

**An Initial Exploration of the Impact of Foreign Students on  
the Education of Domestic Students at Queen's University**

by

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of Master of Education

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## ABSTRACT

This study used qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the impact of foreign students on the education of undergraduate students in four classes at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. It was conducted to answer three questions about the impact of foreign students in the host institution: (a) Does the presence of foreign students enrich the education of domestic students? (b) What are the characteristics of that enrichment, and what accounts for it? (c) What factors account for cases in which a domestic student does not perceive his or her education as being enriched or otherwise enhanced from the presence of foreign students? Data for the study were based on the results of 94 questionnaires completed by Canadian undergraduate students in the Computer Science, Economics, Sociology, and Education programs at Queen's University in the winter of 2001. Follow-up interviews were conducted with 10 of these students. Interviews were also conducted with seven faculty and administrative members of the university for background information.

Results show that the enriching effect of foreign students on domestic students' education is highly variable, a characteristic that is not previously accounted for in the literature. The largest single group of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed about whether their education had been enriched by the presence of foreign students. Where an enriching effect from foreign students was reported, its strength ranged from very weak to very strong. Social interaction between domestic and foreign students was a factor that was strongly associated with the educational enriching impact of foreign students. Lack

of social interaction was commonly cited where no impact was reported. Participants in general reported a stronger enriching impact from foreign students through non-classroom activities. Recommendations are made for future research on foreign student impact on the education of domestic students.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Purpose of the Study.....	1
Background.....	3
Rationale.....	4
Statement of the Research Questions.....	6
Importance of the Study.....	9
Overview of the Method.....	10
Summary and Overview of the Thesis.....	11
<b>CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....</b>	<b>12</b>
The Emergence of Research on Foreign Students.....	13
Enriching the Education of Domestic Students.....	14
The Potential Educational Value of Foreign Students.....	18
Contradictions in the Literature.....	20
Impact Studies.....	25
The Paucity of Research on Foreign Students.....	34
Theoretical Framework.....	36
Summary.....	41
<b>CHAPTER 3: METHOD.....</b>	<b>43</b>
Review of the Research Questions.....	43
Research Site.....	44
Participants.....	49
Undergraduate Students.....	49
Faculty and Staff.....	53
Development of the Data Collection Instruments.....	54
Survey.....	55
Interviews.....	57
Procedures.....	58
Surveys.....	59
Interviews.....	60
Analysis.....	62
Summary.....	63
<b>CHAPTER 4: RESULTS.....</b>	<b>65</b>
Demographic Profile of the Sample.....	66

Results of Item 2.1.....	67
Scale Responses.....	67
Qualitative Responses.....	70
Evidence of An Enriching Impact from Foreign Students.....	70
How Enrichment Occurs.....	72
Weak Impact.....	73
Impact on Students' Non-Classroom Education.....	74
Foreign Students Do Not Impact Domestic Students' Education.....	75
Results of Item 2.2.....	76
Scale Responses.....	76
Qualitative Responses.....	77
Foreign Students Do Make an Impact on Classroom Education.....	78
Foreign Students Do Not Make an Impact in the Classroom.....	79
Results of Item 2.3.....	79
Scale Responses.....	80
Qualitative Responses.....	81
Impact Outside of the Classroom.....	81
Foreign Students Make No Impact Outside of the Classroom.....	82
Results of Item 2.4.....	82
Scale Responses.....	82
Qualitative Responses.....	84
Foreign Students Do Not Impact Lectures.....	84
Foreign Students Enrich Lectures.....	85
Results of Item 2.5.....	86
Scale Responses.....	86
Qualitative Responses.....	87
Language.....	88
Miscellaneous Responses.....	89
Results of Item 2.6.....	89
Scale Responses.....	89
Qualitative Responses.....	90
Results of Item 2.7.....	91
Scale Responses.....	92
Qualitative Responses.....	92
Foreign Students Are Prominent Participants.....	92
Foreign Students Are Not Prominent Participants.....	94
No Difference.....	95
It Depends.....	96
Results of Item 2.8.....	97
Scale Responses.....	97
Qualitative Responses.....	98
Multiculturalism.....	98
Domestic Students Can Recognize Foreign Students.....	101
Results of Item 2.9.....	103
Scale Responses.....	103

Qualitative Responses.....	103
Why It Is Important to Enrol Foreign Students.....	104
Reactions to Item 2.9.....	108
Results of Item 2.10.....	109
Scale Responses.....	110
Qualitative Responses.....	111
The Absence of Foreign Students Would Not Make a Difference.....	111
Foreign Students Do Enrich the Education of Domestic Students.....	111
A Difficult Question to Answer.....	113
Results of Item 2.11.....	113
Scale Responses.....	114
Qualitative Responses.....	115
Professors Draw on Foreign Students.....	115
Professors Do Not Draw on Foreign Students in the Classroom.....	116
It Depends.....	117
Professors Should Utilize Foreign Students More in the Classroom.....	118
Results of Item 2.12.....	119
Scale Responses.....	119
Qualitative Responses.....	119
A Noticeable Impact.....	120
A Weak Impact.....	124
No Impact.....	124
Miscellaneous Responses.....	125
Results of Item 2.13.....	125
Scale Responses.....	126
Qualitative Responses.....	127
Foreign Students Tend to Cluster Among Themselves.....	127
Foreign Students Associate More With Canadians Than Other Foreign Students.....	131
It Depends.....	131
Results of Item 2.14.....	132
Scale Results.....	132
Qualitative Results.....	132
Foreign Students Are Not Sufficient to Internationalize a University.....	134
The University Benefits from International Exposure.....	134
Miscellaneous Responses.....	135
Results of Item 2.15 and 2.16.....	136
Results of Item 2.17.....	136
Summary.....	137
CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION.....	139
Analysis of the Sample.....	140
Relationship Between the Demographic Results and the Impact of Foreign Students on the Education of Domestic Students.....	143
Discussion of the Impact of Foreign Students on the Education of Domestic Undergraduates.....	144



Range and Strength of Foreign Student Impact.....	145
Variations in Foreign Student Impact by Class .....	146
Foreign Student Impact Outside the Classroom.....	148
The Contingent Nature of Foreign Student Impact.....	149
Negative Impact.....	151
Characteristics of Foreign Student Impact on Domestic Students'	
Education.....	151
What Domestic Students Reported Learning From Foreign Students.....	155
How Foreign Students Impact the Education of Domestic Students.....	156
Why Enrolment of Foreign Students Is Important to Domestic Students.....	156
Factors That Help Explain The Absence Of Foreign Student Impact.....	157
Foreign Student Factors.....	158
Foreign Students Are Invisible on Campus.....	158
Language.....	160
Clustering.....	162
Country of Origin.....	163
Institutional Factors.....	164
Foreign Student Enrolment .....	164
Faculty Appointments.....	165
Segregation.....	170
Limitations of the Study.....	169
Summary.....	170
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS .....	172
Overview of the Study.....	172
Major Findings.....	174
Response to the Research Questions.....	174
Further Research.....	178
Universities.....	178
The Professoriate.....	180
Academic Discipline.....	181
Impact Inside and Outside the Classroom.....	182
Negative Impact.....	183
Foreign Students.....	183
Domestic Students.....	184
Race or Ethnicity.....	185
Methodological Considerations.....	186
Concluding Statement.....	189
APPENDIX A.....	191
APPENDIX B.....	198
APPENDIX C.....	199
APPENDIX D.....	200
REFERENCES.....	201

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This study used qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the impact of foreign students on the education of domestic undergraduate students in the host country institution. It was an exploratory study that focused on Canadian undergraduates in the Computer Science, Economics, Sociology, and Education programs at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. It also included Queen's faculty members, administrators, and staff. The study considered ancillary factors associated with the lives of domestic students that might affect the impact that foreign students have on their education, such as time spent in a foreign country, amount of contact with foreign students, cultural background, and ability in a second language.

Enrolling foreign students has been one of the most visible institutional strategies used to help internationalize campuses in North America. Ellingboe (1998) defines internationalization as "the process of integrating an international perspective into a college or university system [and].... A vision to change the internal dynamics of an institution to respond and adapt appropriately to an increasingly diverse, globally focused, ever-changing external environment" (p. 199).

#### Purpose of the Study

This study was conducted as part of the requirements for the Master of Education degree program at Queen's University. There were two underlying purposes for conducting this study. The first was to assess presumptions in the literature about the

enriching educational effects that accrue to domestic students from the presence of foreign students in a university. The second was to establish directions for future research on this largely uncharted topic.

Specifically, this study was carried out to investigate the degree to which, and how, the education of Canadian undergraduate students at Queen's University is enriched by the presence of foreign students. Research on foreign students has tended to focus on the adjustment and acculturation experiences that foreign students undergo in their host institution (Altbach, 1991). Even though the educational benefits associated with enrolling foreign students, and the enriching effect of their presence on the learning environment, are common justifications for international student programs, these topics are not adequately represented in the literature. This study is a critical approach to questions about the educational impact of foreign students in the university.

The study was conducted with the forward view that the results would be useful to researchers, administrators, instructors, and government policy makers in terms of:

1. Understanding the degree to which, and how, the undergraduate education of domestic students in the host country institution is being enriched from the presence of, and contact with, foreign students on campus.
2. Providing data that give preliminary indications about the impact of foreign students as an educational resource.
3. Identifying factors that influence the educational benefit that domestic students derive from the presence of foreign students on campus.

## Background

I lived in Japan from 1992 to 1997. One of the things that struck me most when I first arrived there was the amount that so many Japanese people knew about the way of life in North America, yet how little I had been taught about theirs.

The traditions, customs, values, etiquette, etc., that make a foreign country different are exaggerated in the eyes of any expatriate. But this awareness of the world outside that I experienced in Japan faded somewhat after I returned to Canada. The contrast was particularly noticeable in the graduate education courses that I took alongside foreign students at Queen's University, where the opportunity to draw on their unique experiences and perspectives and learn about schooling in their home countries was never, in my presence, pursued by professors or fellow students. After completing courses with foreign students from China and the Caribbean, without any discussion about education in their home countries, I was left questioning the scope of these courses and why I was never encouraged to consider subjects studied outside of western perspectives. It struck me that the Canadian students in my classes, most of whom were educators, were implicitly being taught to learn, and teach, from a narrow perspective.

The Association of International Education Administrators (1995) hints at this notion of self-involvement in describing the United States as a society that has "emerged out of striking insularity" (p. 4). Reflecting on the contrast that I experienced in returning to life in North America, I would suggest that this emergence has yet to reach its full potential, and that Canada is similar to the United States in this regard. Weiler (1984) refers to this insularity in our education institutions when he observes the North

American academic subculture's tendency to "adhere to a particular frame of reference to the exclusion or neglect of other, alternative paradigms" (p. 178).

Universities and government agencies commonly refer to the enriching educational effect that foreign students have on local students to advocate enrolling them (e.g., Queen's University, 1985). Despite the plausibility of these claims, they were not supported by my own observations and experiences as a university student. A search of the literature did not respond to my questions about if, and how, foreign students influence domestic students' education, and whether or not the impact of foreign students could only be described generally as positive and enriching. Subsequent conversations with international education researchers and practitioners, and responses to a query that I posted on the National Association of Foreign Student Advisors (NAFSA) Internet discussion group confirmed for me that only a very limited amount of research was available on foreign student impact, and it did not directly ask or answer such questions. Given the numerous references throughout the literature to the paucity of research on the foreign student phenomenon, the opportunity and need presented itself for a study on the impact of foreign students on the education of domestic students.

### Rationale

There is a strong supposition across the literature that the presence of foreign students on university campuses has an enriching effect on the education of the domestic students in the host university (e.g., Holdaway, Bryan, & Allan, 1988; Canadian Bureau of International Education, 1986; Symons & Page, 1984; Vertesi, 1999). Many authors also refer to *potential* educational benefits associated with foreign students on campus.

Use of the word “potential” suggests that these claims are based more on supposition than fact. The basis for these claims is that foreign students bring with them perspectives shaped by different cultures, laws, politics, economies, and natural environments, and that exposing domestic students to these perspectives and experiences will foster, among many other things, a greater awareness of world affairs, global issues, and greater sensitivity of domestic students’ cultural awareness. Recruitment of foreign students by universities in Canada and around the world<sup>1</sup> is at least partly predicated upon this belief (e.g., Canadian Bureau of International Education, 1986).

Two problems emerge. The first one is that claims espousing the real and potential educational benefits associated with the presence of foreign students on campus are not grounded in research. No study was found to have investigated whether foreign students are actually having the ameliorative effects on the education of domestic students in the host institution as presumed. The second problem is that the term *educational benefits*, as it relates to the presence of foreign students, has not been defined. This increases the possibility that the assumptions underpinning the term ‘benefits’ are highly variable. Mestenhauser (1998) alludes to this problem in suggesting that claims that universities are becoming more internationalized “frequently lack conceptual and theoretical foundations” (p. 106).

Without a grounded taxonomy of the educational benefits associated with the presence of foreign students on campus, and research that is only indirectly related to the impact they have on domestic students’ education, claims about foreign students’ value as a rich educational resource are somewhat speculative and premature. Holdaway, Bryan,

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<sup>1</sup> Universities in Australia, Britain, Germany, France, and the United States have strong international student recruitment programs (Peterson, Briggs, Dreasher, Horner, & Nelson, 1999).

and Allan (1988) drew attention to the fact that foreign student policies are developed and approved by various federal, provincial, and institutional bodies “largely in the absence of comprehensive, relevant data” (p. 15). In acknowledging the need for further research in the area of foreign student policy in 1986, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, made an observation that reflects the central rationale for this study: “Without accurate up-to-date information on a range of factors, policy makers run the risk of reaching decisions that are based more on opinion than on facts” (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, 1986).

### Statement of the Research Questions

Three central questions guided the study, as follows:

1. Does the presence of foreign students on campus enrich the education of undergraduate domestic students?

This question represents the backbone of the study. One of the shortcomings of the literature is that it takes for granted the educational impact of foreign students on domestic students. Moreover, this question has not been addressed from students’ perspectives. Given the exploratory nature of this study, the first task is to investigate the basic presumption in the literature that the presence of foreign students enriches domestic students’ education. The results of this question are of central importance because they speak, in part, to the foundations upon which many institutions recruit foreign students.

manage (or fail to manage) their international programs, and our present understanding of the role and value of foreign students in the university.

The next two questions follow from Question 1, but each one was explored conditionally for each participant.

2. Where a domestic student perceives his or her education as being enriched or otherwise positively impacted by foreign students, what are the characteristics of that impact and what factors account for them?

The purpose of this question is to distil the concept of 'benefits' as it relates to foreign student impact in the literature. No study has yet systematically defined the ameliorative elements that foreign students are perceived to contribute to domestic students' education. As a result, the institutional and pedagogical factors that contribute to this positive impact have not yet been defined in the literature. The role of Question 2 is to account for the value added to the education of domestic students related to the presence of foreign students on campus, and to identify factors or institutional practices that promote this type of learning. This will be a useful addition to the literature.

3. What factors account for cases in which a domestic student perceives his or her education as not being enriched or otherwise influenced by foreign students?



The purpose of this question is to consider alternative ways in which to characterize the educational impact of foreign students on domestic students. An additional shortcoming of the literature is that it only represents the educational benefits of foreign students as being positive and uniform across the institution. This question considers alternatives to describing the educational impact of foreign students on domestic students as 'enriching.' An additional reason for employing this question is to uncover factors at various levels in the university that might be responsible for inhibiting the enriching effect of foreign students on the education of domestic students.

The terms "foreign students" and "international students" are used interchangeably throughout the literature (Altbach, 1991). I have chosen to use the former. The Oxford Dictionary defines "foreign" as "coming from another district or society, or is not of one's own land," and "international" as "existing, or carried on, between nations, or agreed on by all or many nations" (Sykes, 1982). In my view, "foreign" more accurately describes a person who enters a country on a temporary basis with no intention of assuming that country's nationality or making it his or her permanent residence. Irrespective of terminology, a foreign student in this study is operationally defined using Statistics Canada's definition: a non-Canadian student who does not have 'permanent resident' status and, as such, has had to receive permission from the Canadian government to enter Canada for the purposes of study (Statistics Canada, 1998).

Definitions for "education" are wide and varied. I operationally define education by borrowing concepts from John Dewey's pragmatist interpretation of education. To Dewey, education "represents growth in the individual's capacity to deal with situations: is a continuous process and cannot be terminated by the completion of course

requirements, promotion, or graduation; and demands self-direction as opposed to authoritarian imposition" (Wyett, 1998). An *impact* on an undergraduate's education, which this study seeks to examine, draws mainly on the first point, and is considered here as any alteration to a student's ability to deal with situations that results from the presence of, or interaction with, foreign students in connection to the university.

In the early stages of this study, these research questions were focused on the secondary school level. I was interested in examining why certain school boards are actively recruiting students from overseas for year-round study (e.g., Champion, 1997). However, since no literature was available on foreign student impact at the high school level, my advisor and I decided for various reasons it would be too difficult to pursue an area for which there was no foundation in the literature. I then shifted the focus of this question to the university level, as universities in Canada also recruit students from overseas.

### Importance of the Study

The aim of this study is to explore untested presumptions in the literature about the educational impact of foreign students on domestic students in the host institution. The study is important because it is one of only a few studies to critically evaluate the rhetoric that typically justifies foreign student recruitment. Although one of the most commonly cited reasons for enrolling foreign students is the educational value to the host institution's domestic student body (e.g., Queen's University, 1996), the paucity of research on this topic suggests that the educational impact of foreign students on

domestic students might not receive much attention in practice. Results of this study will move us toward either confirming the suppositions in the literature or exposing their weaknesses and identifying areas for improvement.

Universities and colleges typically allocate both human and material resources to support their foreign student initiatives. Some resources include a liaison or recruiting office whose role is to promote the institution to prospective students overseas, the provision of special counselling staff, and a foreign student centre on campus. It is hoped that simply asking the question, as much as the findings, will encourage universities and colleges to more closely examine the educational outcomes of their foreign student initiatives vis-à-vis the presumptions upon which they are based.

### Overview of the Method

This study was carried out at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. The study used qualitative and quantitative techniques to gather data. A survey of 196 upper-year undergraduate students in the Computer Science, Economics, Sociology, and Education programs was conducted between February and March 2001. Ninety-six completed surveys were returned, of which 94 could be used. I surveyed different departments in order to compare the responses from different departments. The survey included questions to which students gave yes-no and Likert scale-type agree-disagree responses. In addition, the survey questions provided space where students could elaborate their responses. I augmented the data by interviewing undergraduate students, faculty members, university administrators, and relevant staff members. A small number of

faculty members, administrators, and university staff whose responsibilities were related to foreign students were also interviewed in order to provide context.

### Summary and Overview of the Thesis

This chapter gave an introduction to the study. It began by describing the purpose of the study and then offered a brief overview of the factors that led me to pursue these questions about the educational impact of foreign students on domestic students in the host institution. The research questions and rationale for the study were drawn out of the literature.

This thesis is organized into six chapters. Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature and the theoretical framework. Chapter 3 describes the participants and gives a detailed account of the methods used for collecting and analysing the data. The results of the data collection are presented in chapter 4. A discussion and analysis of the results appear in chapter 5. Finally, conclusions, recommendations, and implications for further research are presented in chapter 6.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter provides an overview of the literature on foreign student impact in universities. Overall, the literature approaches the notion of foreign student impact from various points of view: economic, organizational, administrative, and academic. This section will review only literature related to the academic nature of foreign student impact.

This chapter is presented in seven sections. The first section introduces the topic of internationalization in higher education. The second section then describes the emergence of foreign students as a topic of academic inquiry in order to provide context to the literature review. The third section traces the development of the dominant theme in the literature on foreign student impact: the education of domestic students is enriched from the presence of foreign students in the institution. The aim of this section is to illustrate the momentum that has been generated in the literature regarding the educational impact of foreign students on an institution's domestic student population. The fourth section focuses on aspects of the literature that weaken the validity of these claims. The aim of this section is to draw attention to a discrepancy that exists in the literature on foreign student impact. The fifth section reviews and critiques three studies on foreign student impact, the only ones that could be found on this topic. Two of these studies were conducted on university campuses in the United States while the third one was carried out in Chile. The sixth section reviews calls that have been made for more research on the foreign student phenomenon and internationalization in higher education.

Finally, the concluding section of this chapter provides an overview of situated learning theory, the theoretical framework that guided the study.

### The Emergence of Research on Foreign Students

Although the transnational flow of students gained attention in the 1980's and 1990's, it is not a recent phenomenon. The Canadian government, for example, first started collecting data on the foreign visa student population in Canada in the 1920's (Chui, 1996). But it was not until the 1960's that researchers began treating this group as a subject of academic inquiry (Spaulding, Flack, Tate, Mahon, & Marshall, 1976). While a considerable amount has been written on the topic since then, the pool of literature dealing specifically with the impact of their presence -- on the host country, educational institutions, domestic students, and the community -- remains sparse (Tillman, 1990). Much of the available research focuses on one of three areas: (a) foreign student counseling issues, (b) the process of acculturation that foreign students experience in adjusting to life in the new country, and (c) the economic impact of hosting foreign students. This research exists largely in the form of unpublished Ph.D. dissertations (Altbach, 1991) and government reports.

I arrived at the three research questions outlined in chapter 1 after an initial survey of the foreign student literature. Subsequent and more focused reviews suggested that these questions are actually subsidiaries of broader questions about foreign student impact that were first posed in the 1970's. According to Jenkins (as cited in Herbert, 1981), the revelation that 45,000 Iranian students were studying on American campuses

during the 1979 Iran hostage crisis suddenly prompted people to think in new ways about the implications of hosting students from other countries. For the first time, foreign students in the United States became a national security issue. This “raised a new question” (Herbert, 1981, p. 68) about the impact of foreign students on the institution and the community. So, while foreign students have been a topic of general academic inquiry since the 1960’s, the impact of their presence did not begin to attract scholarly attention for another decade.

### Enriching the Education of Domestic Students

The dominant theme across the foreign student literature is that the presence of foreign students enhances or enriches the education of domestic students in the host institution. I will begin the overview of this aspect of the literature with Chapter 10 of Some Questions of Balance, the 1984 report of the Commission on Canadian Studies to the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (Symons & Page, 1984). The report was written to address a number of issues pressing Canadian universities in the mid-1980’s, and in it the authors devoted considerable attention to the question of foreign student enrolment in Canada’s universities. Symons and Page argued the need for a national policy on foreign students, and described the importance of foreign students to Canada on various levels. The crux of their argument was that foreign students are a valuable educational resource, through whom Canadians learn about themselves, their country, and the rest of the world. For example:

Through the contribution they can make, both inside and outside the classroom and lab, and through the particular knowledge and expertise they bring with them, foreign students can improve the quality of the educational experience offered by Canadian institutions. The presence of foreign students is probably of greater importance to our own education than it is to theirs. (p. 221)

The case that Symons and Page build for receiving foreign students in Canadian universities is based largely on the learning that can result from the cultural diversity they bring to the university. According to Symons and Page,

The presence of foreign students, bringing with them their different heritages and perspectives, provides an opportunity for Canadians to broaden their outlook and to enlarge their knowledge of themselves and others. It should be possible, thanks to the presence of foreign students, for many Canadian students to learn from personal contact about other countries, cultures, and other ways of doing and seeing things. (p. 216)

Shortly after Symons and Page's call for a national foreign student policy in Canada, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), the Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE), and the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) jointly issued a brief to the Senate House Committee on International Relations on the role that foreign students play in Canada's international relations (CBIE, 1986). In this report, they characterized the value of foreign students in much the same way as did Symons and Page. For example, they said:



There has been general agreement for many years on the values attached to receiving foreign students.... Their presence enhances the quality of education experienced by Canadian students because of the contact with other peoples and cultures which they represent; this benefit accrues as well to local communities. (p. 1)

Similar reasoning and sentiments can be found throughout the literature over the remainder of that decade. For example, Goodwin and Nacht described faculty members as "appreciative of the intellectual and cultural richness" that foreign students contribute to a university or program through their presence on campus (as cited in Weiler, 1981, p. 169). In Canada, the Council of Ministers of Education strongly advocated the recruitment of foreign students to Canadian universities in the mid-1980's based on their perceived value as a learning resource. The Council (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, 1986) said, "No one disputes the beneficial effects of foreign students in Canadian classrooms, lecture halls, and laboratories" (p. 2). And in a report on international students in Canada, the Secretary of State of Canada (1989) referred to the enrichment of post-secondary education as one of the benefits of enrolling foreign students when it stated, "internationally, it is widely accepted that international students contribute considerable benefits to host countries" (p. 2).

Crossing into the 1990's, these perceptions of the educational benefits associated with enrolling foreign students continue to be found across the literature. For example, the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA, 1995) made this statement in its 1995 research agenda: "Foreign student programs are known intuitively to contribute in some degree to an understanding of international forces and the global

setting” (p. 7). At about the same time, the AUCC used similar reasoning to advocate efforts to attract foreigners to Canadian universities. In the proceedings from their 1997 conference on internationalization in higher education (AUCC, 1997), it said,

“International and returning students can serve as a rich resource in the classroom by offering intercultural insights, new perspectives, or fresh approaches” (p. 21).

The foreign student literature published towards the end of the 1990’s sustains this perception that the education of domestic students is enriched or enhanced by their presence. For example, in reference to the activities that universities periodically organize to promote interaction between foreign and domestic students, Vertesi (1999) said that at the University of British Columbia, foreign students “unquestionably contributed to a more sophisticated worldview in those Canadians who came to know them” (p. 143).

Finally, in the most recent of a series of reports on the internationalization of higher education in Canada, a study by Knight (2000) demonstrates that Canadian university administrators share this perception of the educational merit of enrolling foreign students. Knight surveyed AUCC member institutions to produce a snapshot of the status of internationalization at Canadian universities and the progress they have achieved since a similar survey she conducted in 1993. Results of the survey showed that the respondents<sup>2</sup> viewed foreign students as being the third strongest impact of internationalization on the university, behind organizational structures and Canadian student mobility (Knight, 2000, p. 19).

The references cited up to this point lead the reader through a variety of examples in the literature: government documents, journal articles, and book chapters. This section

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<sup>2</sup> AUCC recommended that different members of the university complete different parts of the survey, including the President, Vice-President, Registrar, International Liaison Officer, Study Abroad Advisor, and Recruitment Officer.

attempts to demonstrate that domestic students in the host institution have been portrayed as deriving positive educational benefits from the presence of foreign students. Recall that in the introduction to this thesis I questioned the validity of these claims. This was for a number of reasons, namely: (a) despite their plausibility, these claims are not substantiated by research; (b) their underlying assumption is that the educational outcome of all levels and degrees of contact between foreign and domestic students is uniform across the institution; (c) the claims do not reflect, or account for, my personal experience in the university; and (d) examples exist in the literature that either temper these claims or outright contradict them. It is to these examples in the literature I will now turn.

### The Potential Educational Value of Foreign Students

A widespread perception in the literature assumes that the presence of foreign students has an enhancing effect on domestic students' education. However, as demonstrated above, it is important to note how, in some cases, authors qualify their discussion of these benefits with terms like *potential* and what *can* or *should be* possible. This creates a hint of uncertainty in this field, and suggests that much is unknown about the actual educational benefits that domestic students are accruing from foreign students. For example, Symons and Page (1984) said, "It should be possible, thanks to the presence of foreign students, for many Canadian students to learn from personal contact about other countries, cultures, and other ways of doing and seeing things" (p. 216). Indeed, they were obliged to use these terms as no research had been undertaken at that point to

suggest whether perceived benefits were actually being realized in practice. They went on to say, "But surely the most immediate and important reason for receiving foreign students is the tremendous potential educational value of their presence" (p. 221).

A study of foreign student impact at Fort Hays University in Kansas (Potts, 1992), which will be discussed in more detail in the next section, adopted a similar tone. The author stated:

[foreign students] open a vital window to the world which, if properly utilized, can provide a 'living presence' of those different cultural values that students must understand to serve the long-term interests of the United States and the global community as a whole. (p. 7)

Of course, the question raised by this statement is whether or not this "window to the world" is being "properly-utilized" in higher education institutions.

Proceedings from the 1997 AUCC conference on foreign students also reflect this tendency to focus on what is possible rather than what is actually happening in practice. "Universities should maximize the use of international students and returning Canadians in the classroom. These students can contribute to internationalizing the curriculum to the benefit of other 'non-mobile' students" (AUCC, 1997, p.22).

Reference to the potential educational benefits of foreign students draws attention to the speculative nature of the educational value that the presence of foreign students is perceived to add to a university. Furthermore, it weakens the validity of the common perceptions of foreign student impact that were reviewed in the previous section. Curiously, the actual educational benefits that domestic university students are deriving from foreign students have never been put under the microscope. In the end, the

speculative nature of these views, despite their plausibility, merits investigation. It is interesting to compare the statements above by Potts and the AUCC to a comment that Mestenhauser made in the mid 1970's: "While it is generally recognized that a great deal of cultural learning is transmitted informally through interpersonal contacts, such learning is left to chance and cannot be evaluated" (Mestenhauser, 1976, p. iii ).

### Contradictions in the Literature

The above section demonstrates that claims espousing the enriching educational effects of enrolling foreign students have, in some cases, been weakened by being couched in the notion of potential: that it can or should be possible for domestic students to benefit from their presence as long as people recognize and capitalize on these opportunities for academic enrichment. While the previous section outlined aspects of the literature that weaken these claims, this section draws together references that would suggest domestic students are not deriving such rich educational benefits from foreign students. This section draws attention to the contradictory aspect of the literature. The enriching effect portrayed in the literature can be more accurately described as anecdotal and lacking foundation.

A study conducted at Fort Hays University (Potts, 1991) found that foreign students there have a tendency to "cluster into their national groups" as their numbers increase (p. 15). An assumption is that the learning transfer between the foreign and domestic student populations is likely being impeded in these cases. While the study only briefly noted this "clustering" phenomenon, the inference drawn here is that Fort Hays is

not necessarily an isolated case. The CBIE, for example, also touched on the notion of foreign student isolation in a documentary film that it commissioned on foreign students in Canada (Barde & Button, 1988). In it, foreign students described a number of factors that support the findings of the Fort Hays study. One foreign student who was interviewed for the video described the workload at Canadian universities as much heavier than what he was accustomed to in his home country, and that the struggle for him to survive in his academic program immersed him almost completely in his studies. Another foreign student, studying in Canada with financial support from the government in her home country, described the pressure that she was under to finish her program within a short time limit and with high standing, making it difficult for her to socialize with other students. It was the view of a third foreign student in the video that foreign students do have a strong tendency to cluster amongst themselves on campus. She personally found fellow expatriates easier to relate to because they were also experiencing challenges in adjusting to life in Canada and the new university.

Observations noting the marginalization of foreign students in the university are found widely throughout the literature. A survey of faculty and interviews with foreign students by Tompson and Tompson (1996) at two American business schools noted that the most difficult adjustment for foreign students in coming to study in the United States was not having to function in a new language, but developing a social network. Loneliness and a fear of being socially rejected were the major preoccupations of the foreign students in this study. Similar observations are noted in the foreign student counselling literature. For example, in a study of Chinese foreign students in the United States, Cho (1990) found that they experience isolation more often than loneliness in

coming to study in the United States, and that these feelings are most often brought on by culture and language differences.

It is particularly instructive to note Tompson and Tompson's (1996) characterization of foreign students as "operating in ways that secure social acceptance" (p. 55). Their research suggests that foreign students may hide certain aspects of their home culture while in their host university in order to avoid social rejection. This finding stands in stark contrast to aspects of the literature that assume foreign students are vibrant ambassadors of the culture in their home country.

One of the insights that Tompson and Tompson (1996) offered was that the liberal characteristics of American classrooms differ significantly from those in many areas of the world. Students, they said, coming from countries whose institutions are characterized by passive modes of learning -- for example, where value is placed on listening as opposed to arguing one's particular point of view -- would not easily shed their "ingrained" behaviour (p. 56). Not understanding the academic culture in the host country can put a foreign student in a position of great personal vulnerability. The authors draw on the work of Maslow, who noted that individuals will not engage in self-actualizing activities when their more fundamental needs have not been addressed (p. 56).

Egan (1996) described a role-playing exercise that she uses in her international management and marketing classes to coax the foreign students into participating in classroom activities. Her justification of the need for this activity validates foreign students' reclusive classroom behaviour.

One problem encountered in teaching American and international management students is that class members tend to cluster by nationality

and language, rarely engaging in discussion with each other and forming project groups comprising single nationalities. American-born students also often dominate class discussions. (p. 98)

Altbach (1991) corroborates these findings saying, "Foreign students often interact to a considerable extent with other students from their own countries or with other foreign students" (p. 318). Mestenhauser (1998) adds a further dimension to this observation by describing foreign students and foreign student programs as segregated and not well integrated into the fabric of the university. Vertesi (1999) also made a useful observation in saying that, "It is a mistake to assume that there will be widespread spontaneous socializing between Canadian and foreign students" (p. 155).

One final example that suggests foreign students are not necessarily enriching the education of domestic students is Knight's (2000) report of her survey of Canadian universities. In this survey, the reason most frequently cited by Canadian university administrators for enrolling foreign students was "to integrate domestic and international students in and out of the classroom" (p. 53). Presumably, this integration would enhance educational growth. The respondents also overwhelmingly considered that the most important rationale for internationalizing Canadian universities was "to prepare graduates who are internationally knowledgeable and interculturally competent" (p. 17), and indicated that the most widely perceived benefit to students of internationalization was broadened world perspectives and values (p. 21). However, these rhetorical perceptions of the rationale to internationalize higher education contradict what they, themselves, suggested is happening in practice. For example, none of the *outcomes* of enrolling foreign students mentioned by the respondents, in a later section of the report, referred to



ways in which they enhance teaching and learning in the university (p. 20). This is a curious gap between principle and practice, and one which Knight said warranted further investigation. Furthermore, less than one out of five respondents reported that their institution provides support to faculty on how to use the experience and knowledge of international students in the classroom (p. 45). The author described this as “a lost opportunity that needs to be addressed” (p. 45). Fifty-three percent of respondents said that their institution gives either “no or low priority” to drawing on the experience and knowledge of international students in the classroom (p. 46). Is Paige and Mestenhauser’s (1999) comment true, that “educational administration is highly resistant to internationalization” (p. 500)? Knight’s survey neither proves nor disproves this claim.

Unfortunately, Knight’s study reflects only the views of university administrators and international program staff, and did not include students’ perspectives on these questions. Regardless, the study is valuable because it illustrates the gap between the perceptions of those in the university who make influential decisions and what is happening in practice. The AUCC study shows that the outcomes of enrolling foreign students do not live up to the rhetoric.

The purpose for drawing attention to the studies in this section is to highlight the contradictory nature of the literature to date. While one side of the literature recognizes the enriching impact of foreign students on campus (e.g., the American International Education Association, 1995; the Canadian Bureau of International Education, 1986; the Secretary of State of Canada, 1989; Symons & Page, 1984; Vertesi, 1999), the observations noted in this section strongly undermine their validity. Claims about the enriching effect of foreign students on campus are predicated, at least in part, on the

notion of interaction. Yet the literature describes many cases where interaction between foreign and domestic students, both inside and outside the classroom, is impeded. Research has also shown foreign students' tendency to withdraw in the classroom, and to interact more among other foreign students than those from the host country. The awkward co-existence of these two positions of the literature heightens the need for more definitive research. It is my intention with this study to provide a basis on which to evaluate these two sides of the literature.

### Impact Studies

An extensive search of the literature revealed three studies on foreign student impact. Two of these were internal studies carried out at universities in the United States, while the third studied the impact of American exchange students at two universities in Chile. This section will present an overview of these studies.

The first study, titled International Students at Fort Hays University: An Impact Analysis, was largely a statistical account of the broad impact of foreign students at Fort Hays State University, Kansas (Potts, 1991). It compared foreign student enrolments at Fort Hays to other major universities across the United States, identified their countries of origin, compared the GPA scores of the foreign student cohort to domestic undergraduate and graduate students at Fort Hays, and described the economic impact of foreign students throughout the region.

One of the study's conclusions was that foreign students "have an overall positive influence on educational quality and environment of an institution" (p. 7). Part of the

evidence that Potts offers for this is the positive impact of foreign students on academic standards at Fort Hays. Potts describes how foreign students there attain higher levels of education and higher quality of advanced degrees, have higher overall average GPA scores (although the average GPA among undergraduate foreign students was slightly lower than undergraduate domestic students), and hold higher academic expectations and less anticipation of failure (p. 7).

The weakness of this conclusion is that it focuses on the impact that foreign students have on statistics, and that the evidence to support the case for an ameliorative effect on the education of domestic students is anecdotal. The study fails to establish a relationship between the presence of foreign students and the quality and scope of education at Fort Hays University. Potts goes on to acknowledge that the presence of foreign students in universities is serving the long-term interests of the United States, in that they help to prepare students for careers that might expose them to different cultures. He does not pursue how this is accomplished in practice.

Potts' research raises important questions. For example, how do we measure whether or not a student's education has been enriched? What factors do we identify and what type of instrument do we use to measure them? Research in this area so far has not precisely defined the value added to domestic students' education from the presence of foreign students on campus.

Potts' position that foreign students are a positive educational influence at Fort Hays seems to be based largely on the prestige gained by the university in attracting and accepting a cohort of higher achieving students (who, coincidentally, come from abroad), the administrative benefits of an enlarged pool of teaching assistants, and an increased

supply of students to fill excess institutional capacity. Foreign students, he said, “contribute to the overall stabilization of the U.S. system of higher education” (p. 9). In effect, the benefits that Potts describes of enrolling foreign students could be derived from any group of top scholars regardless of their nationality. In the end, while he does make a case that there are institutional benefits that can be derived from enrolling foreign students, his study does not convincingly argue that domestic students are enriched from their presence.

Compounding this weakness in Potts’ report is the disproportionate attention he devotes to the economic impact of foreign students at Fort Hays. This economic impact seems to bear heavily on his conclusion that they are beneficial to the university. While he devotes scarcely a page to the discussion on foreign student impact on educational factors, his account of their economic impact throughout the region spans nearly five pages. This tendency for people to see foreign students as an economic resource before a learning resource comes out in Davies’ (1992) and Mestenhauser’s (1998) writing. Davies (1992) discusses this phenomenon in his examination of the administrative and organizational ramifications of internationalization in universities. He describes the expansion of international activities as being “closely linked with financial reduction and the rise of academic entrepreneurialism” (p. 177), and says that universities are “being driven into entrepreneurial modes of behaviour” (p. 178). Mestenhauser (1998) has also made observations in this area. He described international student programs as becoming increasingly market-oriented as universities begin to see the potential of foreign students to generate revenue. Vertesi (1999) referred to international programs at Canadian universities as “a highly competitive environment, one in which education is dealt with as

a commodity” (p. 143). Potts’ disproportionate attention to the economic impact of foreign students at Fort Hays is reflected in these observations.

Weiler (1984) suggested that as foreign student enrolment increases, so will the ambivalence surrounding their presence. This could be a factor that explains Potts’ attention to administrative and economic factors over ones that are more central to the university’s mission. Potts argues that the institution takes on new responsibilities as it enrolls more foreign students. A question to consider at this point, one that was also raised by Vertesi (1999) and Knight (2000), is what can an institution do to maximize the learning opportunities presented by foreign students? Furthermore, what are an institution’s responsibilities to see that these initiatives are taken?

The second impact study was an internal study conducted at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln (University of Nebraska Bureau of Sociological Research, 1998). In contrast to the Fort Hays study, this one focused more closely on educational factors. Researchers in this study conducted a telephone interview with 376 domestic UNL students to determine the effect that differing levels of contact with foreign students had on their global knowledge, future career plans, and perceptions and attitudes towards people from different backgrounds. One hundred and forty-four domestic students (38%) who were known to have high contact (on a three-point scale of low, medium, and high contact) with foreign students on campus were included in the 376-person sample in order to ensure balanced representation.

One of the study’s primary findings was that greater levels of contact between domestic and foreign students were associated with greater levels of acceptance of individuals from different ethnic backgrounds (UNBSR, 1998). Based on measurements

using the Bogardus Scale of Social Distance. 47% of domestic students with low levels of contact with foreign students were shown to have high levels of social distance from groups such as Chinese, Malaysians, French, Arabs, and Hispanic Americans (p. 2). In contrast, only 16% of domestic students with high levels of contact with foreign students were shown to have high social distance from these groups.

The study's second significant finding was noting a positive correlation between contact with foreign students and increased global knowledge. Domestic students in this study who had medium or high levels of contact with their foreign counterparts scored higher on a test of global knowledge than those with low contact. Whereas only 12% of the domestic students with low foreign student contact scored in the top third of results on the test of global knowledge, 32% of those with high foreign student contact fell into the same category. Forty-five percent of the domestic Nebraska students who had low foreign student contact failed to correctly answer even one of the five questions, yet only 13% of those with high contact fell into this category. Overall, one-third of the students surveyed could not correctly answer even one question on the test of global knowledge, and no student correctly answered all five questions. These responses led the authors to conclude that global knowledge among University of Nebraska students was generally poor.

Unfortunately, the limitations of the five-item test of global knowledge, administered by telephone survey, provide little basis to conclude that increased contact with foreign students has a positive impact on global knowledge. This test pales in comparison, for example, to the 130-item instrument that Educational Testing Services [ETS] employed in its test of global understanding (Barrows, 1981). To develop that test,

ETS assembled a panel of international studies experts from around the United States. Considering the depth of the ETS test of global understanding, little credibility can be given to the instrument that the University of Nebraska researchers used to conclude that contact with foreign students is positively correlated with domestic students' global knowledge.

Discretion must be used in interpreting the results of the University of Nebraska study. For example, the study also shows a strong correlation between increased contact with foreign students and positive attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours toward people of different ethnic backgrounds, and future plans that include an international dimension. From this, the reader could loosely characterize foreign students as positive change agents in these areas, which the tone of the study seems to imply. But it is likely that these characteristics do not result from the *introduction* of contact with foreign students on campus. Arguably, the level of contact that domestic students have with foreign students is itself dependent on attitudes and an interest in world affairs that they developed long before entering university. That is to say, whereas the Nebraska study treated attitudes, perceptions, behaviours, and future plans as a dependent variable of contact with foreign students, the inverse -- contact with foreign students as being dependent on attitudes, behaviours, etc. -- would have been a more appropriate relationship to explore. The Nebraska study does not conclusively show that contact with foreign students increased domestic students' global knowledge and instilled in them an increased level of acceptance toward people from different backgrounds. Rather, the results of that section of the study only confirm the possibility that students with increased levels of global knowledge and more liberal attitudes towards other cultures

and ethnicities are more likely to associate with foreign students. Overall, the University of Nebraska study contributes little substance to our overall understanding of the impact that foreign students have on various aspects of domestic students' education.

The third study (Stephenson, 1998) is more closely related to my investigation. Between 1991 and 1998, over 2,500 foreign students, mostly American, studied at Chile's Pontificia Universidad Catolica in short-term non-degree programs as part of an exchange agreement with universities in the United States. A further 1,860 students, 80% of whom were American, studied at the Universidad de Chile during the same period. The purpose of Stephenson's study was to determine the effects of study abroad on the perceptions of the opposite culture held by the American students, Chilean home stay families, and faculty members who were involved with the exchange program.

Stephenson (1998) surveyed the Chilean host families and faculty members about the impact that the visiting American students had on their perceptions of various aspects of Chilean and American culture, and followed these up with interviews. The author herself admitted to be somewhat sceptical about the reliability of the data provided by the Chilean families, citing the possibility that they might have presented "excessively positive views of the host experience" in order to create a favourable, rather than factual, impression of the exchange program in the eyes of the organizers (Stephenson, 1998, p. 17).

Of particular relevance to my study is Stephenson's focus on the impact that the Americans had on the Chilean classroom, as perceived through the eyes of the faculty members. Stephenson distributed 137 questionnaires to faculty members of the two universities who had regular classroom contact with the visiting students. She did not



indicate the total number of faculty members there were in each institution. Only 33 professors returned the survey, a response rate of 24%. Sixty-two percent of the respondents said that they associated the presence of foreign students in their classes with “a more stimulating audience,” and 59% viewed foreign students in the university as contributing to the “broadening of intellectual horizons” for Chileans (p. 27). The most frequently cited benefit (33% of faculty respondents) that the Chilean faculty members saw from having the American students in their classrooms were the study habits, discipline, and punctuality they brought with them (p. 30). “Incorporation of different viewpoints” was the second most common benefit (19% of respondents) that faculty members associated with foreign students in the classroom (p. 30). In the faculty members’ perspectives, the strongest impact of the American students on the university was on Chilean student perspectives on international affairs (p. 31).

The particular circumstances of the Chilean study are important to note when interpreting the numbers. Only 33 of the 137 faculty members that Stephenson surveyed returned questionnaires, giving a response rate of 24%. Of these, three quarters had at some point studied or taught outside of Chile, therefore increasing the possibility that they were particularly aware of the benefits of foreign study. The wider parameters of Stephenson’s study are also important. She describes Chile as a country with an island mentality, noting how it is geographically bound by ocean and mountain ranges. Chileans, she says, have had “little exposure to culturally and ethnically different people” (p. 4). So, while the results of Stephenson’s study provide useful context for the present study, it is difficult to draw any direct inference from it. These American students in the Chilean classrooms would be much more visible in this relatively homogeneous nation.

Canadian and American universities attract students from around the world. Furthermore, many of them have domestic student populations that are culturally and ethnically diverse. Because of this, there is an increased chance that the impact of foreign students in Stephenson's study is more pronounced than it would be at a university in North America.

Embedded in her study, Stephenson makes an observation that I believe is significant enough to encourage a shift in the way the literature approaches the concept of foreign student impact. She notes in passing that, "... the possibility of using the foreign students as a 'potential resource' varies from course to course depending on the subject and the class size..." (p. 30). This is the first and only reference in the literature I have found that attempts to deconstruct the foreign student phenomenon and consider it in the context of the immediate environment. Otherwise, literature treats all foreign students as essentially the same, and views the circumstances that they encounter in classroom and social situations as constant across the institution. It is wrong to assume, for example, that electrical engineering students from China would have the same educational impact on the domestic students around them as undergraduate students from Britain studying international relations, or that these two hypothetical groups will adjust and function in the host institution in the same manner. Huntley (1993) concluded that foreign students in the United States coming from different cultural and academic environments, such as those in the eastern hemisphere, have more difficulty adapting to life on campus. Ease of adjustment could affect the degrees and ways in which foreign students interact with domestic students on campus, thereby increasing the possibility that students from different countries have varying levels of educational impact on domestic students.

The studies noted above provide useful context to my research questions, but they do not directly answer them. Stephenson's (1998) study on the impact of American students in Chile came close to exploring this idea, but unfortunately it stopped short of examining their impact on the local students and instead focused on Chilean home stay families and faculty members. Potts' (1991) comments about the educational impact of foreign students at Fort Hays State University do not really provide a substantive addition to the literature. In terms of educational impact, most of the insights that he provides are guilty of being based on the same presumptions as the literature that was reviewed in second section of this chapter, *Enriching the Education of Domestic Students*. The Nebraska study examined certain outcomes of interaction between foreign and domestic students, but these were predetermined categories in which the author had a specific interest. In contrast, I want to avoid these limitations in exploring my research questions by letting domestic students themselves respond to open questions about the impact they think foreign students have had on their university education.

### The Paucity of Research on Foreign Students

An additional theme that threads through the literature is that the lack of data on the foreign student phenomenon continues to hinder our ability to make well grounded policy decisions in this area. Symons and Page (1984) referred to this problem in Some Questions of Balance: "Unfortunately, firm and reliable data on which to base answers to many of the questions about foreign student policy are often lacking or incomplete" (p. 219). At approximately the same time, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada

(1986) issued a similar statement on the inadequacy of research on foreign students in Canadian universities at that time. "Every study carried out on foreign students in Canada has lamented the inadequacy of information on foreign students in this country" (p. 1).

While Symons and Page discussed the importance of data on foreign students in the context of national policy, such data might be equally useful to institutions that enrol students from overseas. With approximately 72,000 non-Canadian residents studying in Canadian educational institutions<sup>2</sup> (Statistics Canada, 1998), two-thirds of them in post-secondary institutions, the resources that are being allocated to foreign students are substantial. It is time to begin asking questions about the specific benefits that Canadians derive from providing this educational service.

Yet the high population of foreign students, and the strengthened efforts made by universities and colleges over the last decade to attract them, has still not drawn significant attention from educational researchers. For example, Altbach (1991) said, "There has been very little research on the impact of foreign students on host universities and on academic departments and programs within those universities" (p. 320). In their discussion about the present gaps in research on internationalization, the Association of International Education Administrators (1995) stated in their research agenda for internationalization education, "We need studies which will systematically document impacts and accomplishments, as well as failures, and thus go beyond the traditional, highly anecdotal [studies], which too often have lacked in-depth analysis and comprehensiveness" (p. 39). In a summary of current research on the internationalization of higher education, the AIEA (1995) said, "It is clear that we need more data and a

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<sup>2</sup> The most recent figures available on the foreign student population in Canada from Statistics Canada are for the 1995-96 academic year, in which 72,704 foreign students were studying in Canada.

stronger research base underpinning the effort” (p. 4). Finally, as recent as 1999, Bond and Scott (1999) remind us of the void in research that continues to limit our understanding of internationalization at universities (the field with which the foreign student phenomenon is associated), and also of its implications. They wrote,

The lack of documentation continues to hinder our ability to understand ourselves and think critically about the changes, if any, needed in what and how we teach and in what and where learning can occur. Such research, where it exists, is ad hoc and not widely read. We have very limited ways in knowing the extent to which the education of students today is more internationalized than it was five years ago. There is no systematic body of knowledge to draw on” (p. 70).

### Theoretical Framework

Situated learning theory will be used to guide this study. As Wenger (1998) points out, a theoretical perspective does not prescribe what to do for the researcher; rather, it acts as a guide that can help determine what to pay attention to, what challenges might be expected, and how to approach problems. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) describe how theory can benefit the seven stages of the research process, from formulation of the purpose and the research question, through to the presentation, interpretation, and application of findings. Certain limitations of this study (see chapter 6) allow theory to inform only two of LeCompte and Preissle’s seven stages of research, namely: a) the development of data analysis strategies; and b) the presentation, interpretation, and

application of the findings. To that end, situated learning theory is used here as a means to conceptualize the foreign student-domestic student-university trichotomy, and to guide the analysis and interpretation of the data.

The exploratory nature of this study makes it difficult to select in advance a theoretical framework that directly applies to the research questions. Unlike certain research problems that have a long and developed history and a wide audience of researchers working toward their solution (the critical period hypothesis for second language acquisition is one example), there is no collection of established theories that directly explains the impact of foreign students on the education of domestic students. As such, there are strengths and weaknesses associated with the use of situated learning theory in this study, which will be outlined below. But first, I provide a brief overview of situated learning theory.

Situated learning theory is a social theory of learning that is derived from the work of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky, who proposed that social interaction and cultural context are integral to cognition (Wolfson & Willinsky, 1998). The focus of situated learning theory is on the relationship between learning and the interactive social conditions in which it occurs (Lave & Wenger, 1991). It views learning as taking place in a framework of social participation, not in an individual mind. As such, knowledge is not considered to be autonomous, but rather an integral part of the context in which it is learned. Therefore, learning must be viewed as “the product of a collaborative construction of understanding” (as cited in Billett, 1994, p.7), distributed among co-participants (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and situated in the context in which it is constructed (Griffin, 1995).

Central to the theory of situated learning is the notion of participation in a community of practitioners. Lave and Wenger (1991) refer to this as legitimate peripheral participation: Brown, Collins, and Duguid (1989) describe it as cognitive apprenticeship between experts and novices. Lave and Wenger (1991) describe a community of practice as “a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice” (p. 98). In this view, learners enter a community of practice whose membership is organized according to degrees of proficiency in that domain. “Old-timers” provide “newcomers” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29) with the intellectual scaffolding (Wolfson & Willinsky, 1998) to move toward full participation and central roles in a community of sociocultural practice. Learning is characterized as increasing levels of independence in these communities.

Four varied features of the situated learning perspective make it an appropriate framework for this study. The first one is the way in which it considers interaction in social space as one of the central processes of learning. Artemeva, Logie, and St. Martin (1999) suggest that theories of situated learning focus on the relationship between learning and the social situations in which learning occurs. In this study, the presumptions about how domestic students benefit from the presence of foreign students are predicated on the notion of social interaction. Situated learning theory directly engages this concept in its view that learning is a process by which an individual negotiates meanings with other people and the environment, as described by Hanks (1991):

Learning is a process that takes place in a participation framework, not in an individual mind. This means, among other things, that it is mediated by

the differences of perspective among the coparticipants. Learning is, as it were, distributed among coparticipants, not a one-person act. (p. 15)

The second feature proposed by situated learning theory that is compatible with this study is the principle of enculturation. This is the notion that people “adopt the behaviours and belief systems of groups of people or cultures with which they interact” (Griffin, 1995, p. 65). In its strictest interpretation, this principle could be viewed as problematic in its application to this study, because domestic students are not expected to supplant their behaviours and belief systems with those of the foreign students (or vice versa). The principle of enculturation is still relevant here because it provides a framework through which to view the changes in domestic students’ belief systems when they are exposed to the supposedly different ones that are held by foreign students. Furthermore, the notion of enculturation also focuses attention on the sociocultural practices of the institution. Brown et al. (as cited in Griffin, 1995) suggest that a school is a culture in itself, and that students do not receive direct exposure to the skill areas they are engaged in, but rather to the culture of those skills as it is interpreted by the school. This view will direct attention in this study to internationalization and attitudes toward foreign students as a learning resource at different levels in Queen’s University.

The third aspect of situated learning theory that makes it a compatible framework for this study is its view that learning is ubiquitous in human activity, and also occurs outside of structured, intentional learning environments (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This is an important consideration because this study explores the impact of foreign students on undergraduate domestic students’ *university* education, to include social activities in a university that are outside of formal (i.e., classroom) learning situations. In their



discussion about situated learning and participation in communities of practice, Lave and Wenger (1991) state that “learning through legitimate peripheral participation takes place no matter which educational form provides a context for learning, or whether there is any intentional educational form at all” (p. 40). They go on to say, “Intentional instruction is not the source or cause of learning” (p. 41).

Fourth, situated learning theory is compatible with this study because it also accounts for learning outcomes that are unrelated to the community of practice. This is an important consideration because, in this study, the learning that is expected to occur in domestic students who are exposed to foreign students is not always central to the community of practice. For example, an undergraduate Economics class (in which foreign students are present) is considered in this framework as a community of economics practitioners. As outlined in the previous chapter, the literature harbours strong expectations about enriched learning outcomes for domestic students in these situations. These would include, in this example, a broader and more comprehensive understanding of economics on the one hand, which is clearly in the domain of economics, and a greater appreciation of international issues, broader world views, and increased intercultural sensitivity on the other hand, not falling under the domain of economics. However, the literature also suggests that these latter outcomes are not explicitly recognized or pursued as a matter of concern in many university classrooms (e.g., AIEA, 1995; Mestenhauser, 1998). This type of learning could be seen as an unintended result of participation in an “expert performance” of economics. Furthermore, the mentor is blurred in these situations because the learning outcomes are beyond those explicitly pursued by the community of practice, and therefore are outside of mentor’s

ability to “confer legitimacy” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 92) on the learner. Lave and Wenger’s model of legitimate peripheral participation recognizes this:

Indeed, this viewpoint makes a fundamental distinction between learning and intentional instruction. Such decoupling does not deny that learning can take place where there is teaching, but does not take intentional instruction to be in itself the source or cause of learning, and thus does not blunt the claim that what gets learned is problematic with respect to what is taught. (p. 40)

The weakness of the situated learning framework in this study is in its proposition that learning follows from teaching and an intentional pursuit of a recognizable body of knowledge. Learners are characterized in this model as consciously entering a community of practice in which the subject matter is explicit and learning is somewhat linear. The context of my study is such that the community of practice (i.e., the university population, a faculty department, a classroom) is not in all cases aware of the domain (internationalized education), despite clear expectations of learning outcomes. An enriched education would seem to be a by-product of the learning that is intended to take place. Regardless, it will be easier to explore this issue in the context of the study.

### Summary

This chapter gives a review of the literature on foreign student impact. Questions about the impact of foreign students are part of the wider focus on the internationalization of higher education. Research on foreign students in Canada can be traced back to the 1920’s, but it was not until the late 1970’s that interest in foreign students began to take

hold as a research domain. Since then, most research in this area has tended to focus on the adjustments that foreign students undergo in their new university in trying to determine how host universities can best meet their personal needs. Absent in the research is a focus on how the host universities can maximize the educational benefits that they derive from enrolling foreign students. This section reviewed three studies that have explored the impact of foreign students on universities in the United States and Chile. Yet, there have been wide ranging calls for more research on foreign students, and on the internationalization of higher education. Finally, this section outlined situated learning theory, the framework that was used to guide the study.

The next chapter outlines the method that was used to collect the data.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHOD

This chapter presents the methodology used to collect the data. It is divided into six sections. The first section reviews the research questions. The second section describes the research site. The third section outlines how the participants were selected for this study. The fourth section outlines the development of the data collection instruments. The fifth section describes the procedures I followed to collect the data. Finally, the concluding section discusses the approach I used to analyse the data.

#### Review of the Research Questions

Three research questions guided the study, outlined below. A more detailed account of these questions, along with a discussion of the objectives of the study, appears in chapter 1.

1. Does the presence of foreign students on campus enrich the education of undergraduate domestic students?
2. Where a domestic student perceives his or her education as being enriched or otherwise positively impacted by foreign students, what are the characteristics of that impact and what factors account for them?

3. What factors account for cases in which a domestic student perceives his or her education as not being enriched or otherwise influenced by foreign students?

### Research Site

The description of the research site will begin with a brief statement about foreign student programs in Canadian universities in order to establish the broader context of this study. In Canada, the perceived benefits of foreign students on campus are marked by an interesting paradox. Between 1987 and 1994, the number of foreign students enrolled in Canadian universities increased from approximately 50,000 to 87,000 (Chui, 1996), yet their presence at that time attracted hardly any attention (Bond & Scott, 1999). It was not until the 1990's, when their numbers started to fall (see Chui, 1996, p. 19), and funding for higher education across the country simultaneously began to erode, that universities started to demonstrate an increased interest in foreign students' role in enriching and diversifying the campus. Knight (1999) suggested that the impetus in Canada for recruiting foreign students has become increasingly oriented toward economics, overshadowing the academic, political, and social-cultural rationales. She questions whether international income-generation activities, such as offshore programs and customized training and research contracts, are indeed contributing to the internationalization of the major functions of Canadian higher education (Knight, 1999, p. 222).

I chose Queen's University as the research site. This decision was based on a reflection of the objectives of the study as a master's level research project, Queen's representing a relevant sample, and the convenient access to participants it offered me as a resident Queen's graduate student. Combined, these factors made Queen's an obvious choice as a research site.

Queen's University is a mid-size doctoral and professional degree granting institution in eastern Ontario. In the 2000-2001 academic year, it enrolled 15,185 full- and part-time undergraduate students (Queen's University Office of Institutional Planning and Research, 2001a). Defining a foreign student the same way as the operational definition used for this study, described in Chapter 1, Queen's University reported 1,069 foreign undergraduate students that year, or 7% of the total undergraduate student population (Queen's University Office of Institutional Research and Planning, 2001b). Overall, there were 1,535 full-time foreign students in all programs across the university (including the graduate and professional schools) in 2000-2001, or 8.6% of the total full- and part-time population of Queen's University. A breakdown of the foreign student population at Queen's University in 2000-2001 is illustrated below in Table 1.

In terms of its foreign student population, Queen's University's rank among other Canadian universities depends on the basis of comparison. Unfortunately, the most recent comparative data available from Statistics Canada is for 1995 (Statistics Canada, 1998). That year, Queen's University had the third highest proportion of foreign students among universities in Ontario. Only the Ontario Theological Seminary in Toronto, with 15.9% foreign students, and Collège Dominicain de Philosophie et de Théologie in Ottawa, with 6.7%, had higher proportions of foreign students than Queen's, which had 4.5% foreign

students that year. However, comparing Queen's to other similar universities across Canada, its foreign student population in 1995 was at the lower end of the scale. McGill University had 11.1% foreign student enrolment. The University of British Columbia had 7.2%. The University of Toronto had 4.4%, and The University of Western Ontario had 2.3% (Statistics Canada, 1998b, pp. 74-75).

There is a strong focus on internationalization at Queen's at the administrative level. A number of reports published by the Senate and the Principal's [President's] Office over the last decade refer to the ways in which internationalization can enrich the quality of education offered by the university (e.g., Queen's University, 1996; Smith, 1990). Queen's is actively expanding international study and collaboration opportunities for its students and faculty, as seen in the partnership it recently established with Fudan University (Shanghai, China) and through the International Studies Centre at Herstmonceux Castle in East Sussex, England, described as Queen's "major focus" (Queen's University, 1996, p. 5) on international activities. The university also operates the International Programs Office, providing counselling to Arts and Science students on overseas study opportunities.

Queen's University has long perceived the presence of foreign students on campus as a positive educational influence on the learning environment. In 1985, the Interim Report of the Ad Hoc Senate Committee on Admissions stated, "The Committee is of no doubt that our student body would profit if [the number of foreign students] were to be increased, especially at the undergraduate level" (Queen's University, 1985, p. 2). This sentiment toward the value of foreign students on campus has been sustained. Ten years later, the 1996 Senate Report on Principles and Priorities stated, "The presence

Table 1

Foreign Student Population at Queen's University, 2000-2001

Faculty	Number of Foreign Students
Arts and Science (undergraduate)	679
Engineering (undergraduate)	279
Business (undergraduate)	82
Business (graduate)	26
Education (undergraduate)	9
School of Graduate Studies (Master's and Ph.D.)	419
Law	6
Medicine	15
Nursing (undergraduate)	13
Rehabilitation Science	7
<b>Total No. of foreign students</b>	<b>1,535 (8.6% of total enrolment)</b>

Source: Queen's University Office of Institutional Research and Planning (2001b)

of international students at Queen's is crucial to increasing our awareness of a changing world" (Queen's University, 1996).

Attracting students from other countries has evolved into a competition among universities worldwide (e.g., Peterson, Briggs, Dreasher, Homer, & Nelson, 1999), and Queen's University has invested in resources to compete in this race. For example, the university employs four people in its Office of Student Recruitment and International Initiatives, the department responsible for recruiting foreign students and promoting the university at overseas education fairs. The International Centre, which celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2001, "supports the academic and personal development of international



students....[and] promotes an internationally informed and cross-culturally sensitive university community” (Queen’s University International Centre, 2001). Queen’s also pays membership fees to the Canadian Education Centre network, a network that promotes Canadian universities through specially designated Canadian embassies around the world.

The above examples suggest that Queens’ effort to make itself a more international institution is largely aimed at offshore activities. Other than numbers of foreign students on campus, there is little public evidence to suggest that internationalization is regarded at Queen’s University as an internal process. Despite the considerable amount of attention and resources for staff salaries that Queen’s devotes to international activities, their impact on the average Queen’s student who does not go abroad is less clear. According to a Queen’s administrator I interviewed for this study, the only study that the university has conducted on internationalization was an informal survey of faculty members on their international activities, a survey that relied on voluntary responses (personal communication, February 26, 2001). As a result, the only data the university has on the outcomes of its internationalization strategy is rather haphazard.

While Queen’s presents itself as an institution that strongly supports and promotes an internationalized learning environment, there presently seems to be a lack of evidence to substantiate this perception. In the course of data collection, I conducted interviews with seven Queen’s administrators, faculty, and staff members to gather background information on foreign student initiatives at Queen’s. While each of these people readily subscribed to the presumptions in the literature about the value of enrolling foreign

students. nobody was able to answer my questions about the actual impact of foreign students on the education of domestic students at Queen's. As one of the administrators (FS-9) interviewed for this study said, "No hard data is available."

### Participants

The literature could not provide any guidance about how the participants should be chosen for this study. It does not specify the conditions under which foreign students enrich the education of domestic students, or whether the effect, if any, varies with year, program of study, gender, or age. Accordingly, I decided to sample undergraduate Queen's students to explore the research questions. In addition, I also talked with seven members of Queen's faculty and staff to add context to the data.

### Undergraduate Students

I chose to focus on undergraduate students at Queen's University. Even though the literature does not specify a particular student group or level of study as deriving any particular benefit from foreign students, the ubiquity of the claims about their ameliorative impact implies that undergraduates, the largest segment of the university student population,<sup>4</sup> would be obvious beneficiaries of this effect.

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<sup>4</sup> In 1998, there were 507,195 undergraduate students enrolled in Canadian universities and 76,596 graduate students, a ratio of 6.6:1. The ratio of undergraduate to graduate students at Queen's in the 2000-2001 academic year was 7.0:1, which was similar to the national average. Sources: Statistics Canada, (1998). *The Daily*. [On-line]. Available: <http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/981110/d981110.htm#ART2>; and Queen's University Office of the Registrar.

The goal of this study is to determine if the education of domestic students is enriched by the presence of foreign students on campus, and identify as many characteristics of that effect as possible. To do this, I assumed it would be important for the domestic students in the sample to have had many opportunities while at Queen's to be exposed to, and interact with, foreign students. The most efficient way of gaining access to a stratified sample of university students is through individual courses. Accordingly, I began selecting a purposeful sample by identifying the five undergraduate programs at Queen's with the highest number of foreign students. My initial choice to focus specifically on third-year undergraduates was based on the assumption that by their third year, students are more likely to have established their patterns of social interaction in the university.

Data from the Office of the University Registrar revealed that Economics and Computer Science are two of the five departments at Queen's with the highest absolute numbers of foreign students registered. Additional data provided by the Registrar's Office disaggregated the data by academic concentration and the numbers of foreign students enrolled in each Queen's course for the 2000-2001 academic year. I used this data to select the individual classes that I would sample.

After analyzing this information, I narrowed the choice of sample population down to two third-year classes, one in Economics (ECON), the other in Computer and Information Science (CISC). Each of these had a comparatively high proportion of foreign students compared to other undergraduate classes, and was being taught in the winter term of the 2001 academic year, which was the only available time for data collection. The first class was ECON 351, a third-year Economics course (n=48) with six

foreign students enrolled (12.5%); the second was CISC 365, a third-year Computer and Information Science course (n=61) with four foreign students enrolled (6.5%). The total sample size was therefore 109 students. Data from the Office of the Registrar showed that an average of 1.53 foreign students were enrolled in all third-year courses at Queen's during the 2001-2001 academic year. So, ECON 351 and CISC 365 satisfied the criteria of being a sample of domestic students who, based on enrolment numbers, had had a higher than average likelihood of interacting with foreign students in the university. ECON 351 and CISC 365 were required courses within their respective degree programs, meaning that all students in those two classes who were pursuing Economics and Computer Science degrees would have proceeded together as a group through other required courses in their first and second years of study.

After I received permission from the General Research Ethics Review Board (see Appendix D) I surveyed all of the students in these two classes in February 2001 (the method is described below in the Procedures section). Unfortunately, the response rate was very low. Only eight of the 48 surveys distributed in ECON 351, and four of the 61 surveys distributed in CISC 365 were returned, a response rate of only 11%. One of the Economics students identified himself as a foreign student, so his survey was discarded. Moreover, only six of these seven remaining respondents were willing to be interviewed. But as final exams and the end of the school year were rapidly approaching, I was forced to increase the size of the sample inside a very narrow window of time.

Reflecting on the time it took to gain access to the first two classes, I wanted to get quick access to approximately 100 additional students before the end of the academic year. Time constraints required a new sampling strategy different from the one that was

used for the Economics and Computer Science classes. Two of my former Queen's professors gave me permission to survey two more undergraduate classes. One was a third-year Sociology class, SOCY 324 (n=38) in which one foreign student was enrolled (2%), and the other was a Concurrent Education class, EDUC 255 (n=49), in which no foreign students were enrolled. There was no evidence that the Education students had previously shared classes with foreign students. The response rate in each of these two classes was over 95%, very high, I believe, because the professors allowed them to complete and return the surveys to me in class. One student from the Sociology class identified herself as a foreign student. I discarded her survey, which left a total of 94 surveys for analysis. A detailed account of the method I followed to survey these four classes appears below in the section on procedures.

The students were asked on the survey to indicate if they would participate in a follow-up interview. A total of 13 of the 94 domestic Canadian undergraduates from these four classes (14%) who returned the survey indicated a willingness to be interviewed. I attempted to interview each one. In the end, I interviewed 10 of these 13 undergraduates. The remaining three people did not reply to my repeated attempts to arrange an interview.

In summary, a total of 196 undergraduate students in four classes were surveyed. A total of 96 surveys were returned, for an overall response rate of 48%. Two of these surveys were discarded because they were completed by foreign students, which left 94 usable surveys. Thirteen of these 94 students (14%) indicated a willingness to be interviewed, and I was able to interview 10 of them.

### Faculty and Staff

I considered it important to explore the university's perception of the value of foreign students on campus, and to learn more about the context of Queen's University as the research site. So, to supplement the undergraduate student data, I interviewed seven staff and faculty members who either had an interest in foreign student issues or whose role in the university involved foreign students.

Faculty and staff could provide information that was only indirectly related to the research questions, so I did not purposefully target them in the way I did the undergraduates. I began selecting the faculty and staff sample by interviewing one person in the Planning Office, who suggested the names of two administrators with an interest in the role of foreign students at Queen's. One of those people, in turn, suggested the names of two people in the School of Business. Lastly, I interviewed one person in the Office of Recruitment and International Initiatives, and one faculty member in the Department of Computer and Information Sciences.

### Development of the Data Collection Instruments

As described above, two methods were used to gather data for this study: a questionnaire (see Appendix A) and key informant interviews of students, and faculty and staff members (see Appendix C for a list of the questions). This section describes the development of these data collection instruments.

Owing to the exploratory nature of this study, and to the lack of literature, there was no previously established instrument available that would fit my research questions.

The studies conducted at Fort Hays State University, the University of Nebraska, and the two Chilean universities all investigated the impact of foreign students on domestic students, but each one explored notions of impact as preconceived by their authors, not from a student's point of view. In addition, each of these studies began with the working assumption that foreign students did make an impact on domestic students in some way. This I considered to be an ill-founded leap of inference. These studies made no provisions in their methodologies to account for, or explore, cases in which domestic students derived no impact from the presence of foreign students in the university. This is an important aspect of my research questions.

Only one known testing instrument, Educational Testing Service's Test of Global Understanding (Barrows et al., 1981) reflects some of the objectives of this study, but is too narrow in its focus. Despite its comprehensiveness, the ETS instrument limits foreign student impact strictly to the notion of global understanding. My intention in this study is to expand on current conceptions of foreign student impact and explore any form of impact -- enriching, neutral, or otherwise -- that foreign students are making on the education of domestic students, especially forms of impact that have not been previously recognized in the literature.

### Survey

I first developed a draft version of the survey. As described in the previous chapter, situated learning theory suggests that learning is a function of the interactive social situations in which it occurs. Reflecting on this, I focused on (a) the formal (i.e.,

classroom) learning environment at Queen's University, an area of the domestic students' lives in which I knew each participant had been exposed to foreign students; (b) the non-formal learning environment everywhere outside of the classroom at Queen's University, where these students likely had been exposed to foreign students; and (c) their personal lives outside of Queen's University, where it was less likely they had been exposed to foreign students, but possibly to other factors that might influence the effect of foreign students on their education. Using the concept of social interaction in these three areas, I developed a series of questions for the survey (Appendix A) and interviews (Appendix C) that seemed relevant to the three central research questions.

Time did not allow me to pilot test the draft, so in order to identify its weaknesses I asked two of my peers (one a recent graduate of the Queen's M.Ed. program, the other a Political Science graduate who works in private industry) to complete it and to pay close attention to the wording, content, and format. These two people were chosen because of the immediate feedback they could provide, and because they were both recent university graduates with experience that directly related to the research questions. They provided feedback on which I based the revisions. My thesis supervisor then reviewed the draft survey for accuracy, clarity, thoroughness, and relevance to the research questions. I made a series of revisions to the draft survey based on their collective feedback.

The final working version of the survey (see Appendix A) was four double-sided pages in length and consisted of two sections. The first section included nine demographic questions about the participant's background, such as age, citizenship, second language ability, and shared living arrangements. This information was used to



determine a respondent's suitability for an interview, and to explore whether any of these factors are associated with the perceived educational impact of foreign students.

The second section included a series of 14 statements to which students would agree or disagree, using a five-point Likert-like scale, about the impact they considered foreign students to have made on their education at Queen's. These questions were derived from gaps in the literature, previously discussed in chapter 2, and covered the following four themes: (a) the educational impact of foreign students, (b) the presence of foreign students on campus, (c) the perceived importance of enrolling foreign students at Queen's, and (d) the use of foreign students as a learning resource on campus. Three additional items in the second section, bringing the total number of items in the second section to 17, asked respondents to describe the amount of interaction they had had with foreign students on campus through course and non-course related activities, and to describe in their own words the impact they perceived foreign students to have made on their education at Queen's University.

The survey served three functions. One, it sought to ascertain the presence, strength, and characteristics of the impact, if any, that domestic undergraduate Queen's students think foreign students have made on their educational experience at Queen's University. Two, the space after each survey item for students to elaborate on their response provided an efficient means of gathering qualitative data from a large number of people. Three, the survey was used to identify candidates for interviews, i.e., domestic Canadian students who could provide important insights into the research questions.

## Interviews

As with the surveys, I designed the interview questions to explore the three research questions for “insights to process variables not evident to the investigator” (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 167), and to pursue the overall objectives of the study. The development of the interview portion of the data collection was informed by methods presented by LeCompte and Preissle (1993). First, I determined the exact information that I wanted to elicit from the respondents, mainly from scrutinizing the three research questions and the objectives of the study, and from reflecting on the heuristic claims and gaps in the literature. After clarifying these broad parameters, I formulated the core interview questions (Appendix C) noting Patton’s recommendation to be cognizant of leading questions, questions that encompass more than one idea, and questions that have assumptions or overstatements built in to them (as cited in LeCompte and Preissle, 1993, p. 174). For the undergraduate interviews, the core questions were centred on the following five themes: (a) the impact of foreign students on the education of undergraduate Queen’s students, (b) foreign student participation in the classroom, (c) identifying foreign students on campus, (d) the interaction between foreign and domestic students on campus, and (e) faculty members drawing on foreign students as learning resources. For the staff and faculty interviews, the core questions surrounded just three themes: (a) the enriching effect of enrolling foreign students in the university, (b) the reasons for enrolling and/or recruiting foreign students, and (c) the degree to which faculty use foreign students as learning resources in the classroom.

I used semi-structured questions to explore these themes in each interview in order to increase the consistency of the interviews as a data collection instrument. At the outset I considered that non-scheduled standardized interviews, recommended by Denzin (as cited in LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 169), would provide the optimum balance of flexibility and systematic structure. This approach to interviewing allows the investigator to vary the order in which the questions are presented. Examples of semi-structured questions I used in these non-scheduled standardized interviews were, "Have foreign students made an impact on your education at Queen's University," and "Can you recognize who the foreign students are in your classes?" I also introduced unstructured questions spontaneously throughout the interviews to probe emergent themes. An example of an unstructured interview question I used was, "Why do you think foreign students in your (X class) made a stronger impact than they did in your (Y class)?"

### Procedures

The critical first step was to ensure that: (a) the interviews and survey would produce data that would address the research questions, and (b) the confidentiality and protection of participants' identities. The process to receive ethical approval for research on human subjects requires an application to two research ethics boards at Queen's, one at the unit level (Faculty of Education) followed by the second at the central level (the General Research Ethics Board of Queen's University). After making a series of revisions to my survey procedures, the General Research Ethics Board granted approval to conduct this study (see Appendix D).

## Surveys

I then took the necessary steps to gain access to the two initial target classes, ECON 351 and CISC 365. First, I contacted the two respective professors by e-mail and arranged to meet them in person to (a) describe the study, (b) seek their approval for distributing the survey in their classes, and (c) respond to any of their concerns or suggestions. In both cases, they granted me permission to take a few minutes during one of their classes to describe my study to the students and distribute the surveys.

For CISC 365, I made a brief presentation at the beginning of one class in the second week of February 2001. During this presentation I described the rationale and goals of the study to the students, invited them to participate, and described their rights as participants in a study sanctioned by Queen's University. I then distributed the surveys, along with a separate consent form (see Appendices A and B), and a self-addressed envelope. I made it clear to the students that they should complete the survey outside of class and send it to me at the Faculty of Education through the campus mail system. Alternatively, I gave them the option to contact me if this was not convenient and I would make arrangements to pick up the completed survey. I followed the same procedure for ECON 351 the next week. The only difference in my approach to this class was that my presentation was at the end of the class rather than the beginning.

With the next group of students, the one used to increase the response rate by approaching students in SOCY 324 and EDUC 255, I followed the exact same procedures used in the previous round of data collection. However, this phase was marked by one difference. Both professors in this round provided 15 minutes for the students to complete

the survey in class, allowing me to collect them on the spot. I did not have to rely on the students to complete it outside of class and make a special effort to deliver it to me. Not surprisingly, there was a tremendous increase in the response rate of these two classes.

### Interviews

I carried out a total of 17 interviews between February and March 2001: 10 with domestic Canadian undergraduate students and seven with Queen's faculty and staff members. Each undergraduate student indicated on the survey his or her willingness to participate in an interview. The only criterion for selecting an undergraduate for an interview was that he or she was not a foreign student according to Statistics Canada's definition (see Chapter 1), as determined from the first section of the survey. All of the 13 students who agreed to be interviewed met this criterion.

In arranging the interviews with the participants, I suggested locations that would help encourage them to speak freely about the impact that foreign students have made on their education, e.g., seminar or other rooms in the university that offered privacy. Each interview took place at a time and location that was chosen by the interviewee. The longest interview was 65 minutes in length; the shortest one was 20 minutes in length. Each person was interviewed once. Nine of the 10 undergraduate interviews were recorded on audio tape; one undergraduate requested that the interview not be recorded. In the latter case, extensive field notes were taken. Four of the seven faculty/staff interviews were tape-recorded. Three of these interviews were not tape recorded for

reasons that included (a) one professor's reluctance to be tape recorded, and (b) two instances where the interview topic was not central to the research questions

Each interview began with a description of the background and purpose of the study, and by asking again if it was acceptable for me to tape-record the interview. I reminded each interviewee that he or she would have the opportunity to review the transcripts and designate any portions that should be struck from the transcripts. My brief introduction was often punctuated with a personal anecdote in order to help create an atmosphere in which the interviewee felt comfortable to speak freely. This was another reason that I used open, semi-structured, non-scheduled questions in each interview.

The interviews were transcribed within one week after being conducted. I contacted three people to clarify parts of their recording that were indecipherable. Any segments that could not be interpreted were marked "indecipherable" on the transcripts along with the length of that segment. I delivered a copy of the transcript to each respective participant to give him or her the opportunity to edit it for official use. Nobody requested any changes be made to their transcript. In order to code and analyze the interview data, the transcripts were marked with line numbers.

### Analysis

Since I used two different methods to select a sample of participants for the first round (ECON 351 and CISC 365) and second round (SOCY 324 and FOCI 255) of surveys, the first task of the data analysis was to determine whether this resulted in a significant difference among these four classes in terms of the participants' responses to

survey item 2.1, which was, “The presence of foreign students at Queen’s University has enriched the education that I have received at this university.” An ANOVA performed with SPSS v.10 software (the results of which are presented in chapter 4) found that there was no significant difference in responses to this question among the four classes. This finding made it possible to amalgamate all four classes into one single group for analysis.

Employing more than one technique provided the opportunity to assess the results from more than one vantage point. The methods for qualitative data analysis described by McMillan and Schumacher (1997) guided my work. As they recommended, I began the data analysis while collecting the data. After transcribing each interview, I reviewed each transcript and set of field notes to identify any recurring patterns that were emerging from the interviews, and any topics that were contained in the data. This step also helped me to focus each subsequent interview.

When the data collection stage was complete, I used the three primary research questions to form the initial framework of the data analysis. Again, those questions were:

1. Does the presence of foreign students on campus enrich the education of undergraduate domestic students?
2. Where a domestic student perceives his or her education as being enriched or otherwise positively impacted by foreign students, what are the characteristics of that impact and what factors account for them?
3. What factors account for cases in which a domestic student perceives his or her education as not being enriched or otherwise influenced by foreign students?

I began the data analysis by listing all of the raw data generated by each survey and interview question. First, I summarized the results of each individual survey question. Then, through continuous analysis and cross-validation between the interview transcripts and survey results, I grouped the data into topics. I looked for consistency within each topic as well as clear distinctions between each topic. Five distinct categories emerged from the topics: (a) academic program, (b) social interaction, (c) language, (d) educational impact, and (e) factors associated with Queen's University. These five categories provided the basis from which I further analyzed the data. The findings are presented in the next chapter.

### Summary

This chapter outlined the method I used to gather data for the study. The study was conducted at Queen's University to answer three questions about the impact of foreign students in the host institution: (a) Does the presence of foreign students enrich the education of domestic students? (b) What are the characteristics of that impact, and what accounts for it? (c) What factors account for cases in which a domestic student does not perceive his or her education as being enriched or otherwise enhanced from the presence of foreign students?

One hundred and ninety-six undergraduate students in the Computer Science, Economics, Sociology, and Education programs at Queen's were surveyed in the winter of 2001. Follow-up interviews were conducted with 10 of these students, who were born



and raised in Canada. Interviews were also conducted with seven faculty and staff members of the university to provide context from which to interpret the data.

The next chapter reports the results of the data collection.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

This chapter is divided into sections that report the results of each item on the survey. A summary of the demographic profile of the sample (section 1 of the survey) is presented first. The results of each survey item are then presented in separate sections, along with the supporting interview data, in the following pattern: quantitative survey data are presented first using bar graphs, followed by the qualitative survey data and supporting interview excerpts.

It is important to note that, while the response rate to the scale questions was almost 100%, there were many cases where respondents did not take advantage of the opportunity to provide a written explanation to a particular survey item. For that reason, the number of qualitative responses in a certain category does not always corroborate the scale results in that category.

References to the surveys and interviews are coded. Survey item 2.1, for example, refers to section 2, item 1. The qualitative survey responses are cited with a code, ranging from A to CS, to reference the particular survey from which it came. References to interviews with domestic students are cited using a code starting with "DS" (e.g., "DS-2, p. 3" refers to the transcript of the second domestic student interviewed), while interviews with faculty and staff members are marked "FS" (e.g., "FS-2, p. 1").

## Demographic Profile of the Sample

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the student participants. The data in this section were gathered through survey items 1.1 to 1.9, and items 2.15 and 2.16. The results are summarized below in Tables 2, 3, and 4.

One hundred and ninety-six surveys were distributed between four classes, and 96 were returned, a response rate of 48%. The majority of the respondents were between their second and fourth year of undergraduate study. Four students were in their first year, and three students were in their fifth or higher year of undergraduate study. These figures are illustrated in Table 2 below.

Table 3 provides a summary of the results of Section 1 of the survey. Seventy-five percent of the respondents were female; 25% were male. A strong majority of the respondents were born in Canada and were not foreign students according to the definition of a foreign student being used for this study. Approximately one-third of the respondents had lived or attended school outside of Canada in the past. Almost half spoke another language when growing up.

Table 4 presents the result of survey items 2.15 and 2.16, which asked respondents to indicate the amount of contact they had with foreign students at Queen's University through course related activities, and through activities outside of the classroom. They did this on a 4-point scale that allowed them to indicate no contact with foreign students, or low, medium, or high levels of contact. This was a personal judgment on the respondents' part. No criteria were provided to define low, medium, or high levels of contact.

Table 2

Target Classes, Response Rate, and Years of Undergraduate Study

Class	No. of Surveys Sent	No. Returned	<u>Year of Study</u>					Not Reported
			1	2	3	4	5+	
ECON 351	48	8		5	1	1	1	
CISC 365	61	4		4				
SOCY 324	38	37	4	26	7			
EDUC 255	49	47			5	34	2	6
<b>Total:</b>								
No.	196	96	4	35	13	35	3	6
(%)	100%	48%	2%	18%	7%	18%	1%	3%

## Results of Item 2.1

Survey item 2.1 asked students to respond to the statement, "The presence of foreign students at Queen's has enriched the education that I have received at this university." This was the central question of the study.

Scale Responses

The quantitative results of item 2.1 resembled a normal curve. Thirty-nine percent of participants, the largest single group, neither agreed nor disagreed that the presence of

Table 3  
Summary of Survey Section 1, Items 1.2 – 1.9

Survey Item	Response No. / (%) (n=96)	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
1.2 Gender	Male = 24 (25%)	Female = 72 (75%)
1.3 Born in Canada?	81 (84.3%)	15 (15.6%)
1.4 Canadian citizen?	92 (95.8%)	4 (4.2%)
1.5 Foreign student?	2 (2.1%)	94 (97.9%)
1.6 Lived outside of Canada?	35 (36.5%) <sup>a</sup>	61 (63.5%)
1.7 Attended school outside Canada	33 (34.4%) <sup>b</sup>	63 (65.6%)
1.8 Spoke another language growing up?	47 (49%)	49 (51%)
1.9 Shared accommodation with a foreign student?	31 (32.3%)	65 (67.7%)

<sup>a</sup> Median = 3 years, Mean = 1.53 years (SD=3.55)

<sup>b</sup> Median = 3 years, Mean = .96 years (SD=2.79)

foreign students had enriched their education at Queen's University. The second largest group was students who agreed with the item. There were no blank scale responses to this question. The results are summarized in Figure 1 below.

Table 4

Summary of Items 2.15 and 2.16 (n=96)

	None	Low	Medium	High	Missing
2.15 Contact with foreign students through course related activities	21 (22.3%)	44 (46.9%)	23 (24.5%)	3 (3.2%)	3 (3.2%)
2.16 Contact with foreign students outside of the classroom	15 (16%)	37 (39.4%)	19 (20.2%)	22 (23.4%)	1 (1.1%)

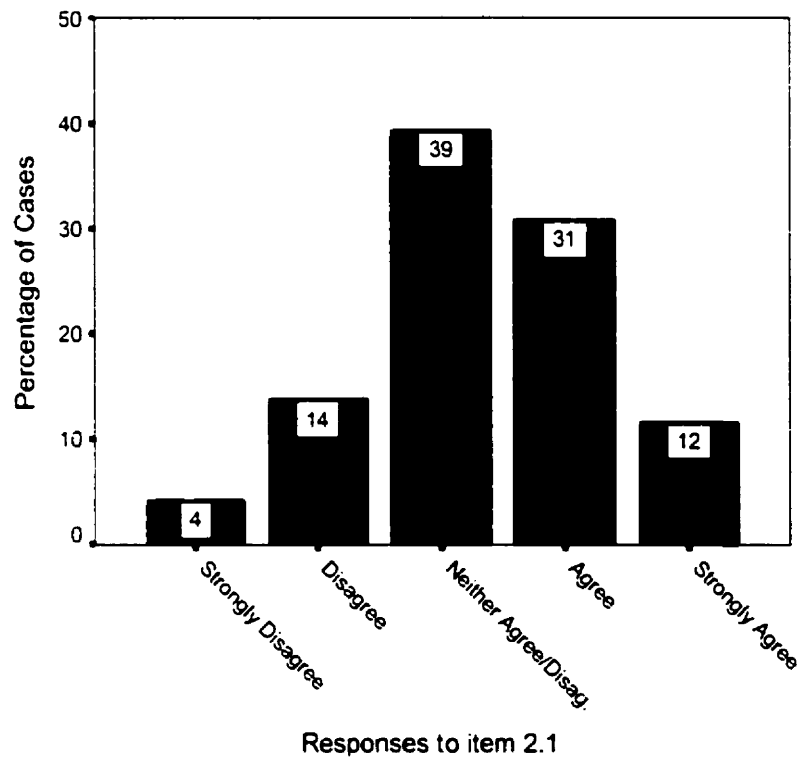


Figure 1. Summary of responses to survey item 2.1. "The presence of foreign students at Queen's University has enriched the education that I have received at this university."

## Qualitative Responses

### Evidence of An Enriching Impact from Foreign Students

Perspectives. Forty-five out of the 80 (56%) open-ended written responses to this survey item supported the view that foreign students have an enriching impact on the education of domestic students. Five of these were from students who neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement in their scale response. Among them, learning new perspectives was the most common response, with 18 people (23%) specifically referring to this as the impact that foreign students had made on their education. For example, CS wrote that foreign students provide “different perspectives on educational issues.” CB wrote, “A variety of perspectives is enriching.” AL described the presence of foreign students as “expanding [his] horizons.” N wrote, “It is always valuable to hear their points of view on topics discussed in the classroom.”

Three interview excerpts provide additional insight into the way domestic students value the different perspectives that foreign students bring to the classroom. In the first example, DS-5 describes the foreign doctoral students she had come to know through her father, a professor. When I asked her how she had benefited from foreign students, she said:

Basically what I've learned from foreign students is, it's a perspective thing.

Basically, I've learned not to look at what I've learned from just one perspective.

I don't know if this is just a sociology thing or if it's international students, but

I've basically tried to look at points from just more than one perspective, just to see if somebody else would be looking at it from another view. (DS-5, p. 3).

DS-7, a third-year Commerce student from SOCY 324, agreed that learning new perspectives was one of the strongest ways that foreign students had impacted her education. In her interview, she recounted how an Asian foreign student explained to her class the failure of a product marketed in Asia by an American company, because Asians associated the product symbol - a bird - with a dirty pest rather than with the purity and freedom that it symbolized in America. She indicates in the excerpt below that foreign students are an important resource for teaching students about different perspectives:

Different opinions, I think, are very important. If you have everyone sitting in a room thinking exactly the same way, you're not going to learn anything. And, I think it's just a given that people from different countries are going to have different viewpoints on different things. I think it's just a really important part of education. (DS-7, p. 5)

The following excerpt is from my interview with DS-8, an Education student. In response to my question about whether the presence of foreign students at Queen's had enriched his education, he said,

Oh yeah, definitely. One of my teachables is geography so I took some geography courses. Yeah, it's actually phenomenal....The international students in the class - they would contribute perspectives.... like students from Ecuador talking about what it was like at their home and outside of the country. It brings it to life. You can only listen to so many lectures from the same prof until somebody tells you, what it smells like for example. (DS-8, p. 1).



Facts about foreign countries. Fifteen of the 45 written responses (33%) indicated that learning about countries outside of Canada was the way foreign students had enriched the education of domestic students. For example, “Learned about issues in their home country.” wrote M, who agreed with item 2.1. AT also agreed with the item, and explained, “I’ve met people from all over the world and had the opportunity to learn about their country, thus expanding my knowledge of the world.”

### How Enrichment Occurs

Three students wrote how foreign students had made an impact on their education. As examples, a student who agreed with item 2.1 said that her involvement with the Queen’s School of English over the last two years could be attributed to the enriching impact that foreign students had made on her education (AU). BR, who strongly agreed with item 2.1, said that, in her case, learning about other cultures came from working in groups with foreign students. BM indicated that the impact of foreign students on her education came from maintaining contact at Queen’s with foreign students from Japan and Scotland.

The following excerpt from my interview with DS-8 suggests that domestic students’ education might be enriched by the simple presence of foreign students on campus.

Even if you don’t talk with any international students, they’re still seen on campus: the Asian Student’s Society, the African/Caribbean Student’s Society. And they’re a voice, and they’re heard, and you see them around. It kind of gives

you a feel that this isn't Canadian space, this is like Queen's University, a multicultural society. (DS-8, p. 3)

### Weak Impact

Two people indicated that foreign students had made an enriching impact on their education, but the effect was a weak one. "Only affected my education in a minor way," wrote CF, who neither agreed nor disagreed with item 2.1. "I suppose this is true. I have learned more [about] other cultures (but not much)," wrote U, who agreed with item 2.1.

Excerpts from three interviews further illustrate this view. For example, in the following excerpt I asked DS-1 to clarify a point that he had made about the impact of foreign students, and visible minority students whom he perceived as second-generation Canadians, in tutorials:

CAL: From your experience in that class and in those tutorials, on a scale of 1 to 10, to what degree did those students – second-generation, foreign students, or otherwise -- enhance the scope of those tutorials? What impact did they make?

DS-1: I would say probably 3 or 4, probably around 3 to tell you the truth.... maybe a little bit of an effect, but generally weak.

Later in the interview, he described the degree of impact that learning about life in a different country has had on his education: "You get a little bit of the sense.....It did have an effect. I wouldn't say it had an astronomical effect, but it did have a positive effect" (DS-1, p. 5).

A Computer Science student responded the following way to the enrichment question: "I'm not actually going to say 'enriched' necessarily at all; maybe slightly, but it wasn't really anything noticeable, at least in the computer science department" (DS-3, p. 1). Later, I tried to clarify a point he was making about the enriching effect of foreign students and he said, "Yeah, I would consider it a fairly weak enriching effect" (DS-3, p. 3).

### Impact on Students' Non-Classroom Education

Three people in their written responses indicated that foreign students had impacted their informal education outside of the classroom more than their formal education. For example, BK, a student who agreed with item 2.1, wrote, "More socially than academically." X also agreed with 2.1, and wrote, "They have enriched my education in their cultures, not really my academic education."

One excerpt from the interview data illustrated the impact foreign students had had on one participant's thinking. The following excerpt is taken from the interview with DS-8, a student from EDUC 255.

CAL: How do you think your education at this university, inside the classroom, outside the classroom, would have been different if there were no foreign students on campus?

DS-8: I think my academics would be...well, I don't think I would be driven as much to experience the world. When somebody talks about ..... their home, what

it's like, and what it feels like when you're there, you're just driven to experience it. (DS-8, p. 3)

### Foreign Students Do Not Impact Domestic Students' Education

Twenty-three of the 80 written responses (29%) indicated that foreign students had not enriched or made an impact on domestic students' education. This number does not exactly corroborate the survey findings because five people who said that they had not been affected neither agreed nor disagreed with item 2.1 in their scale response. However, eight people stated their disagreement in very simple, clear terms. For example, "No impact" (CN); "No, because they don't speak out in class" (AX); "A non factor" (BB); and "Not something I observed" (BF) were typical responses.

Fifteen of these 23 responses did not directly state that foreign students had not enriched their education, but I inferred that this was the case by looking at the accompanying scale response. For example, "Haven't met foreign students in class." wrote AZ, who disagreed with item 2.1. "Interesting ideas, but not enough contact to be enriching." was BC's explanation for disagreeing with item 2.1. "I have not come into contact with foreign students at Queen's." wrote BE, a student who neither agreed nor disagreed with the item. Seven other students responded in a similar way to BE. "I haven't noticed foreign students." wrote AW, who also neither agreed nor disagreed. "No, because Queen's is too white/North American." wrote R, who disagreed with 2.1. An additional two people, H and G, viewed foreign students as being no different from anybody else in the university.

Two people indicated in their interview that foreign students had had no impact on their education. For example, DS-3 said, "I haven't found that [the presence of foreign students] takes anything away or really adds anything....there's nothing that really affects my education" (DS-3, p. 3).

Not a Negative Impact. Two people emphasized in their interview that the presence of foreign students did not negatively impact the university or their educational experience. For example, DS-6 was a computer science major. In our interview, I asked a rhetorical question about why Queen's and so many other universities are making such a concerted effort to recruit students from other countries. She responded by saying, "I don't think it will ever be a negative impact. If one person learns more about another culture, that's enough. I don't really see that we're a lot more aware of everyone else in the world now than we would have been 10 years ago" (DS-6, p. 7).

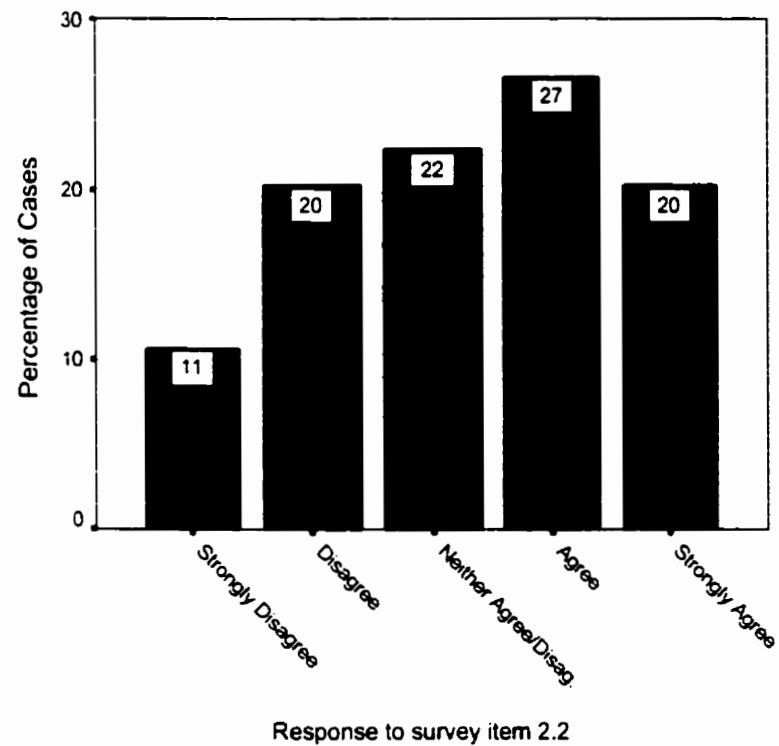
### Results of Item 2.2

Item 2.2 asked students to respond to the statement, "Foreign students have made no noticeable impact on my formal classroom education at Queen's University." The purpose of this item was to explore one facet of a student's education that foreign students could impact. Item 2.2 was also a way of evaluating the reliability of item 2.1.

### Scale Responses

Forty-seven percent of respondents agreed that foreign students had made no noticeable impact on their formal classroom education at Queen's University, while 31

percent disagreed. The mode of survey item 2.2 was “agree.” with 27 percent of responses. A summary of the scale results of survey item 2.2 is presented in Figure 2 below.



**Figure 2.** Summary of responses to survey item 2.2. “Foreign students have made no noticeable impact on my formal classroom education at Queen’s University.

### Qualitative Responses

Fifty-one percent of the people (n=48) did not provide a written response to this

item. Many of them referred to their written response to item 2.1. However, the themes that emerged from item 2.2 mirrored those of the previous item.

### Foreign Students Do Make an Impact on Classroom Education

Seventeen of the 46 written responses (37%) described the enriching impact that foreign students had made on their classroom education. As with item 2.1, impact on domestic students' perspectives or points of view was the most common response in this category, with 13 references. Many of these responses duplicated the ones outlined above for item 2.1, and therefore are not presented here. New written responses generated by item 2.2 include the one by M. who disagreed with the suggestion that foreign students had made no impact on her classroom education: "Foreign students have made me realize how fortunate I am that Canada is such a peaceful country." Two people, AC and AL, mentioned that meeting people from different countries had had an impact on their education.

Item 2.2 generated the first response that showed that the presence of foreign students negatively impacts the classroom. F, a student who disagreed with item 2.2, wrote, "Although foreign students have made few impacts, I have found foreign TA's difficult to understand at times and therefore difficult to learn from." Another CISC 365 student expressed frustration in her interview with the same problem (DS-6, p. 2):

Cal: What was the impact that you felt?

DS-6: For me, it's probably in the way that they're asking questions, which a lot of other students aren't willing to do just because they don't want to speak up.

Because of that, especially in the Computer Science department, a lot of the TA's are foreign. And where it becomes negative for me is when I go to a TA and they don't speak English.

### Foreign Students Do Not Make an Impact in the Classroom

Twelve of the 48 written responses (25%) to item 2.2 indicated that foreign students do not make an impact on the classroom education of domestic students. Most of these responses were duplicates of ones in item 2.1 and therefore are not presented here. Two responses, however, provided important new insights. J, who neither agreed nor disagreed with item 2.2 wrote, "Foreign students rarely add more than what the test presents in terms of theory, but they can provide good examples." B neither agreed nor disagreed with item 2.2, and explained, "My Scottish lab partner made physics labs fun, but did not change what I learned."

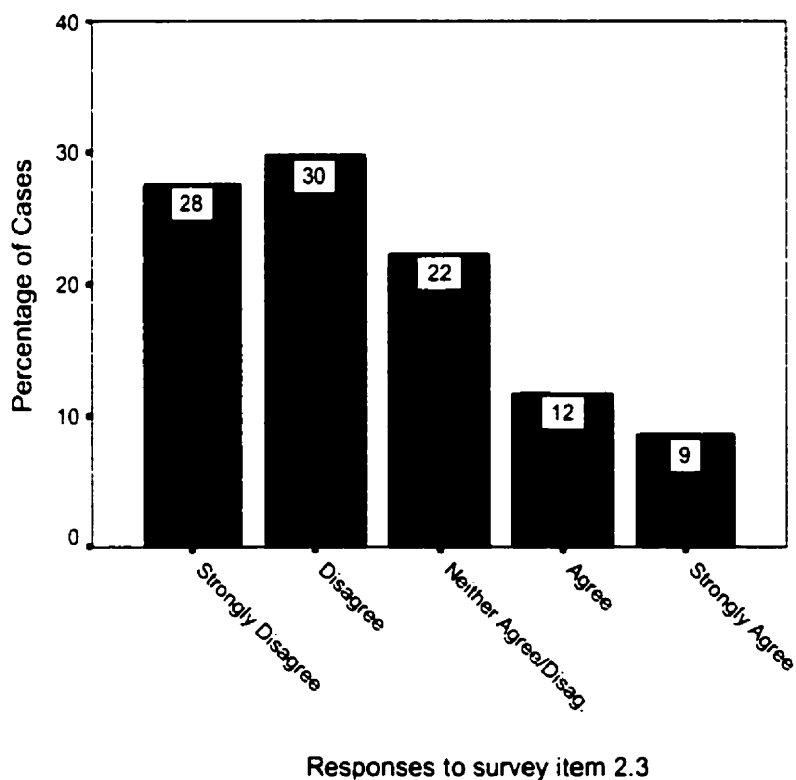
### Results of Item 2.3

Item 2.3 asked students to respond to the statement, "Foreign students have made no noticeable impact on my broader education outside of the classroom at Queen's University." The purpose of this item was to explore one facet of education on which foreign students could make an impact, as well as to authenticate the reliability of item 2.1.



### Scale Responses

There was a noticeable shift in the responses to item 2.3 in comparison to item 2.2. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents disagreed that foreign students had not impacted their broader education outside of the classroom at Queen's University, while 21% agreed. The mode for survey item 2.3 was "disagree," with 31% of the responses. The scale results to survey item 2.3 are summarized in Figure 3 below.



**Figure 3.** Summary of responses to survey item 2.3. "Foreign students have made no noticeable impact on my broader education outside of the classroom at Queen's University."

### Qualitative Responses

As item 2.3 was similar in nature to the previous two items, the same two categories emerged outside and inside the classroom. The results are presented in Figure 4 below.

#### Impact Outside of the Classroom

Twenty-seven of the 53 open-ended responses (51%) to item 2.3 supported the view that the educational impact of foreign students on domestic students occurs outside of the classroom. In comparison to the previous two items, there was a much greater range of responses to item 2.3. For example, "I never watch the news. When people talk about what is going on in Croatia and Serbia, for example, I can carry a conversation as a result of hearing what foreign students have talked about in classes...." (M). K strongly disagreed with 2.3. She wrote, "I have travelled overseas to visit ex-foreign students and learned more about their culture." BE disagreed with item 2.3 and explained, "I have been tutoring some Iraqi students in ESL outside of Queen's. I have learned about their culture and the types of difficulties they have." AZ strongly disagreed and wrote, "Friends that were from abroad....have increased my desire to travel and learn more about the world." CH disagreed with the statement and explained, "I live with international students and they have opened my eyes to learning new things in a foreign place."

### Foreign Students Make No Impact Outside of the Classroom

Seven of the 53 written responses (13%) suggested that foreign students have no impact on domestic students' informal education outside of the classroom. Five of these seven responses noted that having no contact with foreign students outside the classroom was a strong contributing factor. AA, for example, agreed with item 2.3. She explained, "I have very little interaction with foreign students." AV, who agreed with 2.3, was very clear in her reasoning: "I don't know any [foreign students]." However, BF's response provides an interesting contrast to AV's response. She wrote, "While I have met and know a few foreign students, I do not believe they have impacted my broader education." BF agreed with item 2.3.

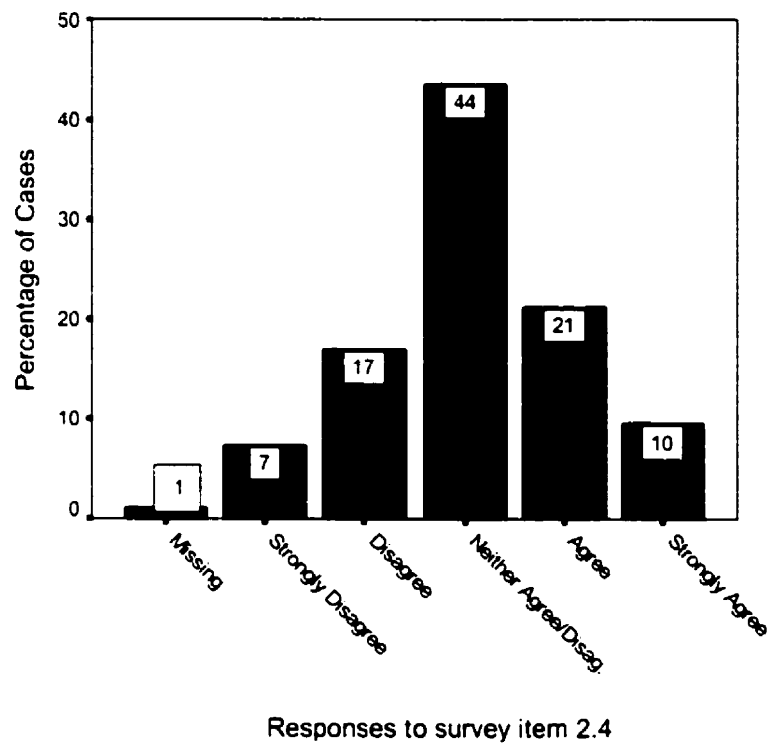
### Results of Item 2.4

Item 2.4 asked students to respond to the statement, "The presence of foreign students enhances the depth and scope of lectures." The purpose of this survey item was to explore the impact of foreign students on one particular aspect of domestic students' classroom education.

### Scale Responses

By a strong margin, the most common scale response to survey item 2.4 was "neither agree nor disagree." with 44% of the responses. Thirty-one percent of

respondents agreed with the suggestion that foreign students enhance the depth and scope of lectures, while 24% disagreed. One person did not provide a scale response to this question. A summary of the scale results of survey item 2.4 is presented in Figure 4 below.



**Figure 4.** Summary of responses to survey item 2.4, “The presence of foreign students enhances the depth and scope of lectures.”

## Qualitative Responses

### Foreign Students Do Not Impact Lectures

Although 27 of the 60 written responses (45%) to item 2.4 indicated that the presence of foreign students had no bearing on the depth and scope of lectures, three of these people neither agreed nor disagreed to the statement in their scale response. More people supported the view in their written responses that foreign students do not impact classes any other theme in item 2.4. While many of these responses were similar to those illustrated above, there were some different ones. For example, F disagreed with item 2.4 and wrote, "Foreign students don't add or take away from lectures." M, who neither agreed nor disagreed with 2.4, indicated that foreign students should not be viewed any differently from domestic students. She also wrote that all students in general "are quite passive in lectures. There is little opportunity to add much to lectures." Six other students expressed the same view. "Lectures do not usually permit much participation," explained W, who neither agreed nor disagreed. "Lectures aren't meant to have audience participation," wrote BC, who strongly disagreed. AA, who also neither agreed nor disagreed in her scale response explained, "My lectures tend to be very Canadian centred."

Two people described the (unrealized) potential for foreign students to enrich the content of lectures. For example, BK wrote, "[They] could... Queen's should take advantage of these students, and profs should know them" [emphasis added by the respondent].

### Foreign Students Enrich Lectures

Fourteen of the 60 students (23%) who gave a written response indicated that the presence of foreign students had enriched or enhanced the depth and scope of lectures at Queen's. Most of the examples reflected those already mentioned in the results of items 2.1 to 2.3, i.e., the different points of view (nine responses), life experiences (three responses), and cultures (2 responses) that foreign students bring into the classroom are enriching.

Weak impact. Two people indicated that foreign students do have an enriching impact on lectures, but it is not constant or strong. "This could be true depending on the topic, but I have rarely noticed a difference," wrote CB, who neither agreed nor disagreed with item 2.4. "Sometimes yes, sometimes no," was CA's response, another student who neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

It depends. Six people indicated that the large number of factors affecting the impact that foreign students have on lectures made it difficult for them to generalize about this statement. "It depends on which course I'm taking," wrote X, who neither agreed nor disagreed with item 2.4. AZ also neither agreed nor disagreed with 2.4. She explained, "Depends on if you have any [foreign students] in a class and if they decide to contribute." Three people suggested in their written responses that the impact foreign students have in lectures depends on the professor.

DS-7, the commerce student from SOCY 324, made a comment in her interview that supported the contingent nature of foreign student impact in lectures. Asked what the impact of foreign students was in her lectures, she responded,

I think it depends on what program you're in, or what concentration of commerce you're in. Certain concentrations really bring it out, such as marketing, whereas other concentrations, like my [Management Information Systems] concentration, not really....I think marketing is a much more discussion-based course. (DS-7, p.1)

Presumptions. It was interesting to note the responses of three people who could not say with certainty if foreign students enriched lectures, but assumed that they did. Assumptions in the literature were similar to these assumptions held by participants. O, for example, agreed with item 2.4 and wrote, "I would presume it does from the valuable experiences they could raise." AY did not provide a scale response, but wrote, "Probably, but I don't know."

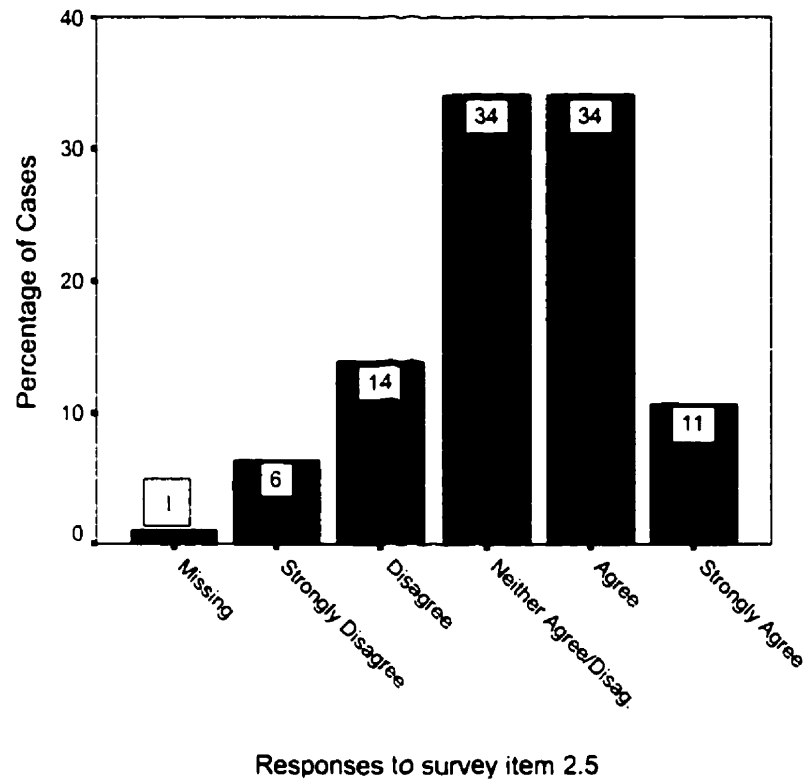
### Results of Item 2.5

Item 2.5 asked students to respond to the statement, "The presence of foreign students enhances the depth and scope of seminars and tutorials. The purpose of this item was to explore the impact of foreign students on another particular aspect of domestic students' formal education.

### Scale Results

The scale results of survey item 2.5 were bimodal. Thirty-four percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that the presence of foreign students enhanced

the depth and scope of lectures or tutorials, and an additional thirty-four percent agreed that foreign students had this effect. The scale results of survey item 2.5 are summarized in Figure 5 below.



**Figure 5.** Summary of responses to survey item 2.5. “The presence of foreign students enhances the depth and scope of seminars and tutorials.”

### Qualitative Responses

There were 58 written responses to item 2.5. For the most part, they could be classified into four themes: a) No impact on seminars and tutorials (17 responses) for



reasons that include not having been in a course with foreign students (6 responses), foreign students are not identifiable in seminars (2 responses), and domestic students do not notice foreign students (2 responses); b) Foreign students do make an impact on seminars or tutorials (26 responses), mainly because of the perspectives and life experiences they bring; c) It depends (5 responses): on the topic (2 responses) or the student (3 responses); and d) Domestic students presume that foreign students have an impact on tutorials, but have no firsthand evidence (3 responses). Since each of these four themes has been discussed above, they will not be duplicated in this section.

### Language

Four people, all from CISC 365 and ECON 351, referred to language in their response to item 2.5. For example, B strongly disagreed with item 2.5. She explained, "Not once have I gone to see a TA only to find that they are helping the other students in another language and I have to ask them to speak English so I can understand as well." D, who disagreed with item 2.5, had a similar response: "Foreign TA's who are still trying to grasp the English language often are hard to understand, making help difficult." F also disagreed with item 2.5. He explained, "If any changes to seminars or tutorials can be attributed to foreign students, it might be the slightly slower pace required to explain complex ideas or topics in English."

### Miscellaneous Responses

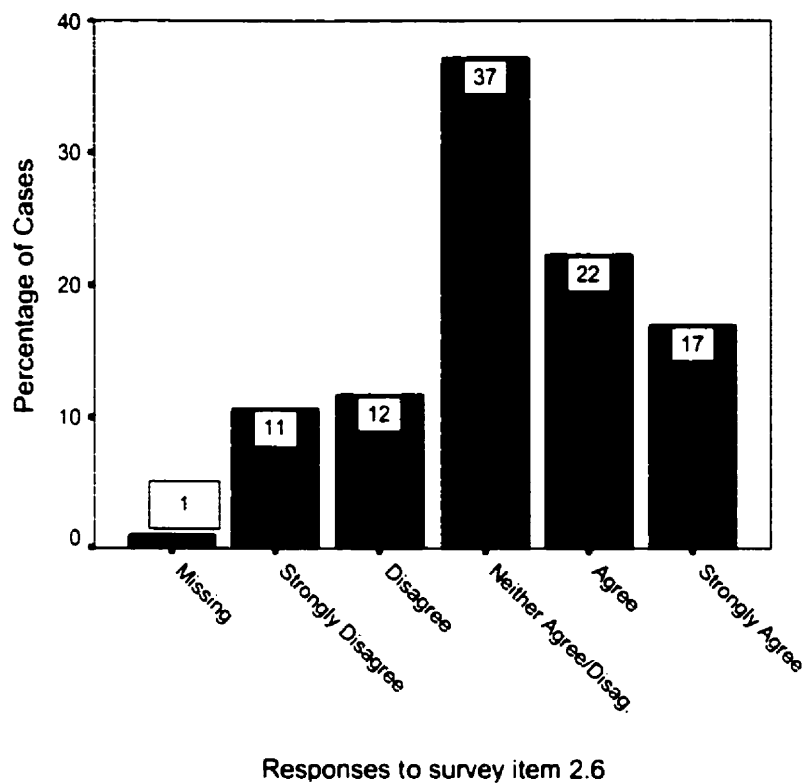
Finally, two people mentioned that tutorials and seminars provide a more comfortable atmosphere for interaction between foreign and domestic students. AX, for example, agreed with item 2.5 and wrote, "Smaller discussion groups make it possible to become more personal and share experiences."

### Results of Item 2.6

Item 2.6 asked students to respond to the statement, "The depth and scope of courses that I have taken with foreign students are no different than courses without foreign students." The purpose of this item was to provide a means to assess the reliability of items 2.1 and 2.2.

### Scale Results

Survey item 2.6 was another question in which the most common response was "neither agree nor disagree," in this case by a wide margin. Thirty-seven percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that the depth and scope of courses they had taken with foreign students were any different than courses without foreign students. Thirty-nine percent agreed with the statement, while 23% disagreed. One scale response was missing. The scale results of item 2.6 are summarized in Figure 6 below.



**Figure 6.** Summary of responses to survey item 2.6. “The depth and scope of courses that I have taken with foreign students are no different than courses without foreign students.”

### Qualitative Responses

The 39 written responses generated by item 2.6 had all been observed previously in items 2.1 to 2.5. Twenty-four people indicated that the presence of foreign students did not enhance the depth and scope of their courses at Queen’s. The reasons given included not being able to distinguish foreign from non-foreign students (3 responses), never having had a class with foreign students (8 responses), and not having a means to compare because they had never been in a class without foreign students (3 responses).

Ten people stated in their written response that the presence of foreign students simply did not make much difference to the course.

In contrast, eight responses supported the view that foreign students do enhance the depth and scope of a course. Six of these people referred to the different perspectives and experiences that foreign students can share, as described by CD and M here. It was CD's view that "discussions are more rich" in courses with foreign students. M wrote, "They are more knowledgeable on world issues" to explain why she disagreed with item 2.5.

Four people suggested that the impact of foreign students on a course depends on a student's willingness to participate regardless of background, the climate within the class, and the nature of the course itself.

Four important miscellaneous responses were recorded. CA, who strongly agreed with item 2.6, wrote, "When I was in Kenya it was strongly different. At Queen's I haven't seen a difference." Others' comments below support their agreement with the statement: "In science, where discussion is factual and not opinionated, we really don't have much opportunity to learn about backgrounds" (CF). AD offered a similar response: "The same material is still covered." BH wrote, "Little interaction in university courses."

### Results of Item 2.7

Item 2.7 asked students to respond to the statement, "Foreign students tend to be prominent participants in the classroom." The purpose of this item was to gauge the visibility of foreign students in the classroom in the eyes of domestic students.

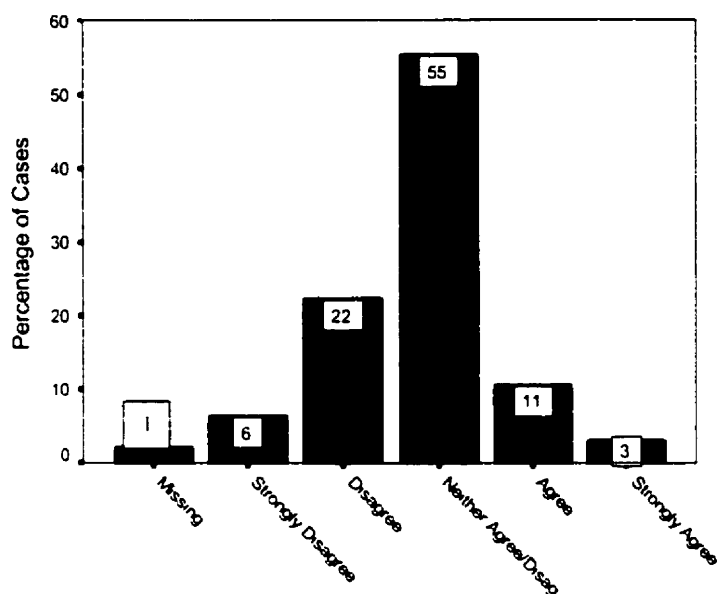
### Scale Responses

More than half of the respondents (55%), the largest single group, neither agreed nor disagreed about whether foreign students are prominent participants in the classroom at Queen's University. Twenty-eight percent disagreed that foreign students were prominent classroom participants, while 14% agreed. The scale results of survey item 2.7 are summarized in Figure 7 below.

### Qualitative Responses

#### Foreign Students Are Prominent Participants

Five of the 52 people (10%) who provided written responses to item 2.7 indicated that they perceived foreign students to be prominent participants in the classroom. "They tend to ask and answer a lot of questions." wrote U. Other responses included, "Because it costs them a lot in order to be here. They therefore tend to work really hard" (E), "For whatever reason, they tend to make their presence known, but in my experiences, it has always been in a positive way" (BQ), and "Yes, but on matters relating to the course, not to them being international" (J).



Responses to survey item 2.7

**Figure 7.** Summary of responses to survey item 2.7, “Foreign students tend to be prominent participants in the classroom.”

Two excerpts from my interview with DS-6, a Computer Science student, revealed her view that foreign students are prominent participants in the classroom. She said, “Actually, in one of the philosophy courses that I was taking, there was a foreign student. He was just as active and talking and, like his English was great. I think he spoke more than the professor.” (DS-6, p. 5). The second excerpt is from the same interview with DS-6:

DS-6: I’ve always felt like a minority, being female. I was in a class last year, there were about five of us who were second-year students. Everyone else was a mature student, foreign mature students. They tend to talk a little bit in class, but they also tend to stick together.

Cal: That's really interesting....You said they tend to talk more?

DS-6: To the professor. Ask more questions. I think they're comfortable with that.

Cal: How many people were in that class?

DS-6: It was, maybe, 25.

Cal: How many of those students were foreign?

DS-6: I would say about 20.

Cal: And you found in that class that the foreign students tended to talk a lot?

DS-6: Yeah. Between themselves, but they also felt more comfortable asking the professor questions. (DS-6, p. 1)

#### Foreign Students Are Not Prominent Participants

Yet, in contrast to the responses illustrated above, 11 of the 52 responses (21%) described foreign students as tending to be quiet or passive in the classroom. "They usually don't talk or contribute unless it affects their grades." wrote C, a Computer Science student who disagreed with item 2.7. "Tend to be quiet and more reclusive." was CD's response, who strongly disagreed with item 2.7. CN, who also strongly disagreed, commented that, "They don't seem to participate besides asking a lot of 'clarification' questions."

One person specifically mentioned Asian students in her written response. She wrote, "I am in [Computer Science], so many of the Asian foreign students are quiet (C). BK pointed specifically to exchange students, and said that in her view they participated more than English Second Language students.

When I asked DS-7 in the interview if foreign students were prominent participants in the classroom, she replied, “No. I would say more of them are not, probably. There are some who are, but they’re from Australia or New Zealand where there’s not much of a language barrier...and it always comes down to the language barrier. That’s what makes them stay quiet and not participate in courses because that’s the level that they’re not comfortable with” (DS-7, p. 4).

Further insight into this phenomenon is provided from DS-3, who said:

There is not necessarily a lot of participation from foreign students in classes unless it is more mathematically driven. If [there is] a large amount of English, most [foreign students] don’t want to ask a item if they don’t know for sure that they are understanding it correctly... A lot of the times the foreign students are not actually saying anything unless they’re saying something intelligent. (DS-3, p. 5)

### No Difference

Nine of the 52 written responses (17%) indicated that there is no difference in the amount of classroom participation between foreign and domestic students. “Foreign students participate no more or no less than Canadian students” (CB). She neither agreed nor disagreed with the item. H explained, “no more or less outspoken than domestic students.” “Haven’t noticed, students are students.” wrote AJ.



### It Depends

Fifteen of the 52 people (29%) indicated that they could not generalize about all foreign students, suggesting that the participation of foreign students in the classroom depends on different factors, including the particular class (two responses), language ability (three responses), the individual's personality (nine responses), and the student's home country (one response). For example, "It varies, as it does with domestic students," wrote I, who neither agreed nor disagreed with item 2.7. "It depends on their personality," wrote CC, who also neither agreed nor disagreed. Eight other people shared this view. Two people suggested that the atmosphere within the class has a stronger bearing on whether a student participates than their status as a foreign or non-foreign student.

Another student suggested that the difference in classroom participation between foreign and non-foreign students depends on the country from which the student originates and the local norms that govern classroom protocol. Finally, one student pointed out that, "it depends on their confidence with English" (CL).

DS-7 described a foreign student from France and two other French exchange students in the School of Business: "He flocks right to them because they are French and that's part of his culture. But [the two French exchange students] were in two of my classes, and never, ever did they ever say a word unless the professor asked them for their opinion....they're not comfortable enough with English. They won't talk in class" (DS-7, p. 2).

DS-5 commented on the 'whiteness' of Queen's professors:

The only thing I might want to criticize is the fact that most of the profs are white. I think there's only one or two non-white Sociology profs. If you get people who are, like, non-European descent profs, then it might be easier for international students who want to say something. (DS-5, p. 5)

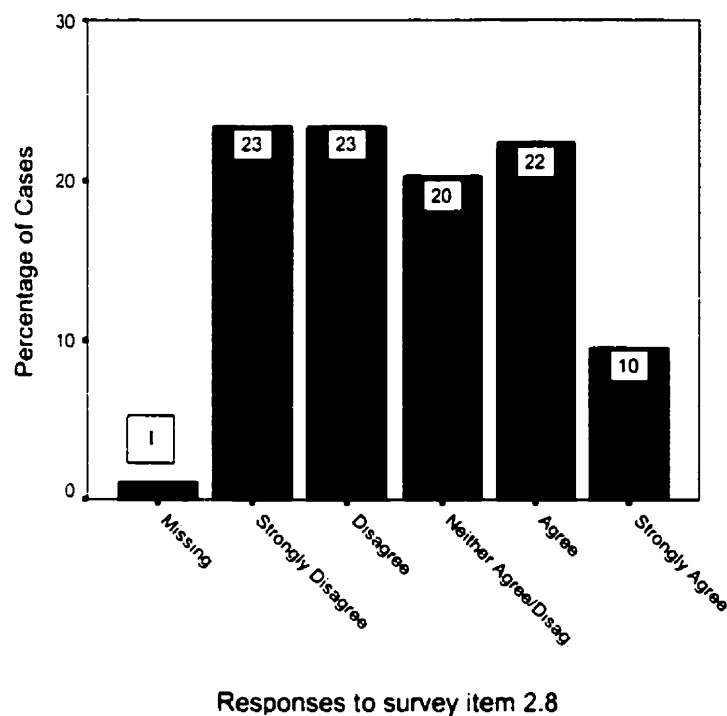
DS-2 thought that the student's year in university affected their impact. She said: I think that at this level, upper year undergrad level they participate more.... because at this point, you just want to learn. Whereas in the lower years, you don't want to look too stupid and you have all these reservations. (DS-2, p. 2)

### Results of Item 2.8

Item 2.8 asked students to respond to the statement, "It is easy for me to recognize if a student is from another country." This was one of the most important items on the survey because it challenged the hidden assumption behind all of the other survey items: that domestic students are able to identify foreign students on campus.

### Scale Results

Forty-six percent of the respondents disagreed that it is easy for them to identify a foreign student on campus, while 32% agreed. One scale response was left blank. The scale results of survey item 2.8 are summarized in Figure 8 below.



**Figure 8.** Summary of responses to survey item 2.8. “It is easy for me to recognize if a student is from another country.”

### Qualitative Results

#### Multiculturalism

Eight of the 58 written responses (14%) to item 2.8 referred to the multicultural nature of Canadian society, which made it difficult or impossible to determine if another student came to Queen’s from a foreign country. Typical responses that illustrated this view were. “I have no concept of how long a person’s been living in Canada or [if he or she is] just visiting,” wrote CM who disagreed with item 2.8. “Canada is multicultural, so one doesn’t know without asking,” was the response of CB, who strongly disagreed with

item 2.8. "There are a lot of Canadian-born visible minorities," wrote CC, who neither agreed nor disagreed with 2.8. "Another country, no; another ethnicity, yes," wrote BD, who also neither agreed nor disagreed.

Item 2.8 prompted many references to the homogeneous nature of the Queen's student population as a factor in identifying foreign students. Twelve people described Queen's as having a largely white student body, which made it easier for them to identify students who came from abroad. These people indicated that it was easier to identify foreign students on campus than, for example, "outside of the Queen's bubble," as O phrased it. "Not in Canada, although it is easier at Queen's," wrote BM, who neither agreed nor disagreed with item 2.8.

AZ's response to item 2.8, however, suggests that there is a wide range of perceptions among students of the diversity of the Queen's student population. In contrast to those people who viewed Queen's as being a largely white university, AZ saw Queen's in the opposite way. She wrote, "There are many ethnicities inside Queen's," and disagreed that it is easy to identify foreign students at Queen's. Her view that Queen's has a diverse student population was clearly among the minority in this study. Most people viewed Queen's as being a predominantly white university.

One example from the interviews also reflects the theme that domestic students cannot easily distinguish foreign and non-foreign students. In this excerpt, an Economics student reflects on his experience living close to the international floor in residence during his first year at Queen's. He indicated that, while he viewed foreign students as "interesting" (DS-1, p. 1), the wide variety of domestic people he met in his first year were no less unique to him:

When I first came to Queen's, I really found in first year.... my main exposure was to a wide variety of people, especially in residence. They had a, I think it was the international floor, was right across from me.... So there was a wide variety of students that I met. And they came from different regions of the world, like from Africa, and Central America, and Europe. It was kind of like, because I came from Ottawa, talking to someone from Toronto was different than someone from Vancouver, [which] was different [than] talking to Americans.... (DS-1, p. 1)

Excerpts from two other interviews support this theme. In the first one, an Economics student explains how he does not view foreign students as having a visible presence on campus.

It's strange in that, overall, I'd actually say that foreign students go very unnoticed. They kind of fade into the background, I find. I find they... aren't really outwardly participatory. It just seems like they're there, but not much more. (DS-1, p. 4)

Another Economics student described how he does not notice the foreign students in his classes, particularly lectures. He explained that in lectures, "We go and listen, and there's hardly any interaction. So in most cases, I don't even notice where the people come from" (DS-4, p. 1).

When DS-7 was asked if it was easy for her to recognize foreign students at Queen's, she replied, "No, I don't think so, because what is a Canadian? A Canadian is someone who has citizenship, but other than that there is no look to a Canadian" (DS-7, p. 4). DS-8 also provided insight when he said, "If I didn't know the students personally,

it's not like they would stand up and say, 'I'm from such and such a place and this is how you solve the Economics problems there" (DS-8, p. 1).

### Domestic Students Can Recognize Foreign Students

Forty of the 58 people (69%) who provided written responses to item 2.8 indicated that they could recognize foreign students on campus. Eight of these people, however, neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement in their scale responses. None of the responses referred to the *ease* with which they could do this, as item 2.8 asked them to consider. All of the written explanations described how they were able to identify the foreign students, which are outlined below.

Language. Twenty students pointed to language as the way they could identify if a student came from a foreign country, making it the most commonly cited response. "Yes, if they participate in class discussions," wrote CG, who agreed with item 2.8. AG wrote that it was easy for her to recognize if a student was from a foreign country, but only "if they choose to speak." Participant I wrote, "Impossible without conversation." "You won't know unless you have interaction," wrote BJ. K, a Sociology student, disagreed with item 2.8 and explained, "Difficult unless they have a distinguishable accent."

Furthermore, two people who referred to language as a way to identify foreign students emphasized that language itself is not reliable means to judge if someone is from a foreign country. "Command of English may lead me to suspect, but it's not a guarantee," wrote D, who disagreed with item 2.8. H said that a person's accent could

reveal if they are from a foreign country, "but sometimes that's misleading." H disagreed with item 2.8.

Visible features. After language, 15 people cited visible features as the way they were able to identify foreign students on campus. For example, five people mentioned clothing as something that distinguishes foreign from non-foreign students. BB wrote, "The Kenyans on campus are visible because of their skin tone and dress during cold months." She disagreed with item 2.8. "Looks" (CE), "body language" (CD), and "mannerisms" (X, J) were other ways that domestic students distinguished foreign students on campus. Other people were more general, referring simply to "visible features" (AE, AA, V) or "appearance" (BU, AX) as explanations for their scale responses to item 2.8. Only one person (BX) wrote, "Can't tell by appearance." She disagreed with item 2.8.

Three people said that one's friends or acquaintances helped them determine if a student was from abroad. F wrote, "Lack of cultural diversity of their friends" as an explanation for disagreeing with item 2.8. "They speak foreign languages to their friends." was G's explanation why he neither agreed nor disagreed with item 2.8. AW's response was country-specific: "They hang around together speaking Japanese."

Three responses do not fall easily into the above two categories. C strongly agreed with item 2.8, explaining, "I am a foreigner." U agreed with 2.8 and wrote, "They often mention it." AD wrote, "Depends on the country the student is from."

## Results of Item 2.9

Item 2.9 asked students to respond to the statement, "It is important for Queen's to enrol foreign students." The purpose of this item was to get a firsthand account from domestic students of the importance they attach to the presence of foreign students in the university.

### Scale Results

The results of survey item 2.9 showed that a majority of the participants agreed that it is important for Queen's University to enrol foreign students. The mode for this survey item, by a wide margin, was "strongly agree," with 48% of the responses, followed by "agree" with 32%. One scale response was missing. The scale results of survey item 2.9 are summarized in Figure 9 below.

### Qualitative Results

Item 2.9 generated the greatest variety of written responses of any item on the survey. They fall into two broad categories: a) Reasons why Queen's should enrol foreign students, and b) General reactions to item 2.9.



## Why It Is Important to Enrol Foreign Students

Diversity. The most commonly cited reason (19 of the 66 responses, or 28%) why the respondents thought it was important for Queen's to enrol foreign students was to

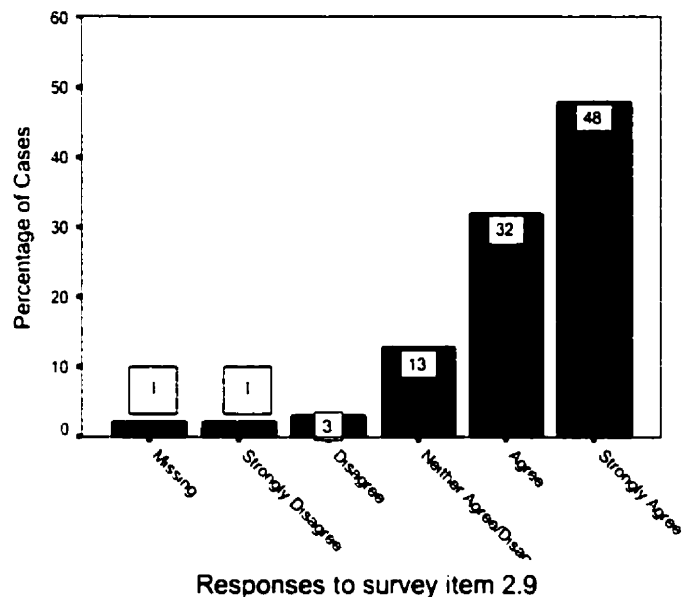


Figure 9. Summary of responses to item 2.9. "It is important for Queen's to enrol foreign students."

maintain a diverse learning environment. For example, it was B's view that foreign students are important to "enhance the social and cultural atmosphere of the university." U also strongly agreed with 2.9, explaining that the presence of foreign students "adds to a multicultural environment." AH wrote, "[foreign students] add to a school's social and cultural capital." BA agreed with the item because, in her view, foreign students diversify the SES (social economic status) of the student population. R wrote, "A homogeneous body narrows education." "We need to enhance, broaden, enrich our outlook," wrote CR.

The perception among students of Queen's being a largely white university emerged again in item 2.9. "We need more ethnicity at this school," wrote CL, who agreed with the item. "[Foreign students] help Canadians feel they aren't trapped in a bubble." (CD) was the response of an Education student who strongly agreed with the item. AA was a Sociology student who agreed with 2.9. In her view, the presence of foreign students "diversifies a very Euro-centric environment." BL, an Education student who also agreed with the item wrote that the presence of foreign students "adds variety to a homogeneous group."

Opportunities. Fifteen of the 66 responses (23%) said that it is important for Queen's to enrol foreign students because of the opportunities that are created for foreign and domestic students alike. For example, five of these people indicated that it is important to offer overseas study opportunities to students from countries outside of Canada. "To share views and allow them the experience to attend school abroad." wrote AB, a student who strongly agreed with item 2.9. "It gives foreign students the opportunity to learn a new culture." wrote AR, who agreed with item 2.9. Another person suggested that receiving foreign students is a way for the university to contribute to international development. "Foreign students can receive an education they might not get at home, and then return home to help." wrote BU, an Education student who strongly agreed with item 2.9. The remaining 10 people mentioned the opportunities that foreign students create for domestic students as a reason why it is important for Queen's to enrol foreign students. "Because I would like to study abroad and I feel my chance to do so might be lower if Canadian universities didn't enrol foreign students." wrote AK, a Sociology student who strongly agreed with the item. "Not everybody has the

opportunity to travel abroad,” wrote N, in reference to how domestic students can experience another country through foreign students on campus. “I have made future connections,” was the response of I, an Economics student who agreed with item 2.9.

Miscellaneous Responses. A number of miscellaneous responses to item 2.9 do not easily fit into the above category, yet were not cited enough to form categories of their own. These miscellaneous responses are outlined randomly below.

One person viewed the enrolment of foreign students as a way for Queen’s to strengthen its reputation outside of Canada. “It promotes the university,” wrote CA, an Education student who agreed with item 2.9. Two people suggested that the higher foreign student tuition fees benefit the university. For example, K wrote, “Queen’s gets more money,” as the reason she agreed with the scale item in 2.9. In addition to this, K wrote, “Students who come into contact [with foreign students] may have their lives changed forever.” “To follow government policy,” wrote AE, also a Sociology student who agreed with item 2.9. It was BD’s view that the university should help foster respect “for those who are not white Queen’s students.” It was BU’s view that foreign students “have past experiences to share.” She didn’t elaborate on this response, but it seems to reflect why D also thought it was important to enrol foreign students. D wrote, “To expand the horizons of domestic...and foreign students’ minds. More ideas lead to more thinking, more intelligence.” D was a Computer Science student who strongly agreed with item 2.9. J, an Economics student, indicated that the benefits of enrolling foreign students are realized more outside of the classroom. He wrote, “Out-of-class interaction [with foreign students] can be an eye-opener if you take the time.” CC, an Education student who agreed with item 2.9 provided a unique response: She wrote that the

enrolment of foreign students in Canadian universities “gives Canadians a view of our society.” Finally, AW’s response seemed to epitomize all of the responses that supported the enrolment of foreign students at Queen’s. In describing why she strongly agreed to the scale item in 2.9, she wrote that enrolling foreign students is “definitely important, they should enrol more.”

In the interviews, DS-3 had a unique and insightful view of the diversity that foreign students add to Queen’s. He said:

You know, the foreign students at Queen’s, they’re upper class foreign students. The non-foreign students [who] are here, they’re upper class non-foreign students. It’s all upper class. You don’t have a large amount of diversity when it comes to socio-economic status. [By enrolling foreign students], you’re just getting a taste of richer people. (DS-3, p. 4)

In another excerpt, DS-6 brings us back to the item about the difference between foreign and second-generation Canadian students:

If foreign students were not allowed, for example, which is horrible, but I think that you’d have just as multicultural a mosaic. It wouldn’t be maybe as obvious, but I think it would still be very multicultural. (DS-6, p. 6).

Finally, DS-1 offers his views about what the university is doing to capitalize on foreign students as a learning resource. “I think that they’re taking a very laissez-faire approach to that: enrol them, let them interact, and let nature take its course” (DS-1, p. 3).

### Reactions to Item 2.9

The above section outlined the responses to item 2.9 that described why domestic students considered it important for Queen's to enrol foreign students. This section presents participants' general reactions to the suggestion that it is important for Queen's to enrol foreign students. They are useful because it provides a look into what DS think about the presence of foreign students on campus and the resources that Queen's devotes to them.

F was a Computer Science student who neither agreed nor disagreed with item 2.9. He wrote, "I don't feel that we should seek students just because they're from another country." Four people referred to foreign students taking spots away from Canadian students. For example, "I would be upset if a foreigner was accepted in my place." wrote BB, an Education student who agreed with the item. "We should educate our own first and foremost," was the response of H, an Economics student who neither agreed nor disagreed with item 2.9. Two people referred to the discrimination involved in enrolling foreign students. For example, O, a Sociology student who disagreed with the suggestion that it is important for Queen's to enrol foreign students, wrote, "only the rich [foreign students] can come." AG, a Sociology student who neither agreed nor disagreed with the item, seemed to expressed a similar concern He wrote, "They bear the full brunt of tuition."

Two people were rather ambivalent about the importance of Queen's enrolling foreign students. "Foreign students neither hinder or enhance my academic understanding," wrote F, a Computer Science student who neither agreed nor disagreed

with item 2.9. "It is good, but not important." was the explanation offered by AO, a Sociology student who disagreed with the item. BC, an Education student who agreed with the item, raised a point that is of particular interest for this study. She wrote, "Enrolment is great, increasing integration is the next step."

Three people mentioned that it is important to focus on sending Canadian students abroad to study. BF, for example, disagreed with item 2.9 and wrote, "It is more important to send our students overseas." BS neither agreed nor disagreed with the item, explaining that, "the opportunity should be reciprocal."

Four other people viewed the enrolment of foreign students at Queen's as a means of promoting social justice. For example, "People should have the opportunity to study anywhere" (CO); "The law would prohibit exclusion based on race" (CJ); and "Equal opportunity is important" (CF).

The remaining miscellaneous written responses are now presented at random. AU's response suggested that the most beneficial impact of foreign students accrue outside of the classroom. She wrote, "Without foreign students, the informal education may be sacrificed, but not the formal education." Finally, two people suggested that there is no good reason for Queen's not to enrol foreign students. "Why not?" wrote BT.

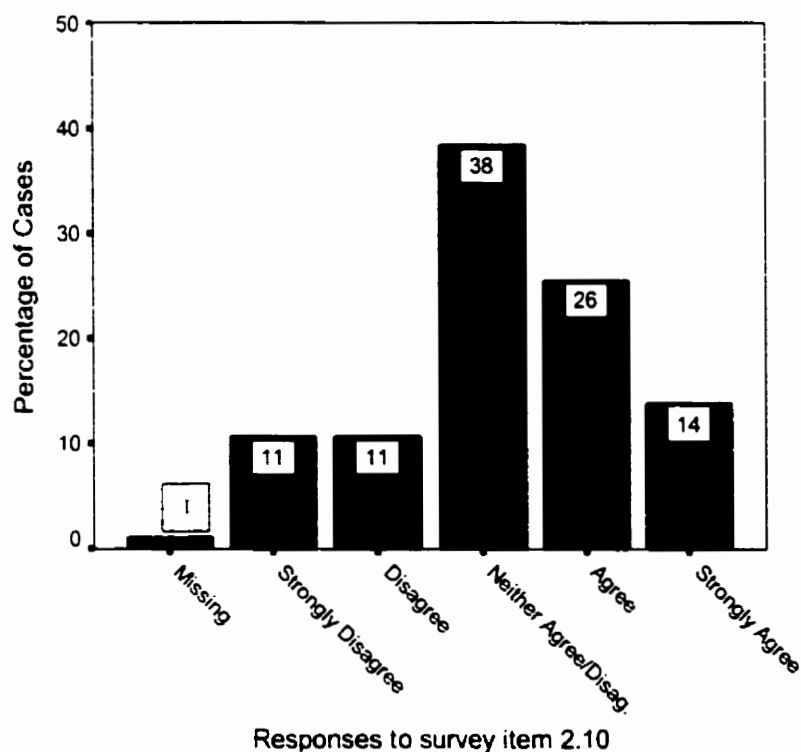
#### Results of Item 2.10

Item 2.10 asked students to respond to the statement, "My education would have been less enriched or enhanced if the university did not enrol foreign students." The purpose of this item was to explore the contribution that foreign students make to the

education of domestic students from a different angle, i.e., by asking domestic students to reflect on how their education at Queen's might have been different in the absence of foreign students.

### Scale Results

Forty-two percent of the respondents agreed that their education would have been less enriched or enhanced if Queen's University did not enrol foreign students, while 22% disagreed. The mode was "neither agree nor disagree," with 38% of responses. The scale results of survey item 2.10 are summarized in Figure 10 below.



**Figure 10.** Summary of responses to survey item 2.10. "My education at Queen's would have been less enriched or enhanced if the university did not enrol foreign students."

### Qualitative Results

The qualitative results of item 2.10 can be grouped into three categories: a) The absence of foreign students would not have made a difference to domestic students' education. b) The education of domestic students would be less enriched or enhanced without foreign students, and c) item 2.10 is difficult to answer.

#### The Absence of Foreign Students Would Not Make a Difference

Fourteen of the 43 written responses (32%) to item 2.10 indicated that the absence of foreign students would not have made a difference to their education. For example, CN, an Education student who strongly disagreed with item 2.10 wrote, "They didn't enrich anything." BL wrote, "I don't think it would have much impact on me with the courses I took." BL was an Education student who neither agreed nor disagreed with the item. BC, another Education student who neither agreed nor disagreed with the item, explained, "Aside from a few out-of-class discussions, I didn't form lasting relationships." "No impact on my education." was BX's response.

#### Foreign Students Do Enrich the Education of Domestic Students

Twenty of the 43 written responses (46%) to item 2.10 suggested that the education of domestic students would have been less enriched or enhanced in the absence of foreign students. Seven of these responses referred to the social benefits that they have



derived from the presence of foreign students. For example, U, a Sociology student who neither agreed nor disagreed with item 2.10, wrote, "It's enjoyable meeting other people and learning about other cultures." V wrote, "It's nice to have different people around." "I would never have met some of my best friends," wrote D, a Computer Science student who agreed. "It's good to have contact with foreign students," wrote BY, an Education student who also agreed. For G, an Economics student, foreign students are "interesting to talk to." G was an Economics student.

BQ was one of three people whose response to this item pointed to factors outside of the classroom that have been enriched or enhanced by foreign students. "Yes, particularly my extracurricular activities," she wrote. BQ was an Education student who agreed with item 2.10. "I would not have learned about other cultures," wrote I, an Economics student who agreed.

Four people described how their education would have been less enriched or enhanced in the absence of foreign students. "I would not have learned about life outside of Canada," wrote K, a Sociology student. C, a Computer Science student, explained that he would not have been exposed to "different perspectives and ideas" if Queen's did not enrol foreign students.

Three people were not specific about how their education would have been enhanced. CB, for example, simply stated, "I have learned from them." N, a Sociology student, wrote, "I have learned many formal and informal things from foreign students."

### A Difficult Question to Answer

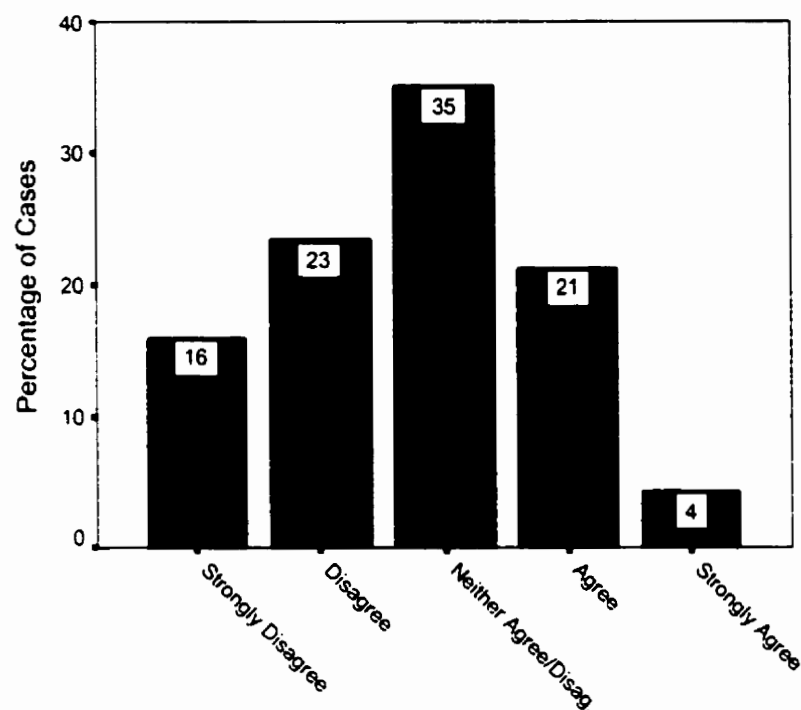
Eight people did not give a definitive answer regarding how their education at Queen's might have been less enriched or enhanced in the absence of foreign students. For example, AK, a Sociology student who neither agreed nor disagreed with item 2.10 wrote, "I wouldn't know the difference never being in a class of foreign students." CK, an Education student who neither agreed nor disagreed with the item explained, "I haven't had any interactions with foreign students here at Queen's." AJ wrote, "I can't tell because Queen's does enrol them." AJ was a Sociology student who neither agreed nor disagreed with the item. CC, an Education student, wrote, "It's hard to say because my program does not tend to attract foreign students." CC neither agreed nor disagreed with item 2.10. AW strongly disagreed that her education would have been less enriched or enhanced in the absence of foreign students. She explained, "I didn't notice them. They don't make themselves known."

### Results of Item 2.11

Item 2.11 asked students to respond to the statement, "Faculty members regularly draw on the experiences and perspectives of foreign students to enhance course content." The purpose of this item was to determine the degree to which professors provide an opportunity for foreign students to share their experiences or perspectives with domestic students in a formal learning situation.

### Scale Results

More people generally disagreed (39%) than agreed (25%) with the suggestion that faculty members regularly draw on foreign students as learning resources. The mode, however, was “neither agree nor disagree” with 35% of responses. There were no blank scale responses to this survey item. The results are summarized in Figure 11 below.



Responses to survey item 2.11

**Figure 11.** Summary of responses to survey item 2.11. “Faculty regularly draw on the experiences and perspectives of foreign students to enhance course content.”

### Qualitative Results

The qualitative responses to item 2.11 can be divided into five categories: a) Yes, professors draw on foreign students as a learning resource in the classroom. b) No, professors do not draw on foreign students as a learning resource in the classroom, c) Professors should draw on foreign students more in the classroom, d) It depends on certain factors, and e) Miscellaneous responses.

#### Professors Draw on Foreign Students

Twelve of the 55 people (22%) who provided a written response to item 2.11 indicated that professors do draw on the knowledge and experiences of foreign students in the classroom. There was a wide range of responses to this item. Seven students wrote that, in their experience, professors draw on foreign students in the classroom. M, for example, a Sociology student who agreed with item 2.11, wrote, "Often a prof will ask, 'Is it like this in your country?'" CH, an Education student, wrote, "They look at their own experiences and those of students." Z, a Sociology student who agreed, wrote, "Through questioning foreign students about the societies in which they are native to."

Five people cited particular courses in which they saw professors drawing on foreign students as learning resources. CS, an Education student who strongly agreed with question 2.11, wrote, "Geography profs ask and encourage input." CI agreed with the item, explaining that professors draw on foreign students "in linguistics courses [and] Education courses." BF wrote, "only in international studies and post-colonial English

courses.” BC, an Education student who agreed with the item, said that in her experience professors drew on foreign students “in third-world history and British India [sic].”

“Sometimes in Economics,” was D’s explanation for agreeing with item 2.11.

### Professors Do Not Draw on Foreign Students in the Classroom

Slightly more people (16 of 55, or 29%) indicated that professors do not draw on foreign students in the classroom than those who said they did. Three of these people were specific about the courses or programs on which their responses were based. “Not in biochemistry,” wrote CF, an Education student who strongly disagreed with item 2.11.

“Not in science and math,” was BH’s explanation for strongly disagreeing with the item.

“Not in Computer Science,” wrote D, who also strongly disagreed.

The remaining fourteen responses were not specific beyond simply indicating that professors do not draw on foreign students as a learning resource in the classroom. For example, when asked to respond to this statement, CN wrote, “Not one bit.” CN was an Education student who strongly disagreed with item 2.11. “Not in my experience,” responded BA, who explained that this was probably because most of her courses were lecture courses. BA was an Education student. “I don’t remember this ever happening,” wrote I, an Economics student who strongly disagreed with the item. “I have not been witness to such events,” was H’s response. H was an Economics student who strongly disagreed with item 2.11.

### It Depends

Eighteen of the 55 people (33%) would not generalize in their response to item 2.11, saying that the answer to this item either depends on the professor and the nature of the course, or that it is different from one course to another. Five people used the word “depends” in their response. For example, “It depends on the course and the instructor,” wrote BM, an Education student who neither agreed nor disagreed with item 2.11. X agreed with the item, explaining, “it depends on the course.” “It depends on whether it’s relevant,” wrote N, a Sociology student.

Thirteen of the 55 responses (24%) indicated that professors had drawn on foreign students as a learning resource in their experience, but that it happened only sporadically. For example, CJ wrote, “Some do, some don’t.” She was an Education student who neither agreed nor disagreed with item 2.11. “Maybe once or twice,” wrote AR, a Sociology student who disagreed with the item. BQ, an Education student who agreed with the item wrote, “Sometimes they do in a way that stereotypes the individual.” AM responded, “Only once in one course, to the point where I would have had no idea there were foreign students in my class.” AM was a Sociology student who neither agreed nor disagreed with item 2.11.

The interviews provided additional support to the view that professors don’t draw on foreign students as a learning resource. For example, DS-4 said,

I can only speak for Economics obviously. I don’t think that they did, but at the same time, I don’t think they draw on the experiences of students generally. I don’t find there to be that much interaction. There were a few....last year.

economic history courses where we talked about certain economic history developments in Europe. and two people from England, they tossed in little anecdotes, but generally there's not that much. (DS-4, p. 2)

DS-5, a second-generation Canadian, offered her thoughts. She said,

It depends on the type of class I'm in. In some classes, profs will actually try to get things out of me....It's not really typical. Like, first-year profs didn't know me so they didn't really call on me. Again, second year it didn't really happen either.

But in third year and this year, the profs know me better, so they don't mind calling on me. (DS-5, p. 1)

### Professors Should Utilize Foreign Students More in the Classroom

It was the view of three students that professors should make more effort to use foreign students as a learning resource in the classroom. For example, when asked to respond to item 2.11, CP wrote, "Not enough. Faculty often don't know who the foreign students are and don't care." CP was an Education student who neither agreed nor disagreed with the item. CE was an Education student who strongly agreed with item 2.11. He wrote, "They should."

DS-8 said the following in our discussion about how professors use foreign students as learning resources in the classroom:

If [professors] can admit they're human and they don't know everything....and see that somebody else in this classroom might have better experience than I do in

this situation. It's kind of ignorant to think that you know more than 30 students in a class about a foreign place. (DS-8, p. 2)

### Results of Item 2.12

Item 2.12 asked students to respond to the statement, "The presence of foreign students has increased my awareness of other countries and world-views." The literature suggests that the presence of foreign students has an ameliorative effect on domestic students' understanding of other countries. The scale results are presented in Figure 12 below.

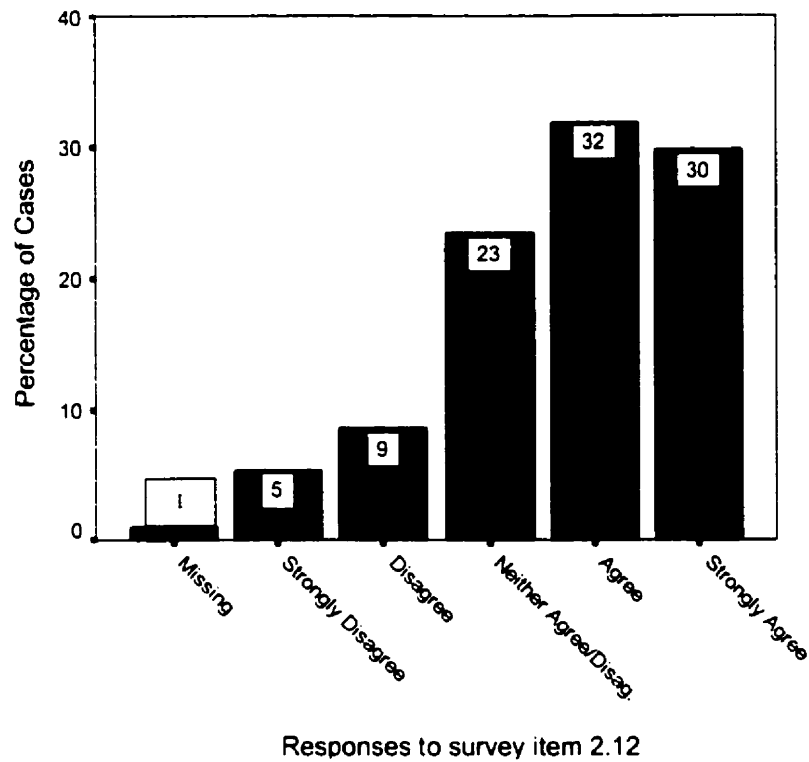
#### Scale Results

The scale results showed strong agreement among respondents with the suggestion that the presence of foreign students had increased their awareness of other countries or world-views. Sixty-two percent agreed with the suggestion, while only 14% disagreed. The mode was "agree." One scale response was missing. The scale results are summarized below in Figure 12.

#### Qualitative Results

There were 53 written responses to item 2.12, which could be divided into four categories: a) A noticeable impact, b) A weak impact, c) No impact, and d) Miscellaneous responses.





**Figure 12.** Summary of responses to survey item 2.12, “The presence of foreign students at Queen’s has increased my awareness of other countries and/or world-views.”

### A Noticeable Impact

The largest single group of written responses to item 2.12 indicated that foreign students had increased domestic students’ awareness of other countries and world-views. Twenty-four of the 53 people (45%) who gave a written response described either what they had learned about other countries or how that learning was facilitated, as follows.

Discussion or interaction. When asked how foreign students and increased their awareness of other countries and world-views, 14 of these 24 people referred directly to

the notion of discussion or interaction. For example, C, a Computer Science student who strongly agreed with item 2.12, wrote, "They talk about their lives before they came to Queen's." N, a student from SOCY 324 who was majoring in business, wrote, "In marketing, I learned more through class discussion than through the text." In a similar fashion, BZ wrote, "Able to ask them questions that I am not able to research in a text." F simply stated, "Fascinating and enlightening discussions." And finally, BX wrote, "If they talk about their country, I am more likely to care about it because I have made a connection."

The remaining 10 responses that supported the view that foreign students increase the awareness of other countries and world-views among domestic students were varied in nature. K strongly agreed with item 2.12 because she had visited "ex- foreign students" from Queen's in their home countries. BR, an Education student, wrote, "My previous beliefs have been challenged." Along similar lines, I, an Economics student, wrote, "Being confronted with other views forces you to think about them much more than mass media." CH said, "The foreign students I live with have opened my eyes to things I did not see before." BB, a Sociology student, pointed to "displays and presentations on campus and articles in the [Queen's] Journal" by foreign students as things that had increased her awareness of other countries.

References to what domestic students learned about foreign countries tended to be more specific in the interviews. The first example is an excerpt from the interview with DS-2, an Economics student. Here, she describes how one foreign student taught her that her previously held conception of Australians, shaped largely by the media, was not accurate.

I met a girl from Australia who was on exchange. She was Asian, but she had this accent that was just so interesting. She told me that ....there was a lot of diversity in Australia. Yet what we see on TV is not so. We see blond hair and blue eyed Australians. She's like, 'No, there's a lot of diversity.' So even something as small as that changes my perception of Australia, or at least manipulates it a bit. (DS-2, p. 1)

DS-3, a student from CISC 365, begins to describe below what he learned about China from a Chinese foreign student in his program:

One of my friends (name), he was talking about where he was coming from. Sometimes he has trouble explaining it out, but I find it very interesting. I'm finding a lot more about, for example, his is northern Chinese culture...just the language.. if we talk about kanji or something like that and I found out that, wow, kanji actually goes through multiple countries that are using the same alphabet system, and almost the same words. I find it very interesting. It's one of the first things that I always bring up because I've been told different things depending on the person, of course. I find that somewhat interesting; it's something that I'll bring up and ask about. (DS-3, p. 2)

There were three written references by domestic students to learning through foreign students about products of a country's culture. CC mentioned learning songs, dances, and traditions of a certain country. DS-6, a student from CISC 365, described a piece of Chinese folklore that she learned about through a friend who was a foreign student at Queen's. The following excerpt relates to a discussion that DS-6 described

having with this friend about a contemporary Hollywood film, in which the characters had the ability to fly.

CAL: Do you think it would be possible to describe what you have learned from the foreign students that you've interacted with?

DS-6 ....the girl I was talking to a couple of weeks ago, we were talking about (a certain movie). She was talking about how they believe that a long time ago there were these people that can jump. And she was just telling me a legend about it, which I would never have heard about from anyone else. (DS-6, p. 4)

I interviewed a staff member who is involved with the international exchange program at the Queen's University School of Business. As a liaison between exchange students and faculty members, he deals regularly with foreign students at Queen's, as well as those of the faculty members who come into contact with them. Below, he describes one example of country-specific perspectives that foreign exchange students have been exposed to:

I think it's a way for students that haven't had a chance to go away, to see how other cultures and business function, and it's quite interesting to see how different cultures will approach a problem differently. When they get in their case discussions, we'll talk about the Canadian response... and a guy from Norway will go, 'What? See, we would look at it from this point of view. You have to consider what is the environmental impact from it.' Well, of course, they're from Norway. I mean, huge: what's going on there. You don't like to stereotype, but it's interesting to see how consistently different cultures attach the problem differently. (SM-1, p. 3)

### A Weak Impact

Eight of the 53 responses (15%) to item 2.12 indicated that the presence of foreign students only slightly increases domestic students' awareness of other countries and world-views. "To some degree," wrote B, a Computer Science student who neither agreed nor disagreed with item 2.12. "Some have, but not all foreign students have a voice," wrote CS, an Education student who agreed with the item. "It would more so if there were more foreign students," was R's explanation for neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the item. AD responded straightforwardly, "Slightly."

### No Impact

Five out of the 55 responses (9%) described why foreign students had not increased their awareness of other countries and world-views. "They never brought it up," wrote CN, an Education student who strongly disagreed with question 2.12. "Nothing has affected my view except my own experiences in learning," wrote G, an Economics student who neither agreed nor disagreed with the item. H's response provides interesting insight into the item. She wrote, "I was globally inclined before coming to Queen's. Q offered this response: "Incentive to travel and study abroad is from friends, not necessarily foreign students." Finally, CN wrote, "They never brought it up." in regards to learning about foreign students' home countries.

### Miscellaneous Responses

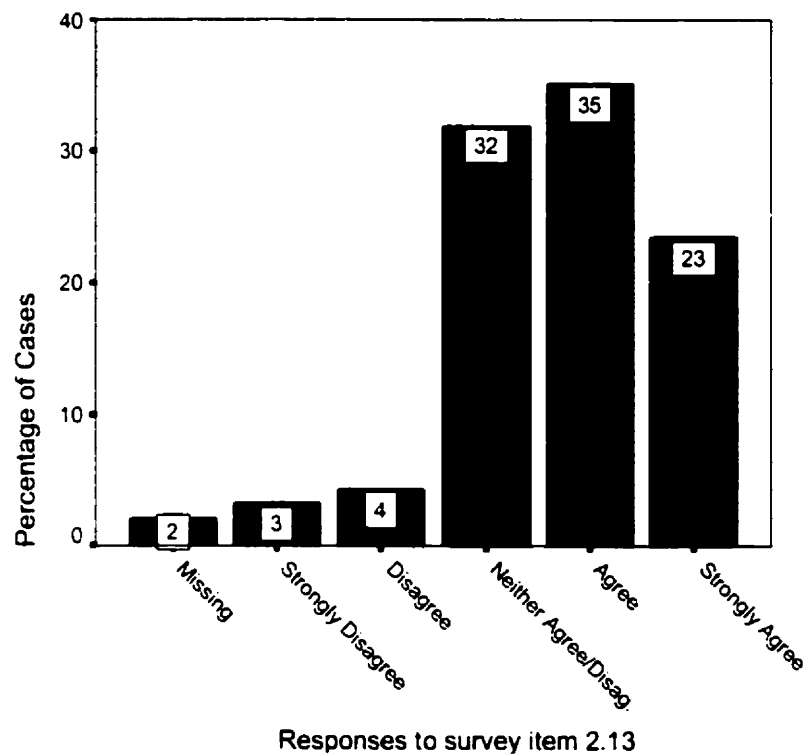
There were 15 miscellaneous responses to item 2.12. R, a Sociology student who neither agreed nor disagreed with item 2.12 suggested that she would have a better awareness of other countries "if there were more foreign students." Three other people focused directly on Queen's as a factor. When asked if foreign students at Queen's had increased her awareness of other countries, AY said that this was true of her high school experience, but "at Queen's this hasn't happened." BQ wrote, "Queen's is not a diverse population, but the people I have met have made a lasting impression." BQ was an Education student who strongly agreed with item 2.12.

### Results of Item 2.13

Item 2.13 asked students to respond to the statement, "Foreign students at Queen's tend to associate with other foreign students more than with Canadian students." Across the literature, foreign students are widely portrayed as clustering among people from their home country and other foreign students, which has implications on the learning transfer between foreign and domestic students. The purpose of this item was to determine if domestic Queen's students view foreign students as having this tendency.

### Scale Results

The scale results to item 2.13 showed overwhelming agreement with the suggestion that foreign students tend to associate with other foreign students more than with domestic students. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents agreed, while only seven percent disagreed. Thirty-two percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the suggestion in item 2.13. The scales results are summarized in Figure 2.13 below.



**Figure 13.** Summary of responses to survey item 2.13, “Foreign students at Queen’s tend to associate with other foreign students more than with Canadian students.”

### Qualitative Results

The qualitative responses to item 2.13 can be grouped into three categories: a) Foreign students associate more with other foreign students than Canadian students, b) Foreign students associate more with Canadian students than foreign students, and c) It depends on the individual.

#### Foreign Students Tend to Cluster Among Themselves

As reflected in the results of scale item, by far the largest group of qualitative responses to item 2.13 agreed that foreign students have a tendency to associate with other foreign students more than Canadian students. Thirty-eight of the 62 written responses to item 2.13 supported this view. For example, CN, an Education student who strongly agreed with the item, wrote, "They rarely interact with Canadian students." AL, a Sociology student who agreed with the item, wrote, "I have noticed this. There is nothing wrong with this, though."

Seven people suggested that clustering among other foreign students is a natural tendency. For example, CL explained, "There is a greater sense of comfort to be with your own people." CL was an Education student who strongly agreed with the item. "Canadians already have cliques. Foreign students know no one, so land quickly with each other." wrote AB, a Sociology student who strongly agreed with the item. BX suggested that being among other foreign students provides a sense of "cultural comfort," while in CE's view, this is "natural."



The respondents provided a variety of suggestions as to why foreign students tend to associate more among themselves than with Canadian students. For example, “Many Canadian and foreign students maintain a circle of friends within their own culture,” was the reason that BH cited for this behaviour. Eight people cited the separate orientation week and the various clubs organized specially for foreign students as a factor that encourages them to cluster. Also they “tend to be on the same floors in [residence],” wrote AV, a Sociology student who agreed with the item. “Because they live with foreign students and have the international centre [as a place] to hang out,” wrote AC, a Sociology student who agreed with the item. “Clubs and associations tend to be geared for them,” wrote AJ, another Sociology student. “These are the people they are first introduced to,” wrote N, a Sociology student who agreed with item 2.13.

DS-7 had this to say when I asked her if foreign and Canadian students tend to interact:

Tend not to. I just think that when international students are brought into the school, the first people they are introduced to are facilitators and each other. They're all strangers in a new land. You have all these people around them who have been going to Queen's for a few years [and] have already made their friendships and made their collectives....so I think it's natural that they tend to flock toward each other. I think it's human nature. (DS-7, p. 2).

Language emerged as a strong theme in the written responses to item 2.13. Eight people cited language as a factor that influences the social interaction patterns of foreign students. For example, AU wrote, “Most seem to spend more time together than with English speakers.” AU was a Sociology student who strongly agreed with item 2.13.

“They feel more comfortable with others who speak the same language,” wrote AT, a Sociology student who agreed with the item. D, a Computer Science student, also agreed with item 2.13, writing, “Especially with people for whom English is not their first language.” B, who strongly agreed with the item, wrote, “Especially in Computer Science, mainly because of the language barrier.”

In the interviews, nine people said that they perceived a tendency for foreign students to associate more with other foreign students than Canadian students. For example, DS-3 was a Computer Science student who offered these comments about students in his department from Hong Kong, and how language is a factor that encourages them to stick together:

English is not their first language, and there tends to be a bit more of a cliquing there because, I suppose, the larger number of people and the differences in the language. I would consider it more of a Hong Kong cliquing than any other thing. I don't know of a large number of Japanese students in my classes or anything else. If you're going to say Asia as an entire continent, they tend to clique more because they're....a lot of times speaking the same language. If you're talking about Europeans, they're often not speaking the same language, so it tends to spread around a bit more. (DS-3, p.1)

One excerpt from my interview with DS-3 provides useful insight into the role of language in the interaction between foreign and domestic students:

I have a Bio-Psych medial before this and the number of foreign students, like, nothing in comparison to Computer Science. I was much more likely to communicate and socialize with foreign students. If one person spoke Cantonese,

they didn't have 18 other people that could speak Cantonese, so they were sort of forced into conversing and communicating with everyone else...there [was] a lot more social interaction. (DS-3, p. 3)

Seven of the 38 responses in this category, the majority of which were from Economics and Computer Science students, specifically cited Asian students as having a tendency to cluster together. "There is a distinct division between Asian and non-Asian students in bio-chemistry," wrote CF, an Education student. "Many of the Asian students associate with each other," was BL's explanation for agreeing with the item. "Japanese/Asians tend to stick together, but others diversify their social groups," wrote AX, a Sociology student.

One of the Computer Science students I interviewed was in the unique position of having immigrated to Canada from Asia as a high school student. She viewed her experience at Queen's as that of both a foreign and domestic student. Hers was one of the interviews that I was asked not to record. She explained in our conversation that, in her view as a Computer Science student, there was not much interaction between foreign and domestic students. As a student of Asian background, she felt isolated at Queen's. She described most of her friends as Asian, saying this is typical among Asian students because associating with other Asians, she said, gives them a sense of "comfort" (DS-13, p. 1).

An Education student who lived on the international floor in residence during his first year described how he perceived interaction between foreign and domestic students: "I think they tend to mix a lot. I know one other German student, and the rest of my friends are from all over the place. But I find the Asian students tend to really group

and... they have their separate thing going on and they don't mix a lot, whereas most of the other international students do." (DS-4, p. 3). Later, he said, "We had three [Asian students] on our floor, and they were gone most of the time. They were really separate" (DS-4, p. 4). Another CISC student said, "I think [that] in Computer Science there are so many [Asian students] that they don't have to mix" (DS-6, p. 3).

### Foreign Students Associate More With Canadian Students Than Foreign Students

Two of the 62 written responses generated by item 2.13 supported the opposite view that foreign students tend to associate more with Canadian students than other foreign students. CD wrote, "They try to mingle with Canadian students because that's one of the reasons they came." AH wrote, "Foreign students are more eager to meet Canadian students."

### It Depends

Ten people would not generalize about whether or not foreign students tend to associate more with other foreign students, saying that it depends on the individual. For example, BG, an Education student who agreed with item 2.13, wrote, "I don't want to assume this would be the case for all foreign students." AZ responded, "Some do, many don't. This is too big a generalization." AZ was a Sociology student who disagreed with the item. X provided an insightful response, saying that the answer to this item "depends

on the amount of foreign students there are [at Queen's].” X was a Sociology student who agreed with item 2.13.

#### Results of Item 2.14

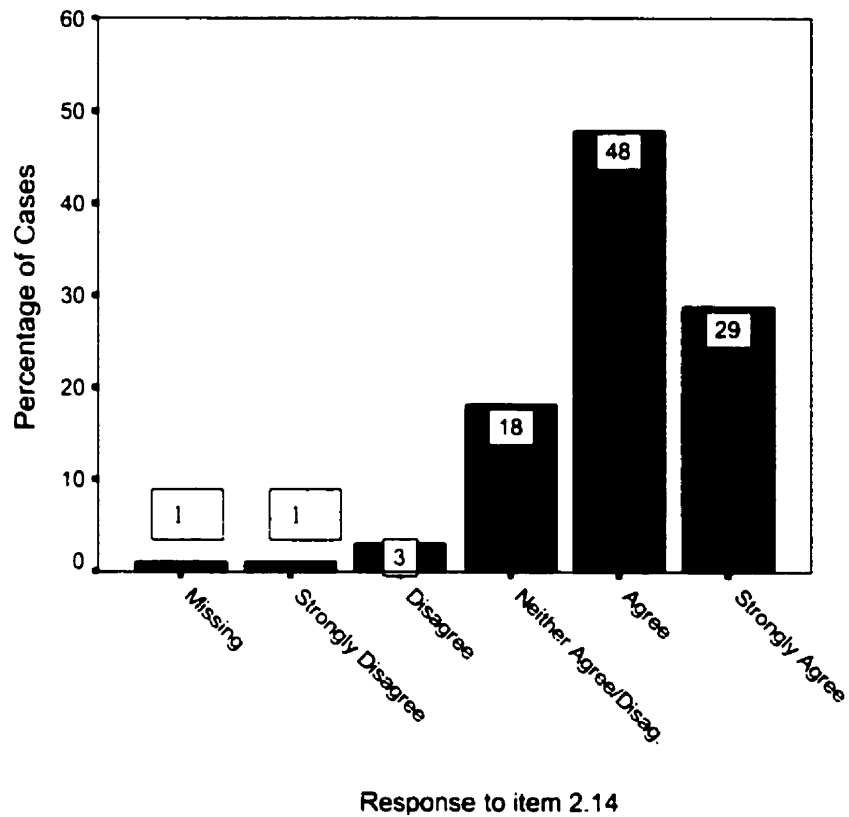
Item 2.14 asked students to respond to the statement, “Enrolling foreign students makes Queen’s University a more internationalized institution.” Enrolling foreign students is seen as part of the broader strategy to internationalize higher education, as described in chapter 2. The purpose of including this item on the survey was to get a preliminary sense, from students’ perspectives, of whether foreign students have successfully contributed to internationalizing Queen’s University.

#### Scale Results

The scale responses showed that respondents tended to agree that enrolling foreign students makes Queen’s University a more internationalized institution. Overall, 77% of the participants agreed with item 2.14. Only four percent disagreed, and 18% neither agreed nor disagreed. One person did not provide a scale response. These results are summarized in Figure 14 below.

#### Qualitative Results

Two strong categories emerged from the qualitative responses to survey item



**Figure 14.** Summary of responses to survey item 2.14. “Enrolling foreign students makes Queen’s University a more internationalized institution.”

2.14: a) Foreign students alone are not sufficient to internationalize the university, and b) Queen’s University benefits from its reputation being strengthened on an international basis. In addition, there were a number of miscellaneous responses to item 2.14 that were not sufficient in number to be classified as a category.

### Foreign Students Are Not Sufficient to Internationalize a University

Sixteen of the 43 written responses (37%) to item 2.14 indicated that enrolling foreign students alone was not a sufficient means to internationalize the university. This was, by a wide margin, the most common written response to this survey item. For example, J wrote, "There are more effective ways, like international conferences or exchanges." N explained, "Foreign students need to be accompanied by foreign courses." F indicated that foreign students do make Queen's University a more internationalized institution, but that the university "needs more foreign students" to do this. Two other respondents made the same suggestion. "Just enrolling them doesn't [make Queen's University more internationalized] but drawing on their life experiences does." wrote BJ. "It's a step, but there's got to be more" was BM's response. BC responded, "To become a more interationalized institution, you need more diverse faculty and an international curriculum." BM stated, "No. It's a step toward it, but there has got to be more."

### The University Benefits from International Exposure

The second most common written response to survey item 2.14 referred to Queen's University's reputation worldwide. Seven people (16% of the responses) indicated that enrolling foreign students generates wider international exposure for the university, and that this in itself helps the institution become more internationalized. For example, it was CB's opinion that "Queen's will better make its name known around the world." BF said that enrolling foreign students "raises awareness of our university around

the world.” AG said that foreign students “spread the word in their country that Canada and Queen’s are a good spot to be.” So for the seven students whose responses fell under this category, internationalization appeared to be strongly connected to the university’s exposure and reputation on the world stage.

### Miscellaneous Responses

Seven people (16%) responded in a general way that foreign students help make Queen’s University a more internationalized institution. For example, AA wrote, “On paper, this must be true.” AW responded, “Obviously” to the suggestion. BX wrote, “Yes, but I wouldn’t call Queen’s international.” CF wrote, “True, but it seems as though many come from the same international areas.”

Three people (7%) disagreed with item 2.14, indicating that enrolling foreign students does not make Queen’s University a more internationalized institution. For example, P wrote, “Queen’s is not international because it doesn’t offer the same opportunities to everyone who is foreign.” It was I’s opinion that, “Where students come from has no effect on how Queen’s directs its attention to a global view.” G disagreed with item 2.14, saying that enrolling foreign students “does not apply to learning.”

Three people (7%) suggested that a diverse student body helps internationalize the institution. Two people again referred to Queen’s as a bubble. AR, for example, agreed with item 2.14 and wrote, “True, but it seems as though many [foreign students] come from the same international areas.” Finally, two people indicated in their responses that



they simply did not know the answer to this suggestion, and one person (CN) simply stated, "It enhances the bank account of the university."

#### Results of Items 2.15 and 2.16

The results of items 2.15 and 2.16 are presented at the beginning of this chapter as part of the demographic profile of the sample.

#### Results of Item 2.17

Item 2.17 asked respondents to describe in their own words the impact that foreign students had made on their education at Queen's University. The purpose of this item was to provide students the opportunity to describe anything related to the educational impact of foreign students that the survey items did not cover. Seventy-eight people (82%) responded to this item. The majority of people, however, either reviewed or summarized in item 2.17 what they had already written in the previous items.

Seven of the 78 people (9%) indicated in their written response that the presence of foreign students at Queen's University had made a positive impact on their education. An additional four people (5%) specified that the impact of foreign students was felt outside of the classroom. In contrast, seventeen people (22%) indicated that foreign students had made no noticeable impact on their education, while an additional four people (5%) said that the impact of foreign students on their education was not distinguishable from that of any other student. Four people (5%) referred to the nature of

Queen's University as being a particularly white institution, and that foreign students help to add diversity to its homogeneous environment.

Twelve people (15%) referred to the personal benefit they had accrued from the presence of foreign students. For example, CR wrote, "[Foreign students] challenge me to change the way I see myself, and taught me to learn about myself and others." CR was an Education student. BQ, also an Education student, responded, "Foreign students have had a very large impact on what I think and want to do with my future." AE said that foreign students "broadened [his] spectrum and outlook."

The remaining 30 responses were miscellaneous ones that, for the most part, have already been reported earlier in this paper. Five of these had not been observed in previous answers. BV wrote, "I would never ask someone where they're from. 'You're here, great.'" AY, a Sociology student, wrote, "In a school the size of Queen's, it's hard to know everybody. I was able to meet foreign students in a smaller environment. AT, reflecting on the impact that his Jordanian roommate had made on him, wrote, "I feel more connected to what's happening in other countries because I can put a face to what is happening there." AI wrote, "[Foreign students'] presence at Queen's makes me realize that Queen's is a multicultural institution." CF wrote, "My contact with foreign students has mainly been through my own initiative."

### Summary

This chapter presented the results of the study. A summary of the demographic profile of the sample (section 1 of the survey) was presented first. The results of each

survey item were then presented in separate sections, along with relevant data from the interviews. The following chapter will discuss the results of the study.

## CHAPTER 5

### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will examine the findings and compare them to the literature on foreign student impact and situated learning theory. It is divided into five main sections, each derived from the main research questions and representing a theme that emerged from the study: a) Analysis of the sample, b) Relationship between the demographic characteristics of the sample and foreign student impact, c) Discussion of the impact of foreign students on the education of domestic undergraduates, d) Characteristics of foreign student impact and factors that contribute to the enrichment of domestic students' education, and e) Factors that help explain the absence of foreign student impact. A sixth section discusses the limitations of the study.

As noted in chapter 4, an ANOVA revealed no significant differences among the four classes at the  $p < 0.05$  level in their responses to five of the six core survey items about the impact of foreign students on the education of domestic undergraduates: items 2.1 ("The presence of foreign students at Queen's University has enriched the education that I have received at this university"), 2.2 ("Foreign students have made no noticeable impact on my formal classroom education at Queen's University"), 2.3 ("Foreign students have made no noticeable impact on my broader education outside of the classroom at Queen's University"), 2.6 ("The depth and scope of courses that I have taken with foreign students are no different than courses without foreign students"), and 2.10 ("My education at Queen's would have been less enriched or enhanced if the university did not enrol foreign students"). Therefore I amalgamated the survey results of

all four classes into one group for the purpose of analysis. An ANOVA did reveal a statistically significant difference among the four classes in survey item 2.4 (“The presence of foreign students enhances the depth and scope of lectures.”) This will be discussed later in section titled Variations in Foreign Student Impact by Class.

### Analysis of the Sample

As the results of this study are based on the responses of a 94-person sample of domestic undergraduates at Queen’s University, it is important to understand the composition of the sample in order to put the conclusions into proper perspective. This section will discuss the nature of the sample.

The original sample was purposefully drawn (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997) from two third-year Queen’s undergraduate classes, ECON 351 and CISC 365, which had comparatively high enrolments of foreign students. The choice of using purposeful over random sampling was to increase the likelihood of detecting an impact from foreign students, and to provide a solid base from which to describe its characteristics. The unanticipated addition of participants from SOCY 324 and EDUC 255 mid-way through the data collection added a new dimension to the sample. These latter two classes were selected strictly based on the quick access they provided me to undergraduate students, not the number of foreign students enrolled in them. So, whereas the Computer Science and Economics classes had comparatively high enrolments of foreign students, the Education and Sociology classes did not. In the end, SOCY 324 and EDUC 255 added 84

randomly chosen students to the 12 purposefully sampled ones from CISC 365 and ECON 351.

These two additional classes had a strong effect on the sample. Unforeseen at the outset of the study was that ECON 351 and CISC 365 provided only narrow examples of subject matter, teaching methodologies, and classroom learning environments at Queen's. According to the interviewees, the Economics and Computer Science classes were oriented towards lectures and assignments, and apparently, according to the students, did not encourage class discussions. Adding the Sociology and Education classes to the Economics and Computer Science classes provided a group of courses that was more interactive in nature, and whose subject matter was more regionally based, which otherwise would not have been observed in their absence. The final outcome was a sample that was more representative of the diverse formal learning environments at Queen's than what would have been discovered only from the CISC 365 and ECON 351 classes.

Questions still remain, however, about foreign student impact in the various disciplines and social environments at Queen's that were not captured in this sample. For example, one of the Sociology students I interviewed was actually a Commerce major. She indicated that the impact of foreign students on her as a Commerce student was very strong because of the prominence of globalization in the study of commerce, as well as the School of Business' strong international exchange program. My interview with FS-9, a faculty member in the School of Business who is closely associated with its international exchange program, also supported this belief. Little can be concluded about foreign student impact in the Commerce program from this study, but my interviews with

these two people raise questions about how different disciplines foster awareness of internationalization in their curricula, and the resulting impact that foreign students have on domestic students. Further research of the different programs and different pedagogies is warranted.

Another aspect of the sample that deserves attention was the respondents' year of study. As a control measure, the methodology originally targeted only third-year students. But in the end, third-year students comprised only 7% of the sample (see Table 2 in chapter 4). Each survey question received answers from students in their first to fifth year of undergraduate study. It is difficult to determine what impact this had on the results. Future research might consider how domestic students are impacted differently by foreign students as their time in the institution increases.

An important point surfaces with regard to the Education students. An Education degree is taken either concurrently with or consecutively after another bachelor's degree, and one not necessarily from Queen's University. In the haste that preceded my contact with the Education class, I overlooked modifying the survey to capture the Education students' academic backgrounds. So, the 47 Education students in this study were also exposed to a variety of disciplines and learning environments in addition to those in the Faculty of Education at Queen's University.

The gender distribution of the sample also deserves attention. Overall, 75% of the respondents to this study were female (see Table 3 in chapter 4). Females made up 37% of ECON 351, 35% of CISC 365, 82% of SOCY 324, and 77% of EDUC 255. In the 2000-2001 academic year, Queen's University enrolled 8,843 female undergraduates and 6,342 male undergraduates (58.2% and 41.8% respectively) (source: Queen's University

Office of Institutional and Research Planning, 2001a). In comparison to the overall undergraduate student population at Queen's University, females were slightly over-represented in this study. However, there was little evidence that foreign students impacted domestic female undergraduates differently than males. Only one item in part 2 of the survey (item 2.4) showed a significant difference between genders. Male undergraduates tended to disagree that foreign students enhance the depth and scope of lectures, while female undergraduates tended to mildly agree ( $t(91) = 2.02, p < 0.05$ ). T-tests revealed no statistically significant differences between the responses of males and females on any of the other survey items.

Finally, it is important to place into context the written survey responses in terms of the overall response rate. Written explanations of the scale questions were somewhat sporadic. Many people did not provide a written explanation to each of their scale responses. The reader should note that the number of written responses reported for each survey item in chapter 4 is not a reliable measure. In effect, the number of written responses reported for each survey item in chapter 4 simply shows how many people chose to explain their scale response.

#### Relationship Between the Demographic Results and the Impact of Foreign Students on the Education of Domestic Students

Part 1 of the survey asked the respondents nine questions about their personal backgrounds (see Appendix A). Two of these factors showed a statistically significant effect on certain survey items in part 2, as follows. First, Canadian students who had



attended school abroad tended to agree more strongly than those who had not that foreign students associate more among themselves than with Canadian students:  $t(90) = 2.15$ ,  $p < .05$ . The second effect was observed among Canadian students who had shared accommodations in the past with a foreign student (30 of the 94 respondents fell into this category). Students who had lived with a foreign student showed a statistically significant effect on one of the survey items. These students tended to agree more strongly that the presence of foreign students at Queen's had enriched their education (Item 2.1):  $t(92) = 2.863$ ,  $p < .01$ . Increased levels of interaction with foreign students appear to be responsible for this finding, as suggested by situated learning theory.

#### Discussion of the Impact of Foreign Students on the Education of Domestic Undergraduates

This section discusses the findings in the light of the first research question, which asked, "Does the presence of foreign students on campus enrich the education of undergraduate domestic students?" This discussion will be divided into five sub-sections: a) Range and strength of the enriching effect of foreign student impact, b) Variations in foreign student impact by class, c) Foreign student impact outside the classroom, d) The contingent nature of foreign student impact, and e) The negative impact of foreign students on campus.

### Range and Strength of Foreign Student Impact

One of the noteworthy findings in this study was the wide range of responses from participants to whether foreign students have enriched their education. The literature tends to focus mainly on the enriching impact of foreign students, but the results of survey items 2.1 and 2.10 provide instructive examples. Item 2.1 stated, "The presence of foreign students at Queen's University has enriched the education that I have received at this university," reflecting the tone of the current literature. Thirty percent of the respondents agreed with this statement, while an additional 11% strongly agreed. Thirteen percent of the respondents, however, disagreed with the statement, with an additional four percent strongly disagreeing. Moreover, 39% of the respondents, the largest single response group, neither agreed nor disagreed with item 2.1 (see the results of item 2.1 on page 69). Similar findings were observed with survey item 2.10 ("My education would have been less enriched if the university did not enrol foreign students"), reported on page 110. Furthermore, results of items 2.2 (impact of foreign students on classroom education), 2.3 (impact of foreign students on broader education outside of class), 2.4 (foreign students enhance the depth and scope of lectures), 2.5 (foreign students enhance the depth and scope of seminars), and 2.6 (foreign students enhance courses) all suggest that a sizeable portion of domestic students disagree with the suggestion that the presence of foreign students enriched these aspects of their education. These results make suspect the underlying belief in the literature that foreign students enrich the education of domestic students unilaterally.

### Variations in Foreign Student Impact by Class

The results of this study suggest that foreign students might not impact the education of domestic undergraduates uniformly across the university, another aspect of foreign student impact that is not accurately portrayed by the literature. As previously mentioned, results from the four classes were combined for the purposes of analysis because an ANOVA revealed no statistically significant differences among their responses to the core survey items about educational impact, items 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.6, and 2.10. However, even though the four classes were combined, noticeable differences emerged in some of the survey items and interview topics between the two classes whose subject matter is not regionally based (CISC 365 and ECON 351) and the two whose subject tends to be situated in Western perspectives (EDUC 255 and SOCY 324). The clearest examples of this were in the quantitative results of survey items 2.4 ("The presence of foreign students enhances the depth and scope of lectures") and 2.5 ("The presence of foreign students enhances the depth and scope of tutorials"). The mean responses to item 2.4 by students in the Economics and Computer Science classes were 2.62 (SD = .74) and 1.66 (SD = .577) respectively, showing their tendency to disagree that foreign students enhance lectures or seminars. In contrast, the Education and Sociology students tended to neither agree nor disagree to 2.4, with mean responses of 3.17 (SD=1.17) and 3.19 (SD=.82) respectively. The results of survey item 2.5 were very similar.

There were also cases where individual classes were observed to deviate noticeably from the other three. For example, while the Sociology, Education, and

Computer Science students' mean responses to survey item 2.2 ("Foreign students have made no noticeable impact on my formal classroom education at Queen's") were 3.00 (SD = .755), 3.19 (SD = 1.28), and 3.25 (SD = 1.35) respectively, showing ambivalence or weak agreement with the statement, the Economics students clearly expressed strong agreement, with a mean response of 4.66 and the lowest standard deviation of the four classes (SD = .577).

Economics students tended to agree more strongly than students from the other three classes with survey item 2.6 ("The depth and scope of courses I have taken with foreign students are no different than courses without foreign students"). Their mean response of 4.33 (SD = .577) to item 2.6 was noticeably higher than the three other classes, whose means were 3.37 for Economics (SD=1.30), 3.30 (SD=1.03) for Sociology, and 3.08 (SD=1.29) for Education. DS-1, an Economics student, best reflected these findings when he said in his interview, "Overall, I'd actually say that foreign students go very unnoticed. They kind of fade into the background" (DS-1, p. 4).

Economics students also tended to disagree more strongly to item 2.11 ("Faculty regularly draw on the experiences of foreign students to enhance course content") than the other 3 groups. The mean scale response of the Economics students to item 2.11 was 1.33, with a low standard deviation (SD = .577). Although item 2.11 is only indirectly related to the impact of foreign students, the results provide additional clues that help increase our understanding of foreign student impact.

Finally, the Computer Science students tended to agree more strongly than those from the other three classes to survey item 2.13 ("Foreign students tend to associate with other foreign students more than with Canadian students"). Their mean response was

4.75, with the lowest standard deviation ( $SD = .462$ ), while the Economics, Sociology, and Education students produced mean responses of 3.33 ( $SD=.577$ ), 3.61 ( $SD=1.10$ ), and 3.65 ( $SD=.89$ ) respectively. These results are most clearly reflected in DS-6's interview, when she said,

I think [that] in Computer Science there are so many [Asian foreign students] that they don't have to mix. There are problems with it. It doesn't add much if they're not interacting with us. But nobody minds. Sometimes it feels like there are a lot more foreign students than there are Canadian students. (DS-6, p. 3)

It is important to emphasize the low numbers of respondents from Computer Science and Economics students. A study dedicated to foreign student impact in different classes or programs could more accurately judge this question. But these findings offer preliminary indications that different academic programs might foster varying levels of impact from the presence of foreign students.

#### Foreign Student Impact Outside the Classroom

Findings from this study point to the possibility that the educational impact of foreign students is different outside the classroom than it is in formal academic settings. The quantitative results of survey item 2.3 ("Foreign students have made no noticeable impact on my broader education outside of the classroom at Queen's University) are important. The mean response to 2.3 was 2.43 ( $SD = 1.24$ ), showing mild disagreement, while that of item 2.2 ("Foreign students have made no noticeable impact on my formal classroom education") was 3.25 ( $SD = 1.28$ ), showing mild agreement. Twenty-two

percent of students in each of items 2.2 and 2.3 neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements. Conversely, 57% of respondents disagreed that foreign students had not impacted their out-of-class education, while only 30% disagreed to this suggestion about foreign student impact on their in-class education. This suggests that the impact of foreign students in the university might be stronger outside of the classroom than inside. This merits further investigation.

### The Contingent Nature of Foreign Student Impact

An important aspect of this study's findings is the weak, but consistent, voice of people who would not generalize about certain aspects of the impact of foreign students on campus. In their view, the effect of foreign students on domestic students is contingent on many personal and institutional factors that vary widely across the university. Such responses were observed in the results of survey items 2.4, 2.5, 2.7, 2.8, 2.11, 2.12, and 2.13, as well as in some interviews. These were described throughout chapter 4 as "it depends."

It depends on the student. The factor most commonly cited for not being able to generalize about foreign student impact was individualism (see the results of survey items 2.3, 2.4, 2.7, and 2.8). For example, AZ wrote, "It depends on if [foreign students] decide to contribute." In contrast, BC wrote, "[Domestic students] just have to make the effort to meet [foreign students]." Classroom participation and interaction with other students were seen by respondents as being determined by: one's personality, a foreign student's

ability and confidence in using English as a second language, and the norms that govern classroom protocol in the home country.

It depends on the nature of the course. The course and subject material were seen as strong factors that determine student participation regardless of one's status as a foreign or domestic student. The variety of disciplines sampled in this study served to highlight this contrast. On one level, there was the contrast between lecture courses and courses that relied on classroom discussion and interaction. On another level there were scientific courses, in which students learned an established body of knowledge and methods (e.g., Computer Science and Economics), and courses in which the knowledge is regionally based and open to interpretation (e.g., Education and Sociology). In this study, participants indicated that the Computer Science and Economics provided few opportunities for class discussion. Differences among programs and within programs should also be investigated.

It depends on the professor. On the same note, many people also cited the professor as a factor that affects the impact of foreign students on domestic students' classroom education (see the results of survey item 2.11). DS-5, for example, was a visible minority student whose parents immigrated to Canada before she was born. She provided an illustrative example in her interview of how her firsthand knowledge of her parents' homeland surfaces in the classroom. She said, "It depends on the type of class I'm in. In some classes, profs will actually try to get things out of me. But it's not really typical" (DS-5, p. 1). An excerpt from DS-8's interview contrasts DS-5's experience. Below, he describes how the professor of one of his classes encouraged foreign students to share their perspectives and knowledge in class:

DS-8: It definitely [depends on the professor]. I can remember one geography class. It was basically run by international students saying, 'This is what it's like in....' and the prof throwing in something, and the Canadian students go, 'Alright, tell me more about this. Let's figure it out.'

Findings that point to the contingencies of foreign student impact shed valuable light on our current understanding of the foreign student phenomenon in universities and other institutions of higher education. The impact of foreign students appears contingent upon the type of class, perhaps the program, the professor, and perhaps even the class itself.

### Negative Impact

A small group of respondents in this study associated the presence of foreign students with a negative impact on their education. These findings emerged exclusively from the one class of Computer Science students, who expressed frustration and resentment at seeking the help of graduate teaching assistants who could not clearly express themselves in English. The significance of language in this study is that it highlights the ambivalent nature of foreign student impact, a point that should be clarified in the literature.

### Characteristics of Foreign Student Impact on Domestic Students' Education

This section discusses the data from the point of view of the second research question, which asked, "Where a domestic student perceives his or her education as being



enriched or otherwise positively impacted by foreign students, what are the characteristics of that impact and what factors account for them?" It is divided into four themes that emerged from the data: a) What domestic students reported learning from foreign students. b) Other educational outcomes of the presence of foreign students, c) How Impact Occurs, and d) Why it is important to enrol foreign students.

### What Domestic Students Reported Learning From Foreign Students

Two categories emerged from the data regarding what domestic students learned from foreign students: a) Perspectives, and b) Facts about foreign countries, which are reported below. This sub-section also reports other outcomes of enrolling foreign students reported by domestic students, of which there were not a sufficient number to form categories.

Perspectives. It was not unexpected that the most commonly reported benefit derived from the presence of foreign students was being exposed to new and different perspectives (e.g., results of survey items 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6). Foreign students provide "different perspectives on educational issues" (CS); "They taught us other ways of doing things, how the subject might be approached at home" (CC); and "give examples from other parts of the world" (K).

The value of these explanations, from a research standpoint, is strongly undermined by their lack of specificity. However, perspectives or points of view do not necessarily have to originate from another country to be different or enriching. To that end, similar results could have been generated by a number of different research settings

or questions. Furthermore, to say that one has learned new perspectives only scratches the surface of the truly important items that this study attempted to uncover: namely, the components of those new or different perspectives, and the degree to which they affect an individual's thinking. So, while this study found that the educational impact of foreign students on domestic students involves enhanced perspectives, it failed to adequately uncover the components of those new perspectives in a way that would advance our understanding of this aspect of foreign student impact. In-depth interviewing in this regard is required.

Another question raised by this discussion on perspectives is the distinction between exposure to something -- for example, a skill, or a concept -- and learning it. It is clear that many domestic students in this study are exposed to different national and cultural perspectives through foreign students. But this study was not able to determine that the domestic students a) had acquired those perspectives, or b) learned something from those perspectives that changed them.

Facts about other countries. Domestic students reported learning facts about other countries, although much less frequently than perspectives. In addition to increasing their awareness of other countries (survey item 2.12), items 2.1, 2.2, and 2.10 generated written responses that showed domestic students learned facts about other countries – as examples, “I’ve learned a lot about their way of life” (CD) and “I learn about issues in their home country” (M).

Other outcomes of enrolling foreign students. Important and insightful data revealed not what domestic students learned from the presence of foreign students, but rather what the presence of foreign students had encouraged or enabled them to do. For

example, four respondents said that the new perspectives to which they were exposed through foreign students had challenged the way they saw themselves. An additional two students reported that they had become more sensitive and understanding of other points of view, and that the presence of foreign students had encouraged them to “look at two sides” (CE). Another (M) reported that the presence of foreign students made her realize how fortunate she is to live in Canada.

Respondents said that having foreign students at Queen’s enabled them to make important connections that would extend beyond their undergraduate years (e.g., I, AH, BG, and BM). Similarly, some domestic students were able to visit foreign students in their home countries (e.g., K). Having made connections with foreign students makes their countries more personal and interesting to some domestic students.

The results of this study suggest that the presence of foreign students also has an effect on some students’ life choices and future aspirations. The impact was diverse: to teach English as a second language, an interest in travelling or studying abroad, a motivation (academically and socially), and broadening the scope of future plans.

Diversity. Participants also reported diversity as being a positive educational impact of foreign students on campus. The new and different perspectives that domestic students associated with foreign students were interpreted as an added measure of diversity to the classroom. The presence of foreign students was seen as adding “depth to a predominately white Canadian school” (B).

The question raised by these findings is just how substantively foreign students contribute to the diversification of the campus beyond colour. Foreign students comprised 7.3% of the total undergraduate student population at Queen’s University in 2000-2001

(Queen's University Office of Institutional Research and Planning, 2001b). Such a low proportion of foreign students cannot have a substantive diversifying effect. Moreover, other results from this study, discussed later in more detail, suggest that foreign students might have a tendency to cluster among their compatriots and other foreign students. So, not only is there, in effect, a low proportion of foreign students at Queen's University, there is reason to suspect that they have a tendency to interact among themselves more than with Canadian students. Impact on diversity is an important finding, but unfortunately this study did not successfully explore how diversity affects education.

#### How Foreign Students Impact the Education of Domestic Students

One of the goals of this study was to identify how foreign students impact the education of domestic students. This knowledge will help to improve practice, as well as contribute to our understanding of how learning occurs.

Interaction emerged as the dominant means by which enrichment, or impact, occurs. Working in groups with foreign students and learning about other cultures (BR), making friends with foreign students (BH), tutoring foreign students (BE), living with foreign students (CH), and attending workshops and events with foreign students (AZ) were the ways that domestic students saw foreign students as enriching or impacting their education. Likewise, those who described themselves as not being impacted by foreign students commonly cited lack of interaction as the reason.

As an analytical perspective for understanding learning, situated learning theory proposes that what we learn is a function of the activity, context, and culture in which it

takes place. Social interaction and collaboration are critical components of this theory because learning is seen to occur within a community that embodies the beliefs and behaviours to be acquired.

The results of this study are compatible with some concepts of situated learning theory. The respondents showed that learning advances through collaborative, social interaction and the social construction of knowledge. Knowledge is formed through interactions with the environment. In this study, lack of interaction with foreign students resulted in domestic students saying that no new knowledge had been acquired.

#### Why Enrolment of Foreign Students Is Important to Domestic Students

The mean scale response to survey item 2.9 (“It is important for Queen’s University to enrol foreign students”) was 4.22 (SD=0.95), showing that domestic students strongly support the view that foreign students are important to Queen’s University. Moreover, the written response rate to 2.9 was particularly high (66 written responses, or 70%), suggesting that domestic students have strong opinions about the contribution that foreign students make to the campus environment. The responses show that domestic students view foreign students as important, mainly to ensure a diverse campus or learning environment, but also to build future overseas connections and to increase the chances for other Canadians to study abroad, as reported in the previous section. Survey results also show that enrolling foreign students is one way that respondents think the university can contribute to international development. Diversity,

though, clearly was the most commonly cited reason that Queen's should enrol foreign students, although it was not expanded upon in the written responses.

It was interesting to note that more than 50% of respondents either flatly disagreed or were ambivalent that the presence of foreign students at Queen's has enriched their formal education (e.g., results from survey items 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, and 2.10). Moreover, more than 50% of the respondents reported having either no or low interaction with foreign students. In the light of these findings, the question that arises is whether domestic students value the added diversity of foreign students on campus for educational reasons or for appearances. Because so much attention in Canadian universities is focused presently on discrimination and fostering inclusive attitudes, the results of item 2.9 could have been a conditioned response to a politically sensitive topic rather than a true reflection of the educational value of foreign students on campus. In hindsight, survey item 2.9 was very loosely worded. The results of this question would have been of more value if it had tied educational outcomes directly to foreign students. Moreover, these findings could have resulted from the paucity of foreign students at Queen's with whom to interact. Perhaps classes with greater percentages of foreign students would facilitate increased interaction.

#### Factors That Help Explain The Absence of Foreign Student Impact

This section discusses the findings in terms of the third research question, which asked, "What factors account for cases in which a domestic student perceives his or her education as not being enriched or otherwise influenced by foreign students?" This

question will be presented according to three themes that emerged from the data: a) Foreign student factors, b) Domestic student factors, and c) Institutional Factors.

### Foreign Student Factors

#### Foreign Students Are Invisible on Campus

Respondents in this study who showed that their education was not enriched or generally impacted by foreign students commonly reported that they either perceived no difference between foreign and Canadian students, or they simply hadn't noticed foreign students on campus. These findings are important because they expose an error in the assumption that many people hold about foreign students: namely, that they are identifiable by physical, intellectual, cultural, or behavioural differences, and that these differences will automatically become apparent and foster learning or enhance domestic students' educational experience at university.

A number of reasons help explain why foreign students go unnoticed on campus. Most obvious is the relatively small percentage of foreign to domestic students at Queen's in the 2000-2001 academic year (6% overall, 7.3% at the undergraduate level: source: Queen's University Office of Institutional Planning and Research, 2001b), and the fact that, as a consequence, the vast majority of domestic students do not share classes, club membership, or living situations with a foreign student. In this study, many respondents simply had never knowingly shared a class with a foreign student or interacted with one outside of the classroom. This raises a complicated issue about the

optimal percentage of foreign students in an institution to achieve a desired educational effect. These issues will be discussed in a later section titled Institutional Factors.

Canada's status as an immigrant nation also helps explain why foreign students can easily go unnoticed on campus. For example, school children have been taught that Canada is too diverse to assume that someone is a foreign student when really they could be a Canadian (Y). Further research should investigate an operational definition for the term "Canadian student."

Findings in this study also show that foreign students tend to be perceived as quiet or reserved in the classroom, which helps explain cases in which domestic students were not impacted by their presence. "They tend to be more quiet," was CD's response to item 2.7. G wrote that foreign students are "rarely prominent in class." It follows that for domestic students whose only contact with foreign students is in the classroom, there are barriers, real or perceived, that prevent interaction with foreign students.

These findings, however, should be kept in balance. For example, AU wrote in her response to item 2.7 that, in her experience, there was "no noticeable difference" in the classroom participation between foreign and domestic students. To this end, some respondents pointed out that they had attended classes in which it is difficult to get *anybody* to participate. At the other extreme lies an experience that DS-6 reported in a class she took the previous year, where foreign students outnumbered domestic students by approximately 4:1. DS-6 reported that, as a group, the foreign students were much more vocal than the Canadian students. So, there was a wide range of perceptions of foreign students' prominence in the classroom. But overall, 55% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that foreign students are prominent classroom participants,



which adds support to the view that foreign students are seen as being no different than domestic Canadian students. Further research with a larger sample size might provide greater clarification here.

One important question that this study did not explore was the degree to which foreign students share their experiences and perspectives with the domestic students around them. It would be valuable to know whether they tend to hide their backgrounds (deliberately or otherwise) in an attempt to assimilate with their Canadian peers. Based on the results of this study, however, perspectives and experiences that foreign students bring with them to Queen's do not seem to be reaching the surface as often as the literature presumes.

### Language

Findings in this study point to language as playing a strong role in the impact of foreign students whose mother tongue is not English. Inside the classroom, a foreign student's ability and confidence in using English as a second language could, to a large degree, affect their participation. Lesser-developed verbal communication skills could have the invisible effect of pushing ESL speakers toward the safety of silence when in groups of unfamiliar people, and away from situations where they could draw unwanted attention to their language skills. This would help explain the remarks of one participant, who herself immigrated to Canada as a teenager from an Asian country. She explained in her interview that language is one reason that Asian foreign students tend to enrol in

math-based courses because they require fewer verbal skills. Math is a universal language that is much easier for ESL speakers to work with than English.

Outside of the classroom, language seems to have a subtler effect. Findings in this study suggest that language is a strong factor behind foreign students' observed tendency to cluster among other foreign students. DS-7 provided an example in her interview of the powerful effect of language over foreign students' social behaviour, both inside and outside of class. She said,

I think most often the benefits of having an international student in your class is if they do have ability with English. A prime example: I have a friend who is in Commerce, not an international student, but his mother is French and his father is [from] Mauritius, so he speaks French.... He has a housemate who's from Egypt, so they just tend to migrate to different international students. And I think I know a lot of international students through them. But then, this year there are two girls from France who are on exchange in the Commerce program, and I've only gotten to know them because of this guy. He flocks right to them because they speak French, and that's part of his culture. But they were in two of my classes, and never, ever did they ever say a word unless the professor asked them for their opinion, because he wanted their opinion because they were from another country....They're not comfortable enough with English. They won't talk in class.

(DS-7, p. 2)

From this example, language appears to have a natural effect of drawing ESL speakers together into social situations or groups where they are not stigmatized by language. Overall, these findings suggest that language could be the invisible hand that

determines whom foreign students interact with, and the amount of exposure they have to domestic students.

### Clustering

The literature reports that foreign students have a tendency to cluster among peers from their home country or other foreign students (e.g., Altbach, 1991; Barde & Button, 1988). With 35.9% of respondents in this study agreeing to this suggestion, and an additional 23.9% strongly agreeing (see the results of item 2.13), there appears to be a strong perception among the respondents that this phenomenon exists at Queen's. Situated learning theory suggests that social interaction is the medium of learning, in much the same way that air is the medium that transmits sound. Learning cannot occur in a vacuum. Clustering among foreign students could be one of the root causes in cases where foreign students do not impact the education of domestic students.

Nobody would argue that clustering among foreign students, or "polarization" as one interviewee described it (DS-2), is a desirable outcome of enrolling them at Queen's. Obviously the spirit of enrolling foreign and exchange students rests on interaction and collegiality. Yet findings in this study show that foreign and domestic students tend not to interact. Clustering among foreign students suggests that social interaction between them is uncomfortable, inconvenient, or somehow naturally impeded. Further research in this area is needed to respond to this question. These findings could provide preliminary clues to why some domestic students report foreign students as having no impact or enriching effect on their education.

### Country of Origin

Responses to survey items 2.7 (“Foreign students tend to be prominent participants in the classroom”) and 2.13 (“Foreign students at Queen’s tend to associate with other foreign students more than with Canadian students”) included references that were specific to a country or a region of the world, particularly Asia. For example, two people indicated in item 2.7 that the participation of foreign students in the classroom depends on the foreign student’s country of origin. In item 2.13, all of the responses that made reference to a country or region of the world pointed to students of Asian background. For example, A Sociology student, V, wrote, “You frequently see Asian groups of students together.” This probably is related to the fact that Asian students (i.e., students from China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan) formed the largest group<sup>3</sup> of foreign students at Queen’s University in 2000-2001.

The results of item 2.8 show that the respondents generally cannot recognize with any degree of confidence if an unfamiliar student is, by definition, a foreign student. It follows, then, that it would be equally difficult for them to generalize about foreign students’ patterns of socialization on campus. Accordingly, an important consideration is that the respondents in the above cases might actually be mistaking first- or second-generation Canadians with foreign students. When considering factors that might impede interaction between foreign and domestic students -- and the enriching effect they have on domestic students -- the possibility that one’s national, racial, cultural, or ethnic

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<sup>3</sup> Overall there were 622 foreign students from Asia at Queen’s University in 2000-2001. The next largest group was what the university classified as “Northern Europeans,” of whom there were 214 that year. (Source: Queen’s University Office of Institutional Research and Planning, 2001b).

background is a factor that should not be dismissed. All in all, the reliability of the results must be questioned.

### Institutional Factors

Three factors emerged from the results that suggest some practices within Queen's University might impede the enriching effects of foreign students: a) Foreign student enrolment, b) Faculty appointments, and c) Segregation. Each of these will be discussed below in a separate section.

#### Foreign Student Enrolment

As it relates to educational considerations, foreign student enrolment at Queen's is a complex issue. The data in the study suggest that some people see a correlation between the number of foreign students on campus and their enriching effect on domestic undergraduate students. For example, a Queen's administrator said:

One thing is that you'd probably have to get the proportion of students up high enough so they have a critical mass. If it's hovering at the one [or] two percent level, that's probably a sub-optimal, to say the least, level. They probably don't have an impact. I would be pulling a number out of the air, but I think when you get up closer to 10 percent, you would expect to see a material impact because the number of interactions, person to person interactions, would start to go up very rapidly. (FS-9, p. 5)

Conversely, an equally compelling argument is that, as the number of foreign students on campus increases, the possibility exists that the division between foreign and domestic students becomes more acute, and that the foreign student population itself begins to form clusters within the university based on race, culture, or nationality, much the same way that ethnic neighbourhoods come into being in larger urban centres. Yet it appears that research in this area has not yet addressed the question of what an optimal proportion of foreign students in a university might be to achieve a desired educational effect. No literature could be found on this topic.

According to one faculty member I interviewed, FS-11, the university does not have a policy to guide the enrolment of foreign students. He also said, "The university needs to think, 'why are [foreign students] here?'" If the university devoted more attention to this question, the enriching effect of their presence might stand a better chance of being more evenly distributed across the university. DS-1 referred to the university's approach to foreign students as "laissez-faire" (DS-1, p. 3). But as it stands, the apparent lack of a foreign student policy at Queen's cannot be described as a factor that ameliorates the educational benefits of their presence to domestic students.

### Faculty Appointments

DS-5 was a Sociology student and a visible minority. She criticized the fact that most of the professors are white. "I think there's only one or two non-white Sociology profs.... If you get people who are [of] non-European descent, then it might be easier for international students that want to say something" (DS-5). She was one of two visible minority students I interviewed in this study, and the only person among the 94

respondents to draw a connection between faculty members' ethnic backgrounds and foreign student participation in the classroom. Indeed, Queen's is not known for its diversity of professors or students.

### Segregation

Segregation is a term that conjures harsh images of racism, but I use the term here softly to describe some practices of Queen's University that might unknowingly be inhibiting interaction between foreign and domestic students, and as a result, restricting foreign students' educational effect on domestic students. I will draw on two examples from the data: a) the Commerce program, and b) support services for international students at Queen's.

Each year, 60 international exchange students from a variety of countries come to Queen's through the School of Business' international exchange program. Each takes the place of a third-year Queen's Commerce student. But according to FS-10, a member of the School of Business who is closely associated with this program, it is wrong to assume that the exchange students blend in naturally with their Canadian peers. He said,

[Foreign students] tend to interact a lot among themselves. They're the ones parachuting in third year. They're trying to crack an egg of students that have been together for two years. [Domestic students] figure each other out in those two years, and they know who's who. ... And it's hard for someone to come in and penetrate those barriers. So [foreign students] do tend to interact somewhat among themselves for that reason. The second reason... is purely out of housing

arrangements. Because leases in Kingston function on 12-month lease, there are students who are coming here for 8 months at the most, 4 months at the least. How do you get a house? Well, there are areas with services set up... for that market. So, it has mostly international students in them. For example, Science '44 Co-op takes an awful lot of our exchange students because they'll do the 4-month lease arrangement. ... We're working very hard to try and break that up. The students realize it's a bit of an issue and they realize it's a very unconscious thing that they're doing, but it happens.

The School of Business' policy that restricts participation in the exchange program to upper year students, combined of course with the realities of the local housing market, appears to undermine the reason for hosting exchange students. Besides echoing the same assumptions in the literature that motivated this study (see chapter 2), the School of Business' experience with foreign student clustering draws attention to an additional assumption behind such initiatives: that foreign students will come and seamlessly integrate with Canadian students. FS-10's comment shows that structural factors throughout the university can have an enormous effect on foreign students' social interaction patterns. According to situated learning theory, lack of interaction would have a direct effect on the educational outcomes for domestic and foreign students alike.

Three other services that Queen's University provides for foreign students might also, ironically, be encouraging segregation: the separate orientation week organized specially for foreign students, the International Centre, and the international floors in residence. For example, N, a Sociology student, agreed that foreign students tend to cluster together. In her response to item 2.13 she explained, "because they have a



separate orientation week and tend to be on the same floors in residence.” N, a Sociology student, also agreed with item 2.13, and referred to the international student orientation week. She explained, “These are the people they are first introduced to, and they have more in common (i.e., new person in a new country).” The international floor in residence and the International Centre each have the same effect: they encourage foreign students to congregate regularly in the same place and establish personal relationships among each other. The more important question is whether or not this happens to the exclusion of domestic Canadian students.

Another debate surfaces regarding the effect of the international floor in residence, international student orientation week, and the International Centre. These provide a strongly needed sense of community and support to students who come to Queen’s from abroad. But the results of this study show that they are perceived to have the effect of creating a ghetto of foreign students. The irony is that while the university is trying to provide a warm, receptive environment for the needs of foreign students, it might well be preventing itself from achieving its objectives of hosting them in the first place. Presumably these goals would be the integration of foreign students into the mainstream Queen’s population, and interaction with Canadian students. But, as it appears that no foreign student policy exists at Queen’s, it is difficult to determine what the university’s objectives are of hosting foreign students and sending staff members abroad to actively recruit them.

### Limitations of the Study

There are certain limitations associated with this study that readers should take into consideration. First, and this was briefly mentioned above, it was conducted on a very narrow cross-section of classes, programs, and students in just one university. Queen's, for example, was considered by many of the participants as lacking racial diversity among its students and faculty. It was impossible to characterize the diversity or character of Queen's without comparing it to other institutions, which in itself would be an enormous and complex task. Therefore, the effect that Queen's particular institutional culture had on the results of this study is unknown. Likewise, with having studied just four of the university's many classes, there is the possibility that the results don't accurately or adequately reflect the overall foreign student impact phenomenon at Queen's University. It was by chance, for example, that one of the Sociology interviewees was actually a Commerce major. Among many other departments at Queen's, the School of Business, with its strong international exchange program and support system for foreign students, is a source for rich information that this study overlooked. Future research should either take a wider cross-section of a particular institution or explore in depth one of the six components outlined above.

Second, the results of the second and third research questions offer only limited insight into the form of the impact of foreign students makes on domestic students, and how that impact actually occurs. This study broke ground in terms of uncovering and committing to paper what was probably obvious in the first place. But the research questions did not go deep enough to dissect, for example, the "new perspectives" and

“expanded horizons” that many domestic students reported accruing from foreign students. Future research could address this limitation by taking the notion of new perspectives as the starting point and investigating the factors that account for them. Similarly, the results indicate that impact results from interaction. There is much more room in this area for specificity.

One of the most elusive questions not identified by this study was, did the domestic students who reported deriving an enriching effect from foreign students really learn something, and how do we know? Being exposed to new perspectives and facts about foreign countries is not a guarantee that one has actually learned them. By analogy, a person could listen to piano music for an entire lifetime and still never be able to play the piano. Future research in this area should consider a theoretical framework that helps determine *when* a person has learned something, as opposed to the framework used in this study, which focuses on *how* learning occurs.

### Summary

This chapter discussed the results of the study. It first analysed the sample in order to provide a context for the results. It then discussed the relationship between certain demographic characteristics that were explored in the study and foreign student impact. Then, the discussion addressed each of the three research questions, namely, the impact of foreign students on the education of domestic undergraduates, characteristics of foreign student impact and factors that contribute to the enrichment of domestic students’

education, and factors that help explain the absence of foreign student impact. Finally, it provided a section on the limitations associated with this study.

The final chapter of this thesis will present the conclusions and suggest some next steps.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS

The final chapter of this study presents the conclusions. It is divided into four sections: (a) Overview of the study, (b) Major findings, (c) Further research, and (d) Concluding statement.

#### Overview of the Study

This was an exploratory study that investigated how the presence of foreign students impacts the education of domestic undergraduate students in the host university is impacted. I developed an interest in this topic after returning to graduate school in Canada, having lived abroad for five years. The lack of interest and curiosity in the knowledge possessed by foreign students shown by most of my fellow students and professors prompted me to explore why universities across North America are making such concerted efforts to recruit foreign students into their ranks.

I developed three main research questions to guide the study, as follows:

1. Does the presence of foreign students on campus enrich the education of undergraduate domestic students?

2. Where a domestic student perceives his or her education as being enriched or otherwise positively impacted by foreign students, what are the characteristics of that impact and what factors account for them?
3. What factors account for cases in which a domestic student perceives his or her education as not being enriched or otherwise influenced by foreign students?

A review of the literature, presented in chapter 2, revealed an underlying presumption that the presence of foreign students has an enriching effect on the education of domestic students in the host institution. This presumption has not yet been substantiated by research. In addition, there have been many calls in the literature for more research into the internationalization of higher education.

The theoretical framework was also established in the literature review. I chose situated learning theory as a framework to guide the study, because social interaction is a critical component of this theory of learning. Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that learning is a function of the activity, context and culture in which it occurs (i.e., learning is “situated”).

The study initially targeted domestic third-year students in the Computer Science and Economics programs at Queen’s University. Queen’s offered a convenient, relevant research site, and my preliminary research showed that these two programs had comparatively high numbers of foreign students. Students from a third-year Sociology class and a fifth-year Education class were later added to the sample because of the low response rate from the Computer Science and Economics students and time parameters.

I considered it important to explore the research questions from students' points of view because prior claims about foreign student impact have originated exclusively from researchers and administrators. I conducted a survey of 196 students in these four classes, which explored the educational impact of foreign students on domestic students. A total of ninety-six surveys were returned. I followed up these surveys by interviewing 11 domestic Canadian Queen's students who agreed to discuss with me, in more detail, the research questions and their learning experiences with foreign students at Queen's. I also conducted background interviews with six Queen's staff and faculty members to add contextual understanding to the student data.

### Major Findings

This section is divided into two parts. The first part will respond to the three central research questions that have guided this study. The second part will present findings of this study that were not anticipated.

#### Response to the Research Questions

As for the first research question, data from this study support the view that the presence of foreign students enriches the education of domestic students. This confirms the views of, for example, Symons and Page (1984), the CBIE (1986), The Secretary of State of Canada (1989), the AIEA (1995), and Vertesi (1999). The underlying presumption in the literature that I often referred to throughout this study appears to be

justified with this sample. The quantitative data, for example, showed that 42% of the participants agreed that their educational experience at Queen's has been enriched or enhanced by the presence of foreign students. Likewise, 39% of the participants agreed that their education would have been less enriched or enhanced in the absence of foreign students at Queen's, and more than half (57%) disagreed that foreign students had made no noticeable impact outside of the classroom.

The qualitative data provided a more thorough description of how the domestic students thought their education had been enriched. The majority of respondents suggested that foreign students bring a world of new perspectives and experiences to the university classroom, and that they learn from being exposed to these new perspectives. Outside of the classroom, the students were not specific about how their education was enriched beyond indicating that enrichment was derived from social interaction. So, in response to the first research question, the results of this study reveal that there are domestic students who perceive that their education has been enriched from the presence of foreign students.

However, the results also suggest that the literature is not entirely representative of the foreign student impact phenomenon. For example, one-fifth of the participants flatly disagreed, and 39% (the largest single group) neither agreed nor disagreed, that foreign students have enriched their education. Almost half of the sample (47%) said that foreign students had made no noticeable difference to their formal classroom education, and 39% agreed that courses with foreign students are no different than courses without them. One-fifth of the respondents indicated that foreign students had not made an impact on their education outside of the classroom. The literature to date has only prescribed one



perspective, namely the ameliorative effects of enrolling foreign students. The range of impact, as found in the results of this research, begs further investigation.

The second research question asked, where an enriching effect is found, what are the characteristics of that effect and what factors either encourage it or allow it to occur? The purpose of this question was to address an existing gap in the literature. Two factors dominated domestic students' explanations of what they had learned from foreign students. The most cited response was being exposed to the new or different ways of thinking that foreign students embody. The undergraduates described this in many forms (e.g., foreign students' different "perspectives" and "points of view," "new approaches to issues," "expanded horizons," and "different ideas"). Another solid factor that emerged regarding the elements of an enriched education was that domestic students reported learning facts about foreign students' home countries. Finally, the respondents indicated that the presence of foreign students has a positive impact on domestic students' life choices and opportunities. Domestic students in this study reported the positive benefits of making international personal connections, and how foreign students had impacted their academic, career, and travel aspirations.

The second part of this question asked, what allows this enriching effect to occur? The one factor that continued to emerge throughout this study was the central role of social interaction. In formal educational settings like the classroom, domestic students gained from listening to foreign students present ideas, working directly with them in groups, and discussing classroom topics with them. The same held true outside of class, where the participants showed that enrichment was derived from social interaction in any situation in which national, cultural, historical, or racial differences between foreign and

domestic students surfaced and gave the domestic students an opportunity to see themselves in a different light. The out-of-class learning also requires further explanation.

The third research question asked, what factors account for cases in which domestic students derived no educational benefit from the presence of foreign students? Once again, social interaction emerged as the prime factor, both inside and outside the classroom. Domestic students who reported deriving no enrichment from foreign students typically had never attended a class with one, did not know or associate with any foreign students, or suggested that foreign students' reclusive classroom behaviour was a barrier to learning from them. Secondly, the nature of a particular course and its subject matter also appear to be factors that determine the enriching effect that domestic students accrued from foreign students. The participants from the two Economics and Computer Science classes tended to report little or no effect at all from foreign students, explaining that the passive learning style in those courses involves little social interaction, and because the subject matter fosters little subjective interpretation and reflection from personal experience.

To summarize the responses to the research questions, the presence of foreign students at Queen's enriches the education of some domestic students, but an equal number of students reported that they accrued no educational benefit from their presence. The literature does not fully account for this dual or inconclusive finding. Among the domestic students who reported an enriching effect, learning new perspectives or ways of thinking, and facts about foreign students' home countries, were the most commonly reported elements of an enriched educational experience. Enrichment occurred through

social interaction between foreign and domestic students. Likewise, interaction was the dominant missing link where no enrichment effect was reported.

### Further Research

The results of this study raised many questions about the educational impact of foreign students on domestic students in the host institution. I have grouped these questions into broad categories, presented below, which should guide future research in this area. In addition, comments at the end of this section reflect on the methodological weaknesses of this study that should be considered in future research.

#### Universities

Symons and Page (1984) questioned whether Canadian universities are making the most of the educational opportunities presented by foreign students. More than 15 years later, this still appears to be an unanswered question (Goldstone, 2001). Results of this admittedly narrow study suggest that Queen's University does not systematically cultivate the potential educational benefits that foreign students hold for its domestic students. Queen's University seems to be taking a laissez-faire approach to foreign students at the policy level, viewing them no differently than domestic students. This could be a strong contributing factor that underlies why some domestic students in this study reported no enriching effect from foreign students. Enrolling foreign students should be seen as an allocation of a very scarce resource (i.e., positions in higher

education). Research on the relationship between universities and foreign students should address what universities can do to help maximize the benefits their students from the presence of foreign students.

I initially targeted students in a Computer Science and an Economics class, assuming that the comparatively high numbers of foreign students in those two programs would yield a rich sample of domestic students whose education had somehow been impacted by their presence. Although the results of these two classes were based on a very small sample, they hint that the domestic students in these two classes derived little or no educational benefit from foreign students. This raises questions about our understanding of the correlation between the number of foreign students on campus and their educational impact on domestic students. A low number of foreign students would seemingly restrict their ability to have any far-reaching impact on a university's domestic student population. Yet it would appear from this study, as well as the literature, that as their number increases, so does their tendency to cluster into groups of their compatriots or other foreign students. This reduces their contact with domestic students, which situated learning theory suggests is necessary for learning to occur. Questions about the optimal number of foreign students in an institution to create an internationalized learning environment do not appear to have been addressed yet by research. So, this study either points to a paradox between the number of foreign students and their enriching effect on campus, or suggests that their enriching effect is not related to their population, and is more dependent on other, less visible factors.

Judging from my interviews with faculty members and administrators, I am led to believe that the university's current approach to foreign student enrolment is mostly

focused on two areas: (a) recruiting foreign students, and (b) nurturing foreign students' personal needs as expatriates after they arrive at Queen's. That is to say, Queen's University seems to be oriented much more towards the service it can provide foreign students to make their social environment more comfortable than on what it can do to strengthen itself as an institution and the quality of teaching and learning for its students. Documents published by Queen's over the years (e.g., Queen's University, 1985, 1996) show that there is a strong belief at the administrative level of the educational benefits of enrolling foreign students, but there was no evidence in this study that the university is actively trying to cultivate these benefits to advance its mission to "prepare leaders and citizens for a global society" (Queen's University, 1996). Considering that the university's basic mission is to advance knowledge, this is a surprising and ironic finding. Future research should further investigate whether Queen's University's somewhat idealistic views of enrolling foreign students is justified in practice.

### The Professoriate

Weiler (1984) suggested that the academic subculture in North America tends to "adhere to a particular frame of reference to the exclusion of other, alternative paradigms" (p. 178). The results of this study support his view. Thirty-five percent of the respondents (the largest single group) had no opinion about whether professors draw on the experiences or perspectives of foreign students in the classroom to enhance course material. Furthermore, compared to the number of students who said professors do draw on foreign students, 54 % more said that they do not.

Professors play a key role in encouraging foreign students' to share their perspectives in the classroom. But defining that role raises many difficult questions. For example, promoting internationalization in the university classroom or laboratory is not a simple matter of choice. It is one of ability, particularly for professors whose subject matter is not regionally based (like the natural sciences), or who have not spent enough time in a foreign setting to understand, appreciate, or care about the situated character of knowledge. The internationalization of higher education is a complex issue, to which an entire field of research is devoted. But professors are at the heart of this issue by virtue of what and how they teach. Future research should consider what role professors play in enhancing the educational impact of foreign students, and what is desirable.

#### Academic Discipline

The results of this study suggest that academic discipline plays a major role in the impact of foreign students on the education of a university's domestic students. The effect of foreign students on domestic students in the Computer Science and Economics classes was, in some cases, different than on those in the Education and Sociology classes, although this, admittedly, is based on a very small sample. The participants from the Economics and Computer Science classes in this study inferred that the content of classes in Computer Science and Economics leaves no room for experiential, cultural-specific input. Future research should work towards uncovering how the academic discipline affects the educational impact of foreign students on domestic students: i.e.,

whether this is a content issue (*what* is taught and learned), or a process issue (*how* it is taught or learned).

### Impact Inside and Outside the Classroom

The participants in this study reported foreign students to have had a stronger impact on their education outside the classroom than inside. Considering situated learning theory and the role of interaction in learning, this likely stems from the finding that domestic students reported having more contact with foreign students outside the classroom than inside. Even though this is only a preliminary finding based on a sample of just four classes at one university, it raises questions about the commitment to internationalization at Queen's University, and how active a role the university takes in its mission to "prepare leaders and citizens for a global society" (Queen's University, 1996). Utilizing the potential resources of foreign students in the classroom would be one of the most obvious and effective ways to prepare Canadians for a "global society." Yet the results of this study hint that the education of domestic students is impacted more from foreign students in situations where the university is least formally involved. An alternative, and more radical, possibility is that the university classroom is actually a barrier to the potential enriching effect of foreign students, something that has been overshadowed by the prevailing optimism in the literature. This would underscore the weakness of Queen's University's embrace of internationalization and suggest that its mission is somewhat lacking in substance. Either way, this question deserves more attention.

### Negative Impact

Three domestic students in this study from the Computer Science class reported that foreign students have negatively impacted their education. This deserves follow-up investigation. It is unknown whether the problems that participants reported in this study (such as language deficiencies among foreign teaching assistants in the Computer Science program) are recognized at administrative levels in the department or at the university-wide level. Again, the optimism in the literature about the benefits of enrolling foreign students might be pre-empting the perceived need to take a more critical view of the presence of foreign students in Queen's University. The results of this study point to the need for a more critical evaluation of the overall effects of foreign students in the institution.

### Foreign Students

Although foreign students themselves were not the primary focus of this study, they are an obvious source of rich information and clues about how and why the enriching effect of their presence does, or does not, occur. For example, foreign students can provide insight into the perceptions about their behaviour that domestic students reported in this study, like not having a strong presence in the classroom or clustering with other foreign students. Many studies have explored foreign students' experiences in adjusting to life on their new campus in order to understand their needs and how



universities can serve them better. I suggest that research in this area needs to place greater emphasis on the university's own needs as an institution whose mission is to advance learning.

### Domestic Students

Left in the wake of this study are questions regarding Canadian students' awareness of the limitations of knowledge situated in one (e.g., Western) frame of reference, and the importance they attach to expanding their knowledge of other countries, cultures, and world-views. In order for foreign students to have an educationally enriching effect, an intellectual space must exist where their perspectives are welcomed, valued, and engaged. Ultimately this depends on the receptiveness of domestic students to the knowledge and experiences that foreign students bring to the university.

The results of this study raise the possibility that domestic students themselves are a factor that impedes the enriching effect of foreign students. There are two views to consider. First, if learning is predicated on interaction, as suggested by situated learning theory, we must consider what domestic students themselves are doing to facilitate, or likewise avoid, interaction with foreign students. The second consideration is if, or when, interaction occurs between foreign and domestic students, do domestic students show an interest in their backgrounds and make an attempt to learn from them? The literature typically portrays the enrolment of foreign students as creating a window to the world, especially for those students who do not study abroad. Certainly, the supply side of this

equation, i.e., the number of foreign students in Canadian universities, is relatively strong at Queen's compared to other universities across Ontario and Canada; but the demand side, namely domestic students' inclination to learn from their foreign peers, or the necessity that they attach to learning from them, is unknown. As the saying goes, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't force it to drink."

Most Canadian students already speak English (the international language of business), are comparatively wealthy, and do not generally grow up with the intention to emigrate from Canada. Moreover, living beside the world's most powerful nation and sharing so many characteristics with it, as well as Canada's status as an immigrant country, might implicitly teach Canadian university students that, as a nation, we have little to learn from other countries. So, a topic that I propose for further exploration is the importance and value that Canadian (and American) students place on learning about the world outside of their national borders.

### Race or Ethnicity

I was particularly careful not to make reference to any particular race or ethnicity in the survey and interview questions, or phrase the questions so as to invite students to do so in their responses. Despite this, many of the participants made reference to one particular racial group on campus. Participants repeatedly indicated that Asians have a strong tendency to group together among themselves. Participants mentioned no other racial group in the entire study. The principles of situated learning theory suggest that, if this is indeed true, some foreign student racial groups might have a different impact in the

university than others. Research should explore if foreign students of different racial or ethnic backgrounds have different effects on the education of domestic students in the host institution.

### Methodological Considerations

This was a small-scale study conducted at a single university not known for its diversity. Participants in this study widely referred to Queen's University as a very white institution. In 1995, the most recent year for which comparative statistics are available, 4.5% of the overall student population at Queen's University was foreign students, the second highest among Ontario universities (Statistics Canada, 1998b). But the number of foreign students at Queen's that year was average compared to other doctoral and professional degree granting universities of similar calibre across Canada (Statistics Canada, 1998b). As Griffin (1995) reminds us, a school is a unique culture in itself. One of the (many) next steps to understanding the educational impact of foreign students is to conduct similar studies in different universities to determine how the culture of the specific institution affects the impact of foreign students. Future research in this area should target universities of different sizes, domestically and internationally, in order to work towards a more thorough understanding of foreign student impact.

The proposal to conduct this study was presented in November 2000. Data collection began in January 2001 and finished in March 2001. Overall, the combination of a survey and interviews provided a good balance between the breadth and specificity

that is required of an exploratory study. Future research in this area, however, need not necessarily use both of these methods simultaneously.

No research project is free of barriers. I encountered two obstacles in the course of this study that future researchers should note. The first was the process of securing ethical approval, which the university requires before it will sanction data collection from human subjects. It took a total of eight weeks in two separate stages to get approval to conduct this research. Graduate students in particular should anticipate these idle periods in the data collection process so that other aspects of the study can advance during this time.

The second obstacle was arranging to conduct the data collection within the actual classes. For example, in two of the four classes, the professors could only afford to give me a few minutes at the end of a two-hour lecture to introduce myself and the study, and convince the students to voluntarily fill out the survey at home and return it to me through the campus mail system. I recommend where possible trying to build a rapport with the professor before soliciting the involvement of an unfamiliar class in order to avoid indifference. The most efficient way of making focused (non-random) contact with university students is directly through their classes. Where the data collection strategy involves approaching students in their classes, professors are a key link because they have influence in getting their students to participate in the research. This was, I believe, the main reason why the response rate was so high from the Education and Sociology students.

The students who volunteered for the interviews were eager to share the experiences they had had with foreign students. Once the initial barriers of actually

making contact with participants had been overcome, the topic itself seemed to rouse a great deal of interest.

The survey (see Appendix A) functioned effectively as a data collection instrument. The questions generated a useful set of data. I would, however, recommend making three changes to the survey. The first modification would be to Items 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3. These are the central questions of the entire study, but they appear too early in the survey for respondents to have adequately reflected on their experiences. I recommend positioning these three items closer to the end of the survey so that the survey design encourages respondents to consider different aspects of their experiences with foreign students before answering questions that are of central importance.

The instructions that prompt respondents to give a written explanation of their scale responses were, in many cases, too vague. As a result, they tended to evoke vague answers. Rather than saying, for example, "Please explain," they would have yielded higher quality data if they had been more precise, for example, "Please describe a foreign student's contribution to a class and why you consider that enriching." As another example, item 2.9 produced interesting data, but it did not provide direct insight into the research questions. To do that, it should have read, "Foreign students play an important role in enriching Canadian students' education at Queen's." Providing more space to explain each question might also encourage students to give more detail in their written responses.

Finally, the survey item about whether enrolling foreign students makes Queen's University a more internationalized institution (item 2.14) produced interesting data, but ultimately contributed nothing towards our understanding of the three central research

questions. The internationalization of universities is a separate, albeit related, issue to foreign student impact.

### Concluding Statement

This study set out to explore the impact that foreign undergraduate students have on the education of Canadian undergraduates at Queen's University. Research on foreign students has tended to focus largely on their experiences in adjusting to life in a new culture so as to better understand how universities can attend to their needs as students. The study described in this thesis is one of a very few to break away from this trend, instead asking questions that will help inform universities how they can use foreign students to their own benefit. That is, whereas research on foreign students has largely addressed what universities can or should do to help foreign students, this study was conducted to further our understanding of what universities can get in return from enrolling foreign students in order to help themselves.

Overall, the only firm conclusion I can make from the results of this study is that much more research is needed to understand how foreign students impact the education of domestic students. This chapter has identified a number of specific areas. However, I believe the results of this study are still valuable in that they provide preliminary clues about this phenomenon in certain areas of Queen's University. More importantly, the results highlight Canadian Queen's students' experiences with foreign students that are at odds with the literature.

As one faculty interviewee in this study told me, “The university has to think, ‘why are they here?’” That Queen’s has not approached this question from a critical perspective likely stems from the fact that very few people, if any, have challenged the rhetoric surrounding the educational value of foreign students on campus. The results of this study do not, by any means, suggest that domestic students are not benefiting from their presence, or that foreign students are not valued. But the results do suggest that not all students benefit from their presence in the way described by the literature. This might be a result of the university not having critically evaluated the role of foreign students on campus, or its own role in cultivating these benefits for its students. For a university that describes its mission as being “to prepare leaders and citizens for a global society” (Queen’s University, 1996), this point deserves much more attention.

## Appendix A - Survey on the Impact of Foreign Students at Queen's University

The purpose of this study is to explore the degree to which the presence of foreign students (also referred to as "international students") at Queen's University has an enriching effect on the education of domestic Canadian undergraduate students. A foreign student is considered to be a non-Canadian student who does not have permanent resident status in Canada and has received permission from the Canadian government to enter Canada for the purpose of study.

This survey should take less than 15 minutes to complete. Please respond to the survey questions based not only on this course, but on your entire experience at Queen's University, both inside and outside the classroom. Your responses on this survey will be used as data for the study.

Please return the survey and the consent form to Calvin Bowry at the Faculty of Education in the enclosed envelope via the internal campus mail system.

### Section 1

- |   |      |        |       |
|---|------|--------|-------|
| 1. What year of study are you now in?   |      |        | _____ |
| 2. Gender   | Male | Female |       |
| 3. Were you born in Canada?   | Yes  | No     |       |
| 4. Are you a Canadian citizen?  | Yes  | No     |       |
| 5. Are you a foreign student at Queen's University?   | Yes  | No     |       |
| 6. a) Have you lived in a country other than Canada?  | Yes  | No     |       |
| b) If Yes, for how long?  |      |        | _____ |
| 7. a) Have you attended a school or educational program outside of Canada?                                      | Yes  | No     |       |
| b) If Yes, for how long?  |      |        | _____ |
| 8. a) Did you occasionally or frequently communicate in a language other than English when you were growing up? | Yes  | No     |       |
| b) If Yes, what language?   |      |        | _____ |
| 9. Have you ever shared accommodations with a foreign student?  | Yes  | No     |       |



## Section 2

In responding to the following questions, please reflect on your entire educational experience at Queen's University, both inside and outside the classroom. Circle the number that most accurately reflects your response. If possible, please provide a short written explanation to elaborate on your response.

- 1. The presence of foreign students at Queen's University has enriched the education that I have received at this university.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree or Disagree		Strongly Agree

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- 2. Foreign students have made no noticeable impact on my formal classroom education at Queen's University.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree or Disagree		Strongly Agree

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- 3. Foreign students have made no noticeable impact on my broader education outside of the classroom at Queen's University.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree or Disagree		Strongly Agree

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**4. The presence of foreign students enhances the depth and scope of lectures.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree or Disagree		Strongly Agree

Explain or give example: \_\_\_\_\_

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**5. The presence of foreign students enhances the depth and scope of seminars and tutorials.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree or Disagree		Strongly Agree

Explain or give example: \_\_\_\_\_

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**6. The depth and scope of courses that I have taken with foreign students are no different than courses without foreign students.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree or Disagree		Strongly Agree

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

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**7. Foreign students tend to be prominent participants in the classroom.**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 Strongly Disagree                      Neither                      Strongly Agree  
    Agree or Disagree

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

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**8. It is easy for me to recognize if a student is from another country.**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 Strongly Disagree                      Neither                      Strongly Agree  
    Agree or Disagree

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

---



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**9. It is important for Queen's University to enrol foreign students.**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 Strongly Disagree                      Neither                      Strongly Agree  
    Agree or Disagree

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

---



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**10. My education at Queen's would have been less enriched or enhanced if the university did not enrol foreign students.**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 Strongly Disagree                      Neither                      Strongly Agree  
    Agree or Disagree

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**11. Faculty members regularly draw on the experiences and perspectives of foreign students to enhance course content.**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 Strongly Disagree                      Neither                      Strongly Agree  
    Agree or Disagree

How? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**12. The presence of foreign students at Queen's has increased my awareness of other countries and/or world views.**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 Strongly Disagree                      Neither                      Strongly Agree  
    Agree or Disagree

How? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- 13. Foreign students at Queen's tend to associate with other foreign students more than with Canadian students.**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 Strongly Disagree                      Neither                      Strongly Agree  
    Agree or Disagree

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

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- 14. Enrolling foreign students makes Queen's University a more internationalized institution.**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 Strongly Disagree                      Neither                      Strongly Agree  
    Agree or Disagree

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

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- 15. Please indicate the amount of direct interaction that you have with foreign students at Queen's through course related activities:**

\_\_\_\_\_ None      \_\_\_\_\_ Low      \_\_\_\_\_ Medium      \_\_\_\_\_ High

- 16. Please indicate the amount of direct interaction that you have with foreign students at Queen's outside of the classroom:**

\_\_\_\_\_ None      \_\_\_\_\_ Low      \_\_\_\_\_ Medium      \_\_\_\_\_ High

**17. Describe in your own words the impact that foreign students have made on your education at Queen's University.**

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Please return this survey and the signed consent form on the following page to:

Calvin Bowry  
Faculty of Education  
Queen's University

If you have any difficulty in getting your completed survey into the campus mail system, please contact me to pick it up.

Phone: (613) 634-9668

E-mail: [7cjb2@qlink.queensu.ca](mailto:7cjb2@qlink.queensu.ca)

## Appendix B – Consent Form

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF FOREIGN STUDENTS

The participant agrees to complete one survey and/or participate in a maximum of two interviews as indicated by signature below. The participant gives consent for the data in the survey and/or interview(s) to be used in the researcher's thesis and for publication. The participant has the right to withdraw from this research at any time, and does not have to answer any question that he or she finds objectionable or makes them feel uncomfortable. If participating in an interview, the participant will receive a copy of the transcript and will be the one to decide how much or what part of it, if any, can be used. The participant has the right to review her or his transcript and make necessary changes or alterations.

I as the researcher will ensure that the participant will be kept anonymous. The results of this study will not be described in the thesis or in any publication in such a way that allows the identity of participants to be determined. I will keep the survey and the transcript in a secure location, and only my thesis committee and I will have access to it. Survey and interview data will be used only for research. One year following the issuing of my degree, I will destroy the survey and/or the transcript.

#### Consent to Participate in the Survey

I agree to complete the survey on the impact of foreign students  
under the terms outlined above ..... **YES**      **NO**

#### Consent to Participate in the Interview

I agree to participate in an interview(s) under the terms outlined above..... **YES**      **NO**  
(If "YES" please indicate below how I can contact you to arrange the interview.)

#### Contact information (for people who are willing to be interviewed):

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Name of Participant: (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher: Calvin Bowry

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date **February 5, 2001**

## **Appendix C - Core Interview Questions for Students**

### **Theme A: The impact of foreign students on the education of undergraduate Queen's students.**

1. Are foreign students in your classes here at Queen's?
2. There is a strong and widespread presumption in internationalization literature that foreign university students enrich domestic students' education. Reflecting on your experience at Queen's, to what degree do you think this is true?
3. Have foreign students made an impact on your education at university? Why/why not? How?
4. Outside of the classroom at Queen's, has the presence of foreign students in general impacted your education? How?
5. Do you think your university education would have been different in the absence of foreign students?
6. Are classes with foreign students any different than the ones without foreign students? If so, how?
7. Does having foreign students in your class help foster "global perspectives" in Canadian students, as is envisioned by the university?
8. Have you benefited educationally from the presence of foreign students?

### **Theme B: Foreign student participation in the classroom.**

1. Reflecting on your experience, do you think foreign students tend to participate in the classroom?

### **Theme C: Identifying foreign students on campus.**

1. Is it easy for you to identify whether a student is a foreign student? Why or why not?

### **Theme D: Interaction between foreign and domestic students on campus.**

1. Reflecting on your experience as a Queen's student, do you think foreign students tend to interact more with other foreign students or with Canadian students?

### **Theme E: Faculty members drawing on foreign students as learning resources.**

1. Have you had foreign students in your classes here at Queen's?
2. Do faculty members treat foreign students as a learning resource? If so, how?
3. Have your instructors drawn on them? How?



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Fleming Hall, 301 Jemmett Wing  
Queen's University  
Kingston, Ontario, Canada K7L 3N6  
Tel 613 533-6081  
Fax 613 533-6806

January 22, 2001

**GREB No.: GEDUC-004-01**  
**Title: "The Impact of Foreign Students on the Undergraduate Education of Domestic Students"**

Mr. Calvin Bowry  
Faculty of Education  
Queen's University

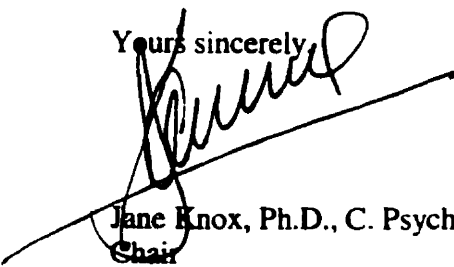
Dear Mr. Bowry,

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB) has given expedited approval to your proposal entitled "The Impact of Foreign Students on the Undergraduate Education of Domestic Students". This approval is valid for one year. Prior to the renewal date you will be sent a reminder to apply for renewal.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB of any amendments or changes to the procedures in your study that might affect the human participants. You are also advised that any adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you success in the conduct of your research.

Yours sincerely,



Jane Knox, Ph.D., C. Psych.  
Chair  
Research Ethics Board

JK/kr

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