

structure of the UK assessment system, so the interpersonal dynamics arise when staff and ISs put summative and formative assessment into practice. Thus, it is assumed that assessment can impact on ISs' learner identity, and may facilitate or inhibit their academic transition to the UK.

Opportunities for self reflection, critical thinking and critical engagement with the content of the curriculum and with each other may help students to make meaningful connections to the curriculum. For assessment design, we may consider how to provide opportunities to engage ISs in the learning and assessment process in order to connect them with the curriculum and assist their academic transition to UK HE. Moreover, Biesta (2004) and Pryor and Crossouard (2010) consider dialogic processes and practices in the social world construct identity. Bakhtin (1981, cited in Cooper, et al., 2012) believes that dialogue impacts on becoming. Thus, finding ways of involving students in dialogue with their tutors and with each other has possibilities to influence personal growth and development. Initiating dialogue between students and staff, assessment and feedback may provide meaningful personal and social learning opportunities in diverse student cohorts (MacKinnon and Manathunga, 2003). Intercultural experiences may accelerate students' reconstruction of identity, and may support individual transformations.

We have identified the theoretical relationship between assessment and learner identity, and we have also confirmed the impact of dialogue on learner identity. We know we can design assessment that promotes dialogue to facilitate ISs' individual transition. Nevertheless, there is the question of what might be done if ISs remain silent in the international classroom. For instance, researchers identify comparatively high levels of classroom silence in many Asian classrooms, whereas Anglophone classrooms tend to be noisier (Turner, 2013). Ryan and Viete (2009) claim that who speaks and the way he/she speaks reflect his/her personal power in the Anglophone context; keeping silent is *often conceived* as 'a lack of personal power, social marginalization or even a lack of intellectual ability' (Turner, 2013, p. 230). However, there may be other factors resulting in silence. For example, the typical traditional Chinese classroom is silent, only teachers speak and students cannot speak without permission from teachers. Thus, silence becomes a habit in the classroom. When Chinese students come to study in the UK classroom, they may initially feel uncomfortable to talk.

This thesis proposes that divergent PA in the international classroom may be an assessment

approach that encourages ISs to talk actively and critically. Falchikov and Goldfinch (2000, p. 287) consider that PA is ‘grounded in philosophies of active learning (e.g., Piaget, 1971) and androgogy (Cross, 1981), and may also be seen as being a manifestation of social constructionism (e.g. Vygotsky, 1978), as it often involves the joint construction of knowledge through discourse.’ Stressing the central position of learner participation in the learning process, Benson (2001) believes that effective learning will happen if learners are engaged in decision-making about how learning is organized and delivered. When conducting divergent PA, ISs are required to participate in the learning and assessment process, through thinking critically about peers’ work, engaging actively in open talk, and self reflection. Although Ecclestone and Pryor (2003) think both summative assessment and formative assessment contribute to learners’ identities, they suggest that divergent assessment has more potential to shape and transform learner identity. Applying divergent PA, ISs might be encouraged to see their practices as products of their current identities and beyond this to consider them in the light of future or desired identities. This reflective process provides an opportunity to hear multiple voices and the possibility of moving between internal and external positions to be congruous with changes in a new context, so that ISs can adopt new identities that can be transformed over time to adapt to the UK academy. Through interacting with diverse students in divergent PA, they may have meaningful personal and social learning opportunities, which may contribute to the development of intercultural competence.

2.6 The contribution of this study to the research field on international students

Internationalization is firmly on the UK agenda and research projects investigating ISs’ experiences in UK HE have emerged over two decades. However, few studies have specifically considered ISs’ experience of assessment, which is an essential part in the learning process. Although assessment in the international classroom has been suggested to be flexible and culturally inclusive, studies in this area are at abstract and conceptual levels with little detailed and empirical research on actual practice in concrete settings, especially at the postgraduate level. It is therefore worth exploring postgraduate ISs’ assessment experience at UK universities.

With the growth of globalized and multicultural workplaces, intercultural competence is an increasingly essential skill for employees. HE institutions are particularly well placed to foster students’ employability, and to provide associated opportunities to develop students’

intercultural competence before they enter the workplace (Jones, 2013). Therefore, curriculum design, delivery and assessment of student outcomes in educational programmes need to reflect the international and intercultural dimensions of curriculum internationalization (Leask, 2009). In this way, the student experience can be enriched in institutions by providing opportunities to learn from and with students from different cultural and educational contexts in order to develop international awareness and improve intercultural competence.

PA, widely publicised over the last twenty years, has gained popularity as an alternative assessment method in HE. As a way to involve students in discussion, dialogue and reflection, PA can make a fundamental contribution to the personal development of independent and self-directing learners, which are essential skills at the postgraduate level. In addition, involving students in the evaluation of work by peers from other cultures has the potential to broaden their subject knowledge in relation to a range of cultural contexts and to develop intercultural competence. However, evidence of the effects of PA on ISs remains inconclusive, and it is unclear under what conditions PA is especially effective. Students from different cultural backgrounds may have diverse experiences and perceptions of assessment, which may conflict with the assessment approaches designed by staff in the international classroom and result in unsuccessful assessment experiences for ISs. Thus, it is necessary to explore ISs' use of PA and the implications for the internationalization of their experience within the curriculum.

Bernstein's (1996) classification and framing provide a framework for conceptualizing pedagogic activities of curricula and related power issues in the classroom. In this study Bernstein's theories are innovatively adopted to understand staff and ISs' performance during PA in the international classroom in various modules. Ecclestone and Pryor's (2003) notion of assessment careers is also adopted to help to link assessment and learner identity, allowing the study to explore ISs' development through the participation of PA more confidently. Bakhtin's (1981) dialogic talk and Hermans's (2001) dialogic self theory may further assist understanding of the effects of PA on ISs. Therefore, I draw on these theories to investigate postgraduate ISs' experiences of PA in different curricula; to enable the student voice to be heard in relation to efforts to internationalize the curriculum as the focal point of this thesis.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the literature which is relevant to the research focus for this thesis. The chapter has reviewed the internationalization of HE in the past two decades, examined the area of assessment in HE, and linked assessment and internationalization from the perspective of dialogue in education and assessment careers. Deploying Bernstein's (1996) classification and framing as the prominent theory, and also integrating Ecclestone and Pryor's (2003) assessment careers, Bakhtin's dialogic talk and Hermans's dialogic self theory, the study explores the implications of assessment for internationalization of the curriculum. The previous studies on PA reviewed in this chapter helped me decide the research design and data collection tools in this study, and the theories discussed provided theoretical themes to analyse data and direct the discussion of findings. Hence, the literature review places the research within a conceptual framework to direct data collection, analysis and discussion in this study.

Chapter 3. Methodology

The chapter is divided into eight sections:

Section 3.1 introduces the chapter and restates the research questions.

Section 3.2 discusses the ontological and epistemological positions in this study.

Section 3.3 justifies the use of mixed methods in this study.

Section 3.4 justifies the use of a case study in this research.

Section 3.5 outlines research methods in previous studies on PA.

Section 3.6 discusses the instruments of data collection.

Section 3.7 considers methodological issues, including the quality of research, ethical considerations and my role in the research.

Section 3.8 concludes the chapter, providing a summary of the research methodology.

3.1 Introduction

Methodology is an essential part of research, as it guides the research process and instructs the researcher engaging in an inquiry (Anderson and Arsenault, 1998). This chapter focuses upon the concepts underpinning research design, methodological issues and the techniques used for data collection.

Having identified the research purpose in chapter one, it is necessary to restate the research questions for this study here. Creswell (1994) recommends that research questions should contain one or two main questions representing an inquiry into the issue being examined in its most general form, followed by sub-questions narrowing down the focus of the study.

The main questions emerge as the inquiry of this research:

- 1) What are the views of postgraduate ISs in relation to their experiences of PA in the international classroom in a UK university?
- 2) What are the implications of these views for considerations about assessment and internationalization of the curriculum?

The following sub-questions need to be answered in order to answer the main questions:

- What benefits and problematic aspects of PA are perceived by ISs in one UK HE institution?
- What conditions influence the implementation of PA in the international HE classroom?
- What are the impacts of classification and framing on ISs' learning in UK HE?
- What are the impacts of classroom dialogue on ISs' learning in UK HE?
- To what extent does integrating PA into international classrooms assist in ISs' academic transition and intercultural learning?
- What are the views of HE staff in relation to their practice of PA in the international HE classroom?

To answer the research questions, data collection was firstly conducted in two modules (BUSI and EDUA) in the academic year 2010-2011 (phase I). To enrich the understanding of the research phenomenon, data collection was continued in 2011-2012 (phase II), including five modules (BUSI, EDUA, EDUB, CEM and CS). Although time and cost was high to

conduct data collection over two years, there are some advantages of this pragmatic decision. First, data collection methods were developed and revised to better explore the research questions; second, two years' data collection in BUSI and EDUA could help us understand the two modules in-depth, as longitudinal case studies; third, the other three modules investigated in phase II could enrich the understanding of the implementation of PA in different disciplines, enabling an exploration of the implications of PA for different curricula to be conducted by employing Bernstein's (1996) classification and framing.

3.2 Considerations of philosophical underpinnings

Social researchers' assumptions about the nature of the social world determine how they explore it (Burrell and Morgan, 1994). Two conceptualizations concerning the nature of the social world are ontology and epistemology (Bryman, 2012). The former is concerned with the reality that may confront us within the social world, and the latter relates to how knowledge is generated and the extent to which the generated knowledge may be a reflection of the phenomenon as we perceive it (Anderson and Arsenault, 1998). Thus, although there is a huge range of methodological approaches for social researchers to collect data and generate knowledge, the methods adopted within any study depend on the ontological and epistemological stances taken by the researcher (ibid).

Holding a social constructivist position in social sciences research, my view of social phenomena is not as external facts that are beyond our reach or influence, but as socially constructed through social interaction, and in a constant state of revision. In the educational setting, Burton and Bartlett (2009, p. 21) address that 'there is no one objective reality that exists outside of the actor's explanations, just different versions of events'. Thus, research in education is more a subjective rather than an objective undertaking; through dealing with direct experiences from different participants in the educational setting, education researchers understand, construe and demystify education reality (ibid). Considering differences between people in the social world and the objects of the natural sciences, educational researchers should grasp the subjective meaning of educational activities.

In this study, PA is a real social activity; however, different participants may have various perceptions towards this event. According to the literature, applying PA might bring benefits to students such as improvements in learning (e.g. Topping, 2000). Therefore, it is interesting

to explore students' perceptions of PA to see how they construct their views of this activity through interaction, whether different social groups (e.g. international and UK students, students and staff) share the same or different understandings of this educational event, and to what extent PA can in fact benefit students in specific contexts. The investigation of the perceptions and experiences of participants seeks to determine a subjective meaning from educational actions.

Adopting a qualitative view of the research process, the study might concurrently benefit from the addition of quantitative data and methods (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner, 2007), because exploring a theme from different dimensions and at multiple levels may contribute to a deeper understanding within the study (Chia, 2002). Thus, the epistemological stance taken in this study is pragmatism, which offers an epistemological justification and logic for the use of mixed methods (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner, 2007). Moreover, pragmatism helped to conceive and deal with unique situations as they occurred (Biesta and Burbules, 2003), so that the study was not impeded when unexpected problems or changes emerged. Hence, pragmatism offered 'a specific way to understand the possibilities and limitations' (ibid, p. 107) of the research.

3.3 Mixed methods approach

The conduct of social research has been orientated around two research paradigms, quantitative and qualitative methodologies; recently, mixed methods research, combining both quantitative and qualitative research, has offered 'a powerful third paradigm choice that often provides the most informative, complete, balanced, and useful research results' (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner, 2007, p. 129). However, in education there has been debate about employing mixed methods research (Newby, 2010), because many researchers prefer to conduct either qualitative or quantitative research (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Mixing paradigms is still a controversial issue argued by social science researchers, but the integration of qualitative and quantitative methods to collect and analyze data can be regarded as an appropriate mixed methods approach to provide general and intuitive insights into the research findings from the quantitative data, and provide a richer understanding of the research by generating qualitative data. For instance, a study conducted by Vu and Dall'Alba (2007) adopted this type of approach to study students' experience of PA in a

professional course by using quantitative analysis of data from questionnaires and qualitative analysis through interviews. Addressing subjective meanings from different people who have participated in PA while concurrently acknowledging the usefulness of quantitative data, the current study therefore selected qualitative dominant mixed methods approach to expand the breadth and depth of data as much as possible within limited time and resources.

Moreover, in this study a major rationale for deploying mixed methods approach is complementarity (Greene, Caracelli and Graham, 1989), which aims to improve and clarify results from one method with results from another. The combination of methods includes interview data and open answers in questionnaires related to participants' attitudes and experiences to PA; observational data related to students' actual performance in the process of PA; along with statistical measurements of perceptions of PA by different variables undertaken through questionnaires and diamond ranking. Therefore, the qualitative study may include a quantitative dimension to help determine what to investigate in-depth, and the quantitative data enhances the generalizability of qualitative findings.

Within each phase, significant responses from questionnaires or significant phenomena in observation were explored in the follow up interviews to gain a deeper insight by reframing interview questions which had not been thought of previously. In addition, the study applied the findings from the mixed methods approach in phase I to develop the research design in phase II. For example, the results in phase I helped me to revise the questionnaires in phase II. In this way, the questionnaires were developed in response to a wider range of considerations to verify findings in phase I for triangulation and generalization. Just as Currall and Towler (2003) stated, researchers' confidence can increase if data collected through different methods yield substantially the same results.

Although mixed methods approach has many benefits, there may be some barriers to its application. Bryman (2012) points out that one problem is the structure of mixed methods approach, which may impede the integration of methods; another problem is that many researchers do not have the specialized knowledge and skills in both quantitative and qualitative approaches which are required by mixed methods approach; a further problem is that mixed methods approach tends to involve higher costs than single method research, with regard to the time needed for the data collection and analysis, as well as cost of materials. Acknowledging the complexity of using mixed method approach, the current study carefully

addressed potential issues in both quantitative and qualitative methods. Actually, anything can go wrong with either pure qualitative or pure quantitative approach, and can also go wrong with the mix of approaches. Nevertheless, it was decided that this study would combine quantitative and qualitative methods to collect and analyze data, in that it was felt that this would best fit the study and the research questions.

3.4 Case study

3.4.1 Justification of case study research

In educational research, there is a wide variety of research approaches, some of which have been employed in previous studies on PA, such as quasi-experimental research (e.g. Kim, 2009) and case study research (e.g. Prins, et al., 2005; Vu and Dall'Alba, 2007). Yin (2009) defines case study research as empirical study of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. Case study research was selected in the current study as it recognizes the importance of contexts, enables in-depth analysis within a limited time scale, and also allows the flexibility which is needed for the dynamic processes involved (Bell, 1999; Yin, 2009). Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, p. 322) suggest that the case study research is 'particularly valuable when the researcher has little control over events'. In the current study, as an independent student researcher, I could not demand that modules used PA, but instead accessed some modules that already used PA, with the permission of the module leaders and students to involve them in my research.

A great deal of discussion has focused on generalizability of case study research (Bryman, 2012), and one of the standard criticisms is that the findings can restrict generalization. The results may not be generalizable to a wider context except where others see their applicability to other audiences, such as those who are teaching and facing the challenges of ISs in HE, and those who are making assessment policy for international universities. If they consider that this study is interesting and valuable, they may apply similar approaches in their contexts to compare the results from this case study. Moreover, according to Yin's (2009) analytic generalization, the more significant focus in this case study is not whether the results can be generalized to a larger population, but to what extent I can generate or develop a theory out of the results. It is also argued that case study researchers may generalize findings by comparing with analogous cases investigated by others (Williams, 2000). Though there is no previous research that is exactly the same as the current study, there are still relevant findings which

can be compared. Furthermore, within the current study, five HE modules as five cases were compared with each other, and two modules which were investigated in two phases also had their findings compared across the two phases. This case study research aims to establish whether the data collected relate to and answer the research questions proposed, and whether the data offer an authentic and plausible account of a phenomenon or event (Deem and Brehony, 1994). Even if case studies are argued to be prone to problems of observer bias and subjectivity, triangulation can be used to reduce this impact. Thus, the case study seemed the most appropriate design to use in the current research.

3.4.2 The context of the case study

Goetz and LeCompte (1984, p. 228) suggest that if ‘components of a study including the units of analysis, concepts generated, population characteristics, and settings are sufficiently well described and defined, it will help other researchers use the results of the study as a basis for comparison’. It is therefore important firstly to supply readers and researchers with descriptions of the context in which the study took place so that this research can be compared with other research situations.

ISs account for a significant percentage of postgraduate students in UK HE, at 36.9% in 2011-2012 (HESA, 2013). The studied university, located in the North East of England, is a member of the Russell Group and had a core population of 21,055 students in 2011-2012, including more than 5,000 ISs from over 100 countries in the world (Newcastle University, 2011). Nearly half of the postgraduate students in this university were ISs in 2011-2012 (ibid). Thus, this research focuses on issues with ISs regarding their learning and assessment in the university. Another reason to choose this university was that I had studied there and had a good rapport with the staff and students. Consequently, it was a pragmatic decision for it was relatively easy to acquire the necessary information.

Five modules in total were investigated in this study: BUSI and EDUA were investigated in both phase I and phase II, while EDUB, CEM and CS were only investigated in phase II as I had not identified and approached the module leaders in phase I. Each of the modules is as a small case study. Details of the specific procedures of PA, population characteristics and results of each participated module will be presented separately in chapter 4 (see 4.2-4.6). A cross analysis across the five case studies will be further provided at the end of chapter 4.

Qualitative and quantitative data will be analyzed and integrated at the individual case level (see 4.1.4) as well as the cross-case level (see 4.7) in order to highlight meaningful similarities, differences, and site-specific experiences. Thus, there is not any significant implication for comparability of data from the different modules due to data collection over two years.

3.5 Overview of research methods in previous studies on PA

The major objective of the data collection in this study was to elicit information about ISSs' experiences of PA. A brief overview of the data collection methods used by PA researchers in recent years is presented in Table 2, which reveals that some researchers employed only one data collection method, while others combined various methods. Interviewing and the questionnaire were the most frequently used data collection techniques. As previous studies on PA have been carried out in different contexts and each method has offered unique advantages and disadvantages, it was decided to combine the two most common tools as well as observation and diamond ranking in a qualitative dominant mixed methods case study in order to achieve the best fit with the research questions. Details of the justification of the chosen methods will be provided in the next section 3.6.

Researchers	Data Collection Methods
Cheng and Warren (1997)	Questionnaire Interview
Gatfield (1999)	Questionnaire
Topping, et al. (2000)	Report form Questionnaire
Prins, et al. (2005)	Self-report Questionnaire
Van den Berg, Admiraal and Pilot (2006)	Questionnaire Semi-structured interview Revisions Oral and written feedback
Keppell, et al. (2006)	Focus group with students Video-interview with lecturer Participants' responses on the discussion board
Vu and Dall'Alba (2007)	Document analysis Questionnaire Observation Focus group Interviews
Ljungman and Silén (2008)	Questionnaire Written statements
Kim (2009)	Self-report Questionnaire
Vickerman (2009)	Questionnaire

Table 2: Overview of data collection methods by PA researchers in university courses

3.6 Instruments of data collection

The study gathered data from the following sources: questionnaires to students, one to one interviews with students and staff, classroom observation and diamond ranking, which fed into the discussion of the findings.

3.6.1 Sampling

Sampling is of great importance in any research, in that it has a pivotal impact on the generalization of research (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996). There were some practical considerations for choosing the sampling techniques for this study. First of all, the purposive sample technique was chosen. The aim of the study is to explore ISs' experiences of PA, which has been little documented in the current literature, while purposive sampling is 'extremely useful when the researcher wants to describe a phenomenon or develop something about which only a little is known' (Kumar, 1999, p.167). Thus, this technique helped to

ensure a clear purpose when seeking participants and to develop the criteria for sample selection. When seeking participants, modules were selected which used PA and attracted ISs. Initially, staff helped me to identify five modules using PA within the university. I attempted to contact module leaders for detailed information about the application of PA in each module. Three modules were undergraduate courses with no or few ISs involved, while another module was not accessible, so only one module achieved the criteria. Then, the snowball technique was employed to seek other modules that met the criteria within limited time.

Another sampling technique employed was a convenience sample that is 'simply available to the researcher by virtue of its accessibility' (Bryman, 2004, p. 100). The studied university was chosen because I have studied there and have a good rapport with staff and students, which made it easier to access the purposive samples. In addition, there was a large and widely dispersed population of ISs in the studied university, especially at the postgraduate level. Hence, this technique helped me to select the university and narrow down the focus from all ISs to postgraduate ISs. Moreover, not all module leaders met the criteria of sample selection determined for the research, and therefore it was not practicable to evaluate the whole targeted population, or to achieve a fully random sample given the time and resources available. Finally, two modules (BUSI and EDUA) were identified for investigation in phase I, and five modules (BUSI, EDUA, EDUB, CEM and CS) in phase II. Other modules were considered but eliminated either because of access issues (gaining access to some modules proved problematic) or because of certain criteria (there were only UK students in some modules which used PA).

There is no doubt that modules differ in their implementation of PA, for example summative PA was used in CS and formative PA in EDUA. This in itself, however, is valuable in providing specific contexts that contribute to our understanding of the perceptions and experiences among ISs, and in opening doors for further research that spans a wider sample range. The total number of student participants was 124 in the pre-questionnaires and 68 in the post-questionnaires in two phases (as not all participants responded to both the pre- and post-questionnaires). 17 participants attended student interviews and seven interviewees participated in diamond ranking. Five teaching staff, one university assessment policy maker and one staff educator joined in individual staff interviews. All participants were volunteers. To conclude, in the light of sampling techniques, I attended sessions, observing the induction

of PA from teaching staff, investigated students' response to PA and their performance in PA. Samplings for questionnaires and student interviews are discussed in detail in the following sections.

3.6.1.1 Questionnaire sampling

In phase I, 42 copies of the questionnaires were sent out to all students in the two modules, and a total of 35 copies of the pre-questionnaires and 37 copies of the post-questionnaires were returned. Two incomplete pre-questionnaires and four incomplete post-questionnaires were abandoned in order to increase the validity of the quantitative data. In phase II, 112 copies of the questionnaires were sent out to all students in the five modules, and a total of 97 copies of the pre-questionnaires and 37 copies of the post-questionnaires were returned. Six copies of the incomplete pre-questionnaires and two copies of the incomplete post-questionnaires were abandoned. Since not all the students completed both pre- and post-questionnaires and all participants were anonymous, I decided not to investigate the shift of students' attitudes towards PA through comparing the pre- and post-questionnaires. I also decided to use data in the post-questionnaires as the main quantitative data, because students completed the pre- and post-questionnaires before and after they conducted PA, and therefore data in the post-questionnaires reflected their actual experiences.

In phase I, 33 students in total (26 ISs and seven UK students) across two modules completed the post-questionnaire, and the response rate was 78.6%. 53.8% of the ISs were East Asian students, and 34.6% of the ISs were Chinese. Cronbach's Alpha was used to test the internal reliability, referring to the consistent degree of scales in the questionnaire (Bryman, 2012). Since the questionnaires were designed by myself, it is necessary to test the reliability. Cronbach's Alpha was 0.756, and Field (2005) suggests that values between 0.5 and 0.7 mean that the consistency of a questionnaire is average, between 0.7 and 0.8 is good, between 0.8 and 0.9 is great and above 0.9 is superb. Thus, the questionnaire in phase I was reliable. In phase II, 35 students (30 ISs and five UK students) completed the post-questionnaire, and the response rate was 31.3%. 60% of the ISs were East Asian students, and 53.3% of the ISs were Chinese. Cronbach's Alpha was 0.743, so the questionnaire in phase II was reliable as well. Table 3 and Table 4 show the general demographic characteristics of the post-questionnaire respondents in both phases; Figure 3 and Figure 4 present the participants' country of origin. As this was an opportunity sample, the

representation of country groups and disciplines appears skewed. However, this may to some extent reflect the distribution of ISs within the university, and it is in accordance with HESA's (2013) statistical results that Chinese students represent the largest group of ISs in UK HE.

Demographic statistics of post-questionnaire in phase I		BUSI	EDUA	Total
Countries of origin	UK	5	2	7
	ISs	20	6	26
Gender	Male	17	1	18
	Female	8	7	15
Age	<20	0	0	0
	21-25	19	2	21
	26-30	1	3	4
	>31	5	3	8

Table 3: Demographic characteristics of the post-questionnaire respondents in phase I

Demographic statistics of post-questionnaire in phase II		BUSI	EDUA	EDUB	CEM	CS	Total
Countries of origin	UK	0	1	4	0	0	5
	ISs	7	3	10	9	1	30
Gender	Male	4	0	2	4	1	11
	Female	3	4	12	5	0	24
Age	<20	0	0	0	0	0	0
	21-25	4	4	9	9	1	27
	26-30	2	0	3	0	0	5
	>31	1	0	2	0	0	3

Table 4: Demographic characteristics of the post-questionnaire respondents in phase II

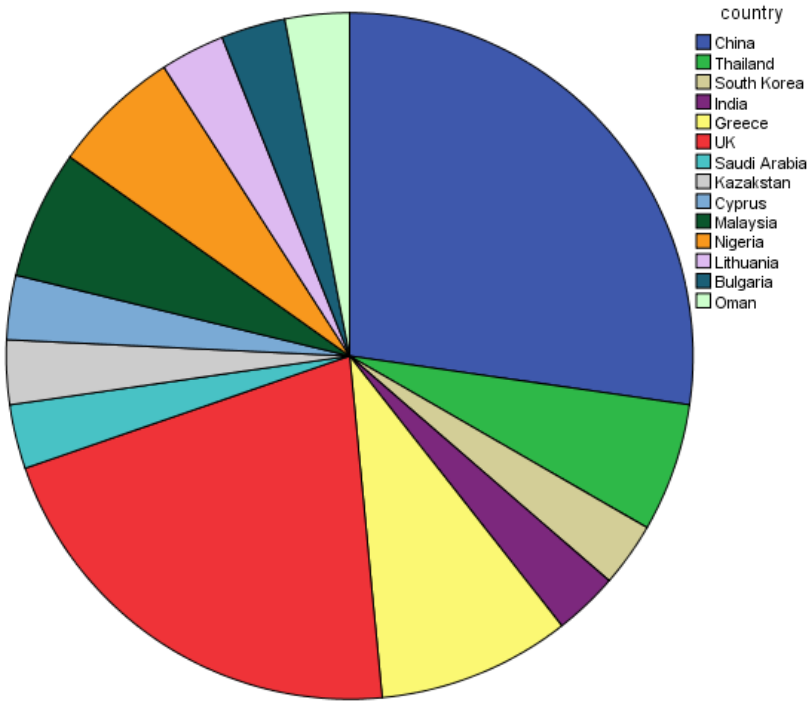


Figure 3: Country of origin in phase I

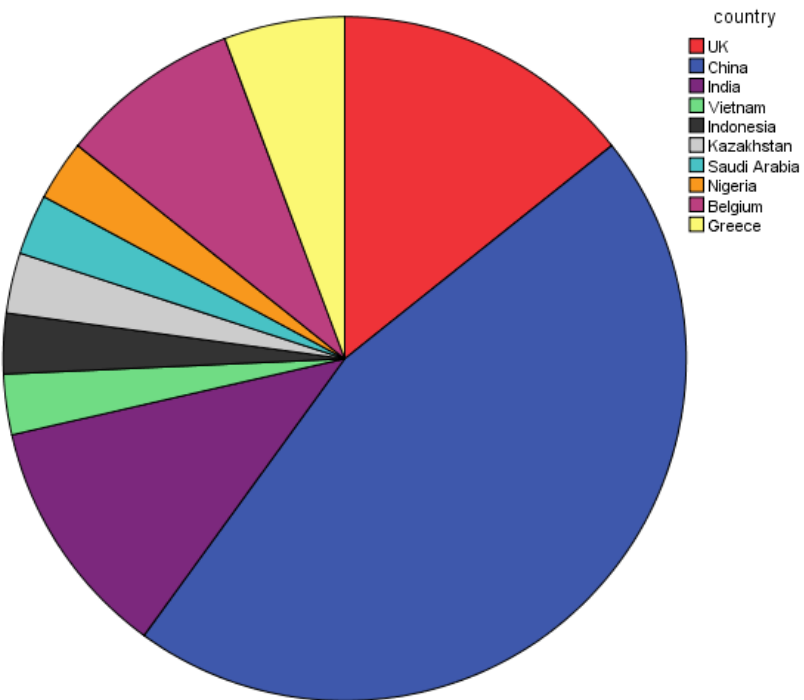


Figure 4: Country of origin in phase II

3.6.1.2 Student interview sampling

Just a few students out of all the questionnaire respondents took part in individual interviews. They may have volunteered because they were interested in the research, or they might have had something worthwhile to say, but such volunteers may not be truly representative of the case study population. According to Drever (1997), random sampling of interviewees could be undertaken to overcome the potential bias brought by asking people to volunteer for interviews. Indeed, this suggestion was considered and attempted. However, it proved too difficult for co-operative participants. Thus, other approaches were deployed to overcome the potential bias.

First of all, it was necessary to readdress that the case study used a qualitative dominant mixed methods approach, and key features occurred in the context were much more valuable than statistical results. Thereby, the principal purpose of using interviews here was to look at personal experience in-depth rather than merely explain findings by quantitative analysis. Secondly, observation as a data collection method in this study to a large extent may make up for the potential deficiency. When observation was conducted in the classroom, students' performance was carefully noted. Thus, I already had a general view of students' potential responses. When I asked for volunteers, I explained that the study was not only looking for positive views of PA, but that it was also open to negative feedback or even complaints about their PA experience. Those who did not like or were not satisfied with the experience of PA were encouraged to join the interview. When I received responses from volunteers, I identified that some of them were positive about this activity, some were neither positive nor negative, and some were negative. Finally, 17 students (14 ISs and three UK students) attended individual student interviews, so a variety of voices could be heard and bias could be overcome. Table 5 shows the general demographic characteristics of the student interview participants.

Two phases		Number	Percent	Total
Gender	Male	6	35.3	17
	Female	11	64.7	
Age	20-25	12	70.6	17
	26-30	3	17.6	
	>30	2	11.8	
Module	BUSI	6	35.3	17
	EDUA	9 *a	52.9	
	EDUB			
	CEM	0 *b	0	
	CS	1	5.9	
Nationality	Chinese	10	58.9	17
	Thai	1	5.9	
	South Korean	1	5.9	
	UK	3	17.6	
	Oman	1	5.9	
	Malaysian	1	5.9	

*a Three students who joined interviews from EDUB also joined interviews in EDUA.

*b No students participated interviews in CEM. Possible reasons and potential influence are discussed in 4.5.1.5.

Table 5: General demographic characteristics of participating students in semi-structured individual interviews

3.6.2 Self-completion questionnaire

3.6.2.1 Justification of questionnaire

A questionnaire consisting of a series of questions was used to gather information from respondents (Bryman, 2012). The use of a questionnaire, offering greater anonymity, was comparatively convenient and inexpensive, and enabled me to collect and analyze data quickly (Bell, 1999; Kumar, 1999). This method allows me to explore relationships between different variables, and highlight any issue that could be examined in-depth during the follow-up semi structured interviews (Borg and Gall, 1989). However, the questionnaire as a research method is also notorious for low response rates (Bryman, 2012). Those who return their questionnaire may have attitudes, attributes or motivations that are different from those who do not, and the findings may not be representative of the total study population (ibid). Further, if respondents do not understand some questions, there is no opportunity for them to have the meaning clarified (ibid). The purpose of the questionnaires in this study was to further investigate perceptions across the whole sample and to verify information which was raised by the literature review, observation and interviews. This enabled a wider range of comments to be obtained and provided a quantifiable level of response. In order to overcome potential pitfalls, the questionnaires were distributed in the classroom and pilot studies were conducted beforehand.

3.6.2.2 The design and development stage

In a questionnaire, closed questions are easy for participants to answer and are useful for eliciting factual information, while open questions are more valuable for seeking a wealth of information provided by participants who feel comfortable about expressing their opinions (Kumar, 1999). The questionnaires were designed in a logical order, from probing open questions including personal background to simple closed questions. In this way, closed questions should not restrict participants' initial answers in the open questions and it may be convenient to complete closed questions at the end.

The Likert scale method (Bryman, 2012) is often used for closed questions to assess attitudes via questionnaires. It consists of two parts: a stem, as a statement of an attitude, and a scale on which respondents can express their opinion as strongly agree, agree, neutral (neither agree nor disagree), disagree or strongly disagree (ibid). This scale was chosen as it is arguably the most commonly used format for obtaining consistent questionnaire responses, and it is easy to identify the similarity between items and any correlations (ibid). In this part of the questionnaire, there were 17 closed questions in phase I and 39 in phase II, investigating factors that influenced respondents' experiences of PA.

Bell (1999) proposes that ambiguous and imprecise statements in questionnaire design could result in misunderstanding or different interpretation by respondents, so double questions, presuming and hypothetical questions were avoided as far as possible. The questions in phase I were attached as Appendix C1. They were designed and modified in response to an initial analysis of the pilot study-the semi-structured interview data and previous studies which were illustrated in chapter two. The questions in phase II were attached as Appendix C2. They were designed and modified in response to initial results in phase I.

3.6.2.3 Piloting the questionnaires

A pilot test of the questionnaire principally aims to increase validity, reliability, and practicability of the questionnaire (Wilson and McLean, 1994). As no previous studies had investigated these issues, no established questionnaire could be applied. The pilot questionnaire in phase I was designed based on more established studies on PA (e.g. Topping, 2000; Vu and Dall'Alba, 2007), the current study's research questions and the themes generated from the pilot study at the initial stage, in order to highlight any ambiguity or imprecision in the questions and highlight any omissions or unanticipated answers while still

allowing for comments from respondents on the length of the questionnaire (Anderson and Arsenault, 1998). It was carried out between August and September 2010 with five students who had already experienced PA in 2009-2010 in this university. These participants completed the questionnaire separately and were also required to annotate the questionnaire and highlight problems with the language or questions that they felt were not applicable to their contexts. All participants were asked to give their comments and suggestions about the questions and the questionnaire as a whole. I discussed problems with the participants as well as with colleagues, who are experts in using questionnaires, in order to find out whether there was a better way to ask the question or to organize the layout of the questionnaire. The pilot test showed that there were few problems with comprehension and the length of the questionnaire. Small revisions were made to overlapping questions and ambiguous wording. The questionnaire was revised in phase II and more themes added according to both qualitative and quantitative findings in phase I. Following the same procedure, nine respondents who attended student interviews in phase I participated in the pilot test of the revised questionnaire in phase II between July and August 2011. In this way, a more comprehensive questionnaire tailored for the current study was developed.

3.6.2.4 Administrating the questionnaire

All the questionnaires were administered in person in the classroom. I explained the purpose of the study to all students, who were informed that their responses would remain anonymous and that if they did not wish to complete the questionnaire they could continue with their normal class activities. I did not give any help to them except to explain the definition of PA to some students who were not clear what it was, although their module leaders had already explained. Where students did not understand, they left the questions blank. The same procedure was carried out in all the modules during the two phases. Most of them completed the questionnaires at the same time, and only a few responded later via email.

3.6.3 Semi-structured interviews

3.6.3.1 Justification for the semi-structured interview

A semi-structured interview is flexible, allows new questions to be brought up during the interview while also offering a means of entering into the world of the individual to explore concepts and construct meaning (Bryman, 2012). This data collection instrument fits my

ontological and epistemological positions in educational research, and allows me to explore issues of an unknown meaning through modification (Gubrium and Holstein, 2001). It is less likely that respondents will misunderstand a question as I can either repeat or explain the question (Kumar, 1999). The purpose of the semi-structured interviews was to elicit richer qualitative data related to interesting responses from the questionnaires, or to explore issues which it had been difficult to find answers for through the observations. The semi-structured interviews enabled me to obtain in-depth statements of ISS' opinions and experiences of PA, especially on how their learner identity was developed in the process (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011).

3.6.3.2 Student interviews

General interview questions were derived from research questions and significant findings collected from other methods. Drever (1997) suggested that a pilot interview before conducting interviews formally could help to enhance the quality of interview. As there were a limited number of interviewees, I decided to employ all of them rather than select some for the pilot interview. However, before conducting formal interviews, I discussed interview questions with colleagues and experts in this area in advance. Therefore, we anticipated whether the wording was clear and unambiguous to avoid misleading or compelling interviewees into particular avenues of response (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). In this way, potential issues were identified and minimized. Informed consent was completed before commencing the interview, which clearly explained participants' confidentiality and the right to terminate the interview. Permission to audio record was also obtained. The student interview question sheet is attached as Appendix D1.

3.6.3.3 Staff interviews

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with four module leaders and one teaching assistant from each participating module, one staff educator and one assessment policy maker from the studied university. Informed consent was obtained, and staff participants were informed that their interviews would be taped but would remain anonymous. Interview questions were attached in the Appendices D2, D3, and D4.

3.6.4 Observation

The nature of observation as a research method is that it offers the possibility to gather live data from real-world settings, and thereby the use of direct cognition has the potential to yield more authentic data, which is the unique strength of observation (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). Observation can be ‘a very powerful tool for gaining insight into situations...to see things that might otherwise be unconsciously missed, to discover things that participants might not freely talk about in interview situations’ (ibid, p. 396-412). As the process of PA is dynamic, and there is a lack of research and knowledge about ISs’ experiences of PA, observation enabled me to see what was naturally occurring without predetermined ideas and by being immersed in this research situation. The main aim of using this method was to see the implementation of PA in each module, to see how teaching staff delivered the curriculum, including how they introduced PA to students in the class, and how students responded to this innovative assessment approach in different classification and framing contexts.

There are different methods and approaches to direct observation (Bell, 1999; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). In this study, I was the observer and was already known to the group of staff and students observed. I sat at the back of the classroom, made notes and avoided interacting with staff or students during the events being observed, so that participants were minimally influenced by me. Table 6 shows the dimensions of the observation in this study. I decided to choose the semi-structured observation, which is an approach that is typically open, but can set issues to observe which may reduce irrelevant sources compared with the unstructured observation (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). It gathers data to highlight these issues in a far less predetermined manner to gain rich relevant data and an understanding of the situation compared with the structured observation (ibid). The semi-structured observation table is attached in Appendix E.

Dimensions of the observation	
Role	Non-participant
Awareness	Overt
Authenticity	Real
Disclosure	Yes
Recording	Field notes
Structure	Semi-structured
Analysis	Qualitative
Scope	Five modules, at least one session in each module

Table 6: Dimensions of the observation

3.6.5 Diamond ranking

Clark (2012) argues that diamond ranking, traditionally a tool for eliciting and promoting talk around a specific topic, can be considered as a research method for identifying priorities once a set of issues have been found. Normally, there are five rows in a diamond ranking with nine descriptors, and the criteria for ranking depend on the task. For instance (see Figure 5): the most important criterion would be placed on the top (row one); the next most important one would be placed on row two; statements placed on row three generally are neither important nor unimportant; statements placed on row four are less important; the most unimportant one would be placed on row five (ibid).

During the student individual interview in phase II, participants were invited to use this tool to identify priority factors influencing the implementation of PA in the international classroom. Slightly different from the traditional use of diamond ranking, each participant was given the same 11 statements extracted from the findings in phase I, so they could choose nine out of the 11 statements to make a diamond ranking. Then, I discussed with participants the priorities they had ranked. Finally, diamond ranking provided quantitative data for the ranking of factors influencing PA, and also qualitative data for the reasons underlying the rank. The results of diamond ranking can be used to compare results from other data collection methods for the purpose of triangulation and to highlight significant results.

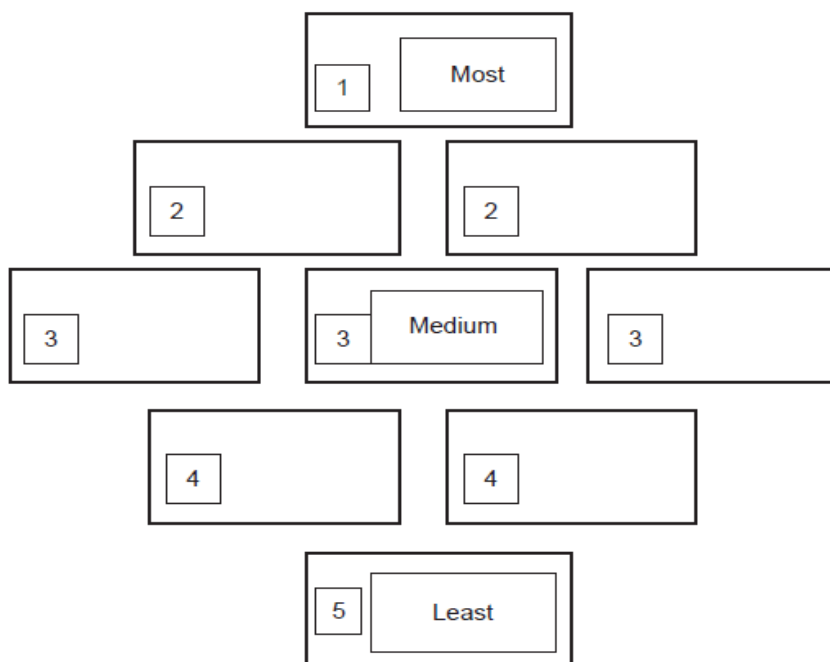


Figure 5: Organisation of diamond ranking—adapted from Clark (2012)

3.7 Methodological issues

3.7.1 The quality of the study

Bryman, Becker and Sempik (2008) indicate that the quality criteria for mixed methods research have not been the focus of a great deal of attention, so there is still no universal agreement on this kind of criteria. Their survey suggests that many mixed methods researchers prefer to use a combination of traditional quantitative and qualitative research criteria in mixed methods research. This research is a predominantly qualitative case study. The mixed methods approach enabled what was seen and heard in the interviews and observations to be analyzed and the questionnaires and diamond ranking to be analyzed statistically. This triangulation of data strengthened the credibility of the study. Following Geertz's (1973) suggestion of thick description, I described in detail the research design, the contexts of the different modules, the procedures for data collection and analysis. This information enables other researchers to determine the extent to which the methods are relevant to other situations and whether findings from this research are relevant to other situations.

3.7.2 Triangulation

Triangulation, defined as 'a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study' (Creswell and Miller, 2000, p. 126), is now often recommended by many methodologists to enhance the quality of research. Triangulation can be achieved through a multiple use of methods, data, investigators and theories, and this can take place in case study research (Yin, 2009). In the current study, the triangulation of the case study data was achieved through the use of mixed methods of data collection and the gathering of multiple perspectives on the process of PA.

3.7.3 Ethical considerations

Research ethics, an essential term in the quality of research, involves the application of fundamental ethical principles to a variety of topics to the design and implementation of research (Anderson and Arsenault, 1998). Drake and Heath (2010) stress that due to public sensibilities of the limits of inquiry and concerns of human rights and data protection, attention should be paid to ethical considerations in research. According to the British

Psychological Society's (2010) code of human research ethics, the ethical considerations of the current study have been as follows:

- First of all, permission from module leaders was requested as an expression of respect. During the process of seeking the sample, some module leaders declined to participate in the project because of the worry that it might affect their modules.
- All participants were informed verbally and in writing about the study in English to ensure that they understood the project and participated on a voluntary basis.
- The students were given the chance to volunteer in order to enable them to talk and reflect on their experiences honestly and directly, rather than tell me what they thought I might like to hear. In addition, participants were given the right to withdraw from the study at any stage.
- Assurances were made to participants that all information gleaned from the investigation would be completely confidential. All data were collected anonymously and identities could not be traced back to specific individuals.
- Raw data, including voice records, documents and transcripts, were stored securely for the appropriate period of time.

3.7.4 The role of the researcher

Greenbank (2003, p. 796) contends that 'researchers who do not include a reflexive account should be criticized'. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 23), it is necessary to 'the researcher as a multicultural subject' to explain their role in the research, how their position may influence the research design, and how their biases may affect understanding of the data. As a female native Chinese/Mandarin speaker from a middle-class family in China, I did my first degree in Russian Language and Literature in China, and then continued my master and doctorate study in the UK. In addition to the current study, I have participated in other qualitative research projects. Influenced by social constructivism and pragmatism (see 3.2), I agree that educational researchers can use any research method that works to grasp the subjective meaning of educational activities (Howe, 1988). Thus, I deployed a mixed methods approach to make more understandable the phenomenon that I have chosen to investigate in this case study.

As a Chinese student in the UK, I shared a similar cultural background and educational experiences with the majority of the participants, so I was easily able to empathize with their

feelings and experiences. Some of the interview participants communicated with me fluently in Chinese, and this enabled me to gain more insider information. Since I had experienced PA in the UK, I could understand the challenges they were likely to encounter and could raise questions that the inexperienced might not have considered. However, it was also possible that I might have unintentionally neglected information that insiders often take for granted but which might have been important for outsiders.

However, as an outsider in the sense that I was not associated with the modules, I did not intervene in participants during data collection. I attempted to play the role of a facilitator to encourage my participants to reflect on their experiences rather than to impose my own thoughts on them or to lead them to satisfy my assumptions. For example, during the interviews, I invited the participants to talk about not only their positive experiences but also negative ones to avoid problematizing or bias in the data. Although there are always inevitable weaknesses in research, I attempted to present the data as completely and authentically as possible, to try my best to avoid bias and not misinterpret participants' responses.

Furthermore, the purpose of the study was to discover meaning and achieve understanding of the lived experiences of ISs in order to address their needs when they study in the UK. Although I did not intervene in student or staff behaviour in class, to some extent I operated as a change agent by challenging them to reflect on and question their understandings of educational activities. For instance, interviews were utilized to provide participants with the opportunity to reflect on their learning activities in ways that they might not have thought about before. Hence, they may benefit from participating in this research, and dissemination of the results may benefit future students.

3.8 Data collection procedures

Four methods for obtaining data were used in the study. The first method was the questionnaire, which explored students' perceptions of PA by asking them to rate statements about the benefits and difficulties of PA in closed questions and to write about conditions influencing their practice in the open questions. Thus, data collected from the questionnaires were used to answer sub-question 1 and 2. The second method was observation of sessions where PA took place. This method provided data to analyze classification and framing in each

module (sub-question 3), highlighted dialogue in the classroom (sub-question 4) and implications of the use of PA (sub-question 5), and allowed me to gain live data of staff practice (sub-question 6). The third method was interviews with staff and students regarding their experiences of PA, providing rich data related to all the sub-questions. The fourth method was the diamond ranking of the success factors influencing the implementation of PA during student interviews, specifically to answer sub-question 2. Thus, the data collection instruments were appropriately applied to address the different research questions. Table 7 shows the research questions matched with the tools that were employed, and Figure 6 gives a visual idea of who was involved at which stage.

Research objectives	Data collection instruments
1) What benefits and problematic aspects of PA are perceived by ISs in one UK HE institution?	Questionnaires Interviews
2) What conditions influence the implementation of PA in the international HE classroom?	Questionnaires Interviews Diamond ranking
3) What are the impacts of classification and framing on ISs' learning in UK HE?	Observation Interviews
4) What are the impacts of classroom dialogue on ISs' learning in UK HE?	Observation Interviews
5) To what extent does integrating PA into international classrooms assist in ISs' academic transition and intercultural learning?	Observation Interviews
6) What are the views of HE staff in relation to their practice of PA in the international HE classroom?	Observation Interviews

Table 7: Research objectives and relevant data collection instruments

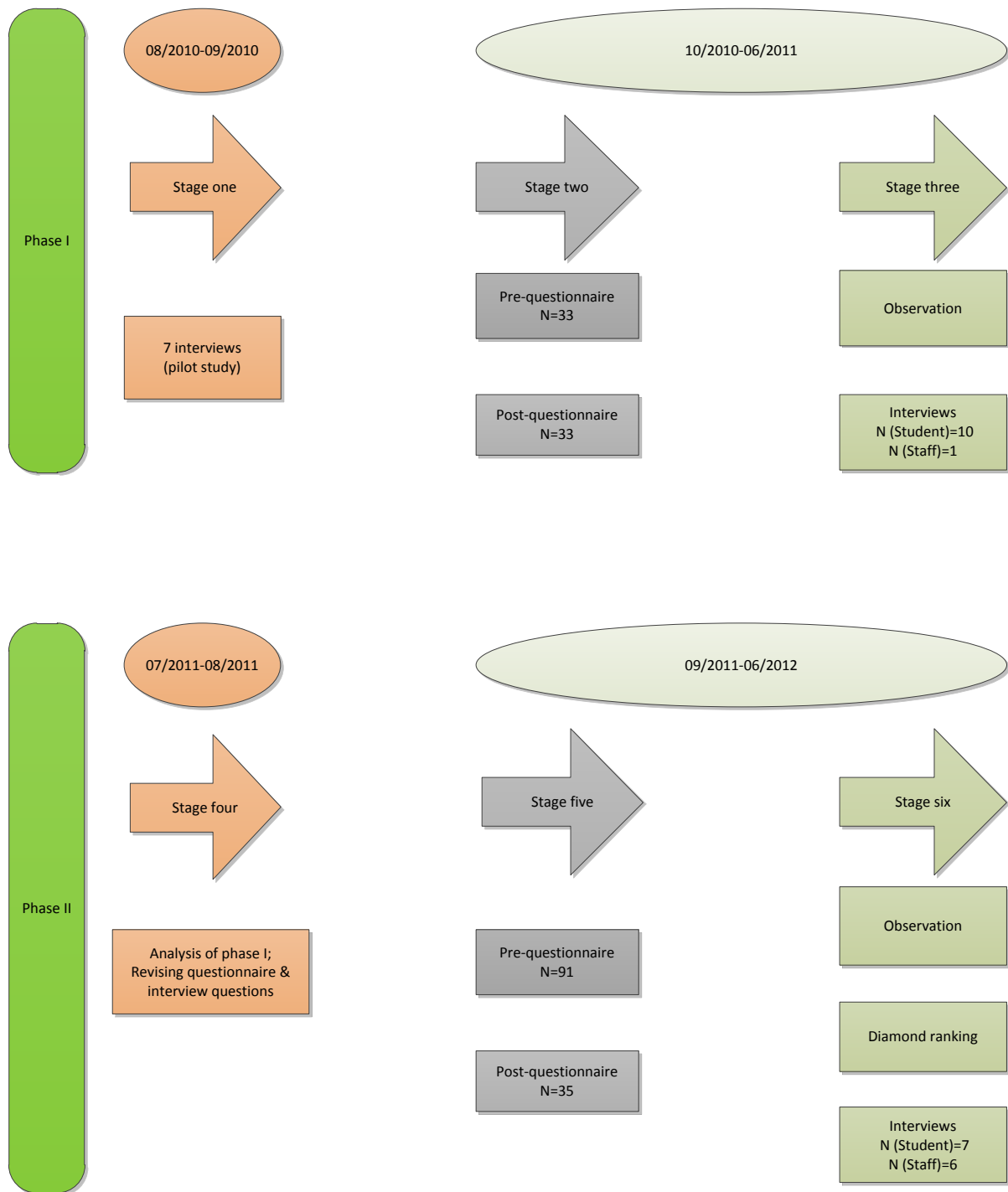


Figure 6: Research timeline

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the research methodology for the thesis. It has discussed the rationale for the research design, the case selection and the methodological issues involved in this study. The process of data collection was discussed and methods to improve the quality of the research were highlighted. The research methodology for the study is summarized in Figure 7 below as stage II of the development of the conceptual framework, which reflects

data collection methods and guides data analysis in the next chapter. In phase I, results from the questionnaires informed the design of the observation form and development of interview questions; results from observation also helped to develop interview questions; results from all the three methods helped to revise the questionnaire design and interview questions for phase II, and to select the statements that were used in diamond ranking. In phase II, the quantitative findings validate and confirm the results from phase I, and the qualitative findings explain the quantitative findings in depth. In this way, the research methods triangulate to inform the research process, and provide rich data for the study. I acknowledge that as an example of qualitative dominant mixed methods case study research, the results are unique to a particular context and there is limited opportunity to widely generalize.

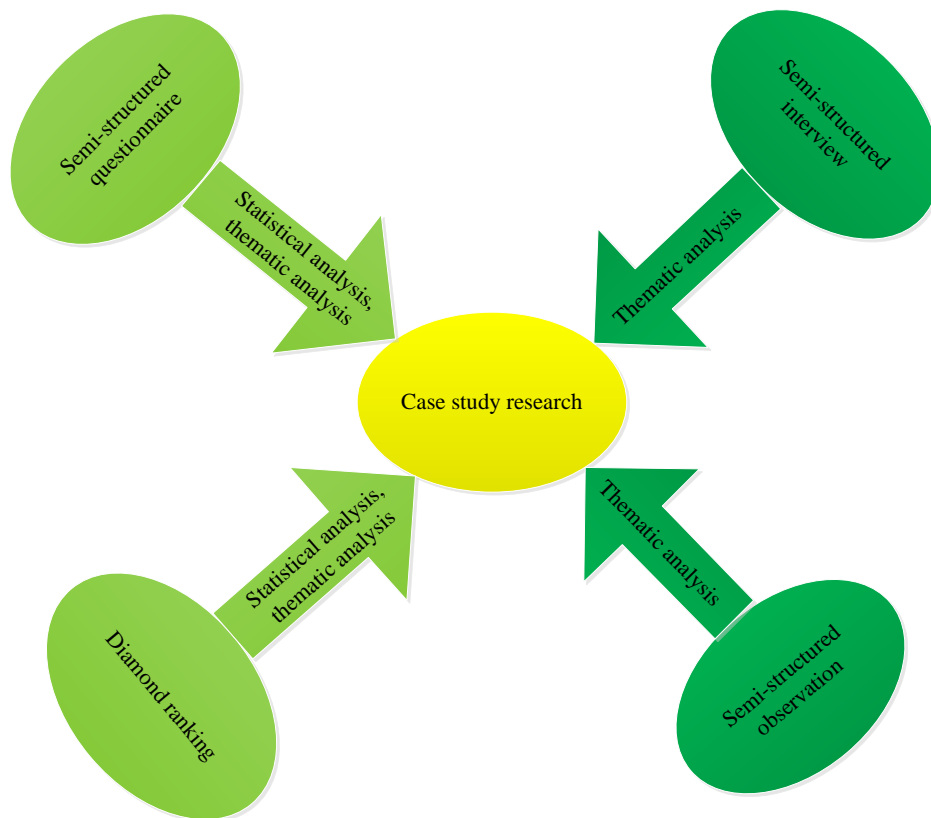


Figure 7: Conceptual framework of stage II

Chapter 4. Analysis and Findings

This chapter is divided into eight sections:

Section 4.1 provides an introduction to the chapter and describes the analysis procedure.

Section 4.2 provides evidence in the form of data extracts from BUSI, outlines the PA procedures, staff comments and ISS' perceptions of this activity.

Section 4.3 provides evidence in the form of data extracts from EDUA, outlines the PA procedures, staff comments and ISS' perceptions of this activity.

Section 4.4 provides evidence in the form of data extracts from EDUB, outlines the PA procedures, staff comments and ISS' perceptions of this activity.

Section 4.5 provides evidence in the form of data extracts from CEM, outlines the PA procedures, staff comments and ISS' perceptions of this activity.

Section 4.6 provides evidence in the form of data extracts from CS, outlines the PA procedures, staff comments and ISS' perceptions of this activity.

Section 4.7 presents a cross analysis of ISSs and staff data for their perceptions of PA in relation to assessment policy, ISS' academic transition, intercultural learning, and staff education.

Section 4.8 provides a conclusion to this chapter.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the study. The five modules are initially presented separately in sections 4.2-4.6 under the structure of key themes as shown in Figure 8, and then a cross analysis across the five modules and relevant findings are presented in section 4.7 at the end of this chapter.

The research used qualitative dominant mixed methods approach to collect data. Thematic coding was used to analyse the qualitative data as it allowed themes to be developed across the data, while statistical analysis was used to analyse the quantitative data, playing a complementary role in conjunction with the qualitative findings. This process identified similarities and differences between groups of participants in different modules. Since this study deployed a case study research design with an opportunity sample, it does not claim generalizability, but is rather committed to providing readers with rich detail to enable them to relate to their own situations, using the power of good examples (Flyvbjerg 2001, cited in Crossouard and Pryor, 2008). In addition, the analysis procedure addresses analytic generalization, as suggested by Yin (2009).

4.1.1 Analysis procedure

The data analysis moved through a series of six stages. The first stage involved the analysis of seven pilot interviews with postgraduate ISs in the selected university in 2009-2010. This allowed research questions to be developed and refined in relation to the development of the literature review.

The second and third stages involved the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data in phase I. This involved identifying themes and categorising the data. The fourth stage revised questionnaire designs and interview questions according to the findings in phase I.

The fifth and sixth stages involved analysis of quantitative and qualitative data in phase II. Figure 6 acted both as a timetable and a research tool demonstrating the whole research process.

4.1.2 Qualitative analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data derived from interviews, open answers in questionnaires and observational data in this study. The recorded interviews were transcribed or translated from Chinese into English where needed. The analysis process explored some themes that had already been decided, whilst keeping an open mind for new aspects and emerging themes. Thus, the themes were informed by the emerging data, theoretical frameworks and published literature.

This process of reading and re-reading the qualitative data from the five modules supported the development of the manual coding categories: as data became familiar they were sorted during the initial period, then extended and modified. During the analysis process some less relevant data were eventually discarded to maintain the focus of the study. For instance, a few participants complained that sometimes the hand-written feedback was difficult to understand. This result might be used in future study to explore and discuss techniques of implementing PA specifically, but since it was not relevant to the current research questions, it is not presented and discussed in this thesis. All qualitative data were analysed according to the coding framework shown in Table 8. The quotations were chosen either as representative of the responses, or for their unique value and richness.

Coding categories	Category elements
Procedures of PA	Group organization
	Peer feedback
	Peer marking
Attitudes towards PA	Positive attitudes/benefits of PA
	Neutral attitudes
	Negative attitudes/issues of PA
	Conditions of using PA
Forms of PA	Summative PA
	Formative PA including convergent and divergent assessment
Pedagogic discourses	Classification & framing
	Recognition rules & realization rules
	Dialogic talk & dialectic talk
Expectations of international education	Expectations of studying in UK
	Expectations of teaching ISs
	Expectations of using PA
Internationalization of HE	Academic transition
	Intercultural learning
	Internationalizing the curriculum & pedagogy
	Assessment policy
	Staff education

Table 8: Coding framework

Table 9 presents the personal information of students whose voices have been directly quoted as qualitative evidence in this study. The students were varied in national or ethnic origin, mainly coming from China, India, South East Asia and Gulf areas, and most of them had

little or no previous exposure to the UK. The participant population is in accordance with the total ISs in this university. Chinese students were always the largest group of ISs in both phases, accounting for over 36% of all ISs in 2010-2011 and 27% in 2011-2012 (Newcastle University, 2010; 2011). The participant population is also in accordance with the total ISs in UK HE. In 2011-2012 the majority (62%) of ISs studying in the UK came from Asia; China was always the top country, accounting for over 16% of ISs in 2010-2011 and over 18% in 2011-2012 in UK HE (HESA, 2013). There was a small minority of UK-based students as well. The quotations of student voices were normally taken from individual interviews; however, some were also from open answers in questionnaires when there were no or few student interviewees in some modules. To note, ‘S’ means students who attended individual interviews, while ‘SQ’ means students who completed questionnaires. Since participants only provided information of age groups (<20, 21-25, 26-30, >31), specific ages of participants are not provided.

S/SQ	Country of origin	Gender	Module	Phase
S1	South Korea	Female	BUSI	Phase I
S2	Malaysia	Male	BUSI	Phase I
S3	China	Male	BUSI	Phase I
S4	China	Male	BUSI	Phase I
S5	China	Male	BUSI	Phase II
S6	China	Female	BUSI	Phase II
S7	China	Female	EDUA	Phase I
S8	China	Female	EDUA	Phase I
S9	Thailand	Female	EDUA	Phase I
S10	Oman	Female	EDUA	Phase I
S11	UK	Male	EDUA	Phase I
S12	UK	Female	EDUA	Phase I
S13	Vietnam	Female	EDUA&EDUB	Phase II
S14	China	Female	EDUA&EDUB	Phase II
S15	China	Female	EDUA&EDUB	Phase II
S16	UK	Female	EDUB	Phase II
S17	China	Male	CS	Phase II
SQ1	UK	Female	EDUB	Phase II
SQ2	Indonesia	Female	EDUB	Phase II
SQ3	India	Male	CEM	Phase II
SQ4	India	Male	CEM	Phase II
SQ5	China	Male	CEM	Phase II
SQ6	India	Female	CEM	Phase II
SQ7	Saudi Arabia	Female	CEM	Phase II
SQ8	India	Male	CS	Phase II
SQ9	India	Male	CS	Phase II
SQ10	China	Female	CS	Phase II
SQ11	Ghana	Male	CS	Phase II
SQ12	Nigeria	Male	CS	Phase II
SQ13	China	Male	CS	Phase II

Table 9: Personal information of participants being quoted

4.1.3 Quantitative analysis

SPSS 18 was used in the analysis of quantitative data derived from items in the questionnaires and the diamond ranking. Descriptive analysis (e.g. frequency) was mainly used in separate module analysis (sections 4.2-4.6) to supplement qualitative findings and provide general insights into what happened in each module, and in diamond ranking to identify the priority factors influencing the implementation of PA. Inferential analysis (e.g. non-parametric tests) was mainly used in the cross analysis of all five modules, looking at the influence of independent variables including countries of origin, gender, age, framing and forms of PA, and relationships between these variables. Table 10 shows the hypotheses of inferential analysis and relevant analysis approaches.

Hypotheses	Analysis approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do UK students and ISs have significant differences in rating each item? 	Mann-Whitney U test: it is used to compare differences between two independent groups in a nonparametric test (Connolly, 2007).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do male and female ISs have significant differences in rating each item? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do ISs in different framing contexts (F+ & F-) have significant differences in rating each item? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do ISs using formative PA and summative PA have significant differences in rating each item? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do ISs in different age groups have significant differences in rating each item? 	Kruskal-Wallis H test: it is used to compare differences of more than two independent groups in a nonparametric test (ibid).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the independent variables have significantly close relationships with each other? 	Chi-Square test: a nonparametric measure of statistical dependence between two nominal variables (ibid).

Table 10: Hypotheses of inferential analysis

4.1.4 Integrating qualitative and quantitative findings

The themes in Figure 8, aiming to answer the research questions, were used to integrate qualitative and quantitative findings in each participating module. The first section is a ‘description of the module context’. Each participating module is a small case study, so thick description of the context is necessary (Geertz, 1973). As Bernstein’s concepts of classification and framing help us understand associated pedagogical practices and related power issues in different curricula, these two terms were chosen as a subheading to analyse and present relevant data. Staff had different pedagogic purposes and used different procedures to implement PA in the five modules, so each small case study has its own characteristics, and the description of participants and research methods used in each module can better help us to understand individual cases. The second section, ‘ISs’ perceptions of

PA', was pre-determined, including satisfaction/benefits/problems/conditions of using PA. Findings underpinning these subheadings present the initial research aim of this study. Subheadings, including academic transition and intercultural learning in the third section, emerged from the data, revealing the implications of PA for internationalization of the curriculum and what students experienced and learned in each module.

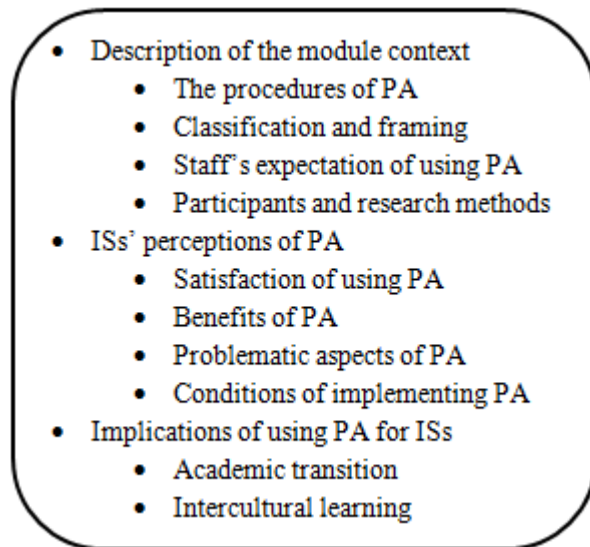
- 
- Description of the module context
 - The procedures of PA
 - Classification and framing
 - Staff's expectation of using PA
 - Participants and research methods
 - ISS' perceptions of PA
 - Satisfaction of using PA
 - Benefits of PA
 - Problematic aspects of PA
 - Conditions of implementing PA
 - Implications of using PA for ISSs
 - Academic transition
 - Intercultural learning

Figure 8: Themes for integrating qualitative and quantitative findings

4.2 The Business Module (BUSI)

This section presents findings from the first case study. It provides data from a taught master's module conducted as part of the MSc in E-business. This module was observed in both phase I and phase II. Due to practical considerations, the procedures for implementing PA in the two phases were different. The module provides evidence for section 4.7, which presents a cross analysis of research data from all five modules.

4.2.1 Description of the module context

4.2.1.1 The procedures of PA

In phase I, students implemented formative PA. They arranged groups comprising of three or four students. Each group did a presentation on a particular topic in the class and other students gave marks and comments according to the given mark sheet and criteria. Students gave group presentations and conducted PA in two cycles. During the first cycle, they practised this activity to become familiar with PA, and each group received mark sheets in order to see the predicted mark and peer feedback on their presentation. Thus, they had an

opportunity to improve their performance in the second cycle, the final implementation of PA. All peer marks and feedback were anonymous. The mark by PA in the second cycle carried 30% of the semester mark for this module. In phase II, students conducted summative PA. The number of students was much larger in phase II and they did not have enough time to practice repeated PA in the class as implemented in phase I, so the first cycle of PA was cancelled. They conducted group work and gave presentations in the class. They wrote peer marks and comments in the mark sheet, which were collected by the teaching assistant to allocate the final mark, but students did not receive either peer feedback or staff feedback on their own work. Figure 9 and Figure 10 show the procedures for conducting PA in two phases in this module.

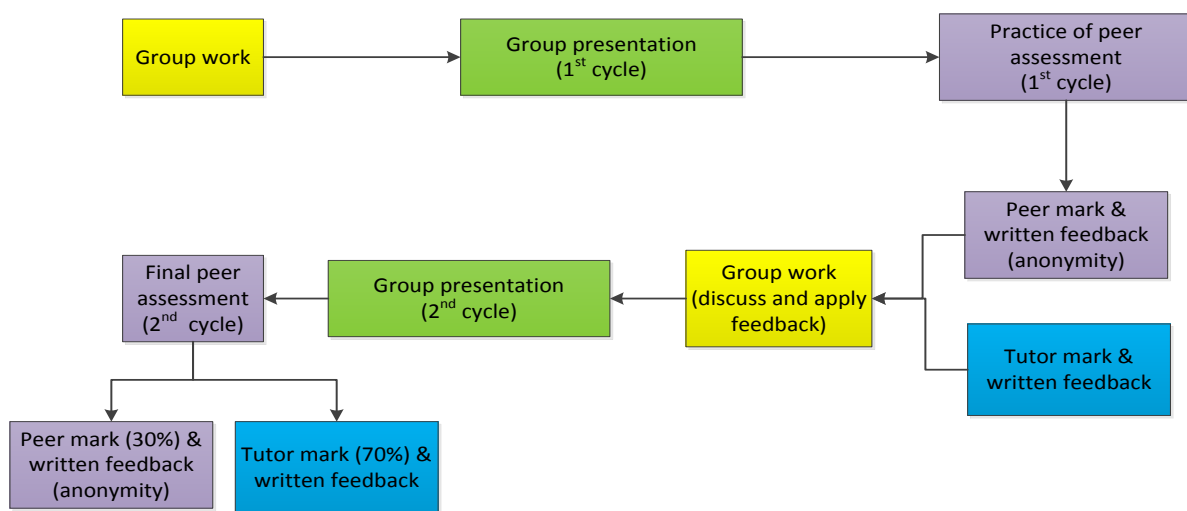


Figure 9: Procedures for conducting PA in BUSI in phase I

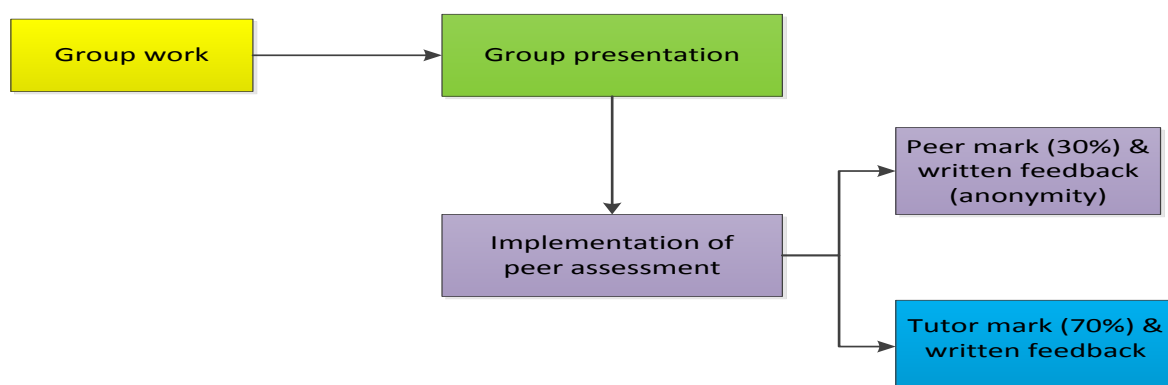


Figure 10: Procedures for conducting PA in BUSI in phase II

4.2.1.2 Classification and framing

This was a social science module, in which knowledge was structured flexibly and students gave presentations on a variety of topics in relation to E-business, so the classification was

weak. In the first session, the module leader introduced PA to students and clarified the procedures. He let students organize groups by themselves and answered questions from students. The teaching assistant delivered and collected mark sheets throughout the process but did not intervene in peer marks and comments, and thus the framing was weak.

4.2.1.3 Staff's expectation of using PA

The teaching assistant did a staff interview and expressed his understanding of using PA in this module, which was to *'provide students with a way to understand and think about others' presentations...provide an opportunity for students to see different projects and topics... get them involved in how to evaluate their work'*. Staff expectations of using PA in this module were to benefit from the basic functions of PA—providing opportunities for students to hear different voices in order to broaden and deepen subject knowledge (Topping, 2000), and to increase personal evaluation skills (Dochy and McDowell, 1997).

4.2.1.4 Participants and research methods

In phase I, 21 ISs and four UK students completed the pre-questionnaires, 20 ISs and five UK students completed the post-questionnaires, four ISs attended individual interviews, and observation in the classroom was conducted three times. Table 11 and Table 12 show the demographic statistics for each research method. Although participants in the pre- and post-questionnaire were not exactly the same, the difference was slight. Thus, participants in the post-questionnaire represent the population in this module.

Country of origin	No. of students pre-questionnaire	No. of students post-questionnaire	No. of students interviewed
China	8	7	2
UK	4	5	0
India	1	1	0
South Korea	1	1	1
Lithuania	1	2	0
Bulgaria	1	1	0
Greece	1	2	0
Russia	1	0	0
Saudi Arabia	3	0	0
Kazakhstan	1	1	0
Malaysia	2	2	1
Nigeria	0	2	0
Sri Lanka	1	0	0
Cyprus	0	1	0
Total	25	25	4

Table 11: Participants' country of origin in BUSI in phase I

Independent variables		No. of students pre-questionnaire	No. of students post-questionnaire	No. of students interviewed
Gender	Male	17	17	3
	Female	8	8	1
Age	<20	0	0	0
	21-25	19	19	3
	26-30	4	1	1
	>31	2	5	0
Previous experience	Have	14	N/A	4
	Not have	11		0

Table 12: Independent variables of participants in BUSI in phase I

In phase II, 28 ISs completed the pre-questionnaires, seven ISs completed the post-questionnaires, two ISs attended individual interview, and observation in the classroom was conducted twice. Table 13 and Table 14 show the demographic statistics for each research method. Although the number of participants in the pre- and post-questionnaires was significantly imbalanced, the sample in the post-questionnaire and interviews indicated to some extent certain tendencies in this module.

Country of origin	No. of students pre-questionnaire	No. of students post-questionnaire	No. of students interviewed
China	18	3	2
India	2	0	0
Nigeria	1	1	0
Belgium	1	1	0
Brunei	2	0	0
Greece	2	2	0
Germany	1	0	0
Taiwan	1	0	0
Total	28	7	2

Table 13: Participants' country of origin in BUSI in phase II

Independent variables		No. of students pre-questionnaire	No. of students post-questionnaire	No. of students interviewed
Gender	Male	15	4	1
	Female	13	3	1
Age	<20	0	0	0
	21-25	22	4	2
	26-30	5	2	0
	>31	1	1	0
Previous experience	Have	9	N/A	2
	Not have	19		0

Table 14: Independent variables of participants in BUSI in phase II

4.2.2 ISs' perceptions of using PA

4.2.2.1 Satisfaction of using PA

In phase I, 80% of ISs expressed their satisfaction or strong satisfaction with their experience of PA in the post-questionnaires. In phase II, no ISs were dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied

with the process, but the majority (71.4%) chose ‘neutral’ (neither dissatisfied nor satisfied), and no one chose strongly satisfied. As this was a one-year taught master module, students in phase I were not the same students as those who took part in phase II, although their countries of origin were similar, with the majority of students coming from China and accounting for 32% of participants in phase I and 64% in phase II. However, ISSs’ satisfaction in phase I was quite different from that in phase II ($p=0.023$, Mann-Whitney $U=32.500$, $Z=-2.274$), as shown in Figure 11.

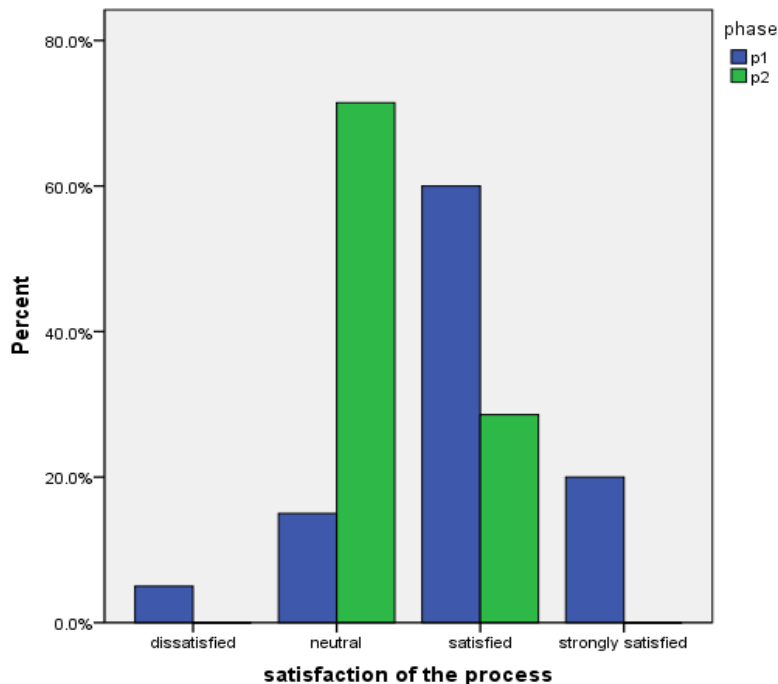


Figure 11: Comparison of satisfaction of PA in BUSI

One main reason for this might have been the change in the procedure of applying PA. In phase I, two cycles of repeated practice of PA allowed students to receive feedback and then to improve work accordingly. In contrast, although students gave each other peer feedback, they did not receive feedback to improve their work in phase II. Thus, the benefits brought from PA were restricted in phase II; it could not make students improve instantly, but just acted as a tool to assess learning. Data from student interviews support this explanation. In phase I, S1 (South Korean, female, BUSI, phase I) said: *‘When we did the first time presentation which was the practice one, they gave us comments. My team members really wanted to apply feedback to improve our presentation, so we changed some parts’*. On the contrary, in phase II, S5 (Chinese, male, BUSI, phase II) commented: *‘I think most of us just take it as a task...including Western students...PA is OK, but nothing amazing’*.

To conclude, ISs did not tend to be negative towards PA in both phases in this module. This might be due to F- discourse between staff and students, the supportive environment and the formative learning process. The different satisfaction levels between the two phases may be mainly due to the different procedures of using PA, as other independent variables (e.g. gender, age group and country of origin) were similar in the two phases.

4.2.2.2 Benefits of PA

PA has more functions than some common assessment approaches, such as promoting interaction with students and improving understanding of the nature and function of assessment criteria in UK HE through evaluating one's own and others' work. For instance:

I like PA, I can interact with my peers, and learn from them. Essays or exams make me isolated to just write theoretical answers. I prefer practice and interaction with peers in the UK.—S3 (Chinese, male, BUSI, phase I)

It gives me an opportunity to know the assessment process and criteria... If I don't do PA, don't see others' presentations, my presentation may follow my own structure. But now I know what points should be addressed in the presentation that markers pay attention to. I have deeper understanding of criteria and the staff's expectation.—S2 (Malaysian, male, BUSI, phase I)

4.2.2.3 Problematic aspects of PA

In the literature, one of the major factors affecting ISs' integration into Western education is language barriers (Hills and Thom, 2005). Here, it was the same, particularly when dialogue between students was encouraged during the formative learning process, as S3 (Chinese, male, BUSI, phase I) commented:

As an international student, language is not an advantage. You find it becomes a barrier when you communicate with others or in particular when you do a presentation.

Some ISs thought that it was challenging to provide accurate, professional and objective marks, particularly when peer marks were valued at the final module mark.

In PA, I think British students are more objective when they give other feedback. Chinese students address interpersonal relations so they are very kind and give good marks to their friends.—S4 (Chinese, male, BUSI, phase I)

I think Asian students tend to give higher mark, like more than 70. But some European students, they gave very short comments, and tend to give a lower mark, like 50-60.—S1 (South Korean, female, BUSI, phase I)

Marking is a little bit difficult as the marking system in China is different from in the UK. At the first time, I gave 70 as in China this mark just means fine. But in the UK, above 70 means outstanding.—S5 (Chinese, male, BUSI, phase II)

I don't know the mark criteria. The module leader briefly mentioned PA, and gave us mark sheet. But seeing criteria and actually marking students are different. I don't think I can provide an exactly accurate mark.—S6 (Chinese, female, BUSI, phase II)

In this module, peer feedback supported the peer mark, provided reasons for specific marking, and could even be applied to improve work especially in phase I. However, providing peer feedback could be a challenge to students. This might be due to a lack of subject knowledge and evaluation skills, as they commented:

I do not understand some presentations.—S1 (South Korean, female, BUSI, phase I)

I have nothing to address.—S5 (Chinese, male, BUSI, phase II)

We are not lecturers and cannot provide the same level comments as lecturers...I feel I lack critical thinking.—S4 (Chinese, male, BUSI, phase I)

4.2.2.4 Conditions of implementing PA

ISs indicated some conditions that might help them to implement PA better. First, there is clarifying purpose. The purpose of pedagogic activities needs to be explicit; in other words, students need to share staff's expectations of using PA. As S3 (Chinese, male, BUSI, phase I) said: *'I think the lecturer has to make us understand the effects of PA, why we have to use it'*.

Since peer marks are valued as part of the final mark, explicit criteria may improve students' confidence in marking. S1 (South Korean, female, BUSI, phase I) commented: *'I think if the criteria are more specific, I will do better in PA'*.

Undermining friendship was a common phenomenon in previous studies of PA (e.g. Falchikov, 1995; Dochy, Segers and Sluijsmans, 1999). Here it was the same. Thus, staff need to make students understand why they have to be objective in PA, and conditions of anonymity could be an approach to solve this anxiety.

I'm worried about my colleagues' attitudes towards me if I give some negative comments. But I think if the lecturer explains these before we start, everyone will appreciate feedback no matter if positive or negative because we can improve ourselves through this process.—S3 (Chinese, male, BUSI, phase I)

If the person knows you are the one who gives the honest thing, friendship might be affected unless they are very open. So I prefer anonymity.—S2 (Malaysian, male, BUSI, phase I)

With regard to setting groups up, some ISs had an evident desire to maximize interactions across cultures through establishing mixed groups; this opinion was expressed by S3 (Chinese, male, BUSI, phase I) who said: *'In the mixed group, I improved oral English and also gained some cultural and religious knowledge in the communication'*. However, there were constraints that led some of them to choose to avoid intercultural situations. Some ISs self-selected peer groups consisting mainly of people from their own or similar cultures. For instance, a few groups consisted of solely Chinese students. They had limited opportunities to interact within an international environment. However, they did not think it was the most important factor of working in a group, as S6 (Chinese, female, BUSI, phase II) said:

Not all foreigners work hard. Some Chinese students work efficiently in group work. So I think it's better to organize a group comprised of students with whom you're familiar and know how much contribution they may make to the group, selecting people that may cooperate happily.

4.2.3 Implications of using PA for ISs

4.2.3.1 Implications for academic transition

ISs may experience different ways of teaching, learning and assessment in UK HE compared with their previous educational experiences in their home countries. Some may have successful academic transition to the UK educational system, while some others do not easily adjust to new ways of teaching, learning and assessment. In this module, ISs found group work was a popular learning approach in the UK, encouraging communication between students; they also found PA was an effective approach to learn from each other, promoting their independent learning and critical thinking skills. For instance:

Many forms of assessment have never or rarely been met in the university in China, such as PA, seminars, and group work. These new forms are challenging to me, to ISs, especially at the beginning... After gradually accepting them, skills are developed. I like PA, I can interact with my peers, although there were some communication barriers, I feel it's useful to discuss with peers.—S3 (Chinese, male, BUSI, phase I)

If we didn't do PA and I didn't have to give mark, I would not listen to others' presentation very carefully. I might just listen a general meaning, and ignore some details. But if I have to give peer mark, I will listen to every detail...This deepens my understanding of the topic, broadens my experience, otherwise I will lose this opportunity to hear others' work and then reflect myself.—S1 (South Korean, female, BUSI, phase I)

Feedback is a new term for many ISs; however, it seems that not all of them appreciated feedback. One significant reason was delayed feedback, which is in accordance with Robson, et al.'s (2013) research on feedback or feed forward. For instance, S4 (Chinese, male, BUSI, phase I) said: *'Lecturers normally give the final mark and feedback to you after a few weeks when the course is finished. So I don't think the feedback is very useful'*. However, if students can receive instant feedback and apply it to current or further work, it can earn much praise. In phase I, the benefits of feedback were recognized by many students in that they had the opportunity to use peer feedback from the practice PA to change and improve their work for the final mark. As S2 (Malaysian, male, BUSI, phase I) commented: *'I read the feedback and sometimes I asked them why they said this, why they said that...if I think some comments are reasonable, I will use them in my future study'*.

For some other ISs, PA was just regarded as a task to complete and so there was no significant impact of PA on their learning. For instance, S4 (Chinese, male, BUSI, phase I) said: *'I didn't think it was important, just did it as a task required by the lecturer'*. Nevertheless, after participating in this study (completed questionnaires), this student changed his mind and expressed in the interview: *'After I completed the questionnaire and considered the process again, I realized it's useful to some extent'*. This may suggest that a possible reason that some students did not see the impact of PA on their learning or have obvious academic transition is that they did not have a chance to reflect on their learning and assessment processes. This also confirms the role of the researcher as a change agent in the study, in terms of bringing opportunities for participants to rethink and question their learning and assessment experiences in ways they had never had before.

4.2.3.2 Implications for intercultural learning

A few ISs were open to intercultural learning, taking the opportunity to develop skills of listening to cultural others and gaining knowledge of others' world views through peer work in the mixed group. This built confidence in their ability to behave and communicate effectively and appropriately when involved with foreigners in the future. These were ideal outcomes of intercultural competence proposed by Deardorff (2006), and the findings from students in this module suggest that these competences can be developed through participation in PA. For instance, S3 (Chinese, male, BUSI, phase I) said:

I want to improve my English and develop some skills that benefit my future careers as I have already worked in a multinational corporation for 3 years in China...In the mixed group, I improved my oral English and also gained some cultural and religious knowledge in the communication...PA developed my evaluation skills and I'll be more confident in working with foreigners in the future.

However, some ISs pointed out that working with students from other countries was sometimes not successful. For instance, S5 (Chinese, male, BUSI, phase II) commented:

I worked with Thai and Indian students in group work. Sometimes their thinking was different from us and didn't fit us. So the cooperation didn't go smoothly.

Students with this type of opinion rarely had high awareness of intercultural learning, but just intended to complete the task.

Through participating in PA, ISs had an opportunity to understand how UK students or other ISs think and work, and to consider how they might use this new knowledge and skills in different contexts. As S6 (Chinese, female, BUSI, phase II) commented:

Chinese people don't quite like critical thinking from our educational experience. But in the UK, they always use critical thinking everywhere, sometimes we don't think it's necessary...Many of us don't feel comfortable to use this. I came here and now have some understanding of how UK or other foreigners think of questions, but when I go back to China, whether I use the skills learnt here or not will depend on the situation I will be in. For example, if I choose to work in a multinational company, and westerners are my boss or manager, then UK experience will help me to know how to work with them. But if I work in a Chinese company or work for the government, I don't think it's useful.

4.2.4 Conclusion

During observation, I observed that some students paid attention to peer presentations, but some of them were distracted, sleeping or playing with their phones. Thus, not all students shared recognition and realization rules of using PA as the staff intended. Students might not be stressed in this module possibly because it was just a ten-credit module, the staff was very flexible, and the students reflected that the staff might even give them a higher mark than their peers. Some students said that some presentations were too deep and too technical for them to understand, and some even related the experience to an unfamiliar socio-cultural background. For example:

Sometimes their explanation is not clear; most of the topics given to students in this class were about technology, so I don't have much background about it. They just turned to the discussion part, so I couldn't understand what they were talking about.—S1 (South Korean, female, BUSI, phase I)

To some extent, the mark you gave to peers might depend on how you are familiar with their topics. For example, a topic 'IT security', if you come from western developed countries, where this area is mature and people have high awareness of IT security, you will feel the topic is interesting and have positive attitudes towards the presentation. But if you come from a developing country where this area is very behind the international level, you will have no idea of the presentation without enough background. This will influence your assessment of the presentation.—S3 (Chinese, male, BUSI, phase I)

To conclude, students' implementation of PA in this module to some extent achieved the staff's original purpose—involving students in assessment and hearing different voices. Students appreciated some of the benefits arising from PA. The staff did not treat ISs differently but taught them in the same way as home students as long as their language ability was appropriate. However, from ISs' voices, except for language, there were other problematic aspects of the implementation, such as the unfamiliar marking and feedback system. A few ISs mentioned intercultural learning, but the staff did not expect this so no facilitation of intercultural learning was conducted.

4.3 The Education Module A (EDUA)

This section presents findings from the second case study. It presents data from a taught master's module conducted as part of the MEd. This module was observed in both phase I and phase II, and the PA procedures remained the same. The module provides evidence for section 4.7, which presents a cross analysis of research data from all five modules.

4.3.1 Description of the module context

4.3.1.1 The procedures of PA

Students arranged groups comprising of three or four students in one group. Each student wrote a part of an assignment, exchanged their work within the group and gave each other feedback either via email or face-to-face discussion. Peer marking was not necessary. Students might use peer feedback to amend and improve their own work before the final submission. PA in this module was formative assessment, and more specifically it was a divergent process. Figure 12 shows the procedures for conducting PA in two phases in this module.

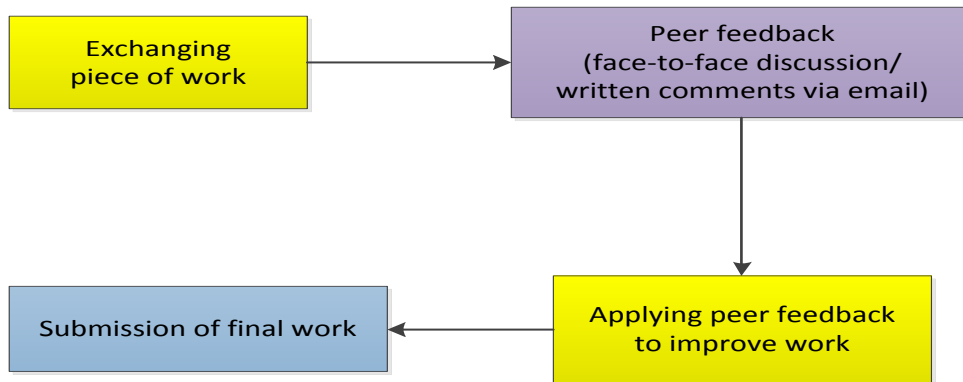


Figure 12: Procedures for conducting PA in EDUA

4.3.1.2 Classification and framing

This was a social science module, in which knowledge was structured flexibly, so the classification was weak. The module leader explained some of the benefits of getting feedback on the work and the benefits of working with ISs, but he deliberately did not go too far because he wanted students to organize themselves. He also told students to feel free to ask him if they had any questions. The framing was weak as the module leader did not give strict guidance but let students explore by themselves while also providing some support. Social relations between the module leader and students were relaxed in that he saw his position as a supporter rather than an authority.

Some ISs quite appreciated the F- context, as S13 (Vietnamese, female, EDUA, phase II) said: *'Sometimes teacher's power in PA might be lost...but I don't think that's a problem...you really have the power to decide what you do...it's good that you can establish criteria by yourself, it can cultivate independent learning, very creative, you can be responsible for yourself...'*. However, not all students shared recognition and realization rules of the F- context. Some Chinese students felt confused at the early stage and always wanted to get confirmation from the module leader.

4.3.1.3 Staff's expectation of using PA

The module leader intended to implement this innovative assessment, firstly for an assignment as a pragmatic consideration, and secondly to promote peer talk as he believed talking was important in the learning process and supported construction of knowledge. He also wanted to cultivate students' responsibility and independent learning skills, which are essential skills at the postgraduate level.

4.3.1.4 Participants and research methods

In phase I, six ISs and two UK students completed both the pre- and post-questionnaires, the four ISs and two UK students attended individual interviews, and observation was conducted once in the classroom. Table 15 and Table 16 show the demographic statistics in each research method in phase I.

Country of origin	No. of students pre-questionnaire	No. of students post-questionnaire	No. of students interviewed
China	2	2	2
UK	2	2	2
Thailand	2	2	1
Saudi Arabic	1	1	0
Oman	1	1	1
Total	8	8	6

Table 15: Participants' country of origin in EDUA in phase I

Independent variables		No. of students pre-questionnaire	No. of students post-questionnaire	No. of students interviewed
Gender	Male	1	1	1
	Female	7	7	5
Age	<20	0	0	0
	21-25	2	2	2
	26-30	3	3	2
	>31	3	3	2
Previous experience	Have	4	N/A	5
	Not have	4		1

Table 16: Independent variables of participants in EDUA in phase I

In phase II, three ISs and one UK student completed both the pre- and post-questionnaires; the three ISs attended individual interviews, and observation was conducted once in the classroom and once in the group meeting. Table 17 and Table 18 show the demographic statistics in each research method in phase II.

Country of origin	No. of students pre-questionnaire	No. of students post-questionnaire	No. of students interviewed
China	2	2	2
UK	1	1	0
Vietnam	1	1	1
Total	4	4	3

Table 17: Participants' country of origin in EDUA in phase II

Other independent variables		No. of students pre-questionnaire	No. of students post-questionnaire	No. of students interviewed
Gender	Male	0	0	0
	Female	4	4	3
Age	<20	0	0	0
	21-25	4	4	3
	26-30	0	0	0
	>31	0	0	0
Previous experience	Have	4	N/A	3
	Not have	0		0

Table 18: Independent variables of participants in EDUA in phase II

4.3.2 ISS' perceptions of PA

4.3.2.1 Satisfaction of using PA

In phase I, 66.7% of ISSs were satisfied with the experience of PA. In phase II, one Vietnamese student was strongly satisfied with PA, one Chinese student was neither dissatisfied nor satisfied, and the other Chinese student was dissatisfied. The Vietnamese student had taken undergraduate study in a Vietnamese university where many teachers were either from the UK/US or had experiences of studying in there, so she had already experienced some forms of innovative pedagogy and assessment, such as group work and PA. Thus, she adjusted to learning and assessment easily in UK HE. However, the two Chinese students who chose dissatisfied or neutral said:

Our Chinese students tend to prefer listening rather than being positively critical.—S14 (Chinese, female, EDUA, phase II)

Peers provide advice to improve writing quality, but because of lack of knowledge and experience, comments cannot be comprehensive.—S15 (Chinese, female, EDUA, phase II)

They were familiar with different approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, and recognition and realization rules of the F- context, so it is reasonable that their attitudes towards PA were varied.

ISSs' satisfaction of using PA in phase I was not significantly different from that in phase II ($p=0.785$, Mann-Whitney $U=8.000$, $Z=-0.272$). Although students in the two phases were different, countries of origin were similar, and Chinese students were dominant along with students from other Asian countries. The procedures of using PA were the same. Thus, it is not surprising that they did not have significantly different levels of satisfaction with this experience.

4.3.2.2 Benefits of PA

One typical benefit realized by ISs was that PA provided an opportunity to see others' work, and so this would assist self-reflection. As S13 (Vietnamese, female, EDUA, phase II) said: *'PA is worth doing because you can get a lot of benefits. Even before sitting with peers to discuss the work, we can get the feel of what it looks like. You can assess your work even before listening to the feedback. You can compare your work with others and see the gaps in your work'*. Formative PA provided peer feedback for the improvement of work before the final submission, as S8 (Chinese, female, EDUA, phase I) mentioned: *'I think it's good to communicate with classmates before submitting assignments, to get formative feedback from peers and have time to improve'*. Meanwhile, students had a deeper understanding of the criteria, as S10 (Omani, female, EDUA, phase I) stated: *'You can understand the criteria more clearly when you evaluate peers' papers'*. PA also helped to promote communication among students and improved ISs' English. For instance, S7 (Chinese, female, EDUA, phase I) said: *'If you work with home students, you're forced to be involved in the English context, which benefits your improvement of English'*.

4.3.2.3 Problematic aspects of PA

One issue during the implementation was unclear criteria, as S14 (Chinese, female, EDUA, phase II) pointed out: *'We didn't have clear criteria to assess others' work at the beginning'*. This statement might be due to F- discourse as the module leader did not give strict criteria but let students explore and establish the situation by themselves. Some students appreciated this and felt empowered, while others felt uncomfortable. With regard to those who did not quite adjust to the F- context, it would have been better if the module leader had explained his rationale for using F- discourse.

Language was always a barrier throughout intercultural learning. For example, S15 (Chinese, female, EDUA, phase II) said: *'Maybe for ISs, English is not our mother language, we may misunderstand something'*. But referring to the benefits they mentioned, after PA their English might be improved.

Additionally, some students mentioned the process was time consuming, such as S10 (Omani, female, EDUA, phase I), who said: *'I don't like the workload it places on the assessor, and the time spent in the process'*. The fact that PA was regarded as time consuming might be due

to the formative process. Some groups met two or three times, and each meeting took one to two hours for discussion. However, even though this formative PA was time consuming, the majority in both phases felt that the extra workload was worth the effort.

4.3.2.4 Conditions of implementing PA

ISs indicated that it would be useful if the module leader could be involved more in the process. For example, S8 (Chinese, female, EDUA, phase I) said: *'I think if the lecturer was involved at the beginning, identifying the criteria with the students, discussing and saying like "what we expect", that will give direction and focus to PA'*. S7 (Chinese, female, EDUA, phase I) continued to point out that *'PA cultivates independent learning here. I think this and Chinese style may be integrated, developing autonomous learners while being monitored by teachers'*. It is reasonable that some Chinese students proposed such an opinion as they were used to studying in a teacher-centred educational context. When they initially enter the F-context, they might lose direction. It is good to try innovative assessment and use F-discourse in the international classroom, but sharing understanding between staff and students becomes significant.

4.3.3 Implications of using PA for ISs

4.3.3.1 Implications for academic transition

ISs realized assessment in the UK did not only relate to having a degree, but was also aimed at learning and personal development, such as the formative PA in this module.

I think I can learn more in this kind of PA...I know the different level of work so I have deeper understanding of assessment criteria in UK HE.—S13 (Vietnamese, female, EDUA, phase II)

I think it's good to communicate with classmates before submitting assignments, to get formative feedback from peers and have time to improve.—S8 (Chinese, female, EDUA, phase I)

Learning and assessment in the UK is a little bit challenging and it needs time. The master assignments are more critique and I have to write some arguments. I can realize my development through the first assignment to now, especially after I assessed peers' work.—S14 (Chinese, female, EDUA, phase II)

ISs realized that in the UK peer learning was useful and peer talk was important in the learning process, especially when there was lack of supervision from tutors.

In China, teachers are used to teach skills. Like when you meet this situation, what you should do. But in the UK, teachers seldom tell you how to do, what the standard answers are... UK education really cultivates my critical thinking, such as in the practice of PA I was forced to think critically and give critical feedback to my peers...I often discussed with my peers to clarify the understanding of some theories, some writing experience... I found peer learning was useful when there was lack of supervision from tutors...—S15 (Chinese, female, EDUA, phase II)

We can identify our problems and find a better solution through discussions. The whole group can brainstorm.—S9 (Thai, female, EDUA, phase I)

4.3.3.2 Implications for intercultural learning

Some ISs reflected that PA provided an opportunity for intercultural learning, especially for those who were willing but too shy to do so. For example:

There are not many interactions with students...we just have a few sessions in the class, we don't meet often...PA this time is a way to organize student meeting...We built a good relationship, learn from different cultures and also from the same cultures.—S13 (Vietnamese, female, EDUA, phase II)

Learning from different cultures is good... from reading peers' work, I know educational systems in other countries. There are some significantly different aspects and we can learn from them. I think PA gives us an opportunity to communicate with each other. Otherwise we may have less or little communication. Actually, I'm not very open, there are some Chinese students around me. I normally communicate with them unless forced by teachers.—S7 (Chinese, female, EDUA, phase I)

Thus, this module suggests that formative PA, or more specifically divergent PA, has great potential to foster intercultural learning.

4.3.4 Conclusion

Students in this module tended to be more positive about the experience of PA in the end though some of them were initially unwilling to take part and confused about the procedure. The successful implementation in this module may be partly attributed to the nature of the module assignment itself. The work was to reflect a practice of innovative assessment, so students had to read some literature of PA which enabled them to have a deeper understanding of PA than students who just completed the task in other modules. Secondly, students had peer talk, and this helped them to find answers through collaboration rather than in isolation.

With regard to the problematic aspects of this experience, students' perceptions of unclear criteria may be caused by F- discourse as the module leader did not provide any strict guidance but let students organize themselves to cultivate their sense of responsibility and develop independent learning skills. Actually, because students explored materials and discussed the information they found, they had a deeper understanding of criteria after the practice. Language is a significant problem for ISs studying in UK HE, both between ISs and UK students, and among ISs. But one interesting phenomenon is that in one group comprised of Chinese and Thai students, they reflected it was easier to communicate with group members than with UK students, as S7 (Chinese, female, EDUA, phase I) said: *'In the peer group, all of us come from China or Thailand. I think we have Asian characters, so I feel the communication is a little bit easier than communicating with westerners'*. It is assumed that this phenomenon is not just about language, but more about culture. Chinese and Thai students are all East Asian students, sharing similar educational traditions and communication styles. Thus, there are fewer barriers of communication between them than with UK students.

A few students were not quite satisfied with this experience, such as the two Chinese students in phase II. This might be because they were not quite familiar with the F- context and the formative PA approach. As they suggested, *'I hope teachers may give us more training of using PA, give instructions and make the process clearly understood'*. However, they were gradually getting to know and understand the benefits of peer learning and peer talk, and behave accordingly. Broadly, ISs achieved the module leader's expectation of using PA in this module.

4.4 The Education Module B (EDUB)

This section presents findings from the third case study. It presents data from a taught master's module conducted as part of the MEd. This module was observed in phase II, and provides evidence for section 4.7, which presents a cross analysis of research data from all five modules.

4.4.1 Description of the module context

4.4.1.1 The procedures of PA

Students arranged groups by themselves, comprising four or five students in one group. Each group did a presentation on a particular topic in the class and others gave immediate oral

feedback. Peer marks were not necessary and this activity did not contribute towards the semester mark in this module. Figure 13 shows the procedure for conducting PA in this module.

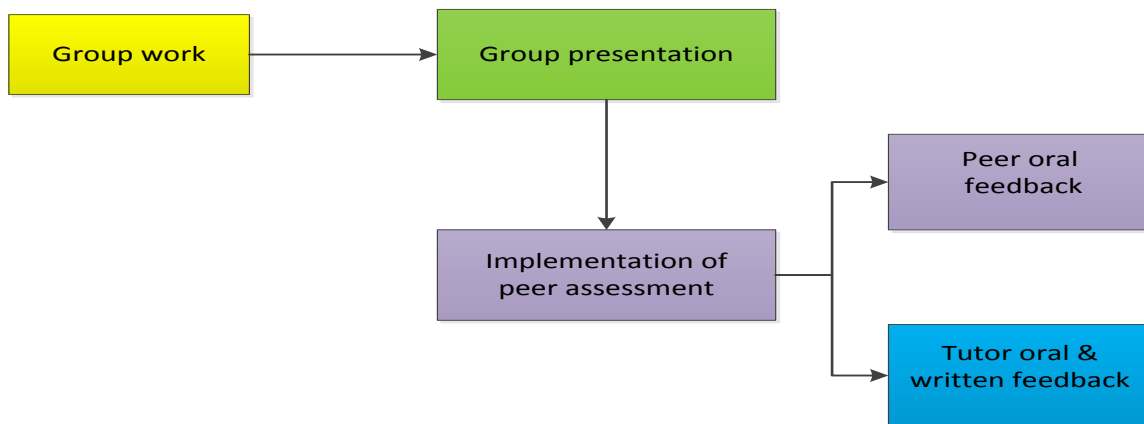


Figure 13: Procedures for conducting PA in EDUB

4.4.1.2 Classification and framing

This social science module structured knowledge flexibly, and students gave presentations of a variety of topics related to the subject, so the classification was weak. In the first session, the module leader introduced the group presentation and peer feedback to students. She let students organize groups by themselves and was happy to answer questions, but did not provide criteria for PA. She gave both written and oral feedback to students, and she did not force students to give peer feedback when there was no response from student assessors. Thus, the framing was weak.

4.4.1.3 Staff's expectation of using PA

The module leader expected students to have self-reflection in a less stressed context, as she said: *'PA is less stressful than teacher assessment...being able to assess each other might help students understand what limitations they had'*.

4.4.1.4 Participants and research methods

19 ISs and six UK students completed the pre-questionnaires, 10 ISs and four UK students completed the post-questionnaires, three ISs and one UK student attended an individual interview, and observation was conducted twice in the classroom. Table 19 and Table 20 show the demographic statistics in each research method. Although the number of participants in the pre- and post-questionnaires was imbalanced, to some extent, the sample in

the post-questionnaire and interviews provided insights into ISSs' practice of PA in this module.

Country of origin	No. of students pre-questionnaire	No. of students post-questionnaire	No. of students interviewed
China	11	8	2
Thailand	1	0	0
UK	6	4	1
Indonesia	1	1	0
Kazakhstan	2	1	0
Vietnam	2	0	1
Russia	1	0	0
Saudi Arabic	1	0	0
Total	25	14	4

Table 19: Participants' country of origin in EDUB

Independent variables		No. of students pre-questionnaire	No. of students post-questionnaire	No. of students interviewed
Gender	Male	6	2	0
	Female	19	12	4
Age	<20	0	0	0
	21-25	13	9	3
	26-30	8	3	0
	>31	4	2	1
Previous experience	Have	8	N/A	2
	Not have	17		2

Table 20: Independent variables of participants in EDUB

4.4.2 ISSs' perceptions of PA

4.4.2.1 Satisfaction of using PA

As no Thai, Russian, Vietnamese and Arabic students completed the post-questionnaire, the results of satisfaction were not representative of the whole module population, but might help us understand the use of PA in this cohort to some extent. No respondents were dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied with the experience of PA, but it seemed that students did not have very positive attitudes towards PA as 50% of them chose 'neutral'. Qualitative data might provide some explanations of their neutral position. Observational data reveal that the majority of ISSs were silent during 'feedback time', and it seemed that they were not sure how they should behave in PA. Thus, they did not share recognition and realization rules of using PA with the module leader. As some ISSs commented:

We didn't dare to speak, so we got little feedback...—S14 (Chinese, female, EDUB, phase II)

I didn't know what kind of feedback was appropriate, so I just listened to others...—S15 (Chinese, female, EDUB, phase II)

In addition, this activity did not meet the UK students' expectations. As they commented:

It was OK, but we didn't really do enough to comment.—S16 (UK, female, EDUB, phase II)

In this module, PA doesn't exist so far as I can see because we haven't done many things in that way. Peer support does exist as we organized groups and did group work for presentation—SQ1 (UK, female, EDUB, phase II).

Generally, for ISs or UK students, the implementation of PA in this module was not quite successful.

4.4.2.2 Benefits of PA

Although students did not highly appreciate PA in this module, they did feel some benefits brought from PA. For example, SQ2 (*Indonesian, female, EDUB, phase II*) indicated 'It's good for us to exchange to bring new ideas if involved us in interaction'. Quantitative data also support this benefit, as 70% of ISs agreed or strongly agreed that PA promoted discussion and interaction among them. Discussion and interaction among students is important in the learning process, and PA could be a catalyst for this activity.

4.4.2.3 Problematic aspects of PA

As mentioned in 4.4.2.1, a reason that PA was not very successful in this module might be due to unclear criteria and guidance on PA. Those students who had not experienced PA before were especially confused by this activity. Moreover, it was easy to be lost in the F-context. For example:

I don't know how to raise feedback, don't know where to start, which points can be addressed. I did take notes of some grammar mistakes in their speaking, but I don't think it's important as feedback so I didn't say...—S14 (Chinese, female, EDUB, phase II)

In China, it's a teacher-centred classroom, I much prefer to follow teacher's instruction, and I was worried I might be lost if there was no direction in the UK...—S15 (Chinese, female, EDUB, phase II)

4.4.2.4 Conditions of implementing PA

In this module, the primary condition of implementing PA from ISs' perceptions was clear instruction and familiarity with the assessment process. Quantitative data show that 60% of ISs agreed or strongly agreed that clarifying criteria was important, as S14 (Chinese, female,

EDUB, phase II) commented: *'The staff need to give clear instruction...I also think they have to explain what they expect and how to assess'*.

4.4.3 Implications of using PA for ISs

4.4.3.1 Implications for academic transition

This module used formative PA. Students did group work, and within the group they proposed their own ideas and discussed and gave opinions to each other, which was a formative learning process. During PA, they gave instant oral feedback after presentations. ISs may experience different forms of assessment in the UK compared with their home countries, and have new perceptions of learning and assessment in UK HE. For instance:

In China, assessment decides if students can be granted degrees, aim-orientated. I think Chinese exams help my learning quite little, especially when teachers gave us clues, then we just focused on a few areas. However, I have met several different forms of assessment in the UK, such as essays and PA. I feel I get little from lectures, but learn much from writing assignments...We can generate new and useful opinions through group communication...I think if I had known the criteria before PA, I would have done better...—S14 (Chinese, female, EDUB, phase II)

60% of ISs agreed or strongly agreed that PA developed their critical skills, and some of them admitted that this would influence their future study. Although PA was not completely successful in this module, it still had positive impacts on ISs' academic transition.

4.4.3.2 Implications of intercultural learning

An international student in this module mentioned intercultural learning, as S13 (Vietnamese, female, EDUB, phase II) said: *'We have UK students and also other ISs, so we have diverse cultural backgrounds. I like the mixed group, we can learn different things from different students'*. A UK student (S16) also mentioned intercultural learning, who commented: *'There are some Chinese students around me, but I rarely communicate with them...through PA, I gained other cultural perspectives on the field of study'*. Thus, the module confirms that formative PA has the potential to promote intercultural learning, but it needs students' awareness of the importance of developing intercultural competence.

4.4.4 Conclusion

The module leader understood that PA might be challenging for some students, especially ISs, as she commented: *'I think they feel PA relates to prior experience, a little bit challenging, I think UK students feel it is easier as they are familiar with it, but for students from other*

countries sometimes they feel implementing PA is more difficult'. The module leader thought students' cultural background was strongly linked to the practice of PA. She noticed students from Eastern countries tended to be more passive and expected more tutorial guidance. However, she did not share the recognition and realization rules of ISs. Responses from ISs indicated that challenges were not just cultural, but more procedural. Although she intended to understand her students, the effect was slight as there was a gap between their understanding of appropriate behaviours in PA between the staff and students.

4.5 The Chemical Engineering Module (CEM)

This section presents findings from the fourth case study. It presents data from a taught master's module conducted as part of the MSc Chemical Engineering. This module was observed in phase II, and provides evidence for section 4.7, which presents a cross analysis of research data from all five modules.

4.5.1 Description of the module context

4.5.1.1 The procedures of PA

An assessment item in this module was a group presentation, involving two or three students, which was arranged by themselves. Each group did a presentation on a particular topic and submitted it to an online forum (Blackboard), and other students gave marks and comments according to the online mark sheet and criteria after watching their peers' presentations. The peer mark was valued at 30% of the semester mark of this module. Figure 14 shows the procedure for conducting PA in this module.

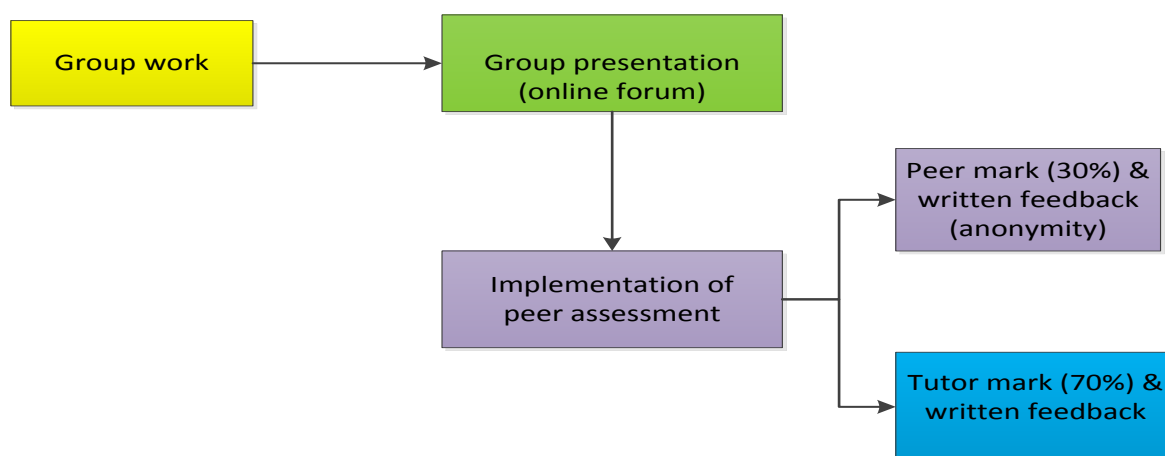


Figure 14: Procedures for conducting PA in CEM

4.5.1.2 Classification and framing

This module was in the science and engineering field, in which knowledge was not structured flexibly, so the classification was strong. In the first session, the module leader explained what the module was about, how it would be assessed, and mentioned that there would be PA and explained the purpose of using it. After students submitted the work to the online forum before going on to conduct PA, the module leader held another session where she gave them clear criteria and showed them how to use the online forum. Thus, the framing was strong.

4.5.1.3 Staff's expectation of using PA

The module leader believed that at the postgraduate level students needed to be more involved in the education process and involved in assessment. Although there might be some issues in PA, students might learn more and gain more out of this. Hence, she has insisted on using PA in this module for a few years. Students might learn to understand how hard marking is and thus think more about their future submissions.

4.5.1.4 Participants and research methods

14 ISs completed the pre-questionnaires, 9 ISs completed the post-questionnaires, and observation was conducted twice in the classroom. Unfortunately, no students participated in the interview, though the same procedure was followed to invite them as in other modules. They might consider doing interviews as increased workload, because they were science students and lacked knowledge in social science, such as ways of collecting data. Thus, the findings came more from quantitative data and some from qualitative open answers in questionnaires or observational data. Table 21 and Table 22 show the demographic statistics in each research method. Although not all students completed both the pre- and post-questionnaire, respondents in the post-questionnaire to some extent might show some tendencies.

Country of origin	No. of students pre-questionnaire	No. of students post-questionnaire	No. of students interviewed
China	1	2	0
India	12	4	0
Malaysia	1	0	0
Belgium	0	2	0
Saudi Arabia	0	1	0
Total	14	9	0

Table 21: Participants' country of origin in CEM

Independent variables		No. of students pre-questionnaire	No. of students post-questionnaire	No. of students interviewed
Gender	Male	10	4	0
	Female	4	5	0
Age	<20	0	0	0
	21-25	14	9	0
	26-30	0	0	0
	>31	0	0	0
Previous experience	Have	3	N/A	0
	Not have	11		0

Table 22: Independent variables of participants in CEM

4.5.2 ISs' perceptions of PA

4.5.2.1 Satisfaction of using PA

77.8% of ISs were satisfied with the experience of using PA, so they tended to be positive with PA in this module.

4.5.2.2 Benefits of PA

During their intensive master's study, PA helped students strengthen their subject knowledge in this module. From the open answers in the post-questionnaire, some of them commented:

We can give feedback accordingly...we learn more from assessing others' work...PA helped us to understand the fast teaching...—SQ3 (Indian, male, CEM, phase II)

Learning what peers see in my work allows me to more understand the subject knowledge...—SQ4 (Indian, male, CEM, phase II)

4.5.2.3 Problematic aspects of PA

As peer marks valued at 30% in this module, ISs were more worried about peer marking. Quantitative data reflect that 88.9% of them thought that students could be biased in assessing peers. Some commented:

Different people have different thoughts, some may be not professional.—SQ6 (Indian, female, CEM, phase II)

Reliability is a problem, peers sometimes have bias in marking.—SQ5 (Chinese, male, CEM, phase II)

In addition, although the module leader explained the purpose and procedures of using PA, ISs were still confused about this activity. 66.7% of them agreed or strongly agreed that they could not be sure what the module leader was looking for. Consequently, all participants

agreed that sharing an understanding of procedures between staff and students was important. Thus, in the F+ context, sharing understanding between staff and ISs can also be a problem.

4.5.2.4 Conditions of implementing PA

Students submitted their own presentation to the online forum and watched others' presentations, also via the online forum, so they complained there was no time for face-to-face questions and answers. For example, SQ3 (Indian, male, CEM, phase II) commented: *'I'd like live presentations, as it's better if I can ask questions'*. No one denied the importance of clarifying criteria; 77.8% of them agreed or strongly agreed the importance of explaining learning objectives and purposes of PA. The PA process was summative assessment and formative assessment combined, but had more characteristics of summative assessment. Although they gave peer feedback, they had no opportunity to discuss with students and staff, and could not improve their current work.

4.5.3 Implications of using PA for ISs

4.5.3.1 Implications for academic transition

ISs in this module admitted the usefulness of peer learning and some of them developed critical skills through PA. 66.6% of ISs agreed or strongly agreed that assessing peers was a way to learn from each other, and over half of them agreed or strongly agreed that PA developed critical skills.

4.5.3.2 Implications for intercultural learning

As this theme often appeared in interviews where no students participated in this module, no data was found to relate to this theme here.

4.5.4 Conclusion

Since no students attended student interviews, all the findings were analyzed from questionnaires and observation. The module leader thought that although it would be much easier if only she gave marks, she still believed students would gain more in PA. The module leader recognized cultural differences: *'I certainly see different cultural backgrounds are more or less reluctant to be involved in this, so I explained carefully. I think it's helpful as I'm also from overseas so I will see the differences. But, if handled properly, that's fine'*.

Generally, ISs in this module achieved the module leader’s expectation of involving students in assessment, as 77.8% of them agreed that PA allowed them to take part in the assessment process. However, the module leader did not intervene to promote intercultural learning in students, and no data emerged to suggest that PA fostered intercultural learning in this module.

4.6 The Computer Science Module (CS)

This section presents findings from the fifth case study. It presents data from a taught master’s module conducted as part of the MSc Computer Science. This module was observed in phase II, and provides evidence for section 4.7, which presents a cross analysis of research data from all five modules.

4.6.1 Description of the module context

4.6.1.1 The procedures of PA

An assessment item for the students in this module was a group project undertaken in randomly divided groups comprised of three to five students who engaged in PA within the group. Students were provided with information regarding the tasks. After they completed the project, they marked each other within the group according to the given mark sheet and criteria on the basis of personal contribution to this project. The mark from PA was valued at 25% of the semester mark for this module. This module combined formative and summative assessment, but had more characteristics of summative assessment. Figure 15 shows the procedure for conducting PA in this module.

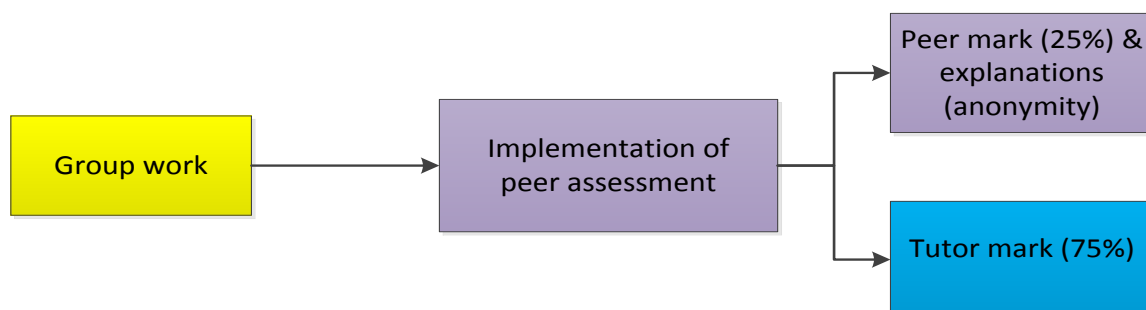


Figure 15: Procedures for conducting PA in CS

4.6.1.2 Classification and framing

This module was in the science and engineering field, in which knowledge was not structured flexibly, so the classification was strong. The module leader told students how they were going to give marks and provided a mark sheet and criteria, and thus the framing was strong.

4.6.1.3 Staff's expectation of using PA

The module leader used PA to encourage students to understand group members' contribution to the group work and to know how to measure individual contributions. He just wanted students to agree the percentage awarded to each individual in the group. If some students did not contribute to the group, they might receive a lower mark than other group members within the group. They could realize they had not done enough work. He also expected it to facilitate students' evaluation skills for professional development.

4.6.1.4 Participants and research methods

15 ISs and five UK students completed the pre-questionnaires, and observation was conducted once in the classroom. Unfortunately, only one Chinese student completed the post-questionnaire and participated in the interview, though the same procedure was followed to invite them as in other modules. They might consider helping the research as increased workload, because they were science students and lacked knowledge of social sciences and its epistemology. Thus, we may gain some insights into this module from observational data and students' assumptions of using PA from data in the pre-questionnaires. Table 23 and Table 24 show the demographic statistics in each research method.

Country of origin	No. of students pre-questionnaire	No. of students post-questionnaire	No. of students interviewed
China	9	1	1
UK	5	0	0
India	2	0	0
Iraq	1	0	0
Ghana	1	0	0
Nigeria	1	0	0
US	1	0	0
Total	20	1	1

Table 23: Participants' country of origin in CS

Independent variables		No. of students pre-questionnaire	No. of students post-questionnaire	No. of students interviewed
Gender	Male	15	1	1
	Female	5	0	0
Age	<20	0	0	0
	21-25	17	1	1
	26-30	2	0	0
	>31	1	0	0
Previous experience	Have	7	N/A	0
	Not have	13		1

Table 24: Independent variables of participants in CS

4.6.2 ISs' perceptions of PA

4.6.2.1 Satisfaction of using PA

Since the item of satisfaction was just asked in the post-questionnaire, which was completed by only one student in this module, the quantitative data could not sufficiently reflect this theme. However, according to data from open-answers in the pre-questionnaire and from semi-structured observation, we might gain some understanding. For example:

PA lets us judge what you have done. But I think it should be the teacher's work.—SQ13 (Chinese, male, CS, phase II)

It's pointless.—SQ9 (Indian, male, CS, phase II)

It's a useful way to improve the group work.—S17 (Chinese, male, CS, phase II)

Thus, students' opinions of PA were diverse in this module, as some were positive while others were negative. In addition, observational data show that not all of them shared the recognition and realization rules of the module leader's induction of PA, as a few ISs asked me what PA was when I delivered questionnaires in the class. This again indicates that sharing understanding between staff and ISs can also be a problem in the F+ context.

4.6.2.2 Benefits of PA

Students thought PA could motivate them to contribute to the group work. For instance:

It promotes participations for group project...group members will be motivated to give their all.—SQ11 (Ghanaian, male, CS, phase II)

It enables us to see who was contributing.—SQ9 (Indian, male, CS, phase II)

It enhances the whole level of the group.—SQ10 (Chinese, female, CS, phase II)

In the pre-questionnaire, 60% assumed PA might develop their critical analysis skills, and a further 66.6% supposed their communication skills could be developed during the process.

Interviewee S17 (Chinese, male, CS, phase II) said that PA helped his learning:

I like PA, really, it's different from exams. PA evaluates several abilities, not only memory and specific knowledge. I think students need PA to improve many necessary skills, such as communication and evaluation skills, which cannot be developed through exams. It facilitates my learning.

4.6.2.3 Problematic aspects of PA

As peer marks were valued at 25% of the semester mark, ISs expressed their concern of biased marking in the pre-questionnaire. A majority of them (86.7%) thought marking would be biased. Some commented:

It's difficult to set the benchmark in assessing them.— SQ11 (Ghanaian, male, CS, phase II)

Marking can be biased.— SQ12 (Nigerian, male, CS, phase II)

Marking is not that objective, people may get high mark from friends.— SQ13 (Chinese, male, CS, phase II)

4.6.2.4 Conditions of implementing PA

ISs felt applying criteria was challenging before they conducted PA. In the pre-questionnaire, 66.7% of them assumed clarifying criteria was important. Some even complained: *'It's difficult to use the criteria'*—SQ8 (Indian, male, CS, phase II).

4.6.3 Implications of using PA for ISs

4.6.3.1 Implications for academic transition

Quantitative data did not suggest that PA contributed to academic transition, but the only international student S17 (Chinese, male, CS, phase II) attending interview expressed his positive adjustment to the UK educational system through PA:

I learnt a lot from this experience, such as group collaboration, communication skills and emotional regulation when encountering difficulties. Through the process, students can realize their weaknesses from peers' perspectives; it's a way to learn from others. It's much better to find problems and correct them by ourselves than be given correct answers from the teacher...

4.6.3.2 Implications for intercultural learning

Although it might be unique, S17 (Chinese, male, CS, phase II) mentioned that intercultural learning took place in the process of group work:

I used to be very shy, very nervous and reluctant to work in a team, and had no idea how to communicate with group members especially if we came from different countries and were not familiar with each other. But after the practice, I realized that group work is very important, I learnt some communication skills with people from different cultures. When I meet team work next time, you know team projects are our main work in computer sciences, I will be more willing and prepared to engage in the team, I won't fear it any more.

4.6.4 Conclusion

As data in the pre-questionnaire were just students' assumptions before conducting PA, and only one student completed the post-questionnaire and attended student interview, the findings were not representative of the whole module. However, some unique results may be valuable. Basically, students met the module leader's expectation of using PA—agreeing the percentage of marks attributed to each individual in the group.

The module leader might pay more attention to share all students' recognition and realization rules. He thought students should have already experienced PA before:

I think students from different cultures may have different tendencies of agreement. Some of them may not complain if marks are unfair. I haven't seen negative feedback, I think students on postgraduate courses have already done PA whether in this country or other countries, so they have gotten this idea.

However, 73.3% of ISs had not experienced PA before they took this module. Robson and Turner (2007) quote Gelter's (2003) suggestion in arguing that tutors should not simply assume that students have critical and reflective skills. Development of such skills requires dedicated time, effort and support. As Hills and Thom (2005, p. 332) proposed, it would be a mistake to forget that 'students and teachers do not always see, to describe, the same phenomenon in the same terms'.

4.7 Cross analysis

The previous five sections presented data from each of the five cases so that we can gain insights into what really happened in each module. This section draws the five modules together and presents a cross case analysis to provide evidence associated with the research

questions. Part 4.7.1 gives details of data to compare ISs and UK students' perceptions of PA across five modules, tests the influences of some independent variables on ISs' views of PA, and synthesizes individual learning outcomes through PA in relation to academic transition and intercultural learning. All the statistical analysis used data from the post-questionnaires. Part 4.7.2 presents research data to discuss and compare staff's views and practices of PA in the international classroom, with comments from a university assessment policy maker and staff educator on formative assessment and the internationalization of the curriculum.

4.7.1 ISs' perceptions of PA

4.7.1.1 Perceptions of PA by country (ISs VS UK students)

For all the 17 items in phase I, two differences between ISs and UK students were clear.

- 1) Just 14.3% of UK students thought PA was challenging, but more than 53.8% of ISs significantly felt the challenge ($p=0.010$, Mann-Whitney $U=35.000$, $Z=-2.588$).
- 2) 57% of UK students strongly disagreed it would be more comfortable if peers shared the same cultural background, but 58% of ISs agreed or strongly agreed with this opinion ($p=0.010$, Mann-Whitney $U=35.000$, $Z=-2.572$).

For all the 39 items in phase II, two important differences between ISs and UK students were found.

- 1) 80% of UK students thought assessment stress could be reduced by PA, whereas just 33% of ISs felt this way ($p=0.040$, Mann-Whitney $U=36.000$, $Z=-2.055$). This, together with the result in phase I, illustrates that PA was more challenging to ISs.
- 2) UK students did not value peer feedback highly and only 20% of them thought it was useful. However, 77% of ISs acknowledged the usefulness of peer feedback ($p=0.049$, Mann-Whitney $U=37.000$, $Z=-1.972$).

Overall, the findings suggest that staff can use PA in the international classroom as there are small differences between ISs and UK students' perceptions of this approach. In addition, the findings confirm Shi's (2006) previous report that the difference between the current generation of ISs and their Western peers is not as great as before.

4.7.1.2 Perceptions of PA by gender

Gender effects are often discussed in social research, but Falchikov and Goldfinch (2000) pointed out that there has been little work on gender effects on PA. In this study, there was only one statistically significant difference between male and female ISs in rating each item in phase I and two in phase II, in terms of useful peer feedback ($p=0.028$, Mann-Whitney $U=43.000$, $Z=-2.203$), assessing fairly ($p=0.047$, Mann-Whitney $U=58.000$, $Z=-1.987$) and reducing stress ($p=0.043$, Mann-Whitney $U=60.000$, $Z=-2.022$). Overall, the data suggests that there are only small differences between male and female ISs' perceptions of PA, and gender is not a significant focus of this study.

4.7.1.3 Perceptions of PA by framing

Three module leaders used F- discourse and two module leaders used F+ discourse, shown in Figure 16.

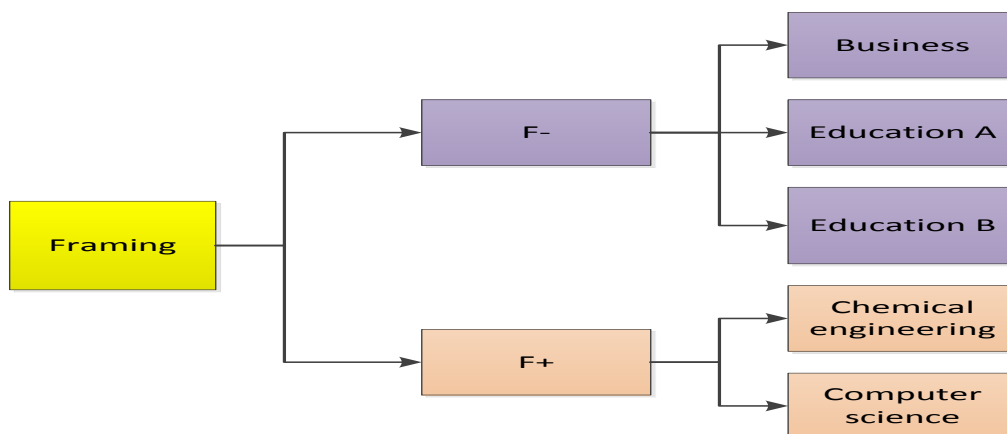


Figure 16: PA by framing

Since there was only the F- context in phase I, the analysis of the variable of framing was just conducted in phase II. It is clear that three differences in the use of PA in the F- and F+ contexts by ISs were found:

- 1) ISs in both contexts felt discussion and interaction could be promoted through PA, but more ISs in the F- context than in the F+ context felt so, 80% compared with 50% ($p=0.050$, Mann-Whitney $U=60.000$, $Z=-1.963$), as shown in Figure 17. This reveals that in the F- context, PA offers students more opportunities to explore issues by themselves.

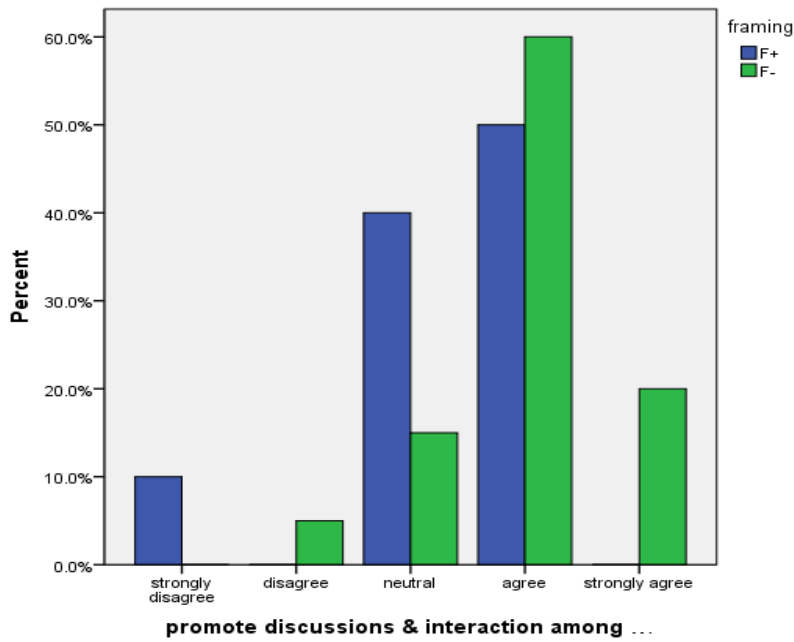


Figure 17: Significance 1 by framing

2) 60% of ISs in the F+ context were not sure what the staff were looking for when using PA, while just 30% of ISs in the F- context were confused by this issue ($p=0.049$, Mann-Whitney $U=57.000$, $Z=-1.969$), as shown in Figure 18. Thus, we may consider that as long as staff and students share their understanding, even in the F- context students may still be given a clear direction; however, in the F+ context in which staff give explicit and direct instruction, students may still feel confused, particularly when they meet a new situation where there is less shared understanding between staff and students.

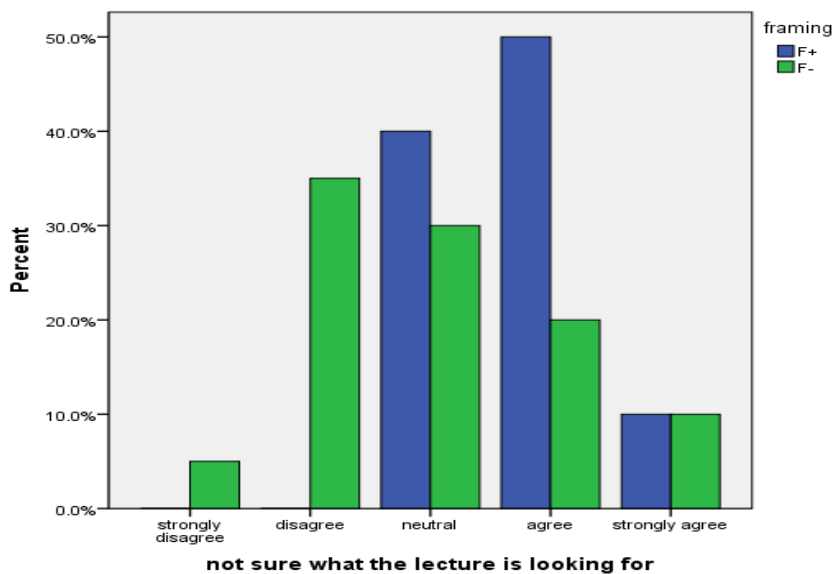


Figure 18: Significance 2 by framing

3) 40% of ISs in the F+ context thought that they just gave a positive mark/feedback to their peers, but only 10% of ISs in the F- context thought this way ($p=0.038$, Mann-Whitney $U=57.000$, $Z=-2.073$), as shown in Figure 19. Therefore, we may assume students in the F- context can be more objective and critical in PA, which is probably due to the freer environment and more relaxed social relations between students created by the F- context.

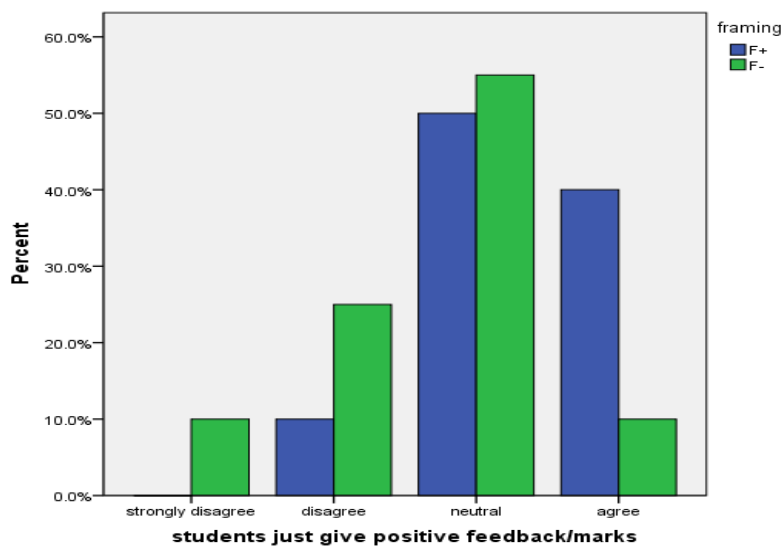


Figure 19: Significance 3 by framing

The findings suggest that there are some differences of ISs' perceptions of PA in the F- and F+ contexts, which provide a new perspective to explore ISs' assessment experiences.

4.7.1.4 Perceptions of PA by forms of assessment

Since all the modules in phase I used formative PA, the analysis of the variable of assessment forms was just conducted in phase II. Two modules used formative PA, and the other three modules used summative combined with formative PA, but had more characteristics of summative assessment and so they were still categorised as summative assessment in this study. Figure 20 shows details of the forms of assessment in the five modules.

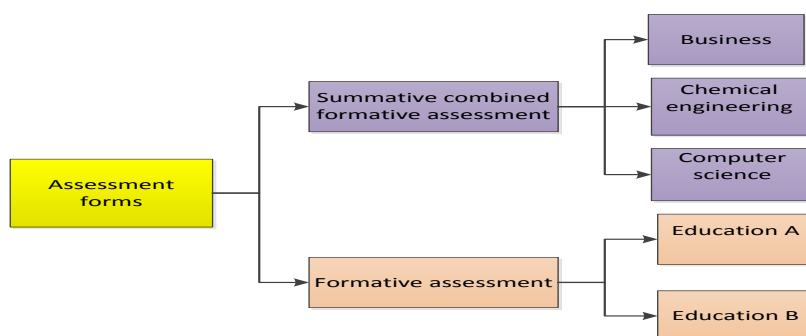


Figure 20: PA by forms of assessment

The study clearly found six different perceptions of PA in the two assessment forms by ISs:

1) and 2) 53% of ISs in the summative assessment dominated context were not sure what the staff were looking for, compared with 23% of those in the formative assessment context ($p=0.043$, Mann-Whitney $U=64.000$, $Z=-2.025$), as shown in Figure 21. In these modules using summative assessment, staff did not explain too much rationale for using PA. Within the formative assessment context, those ISs who were not sure of staff expectations were all from EDUB. Thus, it can be assumed that the induction of using PA by the module leader in EDUA was the more successful. In addition, 38% of ISs using formative assessment agreed or strongly agreed that monitoring, intervention or assistance from staff throughout the PA process was necessary, but more than 82% of ISs using summative assessment thought in this way ($p=0.040$, Mann-Whitney $U=64.500$, $Z=-2.059$), as shown in Figure 22. This result confirms that staff using summative assessment did not provide a clear explanation of the use of PA or provide sufficient support during the implementation, so ISs in summative assessment wanted to have more help from staff. Hence, whether in the F- or F+ context, or whether using summative or formative assessment, staff always have to share students' recognition and realization rules in the classroom, and give support to meet students' needs throughout the learning process.

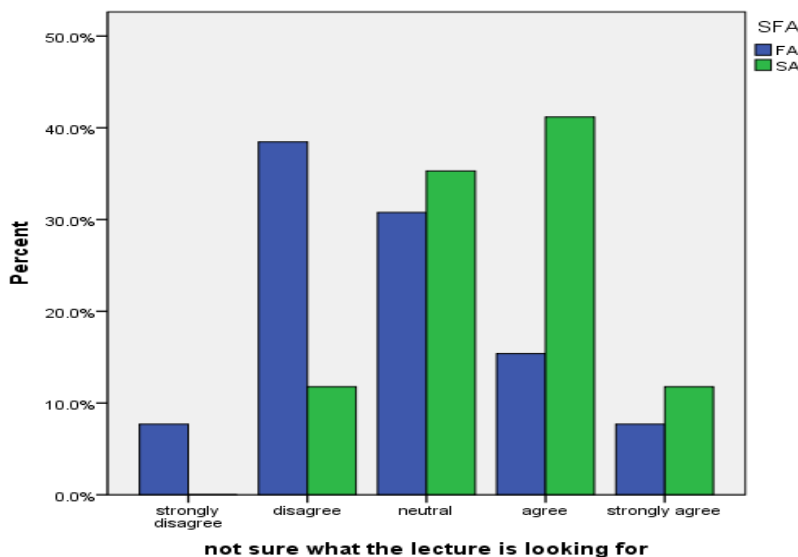


Figure 21: Significance 1 by forms of PA

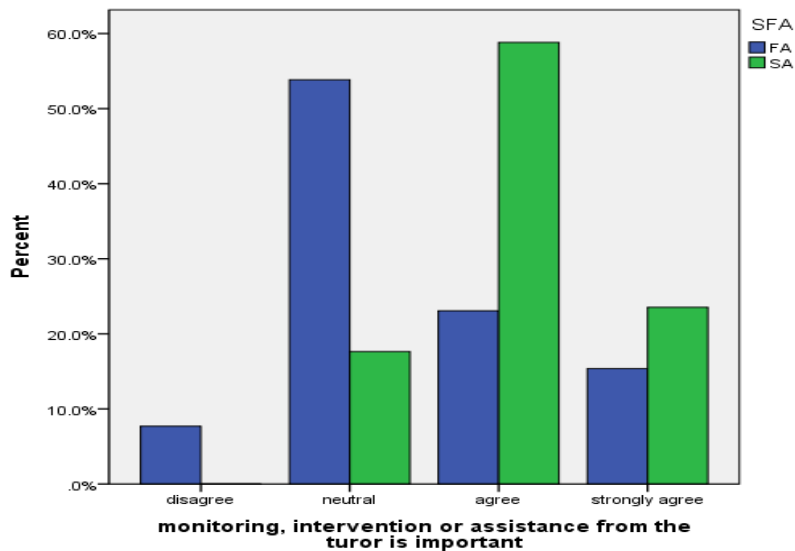


Figure 22: Significance 2 by forms of PA

3) and 4) Regarding the peer marks, 29% of ISs in the summative assessment dominated context did not think that peers could assess fairly, compared with 8% of those in the formative assessment context ($p=0.031$, Mann-Whitney $U=87.000$, $Z=-2.160$), as shown in Figure 23. Moreover, 59% of ISs in the summative assessment dominated context agreed that consideration of friendship with peers resulted in a dishonest mark or feedback, compared with just 8% of those in the formative assessment context ($p=0.012$, Mann-Whitney $U=55.500$, $Z=-2.504$), as seen in Figure 24. All three modules deployed summative PA using peer marks as a part of the semester mark, while the peer mark was not needed in the other two modules deploying formative PA. Thus, it is not surprising that more students in the summative assessment dominated context doubted the accuracy and validity of peer marks.

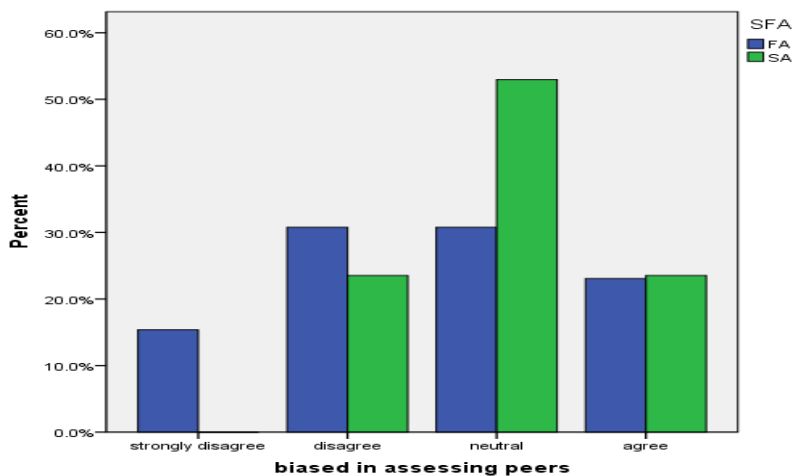


Figure 23: Significance 3 by forms of PA

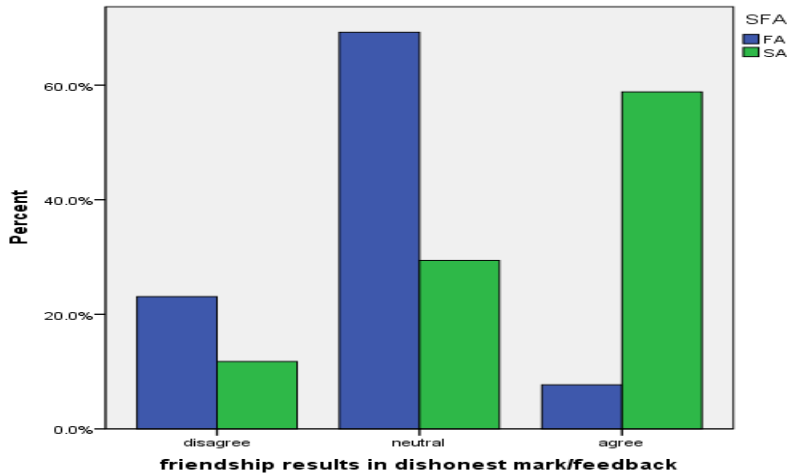


Figure 24: Significance 4 by forms of PA

5) Just 23% of ISs using formative assessment preferred anonymity during PA, but more than 70% of ISs using summative assessment preferred anonymity ($p=0.039$, Mann-Whitney $U=56.500$, $Z=-2.344$), as shown in Figure 25. Students using summative assessment needed to give peer marks, and thus anonymity might be better for them to give objective marks, whereas students using formative assessment needed to talk with each other, so anonymity was not necessary.

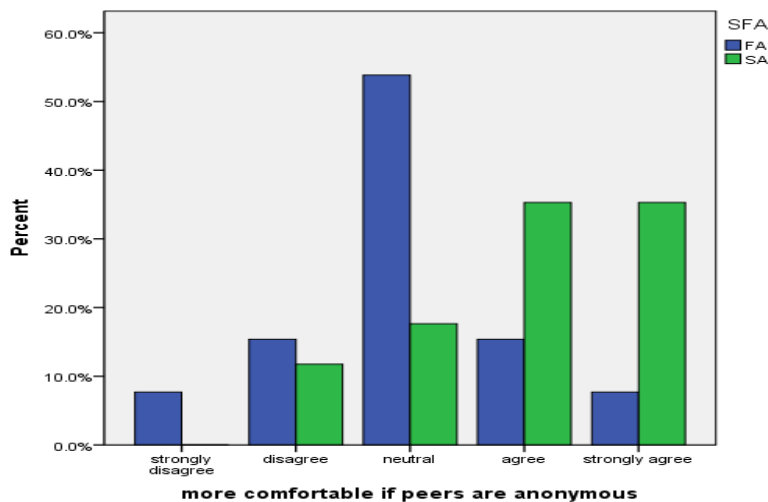


Figure 25: Significance 5 by forms of PA

6) 62% of ISs using formative PA acknowledged the barrier of language in the process of PA, while just 29% of ISs using summative PA felt this barrier ($p=0.039$, Mann-Whitney $U=64.000$, $Z=-2.068$), as shown in Figure 26. This is reasonable as they had more discussions and oral communications during formative assessment, but little communication in summative assessment.

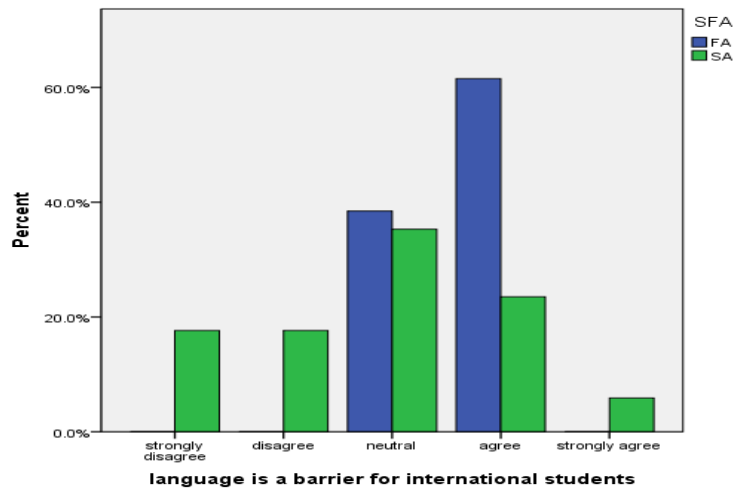


Figure 26: Significance 6 by forms of PA

4.7.1.5 Perceptions of PA by age

Loddington, et al. (2009) found that only more mature students recognize support and teamwork development brought from PA. However, in this study there was no evidence to suggest differences between the three age groups (21-25, 26-30, >31) in relation to ISs' perceptions of PA in phase I, and only one difference in phase II, which was that the older group (>31) tended to think that PA developed their communication skills more than younger groups (21-25 and 26-30) ($p=0.032$, $\chi^2(2)=6.863$, Chi-square=6.863, $df=2$). Overall, the results suggest that age was not a contributory factor influencing ISs' perceptions of PA in this study.

4.7.1.6 Conditions for successful implementation of PA

Seven students (six ISs and one UK student) attending individual student interviews in phase II identified the priorities of conditions that might affect the implementation of PA by the research method of diamond ranking. 11 factors that might affect the use of PA extracted from literature and findings in phase I were provided to students for their selection. Figure 27 is a photo of a diamond ranking exercise completed by a student.

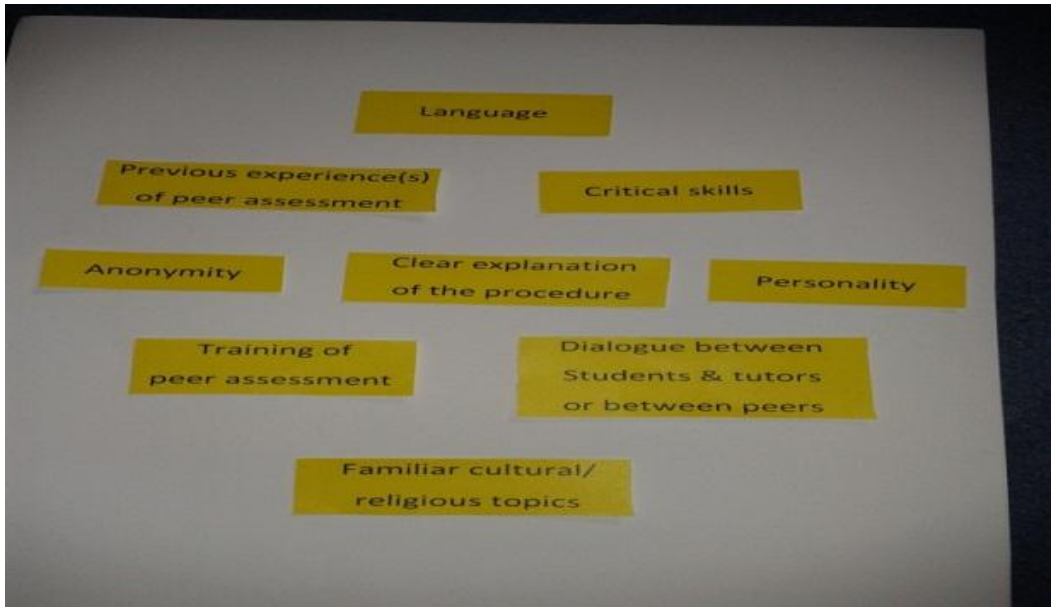


Figure 27: An example of diamond ranking

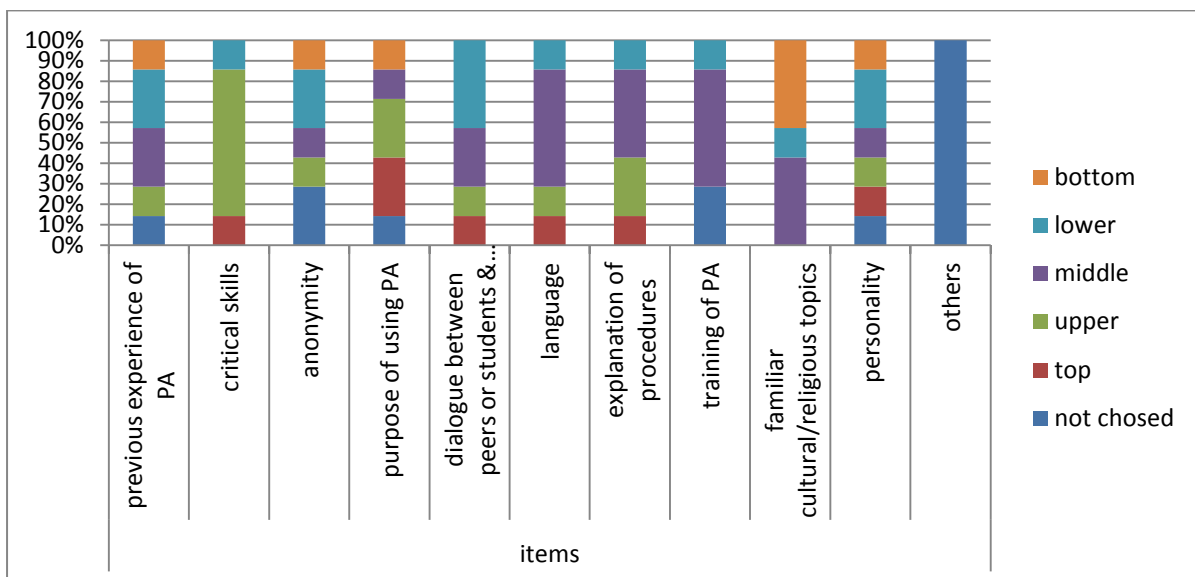


Figure 28: Analysis of diamond ranking

From the analysis of diamond ranking shown in Figure 28, it can be clearly seen that the ‘purpose of using PA’ was ranked as the most important factor to conduct a successful PA, followed by ‘critical skills’ and ‘clear explanation of procedures’. ‘Language’, ‘dialogue between students and tutors or between peers’, and ‘personality’ were placed in the middle of the ranking. ‘Previous experiences of PA’, ‘anonymity’ and ‘training of PA’ were less important. ‘Familiar cultural or religious topics’ were not contributory factors. The results from the diamond ranking accord well with results from other data collection methods. For instance, the first ranking ‘purpose of using PA’ is in accordance with the result from the

post-questionnaire in phase II³ that 73.4% of ISs agreed or strongly agreed that explaining the purpose of PA is important; interview data also reflect this result; for example, S3 (Chinese, male, BUSI, phase I) said: *‘I think the lecturer has to make us understand the effects of PA, why we have to use it’*. These results support the suggestion that staff and students need to share understanding of pedagogic activities.

4.7.1.7 Outcomes of using PA

A total of 14 ISs and three UK students attended individual student interviews in two phases. According to their personal experience, four levels of outcomes of using PA in relation to academic transition and intercultural learning emerged from the data, as shown in Table 25.

Four levels	Participants
1 completion of a task	S4 (Chinese, male, BUSI, phase I) S5 (Chinese, male, BUSI, phase II) S6 (Chinese, female, BUSI, phase II)
2 improvement of subject knowledge	S9 (Thai, female, EDUA, phase I) S12 (UK, female, EDUA, phase I) S15 (Chinese, female, EDUA, phase II)
3 academic transition	S1 (South Korean, female, BUSI, phase I) S2 (Malaysian, male, BUSI, phase I) S7 (Chinese, female, EDUA, phase I) S8 (Chinese, female, EDUA, phase I) S11 (UK, male, EDUA, phase I) S14 (Chinese, female, EDUA, phase II)
4 intercultural learning	S3 (Chinese, male, BUSI, phase I) S10 (Omani, female, EDUA, phase I) S13 (Vietnamese, female, EDUA, phase II) S16 (UK, female, EDUB, phase II) S17 (Chinese, male, CS, phase II)

Table 25: Interviewees’ outcomes of using PA

In the five modules, the module leader in EDUA strongly addressed intercultural learning in the class, and the findings suggest that this could be achieved through formative PA, such as interviewees S10 (Omani, female, EDUA, phase I) and S13 (Vietnamese, female, EDUA,

³ Data were not available in phase I as this item was not designed in the questionnaires in phase I.

phase II). It is interesting that UK students could not obviously recognize intercultural learning in this study, such as interviewees S11 (UK, male, EDUA, phase I) and S12 (UK, female, EDUA, phase I). Actually, internationalization not only influences ISs, it also affects host institutions and home students. Thus, teaching staff should also pay attention to home students and develop their awareness of intercultural learning. Participants identified face-to-face peer feedback as a catalyst to encourage their critical thinking about learned and lived experiences in an intercultural setting. They highlighted PA's particular value in advancing their skills of intercultural communication, as they perceived effects of cultural distance on their communication during PA (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009). Some students indicated that they would use the learning from this experience in their future communication with cultural others. Thus, PA has the potential to promote academic transition and intercultural learning.

To conclude, UK students and ISs did not have too many significantly different understandings of PA. On the one hand, ISs were more worried about intercultural communication, felt more challenged and became more stressed by PA than UK students; on the other hand, ISs appreciated peer feedback more than their UK peers. Gender and age were not critical factors that influenced ISs' experience of PA in this study, while framing and forms of assessment were stronger contributory factors. No matter what the procedures for using PA, sharing the purpose of using PA between staff and students ranked as the most important factor for successful implementation. Additionally, PA has revealed its potential to promote academic transition and intercultural learning in the international classroom.

4.7.2 Staff's practice of applying PA in the international classroom

Students pay close attention to assessment designed and implemented by staff, as it determines students' academic progress in HE (Brown, 2004). Therefore, it is valuable to investigate staff practices of assessment and how to avail assessment as a tool for helping students learning (ibid). Moreover, there is evidence that staff attitudes and expertise about assessment influence the use of assessment approaches and feedback provided to students (Tang and Chow, 2007). Thereby, the study interviewed five teaching staff, one university assessment policy maker and one staff educator to investigate: (a) staff beliefs about teaching, learning and assessment in the international classroom, and (b) staff recognitions of revised

assessment policy in relation to university's agenda of creating an internationalized educational setting.

4.7.2.1 Assessment policy

Studies illustrate that by addressing diverse aims, assessment practice in HE can sometimes correspond to assessment policy, but sometimes they can also be incongruous (Leathwood, 2005; Carless, Joughin and Mok, 2007). Thus, hearing views from assessment policy makers can provide us with an important perspective on assessment practices. In this study, an assessment policy maker in this university expressed her attitude towards assessment in HE, in that the university provides an assessment policy to inform both staff and students that the university does not only rely on assessment to make selection decisions or grant degrees to students, but also addresses assessment to affect students' approaches to learning, such as how they utilize feedback for future learning, and develop lifelong learning skills. As she said, *'The aim of assessment policy is to enable both staff and students to realize that assessment is an important thing, not only to measure progress and reward marks, but also provide feedback to help students improve'*. ISs are currently a focus to be addressed when policy makers are revising assessment policy. Thus, the university has already recognised the existence of ISs, as she commented: *'That's one thing that came out from our conversations, like whether we should have or not have special assessment policies on ISs, like if we should have guidelines on how to adjust ISs, whose English is not as good as others, how to manage that'*. However, policy makers have not made any final decision yet, and it is significant for them to understand how ISs are influenced by assessment.

To avoid contradictions between policy and practice, the university leaves enough space for module leaders to design assessment approaches, but particularly recommends formative assessment, which is in accordance with the current trend of assessment. She commented:

I think module leaders have quite a lot of room in our university. There are certain guide lines like how long assessment can be... but in terms of personal preference, if they prefer exams...essays... or PA... there is definite flexibility. We want people to know there is flexibility, especially the use of formative assessment, how they use it, why they use it. I will recommend formative assessment, but also make staff and students aware how many forms there are, because some students may think formative assessment is just a conversation with their module leader. But it's an assessment in its own way. It's not just guidance...we are trying to make many examples.

Formative assessment has the potential to develop learner autonomy and foster lifelong

learners, both of which are essential purposes of HE (Yorke, 2003). Assessment policy-makers and qualification designers are increasingly interested in encouraging deeper engagement with learning and enhancing autonomy brought about by formative assessment (Meyer, et al., 2010). This university is following the trend and revising assessment policy to promote the use of formative assessment across departments. Results suggest that using a 'bottom-up' mode to implement the reform allows staff to create their own approaches and to make changes, which is important to promote the reform policy (Wallace and Priestley, 2011). The policy maker explained that the revision of assessment policy aims to encourage staff rather than force them to use formative assessment, so in the policy documents there are some definitions and guidelines on formative assessment, along with examples of successful practices.

Meyer, et al. (2010) propose that university assessment policy is unlikely to cover every contingency, situation or preference. 'Rules and regulations to ensure consistency across offerings may provide quality assurance', argued by Craddock and Mathias (2009, cited in Meyer, et al., 2010, p. 347), 'but are also likely to constrain the use of diverse assessment practices shown to have a positive impact on student learning'. At the university level, policy makers do not intend to give strict rules of assessment methods or specific procedures, but provide space for teaching staff to design assessment procedures themselves to fit their own needs. Furthermore, the university holds workshops and conferences to disseminate revised assessment policy, and provides staff education on formative assessment and feedback. The networks, including support from university and faculty, provided a source of legitimacy for staff innovation. This strategy created the possibility for staff to assert their own beliefs in the interpretation of the policy into classroom practice. Currently, the university is trying to promote formative assessment across disciplines, and the five modules in this study represent this tendency. The university's empowerment of staff made it possible for them to participate in the design of formative assessment rather than simply reproduce assessment methods, so that staff can be more positive and empowered by reform (Schmidt and Datnow, 2005).

4.7.2.2 Assessment practice

Four module leaders and one teaching assistant from two faculties in this university participated in staff interviews. Three were from HASS (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences), including one from the Business School and two from the Education department;

two were from SAGE (Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering), including one from the Chemical Engineering school and one from the Computer Science school. Due to disciplinary spaces, they had different understandings and different aims in using PA, and thereby they used various procedures and pedagogic discourses. Table 26 presents the similarities and differences of using PA in the five modules.

Disciplines		Mark & Feedback	Value at the final mark	Formative /Summative assessment	Anonymity	Classification & Framing
HASS	BUSI	M+F	30%	F (Phase I) S (Phase II)	Yes	C-, F-
	EDUA	F	0%	F	No	C-, F-
	EDUB	F	0%	F	No	C-, F-
SAGE	CEM	M+F	30%	S	Yes	C+, F+
	CS	M	25%	S	Yes	C+, F+

Table 26: Similarities and differences of using PA in the five modules

Classification and framing was weak in the three modules from HASS. Especially in EDUA, the module leader recommended some articles of PA to students, gave them space and enabled them to explore and understand by themselves. The strength of social rules between the module leader and students was not tight in that he saw his position as a supporter rather than an authority and students had more apparent control during the process. However, ISs in these three modules had different understandings of the F- context. Some highly appreciated this style, as they had the chance to enjoy self-learning, as S13 (Vietnamese, female, EDUA, phase II) said: *'You really have power to decide what you do... you can be responsible for yourself'*. While others were sometimes confused when they lacked strict instructions, for they did not adjust well to the student-centred situation, as S15 (Chinese, female, EDUA, phase II) said: *'In China, it's a teacher-centred classroom, I was worried I might get lost if there were few sessions in the UK, no direction, I much preferred to follow teachers' instruction'*.

Classification and framing was strong in the two modules from SAGE. Pedagogic discourses by the two module leaders were not very flexible as they always provided standard answers. The social rules between staff and students were strong. For instance, when talking about discourse between staff and students, the module leader in CEM had an entirely different view from the module leader in EDUA, as she said: *'I think students need to see you as an authority in the field. I don't mean you have to do what I say but I'm expert in the field, earn students' respect. Then the discussion between us could be much easier'*. Relatively, students in these two modules tended to pursue specific correct answers expected by staff.

Since participating modules used the same framing and type of assessment in phase I, the relationships between independent variables such as framing and forms of assessment were just measured in phase II by a Chi-Square test. No close relationship was shown in the post-questionnaires in phase II; however, two relationships were found in the pre-questionnaires in phase II. This may be due to too few participants in the post-questionnaires (35 students) compared with 91 respondents in the pre-questionnaires. I did not intend to manipulate data, the closed questions in both the pre- and post-questionnaires were designed to be the same, and independent variables were not influenced by participants' actual experiences of PA. Thus, results in the pre-questionnaires whose Cronbach's Alpha was 0.803 are also valid and reliable. There was a strong relationship between modules and the use of framing ($p < 0.001$, $\phi = 1.000$, Pearson Chi-square=91.000, $df=4$). Staff in science modules tended to use F+ discourse, while staff in social sciences modules tended to use F- discourse in this study, as shown in Table 27. Moreover, framing strongly correlated with forms of assessment ($p < 0.001$, $\phi = 0.528$, Pearson Chi-square=25.389, $df=1$). Staff who used F- discourse tended to use formative assessment, while those who used F+ discourse tended to use summative assessment, as shown in Table 28. Nonetheless, there was no direct relationship between modules and types of assessment. Although the sample was small, it can be assumed that the type of modules has an impact on staff use of framing, and preference of framing influences staff choice of assessment.

framing * modules Crosstabulation

Count

	modules					Total
	BUSI	EDUA	EDUB	CEM	CS	
framing F+	0	0	0	14	20	34
F-	28	4	25	0	0	57
Total	28	4	25	14	20	91

Table 27: Framing and modules crosstabulation

framing * types Crosstabulation

Count

	types		Total
	summative assessment	formative assessment	
framing F+	34	0	34
F-	28	29	57
Total	62	29	91

Table 28: Framing and types of assessment crosstabulation

4.7.2.3 Staff education

The staff professional development program in the university offers a workshop ‘formative assessment’ to staff to promote this kind of assessment, in accordance with the dissemination of university assessment policy. A staff educator was interviewed in this study, and she expressed her attitudes towards feedback, formative assessment and teaching ISs. In the workshop, the staff educator explicitly addressed feedback. She suggested that tutors do not only give feedback to students to improve their work, but also to encourage feedback from students to demonstrate their reflections, so feedback could go to both sides. One module leader in this study mentioned she would like to look at students’ peer feedback and then reflect on her teaching: *‘I will see how they look at each other and I’m thinking how I may comment on the same work. Maybe I miss something that they frankly point out, then I will remind myself’.*

The staff educator tries to blur boundaries between different subjects in order to promote staff cooperation and facilitate the experience of learning from each other before they encourage students to do so. She supports the F- context, as she said: *‘In the workshop, teachers come from across disciplines. They may have quite different knowledge backgrounds, but like teachers from dentistry may learn something from teachers from chemistry’.* The staff educator holds the same opinion as the module leader in EDUA that talking is important in the learning process, so both of them prefer to encourage talk either among peers or between staff and students: *‘Encouraging tutors to talk and discuss in the workshop is a good approach to making them feel formative learning first’.* However, this innovative approach is not widely used in the university at the moment, as she commented: *‘I think it’s not widely seen across the university...Staff particularly prefer to do summative assessment, give marks anonymously...I know one or two people are doing this in postgraduate programme in HASS, encouraging discourses between tutors and students, especially to ISs, using discussion as part of feedback’.*

Regarding the promotion of formative assessment through assessment policy, the staff educator supposes that there is a gap in understanding about feedback between staff and students in practice, as she said: *‘I suppose every member of staff would say they do formative assessment, but if I ask the students, they may say no sometimes’.* Indeed, this is also the reason that policy makers are revising university assessment policy at the moment. They hope that not only staff, but also students understand assessment policy. When both staff and

students share the same understanding of assessment, particularly formative assessment, then this form can become popular and effective in the university. Otherwise, students may not emphasize it, as a UK student said: *'I think the tutor should explain benefits, objectives and purposes of using PA, otherwise students will not take it seriously'*.

In Robson, et al.'s research (2013), some ISs in postgraduate taught modules reflected that the master programme was just one year, and after they understood learning and feedback they return to their home contexts. The staff educator assumed that UK students have similar perceptions of formative assessment and feedback as ISs who do not know how to use feedback for improvement of learning, as she commented: *'Quite a few UK students just recognize written comments, if feedback is not written like that, it's not feedback...I don't think UK students know what to do with it (feedback)'*. Offering students the opportunity to receive appropriate feedback for their learning needs is suggested when staff design assessment (Knight and Yorke, 2003). More importantly, students need to be empowered to recognize feedback and learn how to make use of it (Poulos and Mahony, 2008). The staff educator also said, *'If assessment is not related to marks, students say "I don't want to do it". Maybe it's because of the different educational systems that students come through...I'm not sure if ISs do think it a waste of time'*. In this study, 54% of ISs from the formative assessment context did not think formative PA wasted time. Thus, we may predict that it is not necessary to worry too much that students might feel formative assessment wastes time. As long as staff and students share the same understanding of formative assessment, both sides may appreciate its benefits.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has presented evidence from the five case studies, and discussed the context of conducting PA in each module by presenting data extracts from the staff and students through key themes, such as relating to the concepts of framing, formative assessment and intercultural learning. The next chapter, chapter five, presents a critical discussion based on the findings in this chapter.

Chapter 5. Final Discussion

This chapter is divided into five sections:

Section 5.1 provides an introduction to the chapter.

Section 5.2 examines ISs' experiences of PA at the micro level.

Section 5.3 discusses staff's practice in the international classroom at the meso level.

Section 5.4 proposes the study's indications of internationalizing the curriculum in HE at the macro level.

Section 5.5 concludes this chapter.

5.1 Introduction

This study focuses on ISs' experiences of PA, employing a case study approach which is a commonly used research approach to study assessment and feedback in HE (Evans, 2013). Key theories and concepts in the literature review chapter provide theoretical frameworks to analyze the case study data collected from questionnaires, interviews, observation and diamond ranking. Bernstein's (1996) classification and framing are the prominent theory adopted in this study to investigate power relationships in the implementation of PA in different modules, and the findings will be discussed in this chapter. Dialogue is a key feature in PA, which also relates to Bernstein's (1996) classification and framing, and Hermans's (2001) dialogic self theory, so dialogic talk and dialectic talk occurred in PA will also be discussed. Since PA provides ISs with experience of assessment in UK HE, the development of their assessment careers has the potential to impact on the movement between their internal and external positions when they are exposed to a new learning and assessment environment. Thus, the influence of their learner identity in relation to intercultural learning will be discussed. All these elements build the last stage of the conceptual framework (Figure 29), which brings together the literature review and the research methodology, and links the topics and themes presented into a coherent framework within which the research data can be analyzed, discussed, and then linked to the research questions.

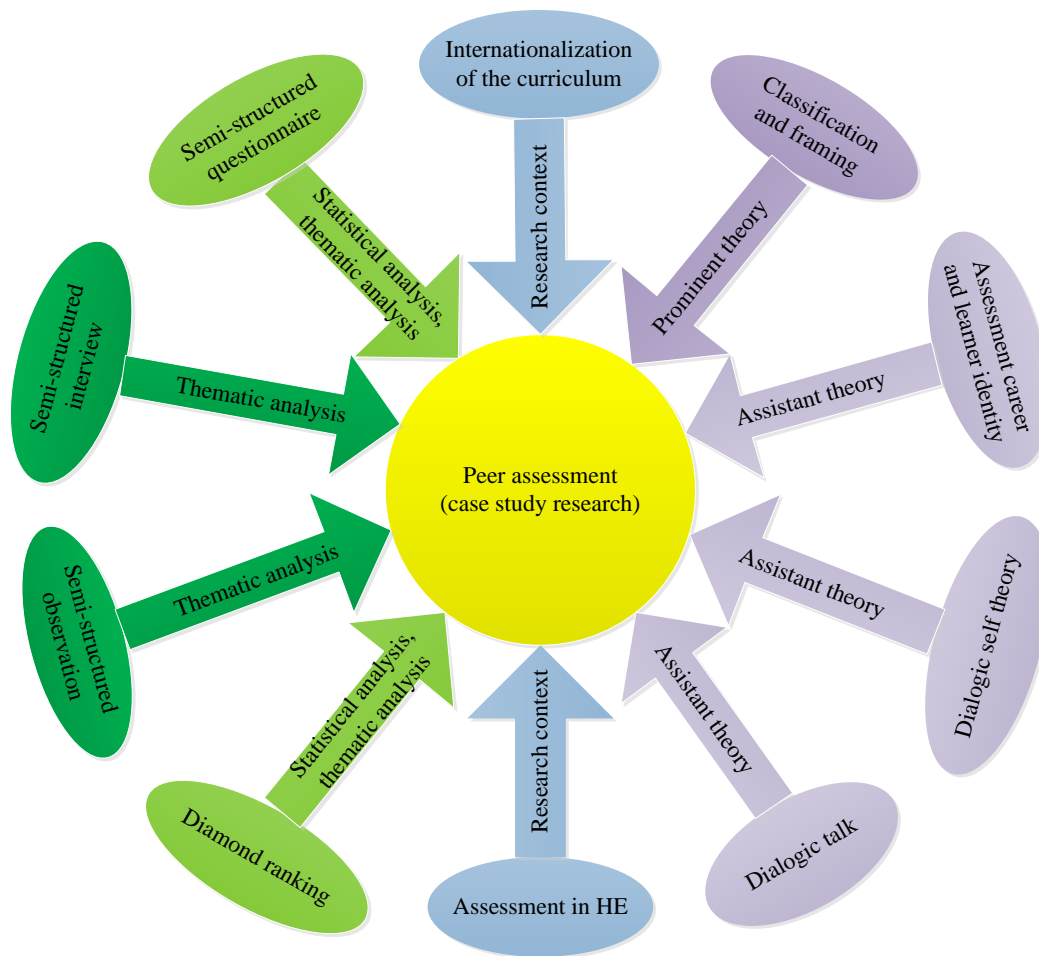


Figure 29: Conceptual framework of stage III

This qualitative dominant mixed methods case study was conducted in two academic years, 2010-2011 (phase I) and 2011-2012 (phase II). The modules include BUSI, EDUA, EDUB, CEM, and CS. Typically, a module was composed of students from four to eight nationalities. However, it is inevitable that Chinese students were to some extent a focal point of this study, because the percentage of Chinese students among the ISs in this study was 38.5 and 34.6 of the pre- and post-questionnaire in phase I, and 53.9 and 53.3 of the pre- and post-questionnaire in phase II. The discussion that follows will seek to address the research questions in the light of the findings in the previous chapter. It will consider ISs' experiences of PA in relation to intercultural learning in different postgraduate modules. It will also consider staff practices and the university's activities in terms of the internationalization of the curriculum.

5.2 Micro level: ISs' experiences of PA

Students' experiences with and attitudes towards assessment have been shown to affect how they approach learning (Boud and Falchikov, 2006). Hence, to investigate ISs' diverse perceptions of PA is a wise approach to evaluate the potential contributions of this assessment mechanism in the international classroom.

5.2.1 Academic transition

This study confirms that many benefits of PA which have already been reported in the literature (see 2.3.2.3) can also be gained by ISs, such as improved interaction with other students (e.g. 4.2.2.2), the promotion of a deeper understanding of subject knowledge (e.g. 4.5.2.2), and the opportunity to reflect on one's own work and the work of others (e.g. 4.3.2.2). These beneficial outcomes not only enhance ISs' subject knowledge, but also contribute to their academic transition, assisting them in adjusting to the UK educational system. As S2 (Malaysian, male, BUSI, phase I) commented: *'It (PA) gives me an opportunity to know the assessment process and criteria (in the UK)'*. According to Vygotsky (1978, p. 186), learning is a social process, and such a collaborative approach has 'benefits on cognitive development over learning in isolation'. PA encourages interaction between students and allows them to enter the zone of proximal development, where a less able peer, or more accurately in terms of this study a less experienced peer, is able to enter a new area of potential development through discussion with someone more experienced or more adjusted to learning in the UK. However, not all ISs had a successful academic transition through PA in this study, and to interpret this we may deploy Bernstein's concepts of recognition and realization rules to help us understand ISs' various performances in PA.

According to Bernstein (1996), recognition and realization rules strongly influence a student's performance in a specific educational context, so the student's successful orientation within that culture can be seen if he or she has appropriate recognition and realization rules for the classroom culture. For instance, following Bernstein's suggestion, through observing participants' reactions during peer discussion in EDUA, S13 (Vietnamese, female, EDUA, phase II), of the three ISs in this group, had high recognition rules as she perceived the F-context and actively engaged in the discussion which was expected by the module leader. Thus, she successfully adjusted to formative PA within the F- context. However, the two Chinese students (S14, Chinese, female, EDUA, phase II, and S15, Chinese, female, EDUA, phase II) had relatively low recognition rules for the F- context, as they did not recognize the

expectations of the situation they were in; in other words, the two Chinese students did not perceive either the module leader's intention in the F- context or the benefits of empowerment brought from formative PA. By not appreciating this empowerment and instead seeking precise confirmation from the module leader suggests that the two Chinese students saw staff as the authority rather than as a supporter. Hence, it is not surprising that they were not satisfied with this experience. In BUSI, I noticed that a few students did not concentrate on watching peers' presentations, but slept or played with phones, and in EDUB most of the students kept silent without giving oral feedback to peer presentations. These students did not take PA seriously or did not know how to behave appropriately in this context, so they operated low recognition and realization rules in the process of PA and did not value it very much. As S4 (Chinese, male, BUSI, phase I) commented: *'I didn't think it (PA) was important, just did it as a task required by the lecturer'*.

In this study, 50% of ISs in phase I and 75% of ISs in phase II had never experienced PA in their home countries. Perhaps for this reason, PA raised anxiety in the majority of ISs during the initial stage. During and after the practice, some of the ISs had a successful experience of PA. From the observation, those who had successful experience of PA had relatively high recognition and realization rules in the classroom, and so they navigated the implementation of PA more effectively; examples of such students are S3 (Chinese, male, BUSI, phase I) and S13 (Vietnamese, female, EDUA, phase II). For instance, this Vietnamese student was active in formative PA, always raised questions and led the group discussion, and her reactions revealed that she understood the module leader's intention of using PA in the F- context. S17 (Chinese, male, CS, phase II) in the F+ context also presented his academic transition through PA. Although he was too shy to be willing to work in a group at the beginning, he was successfully able to complete the group project and develop personal skills because he operated a high level of recognition and realization rules, and finally he began to appreciate group work and PA. On the contrary, those students who had not had successful experience of PA had usually not been accustomed to discussing and assessing other's work. With these students, PA had a tendency to oppress them when they had relatively low recognition and realization rules in both the F- and F+ context. They were not sure why staff used PA or tended to be more silent during peer discussion, and this was the case with some ISs in EDUB. The two Chinese students (S14, Chinese, female, EDUA, phase II and S15, Chinese, female, EDUA, phase II) in EDUA had relatively low recognition and realization rules compared to their Vietnamese peer (S13, Vietnamese, female, EDUA, phase II) at the

beginning. After communicating with staff and peers, the two Chinese students demonstrated a slight academic transition, as in the interview they reflected that they had gradually realized that peer learning was an effective approach to learning in the UK. This enabled them to become more independent learners, particularly when there was less staff instruction than in their countries.

The research findings have supported Bernstein's concepts of recognition and realization rules and extended their application area to the international classroom in HE. ISs with high recognition and realization rules are likely to experience a smoother transition to the UK HE system either in the F+ context or the F- context. However, ISs with low recognition and realization rules are unlikely to make a successful transition to the UK HE system in the F+ context, and might have a slight transition in the F- context. Therefore, the results suggest that F- discourse is more likely to assist ISs' academic transition.

5.2.2 Intercultural learning

Since the Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999, HE has focused on developing the competencies of graduates, curriculum development and pedagogy for internationalization. These trends 'place an increasingly high academic premium on intercultural learning, an appreciation of cultural diversity and the development of intercultural communication skills across all subject areas' (Harrison and Peacock, 2010, p. 125). Pettigrew and Tropp (2000, cited in Robson, 2011) point out that intercultural learning can be facilitated through innovative academic development approaches, including formal and informal learning experiences. In this study, some ISs reflected that during and after PA (divergent PA in particular), they had a better understanding of learning in the UK, gained knowledge of other cultures and developed the ability to work effectively in diverse social and cultural settings. For instance, S3 (Chinese, male, BUSI, phase I) commented: *'In the mixed group, I improved my oral English and also gained some cultural and religious knowledge in the communication...PA developed my evaluation skills and I'll be more confident in working with foreigners in future'*.

With regard to intercultural experiences in the UK, ISs often complain they have little social integration with home students (Middlehurst and Woodfield, 2007). Some ISs also raised this issue in the current study. For example, a Vietnamese student (female, EDUA, phase II)

commented that one-year postgraduate students rarely had interaction with each other or social activities, but PA offered her the opportunity to build friendships with students from different cultural backgrounds, as PA left them no option but to interact with each other. If staff form the groups to ensure a cultural mix or encourage students to do so when they conduct PA, students may learn about multicultural issues that they would not otherwise have done. Thus, the findings in this study reveal that PA has the potential to promote intercultural learning.

Cushner and Karim (2004, p. 292) discuss how experience of studying overseas is ‘a significant transitional event that brings with it a considerable amount of accompanying stress, involving both confrontation and adaptation to unfamiliar physical and psychological experiences and changes’. ISs particularly confront stresses like culture shock (Ward, Bochner and Furnham, 2001, cited in Choi, 2003) and learning shock (Yamazaki, 2005). Nevertheless, successful intercultural experience can lead to personal growth (Furnham, 2004) and even individual transformation for internationalization or global citizenship (Killick, 2013). Some ISs reflected that they would think globally and consider issues from a variety of perspectives if they work or communicate with foreigners in future. For instance, S8 (Chinese, female, EDUA, phase I) said: *‘If I teach in HE in the future, I will consider foreign students’ differences and individual needs in my class’*. Nevertheless, not all modules in this study positively promoted intercultural learning or fostered students’ international perspectives through PA. For instance, some ISs did not reflect successful intercultural learning in the interview and they did not hold very positive attitudes towards PA. The reasons for this were varied, including intrinsic factors such as personal awareness and motivation, and extrinsic factors such as curriculum and pedagogy. Although we can do little about intrinsic factors, we may approach the desired outcomes through amending academic approaches.

By engaging students in discussion during the process of PA, both dialogic and dialectic talk were identified in this study. Bakhtin (1981) proposes that dialogic talk in student relationships helps students learn to see from at least two perspectives at once, their own point of view and that of others. In this regard, this study also includes the students’ points of view and that of their peers from different cultural backgrounds. When dialogic talk occurred, students could hear different voices (in terms of discussion or peer feedback) and they could decide to accept or reject these voices (in terms of changing or amending their work

according to received peer feedback). Sometimes these interactions raised cultural differences in mixed groups, such as other cultural perspectives on the field of study. Thus, intercultural learning was likely to occur in this context. For instance, in EDUA students provided feedback for others and received feedback from others as well. During the discussion, all of them could hear different voices, gain knowledge of other cultures (e.g. educational systems in other countries in this case) and gain awareness of how and why these are similar to or different from their own perspectives. This was a process of mutual learner construction and reconstruction. Thus, no matter whether they accepted different opinions or transferred to different cultural perspectives, they had opportunities to develop mutual understanding and respect. In this way, students create an inclusive space of dialogue within which they mutually construct and reconstruct each other's learning

Dialogic talk in this study took place more frequently in formative PA and in the F- context that not all ISs accepted easily. The traditional education experiences of the ISs involved in this study were characterized by F+ discourse and summative assessment. Many of them used Vygotsky's dialectic talk, which interpreted differences as contradictions that needed to be overcome to achieve a final solution. This pattern of talk was more easily accepted by ISs, by conducting group work or implementing summative PA in BUSI, CS and CEM. Through discussion they overcame differences to reach a consensus about the task, and they preferred to receive precise answers from teaching staff and were particularly focused on the agreement of peer marks. On the one hand, dialectic talk is more easily accepted by ISs, since it is in accordance with their familiar learning strategy of passing exams. On the other hand, this pattern may just help students succeed in subject knowledge learning or the completion of tasks, but has fewer implications for intercultural learning or learner reconstruction than dialogic talk.

Moreover, the different acceptance of dialogic and dialectic talk may help us to understand students' attitudes to PA in EDUB, which used formative PA in the F- context but achieved fewer of the desired outcomes than in EDUA. These ISs accepted dialectic talk easily, valuing the acquisition of knowledge and outcomes and regarding staff as authority, but they were not accustomed to dialogic talk, as many of them were not conscious of the values of the various discourses comprising learning and learner. All participants in EDUA had already completed EDUB over more than two months, so they had more experience when they conducted formative PA (divergent PA) and used dialogic talk again.

Due to the increasingly globalized and multicultural workplace, employers value employees with greater intercultural competence highly. However, obtaining a UK degree is not enough for their future careers, as there is also a need to develop intercultural competence. In this study, intercultural learning did not take place each time students were placed in the mixed cultural context. The findings reveal that intercultural learning was more likely to take place in the F- context using formative PA with dialogic talk, as students had the chance to have an open face-to-face talk with peers from different cultures, some of whom would potentially become a part of their professional and/or private lives. This study does not deny the possibilities of fostering intercultural learning by dialectic talk, such as S17 (Chinese, male, CS, phase II), who conducted group work and used summative PA in CS and finally reflected that his intercultural communication skills have been developed. However, there are no sufficient data to support this point due to a lack of available interviewees in these modules.

5.2.3 Implications for the implementation of PA

In the literature, many researchers have focused on practical issues of validity, fairness and accuracy in PA (e.g. Conway, et al., 1993; Topping 1998). In this study, ISs reflected on these issues in the implementation as well. Some of their opinions on the issues are congruent with results in the literature, whereas some reflect opposite views to those found the literature. This study has also identified a few issues that have been less frequently discussed in previous studies. The following six themes, summarized from the findings, are discussed and compared with themes from the literature.

1) Do we need peer marking in PA?

Some researchers believe PA should be part of summative assessment. Biggs (1999) argues that PA's positive impacts on student learning and development can be restricted if peer marking is excluded, as the act of marking may increase student responsibility. Keaten and Richardson (1992, cited in Dochy, Segers and Sluijsmans, 1999) also point out that peer marking fosters high levels of student responsibility. In this study, two modules (EDUA and EDUB) merely used peer feedback, and the findings were to some extent opposite to the opinions of peer marking supporters. Although peer marks were not applied in these two modules, some ISs appreciated the positive impact of PA on them. For instance, S10 (Omani, female, EDUA, phase I) even stated that *'I prefer peer feedback rather than a peer mark'*.

Some researchers highlight that the formative nature of PA can support students' learning (Alpay, et al., 2010). However, Farmer and Eastcott (1995) worry that PA may be onerous to staff and students by taking extra time and creating a higher workload, if it simply focuses on peer feedback as a supplementary activity. Although some ISs reflected that PA was time consuming, they felt it was worth the effort in general. PA was less popular in EDUB than in EDUA, but this was not due to the fact that no peer mark was expected (see 4.4.2.1). 46% of ISs in these two modules agreed that peers could give unbiased marks, while just 23.5% of ISs in BUSI, CEM and CS trusted peer marking. Indeed, it is common for students to question peers' competence in relation to awarding marks, or for them to express concerns about marking unfairly and irresponsibly (e.g. Sluijsmans, et al., 2001). In addition, this anxiety can be amplified when the required marks account for a significant proportion of the overall mark for the module, such as a peer mark being valued at 30% in BUSI, 30% in CEM, and 25% in CS. Since ISs incur a great expense on programmes abroad, it is understandable that they may fear failure. Thus, peer marking, particularly when it carries a proportion of the overall mark, may increase ISs' anxiety rather than foster high levels of responsibility in PA. If the practitioner's intention of using PA is to provide formative feedback, peer marking is not necessary.

2) Do we need peer feedback in PA?

In the literature, the definitions of PA are varied, with some researchers and practitioners considering it as peer marking in summative assessment, excluding peer feedback. In this study, ISs highlighted the benefits of peer feedback. Some researchers emphasize the importance of frequent, timely and appropriate feedback to the learning process (Brown and Glasner, 1999), but it may be a challenge for staff to provide multiple and meaningful feedback to individual students due to the diverse student population and a high student staff ratio. Formative PA, which is likely to involve questioning together with increased self-disclosure and assessment of understanding, offers many opportunities to provide and discuss feedback. Statistical results show that half of ISs in phase I and 76.6% of ISs in phase II agreed or strongly agreed that feedback from peers was useful. For instance, S15 (Chinese, female, EDUA, phase II) said, '*During PA, I often discussed with my peers to clarify the understanding of some theories, some writing experience... I found peer learning was useful when there was a lack of supervision from tutors*'. Some ISs from modules which did not use peer feedback suggested they would like to have feedback in PA. Thus, this study ascertains that there is a demand for formative PA, by engaging students directly in the assessment

process, which allows the provision of feedback to be shared among students, along with the associated potential learning benefits.

3) Do we need training for PA?

Training students in the use of PA is often suggested in the literature (Vickerman, 2009), and the findings in this study are consistent with such a perspective. 42.3% of ISs in phase I and 70% of ISs in phase II agreed or strongly agreed that training was important. Falchikov (2005) proposed that support should be given to students to learn how to become critical and reliable assessors in assessment, no matter whether marks are required or not. Sluijsmans and Van Merriënboer's (2000, cited in Evans, 2013) PA model has identified that defining assessment criteria, judging the performance of a peer and providing feedback for future learning should be taken into account in any training. However, none of the participating modules followed all of these points.

This study has identified criteria and the purpose of adopting PA as two key components of the training, and on this point Cheng and Warren (1999) suggest that students need to be trained how to establish criteria. 73.1% of ISs in phase I and 76.7% of ISs in phase II thought clarifying criteria was important. Brew, Riley and Walta (2009) note that staff need to communicate the reasons for adopting such practices with students so as to prepare them better. 53.8% of ISs in phase I and 73.3% of ISs in phase II thought explaining the purpose of using PA was important. 40% of ISs in phase II were not sure what staff were looking for when using PA⁴. Thus, training needs to be ongoing and developmental, outlining the rules and criteria of PA, and addressing the expectations and beliefs of value relating to PA. Topping (2010) argues that training alone would be insufficient, but that constructive discussion after PA between staff and students may help students to understand the whole practice and become more self-reflective.

4) Do we need anonymity in PA?

Some researchers propose that PA should be anonymous in order to avoid friendship marking or reduce the opportunity of biased marking (Segers and Dochy, 2001). However, the findings in this study suggest that in some contexts anonymity was not always necessary and did not affect the use of PA, particularly when participants conducted formative PA and

⁴ Data were not available in phase I as this item was not designed in the questionnaires in phase I.

discussed face-to-face. In phase II, 70.6% of the ISs from the modules using summative PA agreed that anonymity made them feel more comfortable, whereas just 23% of those using formative PA agreed in this way. Moreover, anonymity was not ranked at the top in the diamond ranking of successful factors of conducting PA. Thus, the results of anonymity in PA in this study are opposite to previous studies to some extent. Some of the previous studies restrict the definition of PA to grading peers, but neglect the role of peer feedback or peer talk. Hence, it is a useful reminder that anonymity is not always necessary in practice, particularly when practitioners intend to apply formative PA.

5) Can students avail themselves of the benefits of talking in PA?

Talking can readily assist learners in understanding new knowledge (Barnes, 2008). In this study, the findings have provided evidence that oral communication is a key mechanism in PA (divergent PA in particular) through which to facilitate peer learning and produce educationally desired outcomes. For example, S13 (Vietnamese, female, EDUA, phase II) said, *'We discussed face to face (in PA). We like talking and meeting together. Creative thinking, critical thinking, co-operation, maybe interpersonal relationships were developed through our talk'*. However, not everyone is able to think critically or has the awareness of sharing thoughts with others. It is reported that Anglophone classrooms tend to be noisy, whereas Asian classrooms tend to be silent, and this is often associated with 'a lack of personal power, social marginalization or even a lack of intellectual ability' (Turner, 2013, p. 230). As S15 (Chinese, female, EDUA, phase II) commented, *'Chinese students usually do not have enough critical thinking'*.

In addition, the pedagogy of constructing learning, as influenced by culture, has a different perspective on silence and talking (Ollin, 2008, cited in Turner, 2013). For instance, S14 (Chinese, female, EDUA, phase II) commented that *'Chinese students usually prefer to just listen to teachers without too many discussions, either with teachers or peers, as this has been our teaching and learning style since we were pupils'*. The observational data of PA in EDUA in phase II also reflect this phenomenon. During the group meeting, the UK and Vietnamese students were more talkative than the two Chinese students. Their different behaviours were due not only to language challenges, confidence, or intellectual ability, but were also associated with pedagogical traditions, which are congruent with the findings of Turner and Robson (2008).

This difference in pedagogical tradition is a significant factor impacting on ISs' recognition and realization rules of learning in the UK. As S14 (Chinese, female, EDUB, phase II) commented, *'I was not sure of the procedure of PA, so I was a little bit silent at that time. I paid more attention to seeing what others did, and I was also a little bit worried whether the feedback I provided to peers was too simple'*. Hence, some ISs need help to discover what discussion is and how to conduct PA. That is why we need to encourage them to talk in the classroom. Thus, explaining the functions of peer talk before conducting PA is important if students are to be able to achieve more benefits from PA.

6) Do UK and ISs have significantly different understandings of PA?

This statistical analysis shows that UK and ISs did not have many significantly different understandings of PA. The staff educator also indicated that UK students were similar to ISs who have issues in PA and formative assessment. These results support Shi (2006) and some other researchers' opinions of ISs, who become increasingly like their western peers. Staff should therefore avoid stereotypical responses, such as using Confucian theory to understand ISs (East Asia students in particular) anymore (ibid), and should instead learn from ISs and design an inclusive curriculum for all students according to their needs and dispositions.

5.3 Meso level: staff practice in the international classroom

Following Brown's (2004) suggestion of the worthiness of investigating what staff currently do to ensure assessment practices for learning, this study observed and interviewed five teaching staff from the participating modules, one university assessment policy maker and one staff educator in order to have an insight into university assessment policy, current assessment practice and complementary staff education in this university.

5.3.1 Classification and framing

Barnes and Shemilt (1974, cited in Barnes, 2008) propose that how staff interact with their students is inseparably bound up with their preconceptions about the nature of the knowledge taught by them. Some staff believe that students learn from the direct transmission of proven subject knowledge, so they see their role as simply the transmission of authoritative knowledge. According to Bernstein, this kind of staff often use F+ discourse in the class. This study found that this often happened in science subjects, and the classification was strong too. For example, the module leader in CEM said: *'I think students need to see you as an*

authority in the field. I don't mean you have to do what I say but I'm expert in the field, earn students' respect. Then the discussion between us could be much easier'. The findings in this study suggest that staff in the C+ and F+ context, such as in CS and CEM, tend to use summative PA, offering material for bringing the rules of the setting to the learners' attention. In the process, either giving an induction to PA or by monitoring student activity, the tutor's identity is that of an assessor and teacher. Staff designed clear mark sheets and demanded that students gave peer marks using the mark sheet, as a teacher. Then they reviewed students' peer marks as an assessor. Consequently, students in this context preferred to pursue correct answers from staff rather than become actively engaged in PA. For instance, SQ7 (Saudi Arabic, female, CEM, phase II) commented: *'I think it (PA) is pointless, we don't have the authority to assess peers and we don't have the capability to assess them'*.

However, some staff believe students learn from and may generate new knowledge through interactions between staff and students, so they have a constructivist view of teaching and learning, seeing their role as that of a supporter and being more likely to give their students the space to explore new ideas through talk. According to Bernstein, this kind of staff often use F- discourse in the class. This study found that this often happened in social science subjects, and the classification was weak too. For example, the module leader in EDUA saw his position as a supporter rather than an authority: *'I give them a basic explanation...I tell them if there is any problem get back to me...I just help to get them over their questions...but not giving them too much structured guidance. So they do take responsibility, they do organize themselves'*. Findings in this study suggest that staff in the C- and F- context tend to use formative PA, such as in EDUA, accomplished more particularly through the construction of the students as learners who learn from each other. Staff supported students rather than supervised them, encouraging them to discuss and develop thinking through peer talk rather than providing clear and specific answers, so they were experts in pedagogy rather than in subjects. Consequently, students in this context felt empowered, had more chances to learn from peers and generated new ideas. Compared with F+ discourse, F- discourse seems to contribute more to the development of students' potential.

On the basis of interviews with the teaching staff in this study, different ontological and epistemological positions in different subjects could be seen. There is nothing wrong with staff having individual ontology and epistemology, but this has significant implications for educational research (Wegerif, 2008); when linked to pedagogy, methods of enhancing

student learning require staff attention. In the process of teaching postgraduate students, staff not only play the role of expert in their subjects, but also act as pedagogic practitioners who deploy pedagogic techniques to provide learners with subject knowledge and develop essential skills such as creative thinking and independent learning. Generally, disciplines decide the degree of classification; in other words, curricula in science areas are more often C+, and in social science areas are more often C-. With regard to framing, however, staff may change the use of framing with respect to how knowledge is transmitted, and the ways in which this is controlled. Pryor and Crossouard (2005) claim that staff need to make the purpose of particular tasks explicit and help students to engage in discussion, so that all students, not just those with high recognition and realization rules, can generate an understanding of what is required and acceptable in the classroom. This reminds us that no matter whether they use F+ or F- discourse, clarity between staff and students is always important, and this is congruent with the findings in the current study.

5.3.2 Recognition and realization rules

The previous section, 5.2.1, discussed how ISs' performance is influenced strongly by the extent to which they share recognition and realization rules of staff's pedagogic practice. This study indicates that no matter whether staff use F- or F+ pedagogy in science or social science areas, if students share low recognition and realization rules with staff, they are unlikely to achieve the outcomes that staff expect. Not all students share an understanding of pedagogic practice on the one hand; staff in the international classroom, on the other hand, may not possess the recognition rules of the students as well, and therefore may have an entirely different view of what is happening within the classroom, resulting in misperceptions. For instance, the module leader in CS thought all students would have used PA before, but the findings have revealed that 73.3% of ISs in this module had never had this experience. Thus, it is considered that this member of staff did not possess the recognition rules of the students in his class. Bernstein (1996) emphasizes that to develop appropriate curricula the teacher needs to understand particular cultural groups in that educational setting; otherwise, students might not easily and comfortably accept new approaches to the curriculum and assessment in a stressful environment. Thus, except when choosing framing, staff also need to perceive ISs' recognition and realization rules, which assist them in understanding the students in their classrooms, so that they can adjust pedagogic practice to involve all students.

Le Roux (2001, cited in Harrison and Peacock, 2010 p. 140) concluded that ‘intercultural relations in the classroom may be a source of knowledge and mutual enrichment between culturally diverse learners if managed proactively by teachers, or a source of frustration, misapprehension and intercultural conflict if not dealt with appropriately’. It is felt that the use of recognition and realization rules could help staff to raise awareness of the classroom context and curriculum development, and assist them in dealing with students from different cultural backgrounds. Following Bernstein’s suggestion, to determine the extent of the recognition and realization rules students possess, staff can observe students’ reactions and mannerisms in the international classroom, and observe students’ ability to communicate with others in an acceptable and understandable way. Furthermore, an understanding of recognition and realization rules could help staff heighten awareness of the university agenda of establishing an internationalized educational setting, and help the reform of university assessment policy for more formative assessment. With improved recognition of the university agenda and the international classroom context, staff would be better able to address the practicalities of various curriculum and assessment approaches.

5.3.3 Dialogic talk

Section 5.2.2 discussed the dialogic and dialectic talk which took place in PA in this study. Referring to the educational outcome of intercultural learning expected in internationalized HE settings, the findings have confirmed benefits of dialogic talk and suggest that intercultural learning is more likely to occur along with dialogic talk among students, or between staff and students. In the international classroom, staff are often UK nationals with English as a first language, and they meet and teach students from a range of nationalities and cultures. In this study, three module leaders had UK nationality and the other two were from the EU. Through dialogic talk, staff will be more open to listening to their students, and thereby may gain knowledge from students from other cultures, gain international perspectives on the field of study and consider issues from a variety of perspectives. Thus, dialogic talk not only assists students, but can also contribute to staff development.

Wolfe and Alexander (2008, cited in Fisher, 2011) indicate that patterns of classroom interaction are inextricably related to culture, history and staff awareness of the teaching role. If we hope to encourage students to listen to others with an empathetic view, we may initially provide staff education to heighten staff consciousness of the process of construction and

reconstruction of knowledge (Wegerif, 2008). The use of dialogic talk in education is not new, but it has been recently addressed by Alexander and other researchers in primary and secondary schools in the UK, and has not yet been widely used in HE. The staff educator in this study expressed that some staff were trying to use dialogic talk in the classroom, providing constructive oral feedback and also learning from students' responses, but she did not see this educational phenomenon across the university. Based on evidence in this study, encouraging staff to use dialogic talk in the international classroom may support the university agenda of promoting intercultural learning.

5.3.4 Assessment and intercultural learning

Ecclestone and Pryor (2003) propose the concept of 'assessment careers' that has impact on learner identity. They stress that different assessment systems impact on learner identity and disposition, which may transform learners. Pryor and Crossouard (2005; 2010) indicate that formative assessment, particularly divergent assessment, provides a great opportunity for the development of learner identity. Compared with summative assessment, the current study suggests that formative assessment, especially divergent assessment (e.g. in EDUA), in the international classroom is more likely to promote ISs' academic transition to the UK educational system, though many of them come from the traditional summative assessment system. In the meantime, intercultural learning is more likely to take place during divergent assessment, and thereby ISs may develop an international perspective and have individual transition for internationalization. Hence, this study verifies that assessment has the ability to transform students, and further expands 'assessment careers' in the field of the internationalization of the curriculum.

Among the five modules in this study, the module leader in EDUA significantly addressed intercultural learning in the classroom, and the findings have shown that students in this module were more aware of intercultural learning. The students in this module were also more appreciative of the benefits brought from PA than students in the other four modules. This confirms that the occurrence of intercultural learning needs clarity of shared understanding between staff and students. Teaching staff are working in the frontier, so universities badly need staff commitment to transform educational settings (Robson, 2011). In this time of the internationalization of the curriculum, academic staff need expertise to

transmit subject knowledge, but also need to adopt a responsible approach to heighten students' awareness of the importance of intercultural learning.

Moreover, awareness is one thing, practice is another. Staff not only need to improve students' recognition and realization rules of intercultural learning, but also need tools to facilitate intercultural learning in practice. This study has investigated five modules in relation to intercultural learning through using PA, which is an assessment approach that potentially involves every student in an assessment context and promotes interaction between students. This study has illustrated the relationship between the provisions of PA and the two patterns of dialogue in relation to students' intercultural learning. Intercultural learning is more likely to take place in the context of formative PA with dialogic talk, where students experience open face-to-face talk with peers from different cultures and may even establish networks in both their professional and private life.

5.3.5 Suggestions for teaching and assessing ISs

Many universities are now redesigning curricula in order to adapt for internationalization (Ryan, 2013). This study has investigated postgraduate ISs' experiences of PA, and heard the voices of teaching staff, university assessment policy makers and staff educators, and thereby has an insight into the current progress of the internationalization in this university. Since staff are key agents in the implementation of the international strategy of universities (Robson, 2011), based on the findings in this study, there are some suggestions for staff to internationalize the curriculum that may assist the achievement of the university's agenda to internationalize the educational setting.

- 1) In this diverse and highly competitive HE climate, it is important that teaching practices are reviewed 'to educate from, with, and for a multitude of cultural perspectives' (Nainby, Warren and Bollinger, 2003, cited in Robson, 2011, p. 625) to ensure a high quality student experience. The internationalization of HE has seen increasing numbers of ISs come to the UK to undertake postgraduate studies. For students from other contexts or cultures, approaches to postgraduate study in the UK may contrast with their earlier experiences of learning, such as structured learning in contrast with independent learning and reproductive behaviour in contrast with critical thinking (Robson 2011). Actually, some academic approaches taken for granted by

staff may be unfamiliar for ISs (ibid). For example, some staff imagined that ISs should be familiar with PA, whereas this study has found that PA was almost unknown to many of ISs. Their own context or culture may lead them to misunderstand staff intentions of specific pedagogic activities, and thereby they may lose the chance to perform well (ibid).

With regard to assessment, it is especially important for those ISs whose previous experiences are culturally distant from those of the assessors. As Ryan and Carroll (2005) point out, during assessment staff might encounter unanticipated or surprising behaviours from ISs due to cultural differences, such as different expectations between students and staff about what is required and different views of respect for the authoritative nature in assessment. Although staff cannot change learners' prior experiences of assessment, they can share students' recognition and realization rules to design a culturally inclusive assessment for students.

- 2) Brown (2004) suggests we can use self-assessment, PA and group assessment, which are very effective in helping students interpret criteria, encouraging students' metacognition, and encouraging deep rather than surface learning. However, some studies report that students gain greater learning from staff feedback than from self- and peer feedback (Chang, 2011). Referring to PA, Kauffman and Schunn (2011) highlight staff feedback along with peer feedback. Hence, it would be beneficial that staff explicitly discuss and exemplify the value and relevance of PA to future tasks before PA and have constructive talks with students about feedback after PA. 83.3% of ISs in phase II⁵ thought constructive discussion with staff after PA was important. In addition, staff who are interested in empowering students may find that it is particularly helpful to focus on the process of formative assessment and use dialogic talk.
- 3) Irrespective of disciplines, group work has been considered an effective strategy to support learning and can also develop the generic team working skills that are highly valued by employers, so this pedagogic activity is very popular in UK HE (Edmead, 2013). Strang (2011) finds that ISs are likely to achieve more highly in western

⁵ Data were not available in phase I as this item was not designed in the questionnaires in phase I.

academic settings if they favour group work, risk taking and interactive learning. In this study, some ISs described their transition from disliking group work to favouring this style, as did S17 (Chinese, male, CS, phase II), who changed his attitude towards group work after conducting PA: *'When I meet team work next time...I will be more willing and well prepared to engage in the team, and won't fear it any more'*. ISs may have limited recognition and realization rules for the western academic setting in the beginning, but they can perceive the classroom culture after a period of studying with effective tools. Encouraging ISs to join group work can be an initial method to help their adjustment to learning in the UK.

However, not all ISs experience such a positive transition, and this was the case with S17 (Chinese, male, CS, phase II). Edmead (2013) points out that the reason students do not favour group work in the international classroom always refers to a lack of preparation for group work, a lack of awareness of the benefits of studying in a multicultural context, or a lack of clarity of the learning outcomes of this activity. With regard to organized groups, some may be comprises of students from the same context, while others may be comprised of students from mixed contexts. Caruana and Ploner (2010, cited in Jones, 2013) suggest that an internationalized curriculum should encompass all students from diverse backgrounds and provide space to discuss and reflect differences. Thus, it is vital to organize multicultural groups if we expect to foster intercultural learning and develop intercultural competence during group work. The current study suggests different combinations of group members each time and English as the sole medium in group communication so that all students can collaborate with others from various contexts.

- 4) Shi (2006) indicates that the Confucian learning culture is evolving and becoming more related to Western education. Sulkowski and Deakin (2009) also warn against the adoption of unjustified cultural stereotypes by educators. The findings in this study support their views. For instance, some East Asian students were more influenced by individualism even in their home countries, so it was much easier for them to study in the UK and they quite enjoyed PA. Other East Asian students were clearly influenced by collectivist culture, so they were more silent in PA and unwilling to take part at least at the beginning, although some became more positive after experiencing PA, which means that PA supported academic transition. Thus, we can

assume that ISs are shaped not only by their personal histories, cultural traditions and professional aspirations, but are also continually reshaped by new experiences in other cultural contexts, such as experiencing a new assessment approach in this study. Clearly, it will continue to be essential to consider all students' needs without cultural stereotypes. Introducing staff to Bernstein's recognition and realization rules may prepare them to understand students' real needs in their classrooms better.

To summarize, all the suggestions above are offered as a responsible approach to the internationalization agenda, to ensure that students experience a positive and inclusive learning environment, incorporating the assessment of learning as well as the assessment for learning (Robson, 2011).

5.4 Macro level: internationalizing the curriculum

Ryan (2013) proposes that the recent focus of internationalisation agendas in HE has turned attention to the internationalization of the curriculum and transformation of the prevailing pedagogy for all students. Leask (2009) points out that in order to internationalize the curriculum, we should have international and intercultural dimensions in our educational programmes. This study explores ISs' experiences of PA, and findings reveal that PA has implications for internationalization of the curriculum. Participants practised different procedures of PA in five different modules. Results demonstrate that formative PA (especially divergent PA) fostered intercultural learning through involving students in critical evaluation of peers' work. In this way, students had opportunities to gain subject knowledge at the international level through assessing work by peers from different cultural backgrounds (e.g. 4.3.3.2); to perceive effects of cultural distance on their communication; and to develop knowledge and skills to perform effectively in future intercultural communications (e.g. 4.2.3.2). Therefore, PA can be considered an innovative way to promote intercultural learning and enhance intercultural competence as one aspect of internationalization of the curriculum.

A feature of formative PA is dialogic pedagogy. Dialogic education requires staff and students 'to be more open to other voices, more able to question and to listen' (Wegerif, et al., 2009, cited in Fisher, 2011, p. 35). While this approach is adopted in primary and secondary schools, it has not formally appeared in HE. Freire (1970, cited in Cooper, et al., 2012) states that human nature is dialogic, and believes that communication has a leading role in our life.

Kim (2004) states that ‘culture as Geertz and Bakhtin allude to can be generally transmitted through communication or reciprocal interaction such as a dialogue’. Thus, I suggest dialogic pedagogy should gain attention in international HE settings, because it can provide an open and respectful dialogue between different points of view, which leads to intercultural learning, personal development (e.g. global citizenship), and community development (e.g. an internationalized university).

If we intend to establish an internationalized university, beginning with individual transformation is a possible ‘bottom-up’ approach. Although there are several factors influencing learner identity, the current study confirms that divergent assessment in the international classroom can impact on learner’s assessment careers to transform their learner identity. Thus, introducing an international, intercultural or global dimension into assessment is an effective approach for individual transformation and an innovative way to internationalize the curriculum.

Although the focus of the study is ISs, a few UK students participated in the study and the results show that they had little awareness of intercultural learning, and so did some of the staff. Thus, the internationalization agenda in HE institutions may need to be more visible, to give students and staff explicit messages about what is expected, so their recognition and realization rules of internationalization can be enhanced. Furthermore, the internationalization of the curriculum should not only encompass ISs on a programme of study, but should include home students, so that all students have the opportunity to consider the global impact on their field of study through an internationalized curriculum, and to develop intercultural competence for global employability.

5.5 Conclusion

To end the discussion chapter, through giving an overview of the current study I have developed a social cultural model of the impacts of assessment on international students’ learner identity (Figure 30), drawn from Pryor and Crossouard’s (2005) idealized model of formative assessment and Hermans’s concepts of internal and external positions. Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 53) propose that ‘learning...implies becoming a different person...learning involves the construction of identity’. Pryor and Crossouard (2005, p. 7) consider ‘identities are multiple, performed and continually reconstructed through engagement with

others...identity forms a bridge between the social and the individual, it also mediates between contexts'. Thus, when ISs come to study in the UK, they have a chance to reconstruct the identities formed in previous learning in their home countries. This model offers a contribution to the understanding of how assessment associated with classification and framing impacts on learner identity in ISs' home countries, and finally impacts on ISs' academic transition and intercultural learning in the UK.

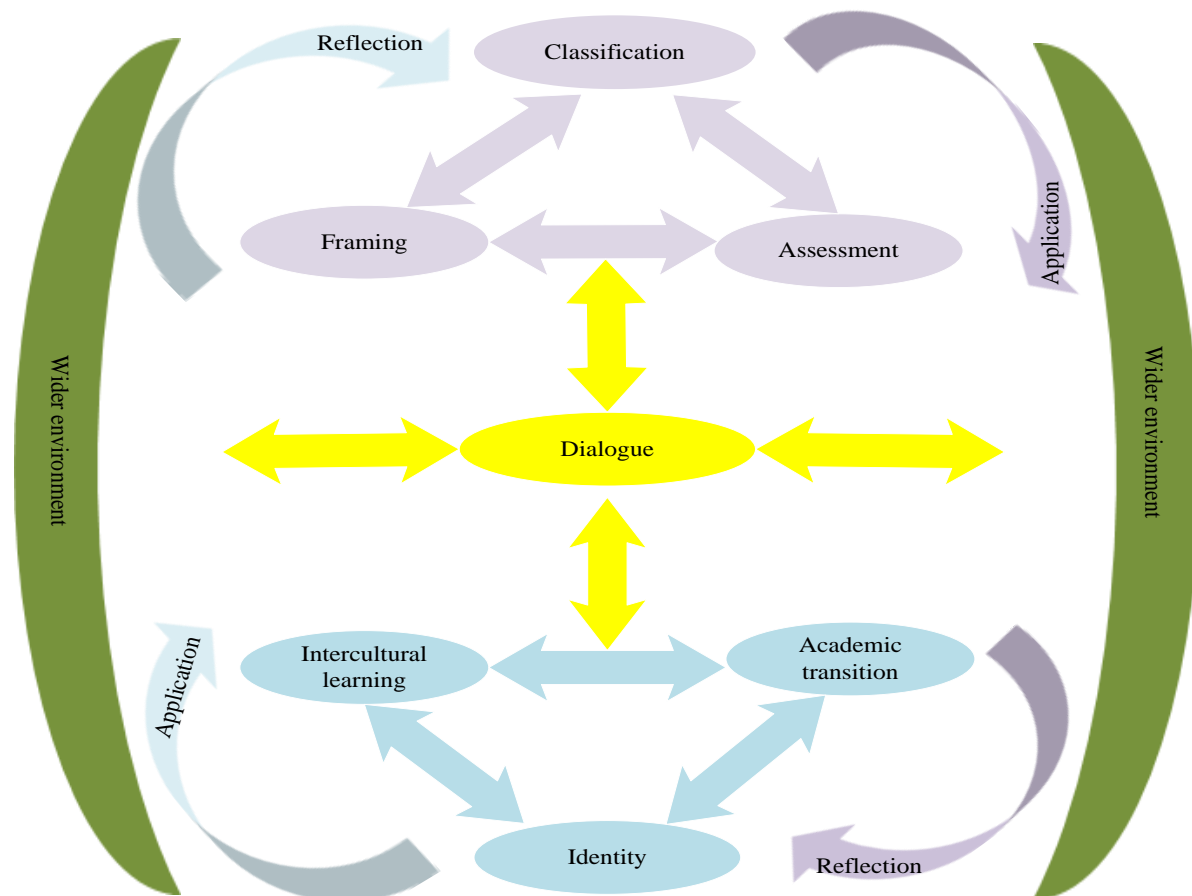


Figure 30: A social cultural model of the impacts of assessment on international students' learner identity

This study acknowledges the importance of dialogue in both the learning process and the formation of identity, in terms of the way that Bakhtin (1981) proposes that meanings are created in the processes of individuals' dialogic interaction. Thus, the dialogue underpinning all activities is placed at the centre of the model. The order in which to look at the model is from top to bottom and from right to left. The upper triangle represents the relationships between Bernstein's (1996) classification and framing and types of assessment within the module (see 4.7.2.2). Classification in this study refers to the strength of the boundaries

between the contents of the different disciplines, while framing refers to the way staff deliver messages in the classroom. The results in this study reveal that modules are closely related to classification and staff preference for framing ($p < 0.001$, $\phi = 1.000$, Pearson Chi-square = 91.000, $df = 4$). The classification in science modules was often strong and staff were more likely to adopt F+ discourse, whereas the classification was often weak in social sciences modules and staff were more likely to adopt F- discourse. The results show that the use of framing closely relates to staff choice of assessment approaches ($p < 0.001$, $\phi = 0.528$, Pearson Chi-square = 25.389, $df = 1$). Staff using F+ discourse preferred to use summative assessment, while those using F- discourse preferred to use formative assessment. Staff use of assessment can be influenced by many factors, such as assessment policies, personal experience and educational traditions. For instance, although formative assessment has been supported in assessment policies for some time, in practice formative assessment has not been commonly or effectively applied across modules in the university. The current study offers a new perspective on this issue. If we want to promote formative assessment, we may initially raise staff awareness of framing and encourage them to use F- discourse. Through influencing their beliefs about teaching, appreciation can be promoted of the value of F- discourse to support knowledge acquisition through open talk. Staff pedagogic positions can be as a supporter rather than an authority, and then they appreciate formative assessment that has a good fit with constructivist learning theories. In this study, academic transition is highlighted as ISs' adjustment to UK HE, and intercultural learning as social-cultural learning from people of different cultures and the development of intercultural communication skills. Students experience pedagogic discourses in the classroom and then they conduct assessment (application). After experiencing assessment, they may have a deeper understanding of learning and assessment in the UK, and become familiar with the UK educational system (reflection). For instance, S2 (Malaysian, male, BUSI, phase I) commented: *'It (PA) gives me an opportunity to know the assessment process and criteria (in the UK)'*. Their learner identity may be influenced to adjust to the new learning environment, so they may have academic transition, as shown in the lower triangle.

Outside the classroom, ISs interact with a wider environment (right crescent of the model). According to Hermans (2001), internal positions that are felt as part of one's self have the possibility to move to external positions felt as part of the environment. In the ISs' home countries, they firstly received education within the social cultural context of the family before interacting with teachers and peers in their mother language. Communication in and

outside the classroom within the social cultural environment shaped their learner identity, which in turn influences their communication within the wider environment and performance in the classroom (left crescent of the model). Through continuous application and reflection, students' internal and external positions merge from their mutual transactions over time, shaped in accordance with the culture in their home countries.

When people receive education in one culture and study further in another, their internal positions will conflict or coexist with a multiplicity of heterogeneous external positions (Hermans, 2001). Thus, when ISs leave home and the familiar social cultural context to study in another country using a non-mother language, and meet teachers and peers from different cultural backgrounds, these external elements may have new impacts on their learning, influence their internal positions and then reshape their learner identity. In the classroom, they encounter similar or different classification and framing, and apply familiar or unfamiliar assessment approaches. If the internal positions shaped in the home countries coexist with the external positions of the UK educational system, internal and external positions will meet in processes of cooperation and agreement. These ISs more easily adjust to the UK academy, such as S13 (Vietnamese, female, EDUA, phase II) who had studied as an undergraduate in a Vietnamese university where many teachers were either from the UK/US or had experiences of studying in there. S13 (Vietnamese, female, EDUA, phase II) had already experienced some forms of innovative pedagogy and assessment, such as group work and PA, and therefore adjusted to learning and assessment easily in UK HE. However, if the internal position conflicts with the external position of the UK educational system, then students' internal and external positions will meet in processes of negotiation, opposition, and disagreement. For example, students from the C+ curriculum context familiar with F+ discourse and summative assessment may feel comfortable when they are in a UK module using F+ discourse and summative assessment. However, they may feel challenged in a C-module where a lecture uses F- discourse to deliver the curriculum and applies formative assessment. During this time, their internal positions have the possibility to move to be congruent with the changes. Learner identities may be reshaped in accordance with the new academic situation, to create academic transition. For example, S15 (Chinese, female, EDUA, phase II) felt confused at the early stage and sought confirmation from the module leader, but realised through the practice of PA that her critical thinking was developed and peer learning was useful.

Sometimes different learner identities are presented in different modules, as modules themselves have distinctive characteristics. No matter whether ISs from similar or different educational contexts are compared with the UK academy, the results in this study suggest that F- discourse and formative assessment have obvious impacts on ISs' transformation of learner identity (see 5.2.1). A possible reason for this is that these pedagogic activities encourage dialogic talk, which provides opportunities for open talk and experience of different voices, with multiple choices to move between internal and external positions. Some ISs may have new positions; however, they are simply not aware of their existence, and they have not realized their transition even after they graduate. A possible reason is that they lack opportunities for self-reflection. Thus, both application and reflection are considered two necessary elements in the model.

In the classroom, some pedagogic activities offer opportunities for open talk between staff and students, and among students, such as F- discourse, formative feedback, and divergent PA. In the process of open talk, initially there may be a gap between internal positions of ISs from different cultural backgrounds (Figure 31). During and after hearing various voices, their internal positions may be mutually influenced, they may gain awareness of their own cultures and awareness of other cultures which are similar to or different from owns, so intercultural learning takes place (Figure 32). Aside from the module itself, ISs communicate with a wider environment in the UK than in their home countries, with a greater opportunity to meet people from different cultures across the world. They are also studying and living in the UK context, which has already been recognized as a multicultural context, and they are sharing with other people cultural elements that may be highly divergent. A variety of voices thus have an impact on the movement of internal positions to become part of the new social and cultural environment, which in turn impacts on the reformation of learner identity. Then, this reformed learner identity is applied in communication with the wider environment in other modules. Figure 31 and Figure 32 illustrate the fluid patterns of Figure 30. The process is an infinite loop: as individuals meet others from different cultures and hear various voices, they may 'gain international perspectives on the field of study' and 'develop the ability to engage positively with cultural others in both their professional and private life' (Leask, 2007, p. 91).

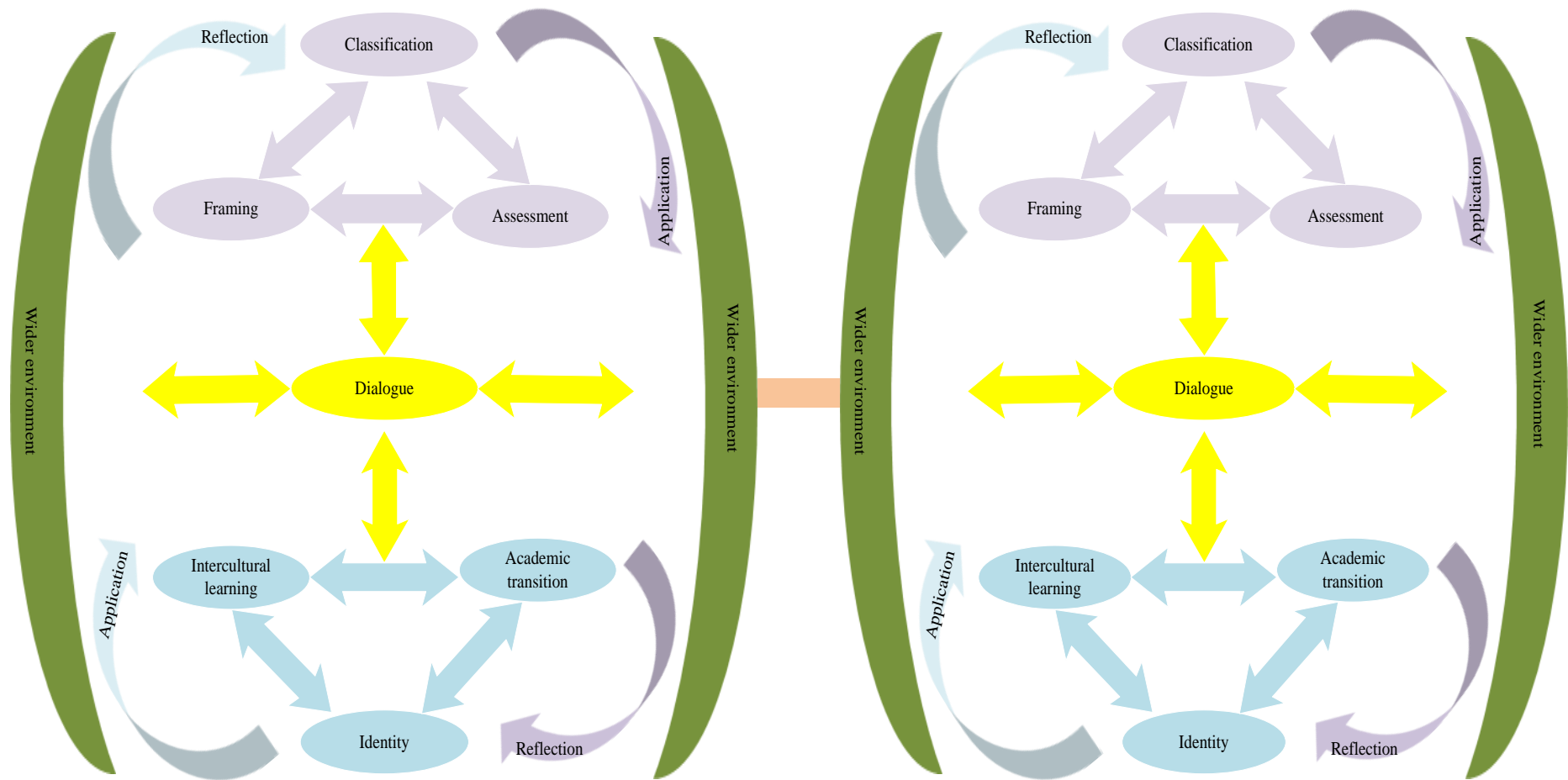


Figure 31: Fluid pattern I of the social cultural model of the impacts of assessment on international students' learner identity

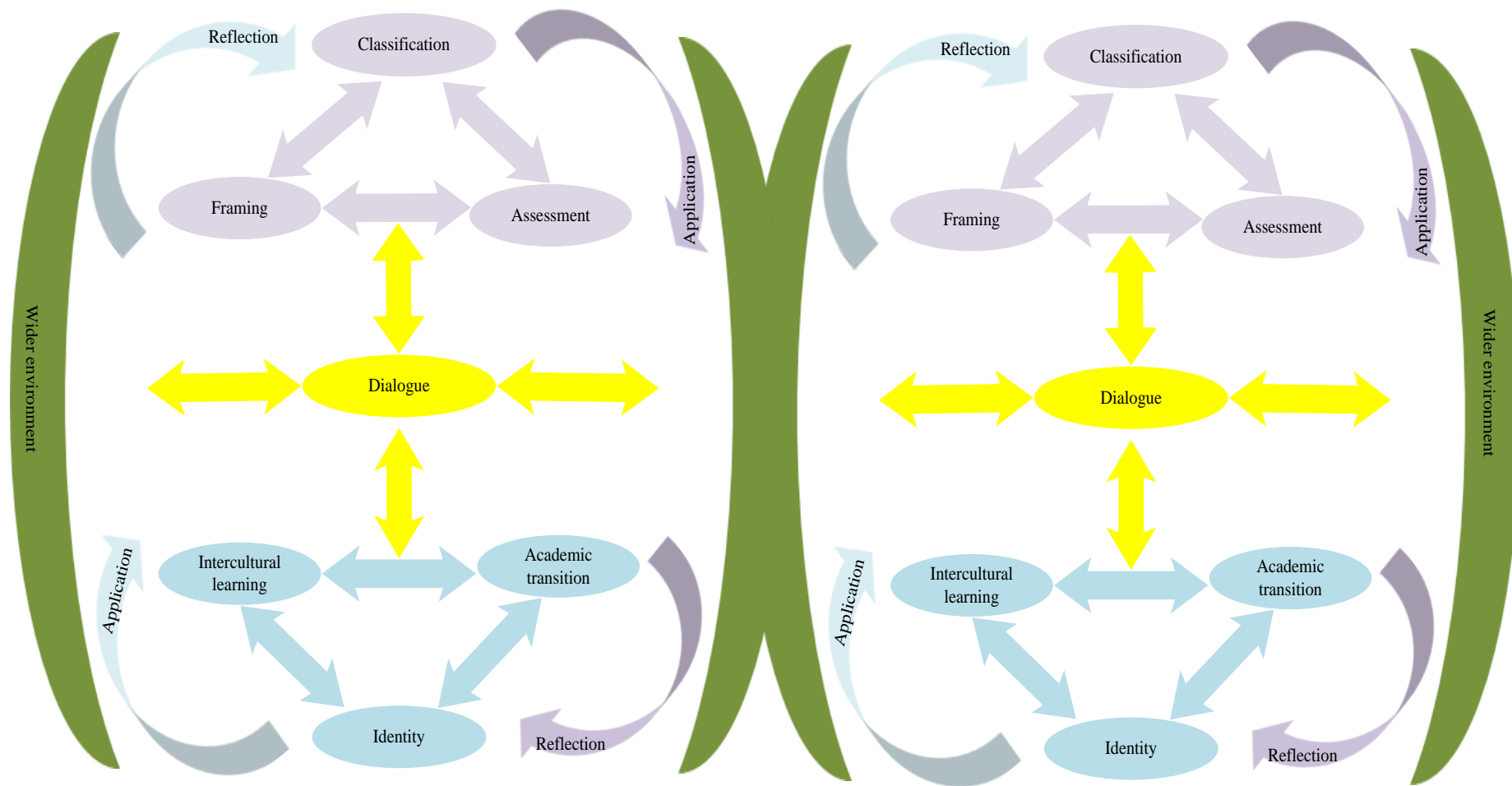


Figure 32: Fluid pattern II of the social cultural model of the impacts of assessment on international students' learner identity

Referring to transition to a new environment, Hsieh (2011) argues that the U-curve pattern (Lysgaard, 1955) and the W-curve pattern (Gullahorn and Gullahorn, 1963) are the most popular patterns that we cannot leave alone; the difference between the two is that the W-curve pattern adds a description of the re-entry shock that individuals may encounter when returning home. Although the W-curve pattern is more comprehensive from my point of view, in the current study there are few findings about what ISSs' internal positions will be when they return to their home countries and whether they are likely to experience re-entry shock or not. Adler (1975, cited in Hsieh, 2011) indicates that multicultural identities can be established so individuals become comfortable in both the original and the new culture. To a large extent, this thesis supports this opinion. The models in the current study suggest that ISSs' learner identities can be continuously reformed and their internal positions have the potential to move to the multicultural level when they have dialogic interaction with cultural others. However, whether being comfortable in both the original and the new culture is unsure. This thesis suggests that levels of recognition and realization rules may be a factor influencing individuals' comfort level in the process of transition, and that sharing understanding with others is a factor that makes internal and external positions move smoothly. Thus, whether the student moves to a new cultural context or returns to their original context, an F-environment is helpful, and dialogic talk, accentuating mutual enrichment through differences, has the power to assist individuals' position movements and can lead to feeling part of the cultural environment they are in.

This study reveals the relationship between classification and framing and assessment approaches, and implies that F-discourse and formative assessment (divergent assessment in particular) are more likely to assist ISSs' transformation of learner identity through explaining movements between internal and external positions from a dialogic perspective. Hermans (2001, p. 266) points out that we live in a world with increasing educational connections, 'an enlarging army of young people visit other countries to continue and enrich their education and professional training'. Although the sample of this study is small and it is difficult to generalize the results, this study indicates that the increasing educational connections have implications for students to reconstruct their learner identity, to hear various voices and develop mutual respect. The models may not capture all the complexity; but they do, however, have heuristic implications for the internationalization of the curriculum.

The final chapter, the conclusion, will draw the thesis together by outlining the main research findings, discussing the contribution of the thesis to knowledge and proposing the potential direction of future research.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

This chapter is divided into six sections:

Section 6.1 provides an overview of the research.

Section 6.2 examines the conceptual links between the research findings and discusses the research's original contribution to knowledge.

Section 6.3 considers the research's implications for practice and theory.

Section 6.4 indicates the research's limitations.

Section 6.5 reflects my learning through this research.

Section 6.6 outlines future studies.

6.1 Introduction

Recruiting ISs has become a key target of HE institutions to earn fee income, especially since the government has cut public funding (Altbach and Knight, 2007). Thus, attracting ISs is one of many UK universities' top current strategies. Graduates with the ability to work in culturally diverse contexts are in demand due to increasingly global and multinational work environments (Jones, 2013). Therefore, enhancing intercultural competence for global employability is one of ISs' key motivations to study abroad. However, research illustrates that students do not automatically develop intercultural competence in the international classroom (De Vita, 2001; Carroll and Ryan, 2005). In order to meet employers' demands and ISs' expectations, intercultural learning needs to be emphasized when teaching staff design and deliver curricula. Recent years have seen greater numbers of ISs seeking the HE experience in the UK, which is now the second biggest destination for overseas students (HEA, 2012). As ISs are no longer the minority group in UK HE, particularly in postgraduate classrooms, new and challenging issues for teaching and learning have been created by the diverse student population. Hence, exploring new ways of teaching and learning that promote intercultural learning and include all students is important, and the internationalization of the curriculum has become a new focus of research (Jones, 2013; Leask, 2013; Ryan, 2013). Assessment cannot be ignored, however, since it influences teaching and learning. An enormous challenge is thereby to provide appropriate assessment for ISs, especially those whose previous assessment experiences are quite different from that in the UK.

Assessment is currently receiving renewed attention in UK HE, and educational researchers have been paying much attention to formative assessment, developing innovative assessment approaches and advocating assessment for learning since the 1990s (e.g. Gibbs, 1999). Since Ecclestone and Pryor (2003) argue that assessment systems have important impacts on learner identities and dispositions of learning, assessment may not only be a tool for learning, but may also have impacts on ISs' academic and intercultural experiences. Considering the political and social contexts of the internationalization of the curriculum and the assessment context of innovation, investigating innovative assessment approaches in the international classroom is a valuable research area. In recent years, a variety of assessment forms, such as portfolios, PA, and self-assessment, has been introduced as major innovations to promote student learning (Kvale, 2007). The benefits attributed to PA for student learning are well reported in the HE literature, showing that students learn from peers through actively engaging in dialogue and assessing each other's work (McDowell and Mowl 1996). However,

the coverage of studies focusing on postgraduate ISs' experiences of PA in UK HE and addressing PA for intercultural learning are few. Thus, to balance the research, the current study paid attention to ISs' experience of PA and the implications for internationalization of the curriculum.

The study focused on PA because this innovative assessment approach theoretically has more benefits than some common assessment approaches. It is able to involve students in discussion and make a fundamental contribution to their personal development, such as becoming independent learners (e.g. Falchikov, 1986), which is an essential skill at the postgraduate level. As an international student receiving postgraduate education in the UK, I experienced formative PA which helped me have a deeper understanding of learning and assessment in the UK. I intended to know if these special benefits could be recognised by more ISs. What is more, formative PA provided me with an opportunity to have open communication with students from different cultures, and this broadened my horizon of educational systems in different countries and developed my intercultural communication skills. The study also explored whether this approach could be acknowledged as an effective tool for intercultural learning. Thus, this study was conducted to make a contribution to the provision of quality of education for ISs and proposed an approach for internationalizing the curriculum.

This empirical research was carried out in one cosmopolitan university located in the North East of England, the United Kingdom. The student demography in this university is already highly internationalised. This case study reports an investigation of the use of PA across five different postgraduate taught programmes (BUSI, EDUA, EDUB, CEM and CS) in two academic years (2010-2011 and 2011-2012). The participating modules applied various forms of PA: some incorporated formative assessment, including divergent assessment with pure peer feedback, whereas some incorporated summative assessment with peer marking, which was a part of the final module marking. Typically, a module was composed of students with four to eight different nationalities, and Chinese students were predominant among the ISs. The case study used qualitative dominant mixed methods approach; it conducted individual interviews with 17 students and seven staff, produced data extracted from researcher observations, collected 124 copies of pre-questionnaires, 68 copies of post-questionnaires and seven copies of diamond ranking. Thematic coding was used to analyse the qualitative data, while statistical analysis was used to analyse quantitative data, playing a

complementary role to supplement the qualitative findings. Bernstein's (1996) classification and framing as the prominent theory, together with Ecclestone and Pryor's (2003) assessment careers, Bakhtin's (1981) dialogic talk and Hermans's (2001) dialogic self theory, offer a theoretical framework to develop the understanding of the findings and raise the critical discussion. The research has identified that there are significant relationships between the provision of PA activities and academic transition and intercultural learning, and implied that dialogic pedagogy might contribute to the internationalization of the curriculum.

6.2 Conceptual links between the research findings and original contributions to knowledge

This study reveals the relationship between assessment and dialogue, identifies their impacts on learner identity, and indicates the potential contribution of assessment and dialogue to the internationalization of the curriculum. The six points outlined below demonstrate the conceptual links between the research findings and provide evidence for the thesis's original contribution to knowledge:

- 1) The research findings have indicated that the positive effects of PA on learning found in previous studies can be realized by ISs in UK HE. This study particularly shows that PA can help ISs' academic transition in the UK through promoting interaction between students, involving them in assessment, encouraging deep understanding of subject knowledge and criteria, motivating them to contribute to the group work, and providing opportunities to appreciate others' work and self-reflect. Since this study does not expose many significantly different perceptions of PA between home students and ISs, it can be seen as an inclusive assessment approach for involving all students. Staff who intend to deploy inclusive innovative assessment approaches in the international classroom may consider PA.
- 2) The research findings support Bernstein's concepts of recognition and realization rules and extend their application to the international classroom in HE. In this study, ISs with high recognition and realization rules were likely to make the transition to the UK HE system either in the F+ or F- context. However, ISs with low recognition and realization rules were less likely to make a successful transition to the UK HE system in the F+ context, and might have slight transition in the F- context. Thus,

staff may wish to introduce F- discourse in the international classroom to assist all students' learning in the UK academic context.

- 3) The current study focuses on PA, in which peer talk is a prominent feature. The study has identified two patterns of peer talk that took place during PA, dialectic and dialogic talk. Dialectic talk occurred in both summative assessment and formative assessment, while dialogic talk occurred more frequently in divergent assessment, a type of formative assessment. ISs using dialectic talk emphasized the completion of the task or group agreement. Their opportunities to hear different voices and take opportunities to move between internal and external positions were fewer, so their learner identities were less influenced in the process of PA. Divergent assessment encouraged ISs to use dialogic talk, which has the potential to be open and to enable different voices from different cultures to be heard. They had more opportunities of movement between internal and external positions, so their learner identities could be more influenced in the process of PA. Thus, assessment policy makers may consider this result and disseminate divergent assessment with good practice exemplars to foster intercultural learning and develop the graduate skills and competences expected by global employers.
- 4) In this study, not all staff used formative assessment especially divergent assessment. The results show that the use of formative or summative assessment was closely related to staff use of framing. Staff using F- discourse preferred to use formative assessment, while those using F+ discourse preferred to use summative assessment. In addition, results reveal that modules were closely related to classification and influence staff preference for framing. In science modules where the classification was strong, staff emphasizing authority and accuracy of knowledge preferred to use F+ discourse to give correct answers to students directly; they positioned themselves as experts in the subject. While in social sciences modules where classification was weak, staff having a constructivist view of knowledge preferred to use F- discourse to encourage and inspire students' thinking rather than deliver subject knowledge to students; in this way, they demonstrated expertise in pedagogy rather than in the subject. Staff can have their own ontological and epistemological positions, but if they are experts in pedagogy in the international classroom, as well as on their subject,

they may be more able to facilitate ISs' learning in the UK educational system, and may thus promote intercultural learning.

- 5) The research focus was not only on ISs, but also on the observed staff teaching in the international classroom, and sought to investigate their perceptions of teaching ISs. Not all students shared an understanding of the pedagogic activities in the international classroom; staff, on the other hand, sometimes had a completely different perception from students of what was happening within the classroom. An understanding of recognition and realization rules could assist in heightening staff awareness of potential difficulties in communication within the international classroom and therefore enhance their ability to deliver an inclusive curriculum for all students. Furthermore, an understanding of recognition and realization rules could assist in heightening their awareness of the university agenda of establishing an internationalized educational setting and the reform of university assessment policy for more formative assessment. With improved recognition of the university agenda and the international classroom context, staff would be better able to address the practicalities of the internationalization of the curriculum.
- 6) This thesis has developed its models of understanding international students' assessment careers based on the findings in the present study, combined with Pryor and Crossouard's (2005) idealized model of formative assessment and Hermans's internal and external positions. The three theoretical models (Figure 30, Figure 31 and Figure 32) together offer a contribution to understanding how assessment approaches associated with classification and framing influence ISs academic learning in the UK and intercultural learning for their future working in a global economic environment. The models indicate the importance of dialogic pedagogy for the internationalization of the curriculum, which may lead to intercultural learning, personal development (e.g. global citizenship), and community development (e.g. an internationalized university) through an open and respectful dialogue between different points of view.

6.3 Implications for practice and theory

ISs may not perform well in assessment if they have misunderstandings about assessment approaches, based on prior assessment experiences formed in their own context or culture

(Robson, 2011). If tutors apply Bernstein's (1996) recognition and realization rules to understand their students, they may be able to share a better understanding with each other for culturally inclusive assessment. In addition, although tutors cannot change learners' prior experiences of assessment, they can help them to re-evaluate these experiences. PA, particularly divergent PA that encourages students to have open face-to-face discussion, can harness the power of talk to engage students, stimulate their thinking, advance their understanding, and exchange prior assessment experience. However, if tutors place students into groups without further support, dialogue may not be effective. Training is suggested for both staff and students to develop their own cognition and skill in using talk to the best effect to enrich educational outcomes.

To achieve the agenda of internationalizing the curriculum, we need innovative academic approaches to intercultural learning for students in both formal and informal learning experiences and assessment practices. This study has pointed out an innovative assessment approach that has the potential to contribute to personal development and intercultural learning. However, there are some practical issues to consider and not all users can achieve the expected learning outcomes, especially when staff and students have little awareness of intercultural learning. If one purpose of undertaking PA is for students to develop intercultural competence, then this should be more explicitly outlined in the learning outcomes of the exercise, so that all agents in the international classroom can share this message. This rule also applies to other pedagogic activities that aim at internationalizing the curriculum.

There is growing global competition for the international education market from English speaking countries like the US or the UK, countries in Europe, and more recently countries in the Asian region. For instance, China and South Korea have emerged as new popular host countries (Gu and Schweisfurth, 2011). This study not only provides evidence and suggestions for staff teaching in international classrooms where there are a great number of Chinese students, but also provides valuable information for Chinese universities which are trying to internationalize. Traditional teaching and assessment approaches in HE in China may challenge ISs from other countries who have different prior educational experiences. Thus, the internationalization of the curriculum is now also necessary in China. Chinese staff development should focus on introducing theories of F- discourse and dialogic talk, and encourage divergent assessment, to support more inclusive teaching and assessment in the

international classroom in China; this is also applicable for institutions in other countries which want to enter the international education market. It is suggested that the research findings and the theoretical models could be adopted by teaching staff, assessment policy makers and institutions to support ISSs' academic transition and intercultural learning.

6.4 Limitations of this study

There are a number of issues relating to the research design which did not progress as expected. Firstly, I intended to investigate the intervention and students' transition using PA through comparing data from the pre- and post-questionnaires. The number of participants in the pre- (124 students) and post-questionnaires (68 students) was dramatically imbalanced. Some students completed the pre-questionnaires but did not respond to the post-questionnaires, and vice versa. Thus, I could not match all participants of the questionnaire phase to conduct comparisons. The study mainly used data in the post-questionnaire to describe each module and conduct cross analysis, but only used data in the pre-questionnaire when there was a need. Secondly, I intended to use factor analysis to identify factors that influenced ISSs' perceptions of PA. However, the total number of participants in the post-questionnaires was too small and the relevant results were not sensible enough, so factor analysis was not adopted. Thirdly, I also intended to explore home students' experiences in relation to intercultural learning in the international classroom, but too few home students participated in this study. Thus, a holistic understanding of the whole international classroom has not been achieved. I am from China, and a majority of the participants are from China, particular those interviewed. It is possible that they may have wanted to help me because we are from the same country. Some interviewees knew they could communicate with me in Chinese, otherwise they would not have attended the interview. Although Chinese students were the largest group of ISSs in this university, especially in HASS (accounting for 56% and 40% in 2010-2011 and 2011-2012), the study acknowledges that the representation of population can be biased to some extent. Moreover, the study can only give a tentative conclusion of the relationships between modules and staff choice of assessment forms, and the impacts of dialogic talk on intercultural learning due to the small-scale sample and data set.

6.5 My learning through this research

I conducted the study of EdD as I hoped to acquire more advanced education theories that promote learning. The whole process of EdD is challenging and painful indeed, but I also quite enjoyed it. I can see the development of my academic skills. The most important lesson I learnt from the research process is that I have come to value talk. I was strategically orientated when I arrived in the UK, emphasizing summative assessment and marks. I neither had any idea about the importance of constructive feedback, nor applied them. I was reluctant to talk with both staff and peer colleagues. I was shy and silent, but after two years of research I have communicated and cooperated with many people, and realized that talking is significant in the learning process. My recognition of learning and assessment has reformulated from 'learn to get a certificate' and 'assessment of learning' to 'learn to learn' and 'assessment for learning'. My learner identity has shifted from a traditional silent Chinese learner to a constructivist learner appreciating dialogic talk and F- discourse.

Throughout the period of this EdD, I have always felt equality and freedom. Supervisors and colleagues respect me and give me space to develop my own thinking. They do not point out that I should know something, but take care of what I do not know. They are not surprised if I do not know something, but inspire and encourage me through dialogic talk, which builds my confidence and develops my critical thinking, creativity and learner autonomy. As an international student, English is not my first language. When it is difficult to express something or I cannot understand what they say, they are patient and attempt to understand me or explain to me in other ways. They are role models, and the lived interactions with them deeply influenced my beliefs and values of teaching.

6.6 Future research

I have outlined five points below, which I believe are important future research areas:

- 1) Further investigation of the effects of the repeated experience of formative PA is an important area to explore in future work. Only one module (BUSI) in phase I implemented PA in this way. The results show that satisfaction with the repeated use of formative PA in phase I was significantly higher than that of using summative PA once in phase II. Unfortunately, the present study was not able to provide findings of further effects and the result from just one case cannot be generalized.

- 2) UK HE institutions endeavour to attract international fee paying students, while not always ensuring their integration into the student culture in a way that is beneficial to both ISs and local students (Harrison and Peacock, 2010). We continue to need to explore teaching, learning and assessment approaches that enable ISs to function well in the UK context and enable home students to develop the intercultural understanding necessary to interact effectively with overseas students. Further studies may address how all students can be prepared to work effectively in intercultural settings for future employment.
- 3) This study explored the role of talk in the construction of learning during a short time period. I would have preferred to explore what happened to peer dialogue over time, but all of the participants had only studied one year in the postgraduate programmes, so longer term results were not available. This study referred to Hermans's internal and external positions to consider the possibility of the transformation of learner identity in the assessment process and in different framing contexts. Dialogic self theory may be considered in-depth as a theoretical framework to investigate ISs' shift of identity, producing rich empirical data to explore what happens to different voices over time. Future studies may highlight the relevance of peer learning to future professional experience, particularly after ISs graduate, return home or work abroad.
- 4) In relation to dialogue, if funding and time are available in future, the study could be extended to analyse cultural diversity and different patterns of behaviours and effects in peer talk to a larger population of students from different cultural backgrounds. We may also investigate the impacts of dialogic and dialectic talk on academic and intercultural learning with larger empirical data.
- 5) Exploring issues of how to engage academic staff in the internationalization of the curriculum in different disciplines is a promising research area (Leask, 2013). This thesis implies that there is a close relationship between disciplines and staff preference of framing, and that F- has a greater potential to assist ISs' academic transition. Future empirical research might investigate ways to encourage the use of F- discourse and its effects in different disciplines.

Appendices

A. Letter to module leaders

Dear,

I am carrying out a project as part of my doctoral research, focusing specifically on the perceptions and learner identities of international students in relation to their experience of peer assessment.

As part of the study I would like to give out some questionnaires, observe a few teaching sessions and conduct some individual interviews with students and the module leader.

All data would be amalgamated and anonymised so that it would not be traceable to any individual.

I would very much hope that the study would contribute to a better understanding of the experiences of international students, and in turn to an enhancement of pedagogical approaches.

Can I use students in your module as part of my samplings if they are willing to participate in the study? I can assure you that I will carry out as sensitively as possible. I look forward to hearing from you and wish to thank you in advance for your help with this.

Yours faithfully,

Meng

B. Research consent form

Dear colleague,

I am carrying out a project as part of my doctoral research, focusing specifically on the perceptions and learner identities of international students in relation to their experience of peer assessment.

As part of the study I would like to give out some questionnaires, observe a few teaching sessions and conduct some focus group and individual interviews with students.

All data would be amalgamated and anonymised so that it would not be traceable to any individual.

I would very much hope that the study would contribute to a better understanding of the experiences of international students, and in turn to an enhancement of pedagogical approaches.

I look forward to hearing from you and wish to thank you in advance for your help with this.

With all best wishes,

Meng

I, _____ consent to participating in the project of perceptions and learner identities of international students in relation to their experience of peer assessment.

Signed _____ Date _____

14. What would you like and dislike about peer assessment?

15. Would it be easy or difficult to assess your peer colleagues and why?

16. Would it be useful or not useful and why?

17. How would you feel about taking part in peer assessment, any challenge or benefit?

Part 2

Please rate each of the following items by giving the corresponding number.

Strongly agree 5 Agree 4 Neutral 3 Disagree 2 Strongly disagree 1

1. Peer assessment allows students to take part in the assessment process. _____

2. Peer assessment promotes interaction among students in a course. _____

3. Assessing peers is a way to learn from each other. _____

4. Feedback from peer assessment is as useful as from teachers. _____

5. Marks given by peers are fair. _____

6. Peer assessment is challenging. _____

7. Peer assessment is embarrassing. _____

8. It is easier if peers have previous experiences of peer assessment. _____

9. It is more comfortable if peers share a same cultural background. _____

10. It is more comfortable if peers are anonymous. _____

11. Additional workload from peer assessment is worth the effort. _____

12. Training for preparing skills of peer assessment is important. _____

13. Clarifying criteria is necessary for peer assessment. _____

14. Peer assessment puts pressure on students. _____

15. Peer assessment wastes students' time. _____

****Thank you for completing this questionnaire****

Post-Questionnaire
Exploring students' perceptions of peer assessment

Country of origin _____ First language _____

Part 1

Please answer these questions by either circling the applicable response or giving brief answers as required.

1. How satisfied were you with the peer assessment process? (Please give reasons for your answer, and a rank 1-5, 1=strongly dissatisfied, 2=slightly dissatisfied, 3=neutral, 4=slightly satisfied, 5= strongly satisfied)

2. What did you like and dislike about peer assessment?

Like: _____

Dislike: _____

3. Was it useful or not useful and why?

4. Has peer assessment impacted on your way of working?

5. Does cultural background make any difference on the practice of peer assessment?

6. Have you changed your mind of peer assessment compared when you did pre-questionnaire/or before this practice, and why?

Part 2

Please rate each of the following items by giving the corresponding number.

Strongly agree 5 Agree 4 Neutral 3 Disagree 2 Strongly disagree 1

1. Peer assessment allows students to take part in the assessment process. _____
2. Peer assessment promotes interaction among students in a course. _____
3. Assessing peers is a way to learn from each other. _____
4. Feedback from peer assessment is as useful as from teachers. _____
5. Marks given by peers are fair. _____
6. Peer assessment is challenging. _____
7. Peer assessment is embarrassing. _____
8. It is easier if peers have previous experiences of peer assessment. _____
9. It is more comfortable if peers share a same cultural background. _____
10. It is more comfortable if peers are anonymous. _____
11. Additional workload from peer assessment is worth the effort. _____
12. Training for preparing skills of peer assessment is important. _____
13. Clarifying criteria is necessary for peer assessment. _____
14. Peer assessment puts pressure on students. _____
15. Peer assessment wastes students' time. _____
16. Lecturers need to explain the purpose of peer assessment. _____

****Thank you for completing this questionnaire****

Assessing peers is a way to learn from each other.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel unease about giving marks and criticism to peers.	1	2	3	4	5
I have to work harder as my peers will assess me.	1	2	3	4	5
PA allows students to take part in the assessment process.	1	2	3	4	5
PA develops critical analysis skills.	1	2	3	4	5
Language is a barrier in the process of PA for international students.	1	2	3	4	5
Monitoring, intervention or assistance from a teacher throughout the PA process is important.	1	2	3	4	5
Unfair marks and inappropriate critical comments cause friction with peers.	1	2	3	4	5
Assessment stress can be reduced in PA.	1	2	3	4	5
Feedback from peers is useful.	1	2	3	4	5
Constructive discussion after PA by a teacher is important.	1	2	3	4	5
PA puts pressure on students.	1	2	3	4	5
Explaining learning objectives & purposes of PA are important.	1	2	3	4	5
Comments or unexpected marks result in feeling hurt or betrayed.	1	2	3	4	5
Training in PA skills is important.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel more comfortable if peers are anonymous.	1	2	3	4	5
Students just give positive mark/feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
PA increases personal motivation.	1	2	3	4	5
Students are unrealistic or biased in assessing peers.	1	2	3	4	5
Feedback from peers is as useful as from a teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
Students' knowledge is not sufficient to assess peers.	1	2	3	4	5
PA helps students better understand their own learning and the assignment.	1	2	3	4	5
PA develops communication skills.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm worried if words in peer feedback are too harsh	1	2	3	4	5

***** 😊Thank you for your reply😊*****

Post-Questionnaire 2011-2012

Exploring students' perceptions of peer assessment

Country of origin _____ First language _____

Part 1

Please answer these questions below.

1	How satisfied were you with the peer assessment process? (Please give reasons for your answer, and a rank 1-5, 1=strongly dissatisfied, 2=slightly dissatisfied, 3=neutral, 4=slightly satisfied, 5= strongly satisfied)	
2	What did you like and dislike about peer assessment?	Like— Dislike—
3	Was it useful or not useful and why?	
4	Has peer assessment impacted on your way of working and how?	
5	Does cultural background make any difference on the practice of peer assessment?	
6	Have you changed your mind of peer assessment after the practice and why?	

Part II Please circle your choices (PA=peer assessment)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
PA promotes discussion & interaction among students in a course.	1	2	3	4	5
PA increases self-awareness.	1	2	3	4	5
PA transfers too much workload to students.	1	2	3	4	5
I cannot be sure what the lecturer is looking for.	1	2	3	4	5
Peers are able to assess fairly.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel more comfortable if peers share a same cultural background.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel easier if peers have previous experiences of peer assessment.	1	2	3	4	5
PA wastes students' time.	1	2	3	4	5
Clarifying criteria is important.	1	2	3	4	5
The familiarity of cultural/religious topics influences mark/feedback given.	1	2	3	4	5
Sharing understanding of procedures between teacher and students is important.	1	2	3	4	5
Consideration of friendship with peers result in dishonest mark/feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
Peers are able to assess accurately.	1	2	3	4	5
Too many voices from peer feedback can be confusing or incoherent.	1	2	3	4	5

Assessing peers is a way to learn from each other.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel unease about giving marks and criticism to peers.	1	2	3	4	5
I have to work harder as my peers will assess me.	1	2	3	4	5
PA allows students to take part in the assessment process.	1	2	3	4	5
PA develops critical analysis skills.	1	2	3	4	5
Language is a barrier in the process of PA for international students.	1	2	3	4	5
Monitoring, intervention or assistance from a teacher throughout the PA process is important.	1	2	3	4	5
Unfair marks and inappropriate critical comments cause friction with peers.	1	2	3	4	5
Assessment stress can be reduced in PA.	1	2	3	4	5
Feedback from peers is useful.	1	2	3	4	5
Constructive discussion after PA by a teacher is important.	1	2	3	4	5
PA puts pressure on students.	1	2	3	4	5
Explaining learning objectives & purposes of PA are important.	1	2	3	4	5
Comments or unexpected marks result in feeling hurt or betrayed.	1	2	3	4	5
Training in PA skills is important.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel more comfortable if peers are anonymous.	1	2	3	4	5
Students just give positive mark/feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
PA increases personal motivation.	1	2	3	4	5
Students are unrealistic or biased in assessing peers.	1	2	3	4	5
Feedback from peers is as useful as from a teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
Students' knowledge is not sufficient to assess peers.	1	2	3	4	5
PA helps students better understand their own learning and the assignment.	1	2	3	4	5
PA develops communication skills.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm worried if words in peer feedback are too harsh	1	2	3	4	5

***** 😊Thank you for your reply😊*****

D. Interview questions

D.1 Student individual interviews

- Personal background information: Where are you from? What is your experience of learning and assessment in HE in your home country? What is your attitude towards assessment in HE?
- Why did you choose to study in the UK? What were your expectations of learning and assessment in the UK before you came?
- How long have you been studied in the UK? Are you satisfied with learning in UK HE? What kinds of expectations do you change after you have studied here for a few months now? Do you feel it is difficult to adjust to learning and assessment in the UK? In which way may help your transition of learning and assessment here?
- What is your experience of peer assessment? Has this been your first experience of peer assessment (if not, please describe your previous experience and make comparison)? What did you feel about it? What is your motivation to use peer assessment?
- Did your assessment of work change during the process according to feedback from peers?
- Is it easy to assign marks or give feedback? How much pressure did the experience put you under? What do you think about the quality of assessment from peers and the quality you gave to them?
- How you perceive the role of the lecturer in peer assessment? Did you fully understand what was expected of you?
- What do you think the role of dialogue between you and peers, or between you and the lecturer in the process of peer assessment? What do you think of the peer meeting? Are there any communication barriers?
- Have you changed your opinion of peer assessment at the beginning, during the activity and after the practice, and how?
- What do you think about the relationship between friendship and giving or receiving mark/feedback in peer assessment? What do you think anonymity?

- What do you think about the impact of cultural background on peer assessment?
- How did you choose peers and why? Are you happy with the arrangement?
- Do you feel differently if you are working with UK students, home country students or international students? Are there perceived differences between cultural groups?
- Do you think there are benefits and challenges of peer assessment?
- Will you do it better if you use peer assessment next time?
- Is peer assessment making any impact on your future study or work? What impacts are they?
- Do you recommend peer assessment in HE in your own country? Is it suitable to use peer assessment in HE in your own country? Can you imagine students' response?
- How will you improve this activity? Please use a diamond ranking to make priorities of factors that may conduct a successful peer assessment in the international classroom.
- What is your understanding of learning and assessment in the UK now? As an international student, do you feel you successfully adjust yourself to study in the UK?
- What do you think of intercultural learning? Do you think peer assessment help you to learn with people from different cultures?
- What do you think of the influence of the UK experience over your learning or even future work?

D.2 Teaching staff interviews

- How many kinds of assessment do you use in your courses, what are they? Are staff and students happy with these?
- What is your understanding of peer assessment? Why do you choose this assessment technique? What is school assessment policy? How long have you used it? Do you think there are benefits and challenges of peer assessment?
- How do you do it? Anything particular important? How do you introduce it to students?
- What conditions are needed for successful implementation of peer assessment in your practice? Are there any difficulties in the implementation and where are they from?
- What is students' response at the beginning and in the end?
- How do they select peers? How many international students? Do they act differently as home students?
- What do you think of students' cultural background in the practice of peer assessment?
- Have you found that peer assessment helps student learning? What makes you think this?
- Has assessment helped or influenced your own teaching in any way?
- What do you think of the role of dialogue between the lecturer and students?
- To what extent did peer assessment in this course meet your expectation?
- Should/can peer assessment go further in your program or your school?
- How will you improve this activity?

D.3 Assessment policy maker interview

- What is your understanding of university assessment policy?
- What policies do we have at the moment?
- Do postgraduate courses have different policies from undergraduate courses?
- Why are you revising policies now? What are the purposes?
- How are you doing it?
- Will you design policies for disciplinary boundaries or in general?
- How will you implement revised policies? How will you evaluate the implementation across the university?
- To what extent do module leaders have space to design assessment?
- What do you think of innovative assessment approaches, i.e. formative assessment, peer assessment, self-assessment?
- Do you consider international students when you revise assessment policies?
- How will you predict the development of assessment in our university?

D.4 Staff educator interview

- What approaches do you train staff to encourage students' participation in formative assessment? What conditions are needed to successfully implement formative assessment?
- Any good or failed examples in our university?
- What is current situation of the implementation of formative assessment in our university? E.g. how many staff use it, in which disciplines, in undergraduate or postgraduate programmes?
- What do you think of the role of discourse between tutor and students either in the introduction of formative assessment or in the practice?
- What do you think how international students look at formative assessment?
- What do you think the aim of assessment in HE? Any other innovative assessment approaches do you provide training or do you recommend using in HE?
- How would you predict assessment situations in our university in the future?

E. Observation form

Module		
Overall peer assessment process:		
Peer assessment length:	Year/Stage of students:	
Type of learning/teaching activity	Specific topic	
Describe the composition and background of the student group/peer assessors and assessees.		
	Curriculum/subject	
1	Reasons for implementing peer assessment	
2	Instruction	
3	Criteria	
4	Mark sheet	
5	Official weight	
6	Feedback	
7	Time	
8	Place	
9	Privacy	
10	Attention	
11	Recognition rules and realization rules	
12	Classification	
13	Framing	
14	Other phenomena	

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