

A Tale of Two Countries: China and UK

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Backgrounds

Which statement is wrong?

1. Born in Mainland China
2. Got two Bachelor degrees in Mainland China
3. Got Master of Philosophy (Mphil) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees in Hong Kong, China
4. Started the first job in my life in University of Aberdeen Business School since September 2018

Learning as a Student in China

- **Undergraduate**

- ✓ Courses: large size, listening, limited interaction, no tutorials
- ✓ Assessment: exams based on memory, limited essay writing and presentation
- ✓ Study on weekends for my minor degree (2 years)
- ✓ Take National Postgraduate Entrance Examination at Year 4

- **Postgraduate**

- ✓ 10 courses in year 1: small size, sharing ideas, presentation, listening
- ✓ Dissertation in year 2
- ✓ Assessment: critical thinking, extensive reading and writing
- ✓ Research projects: extensive reading and writing
- ✓ PhD application: TOEFL, GMAT, research proposal, etc.

PhD Learning as a Student in Hong Kong, China

- **PhD learning requires active participation and intrinsic motivation!**
 - ✓ **Study PhD courses in home and host institutions (formal)**
 - ✓ **Give tutorials as a compulsory requirement of getting studentship**
 - ✓ **Have diverse learning environments (informal)**
 - Departmental seminars
 - Lunch time brownbag meetings
 - PhD supervisor
 - Research collaboration
 - Conferences and workshops
 - Colleagues' kind help
- **Mainly have self-learning throughout the PhD journey**

PhD Learning as a Student in Hong Kong, China

An iceberg floating in the ocean. The tip of the iceberg is above the water surface, while the much larger, jagged base is submerged below. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds, and the water is a deep blue.

- **PhD research and teaching skills**

- **Adapt to different cultures**

- A different language: Cantonese
- Food
- Interpersonal relationships

- **Cultivate psychological wellbeing**

- Hiking and running
- Art and cultural consumption
- Christian belief
- Reading books and writing poems

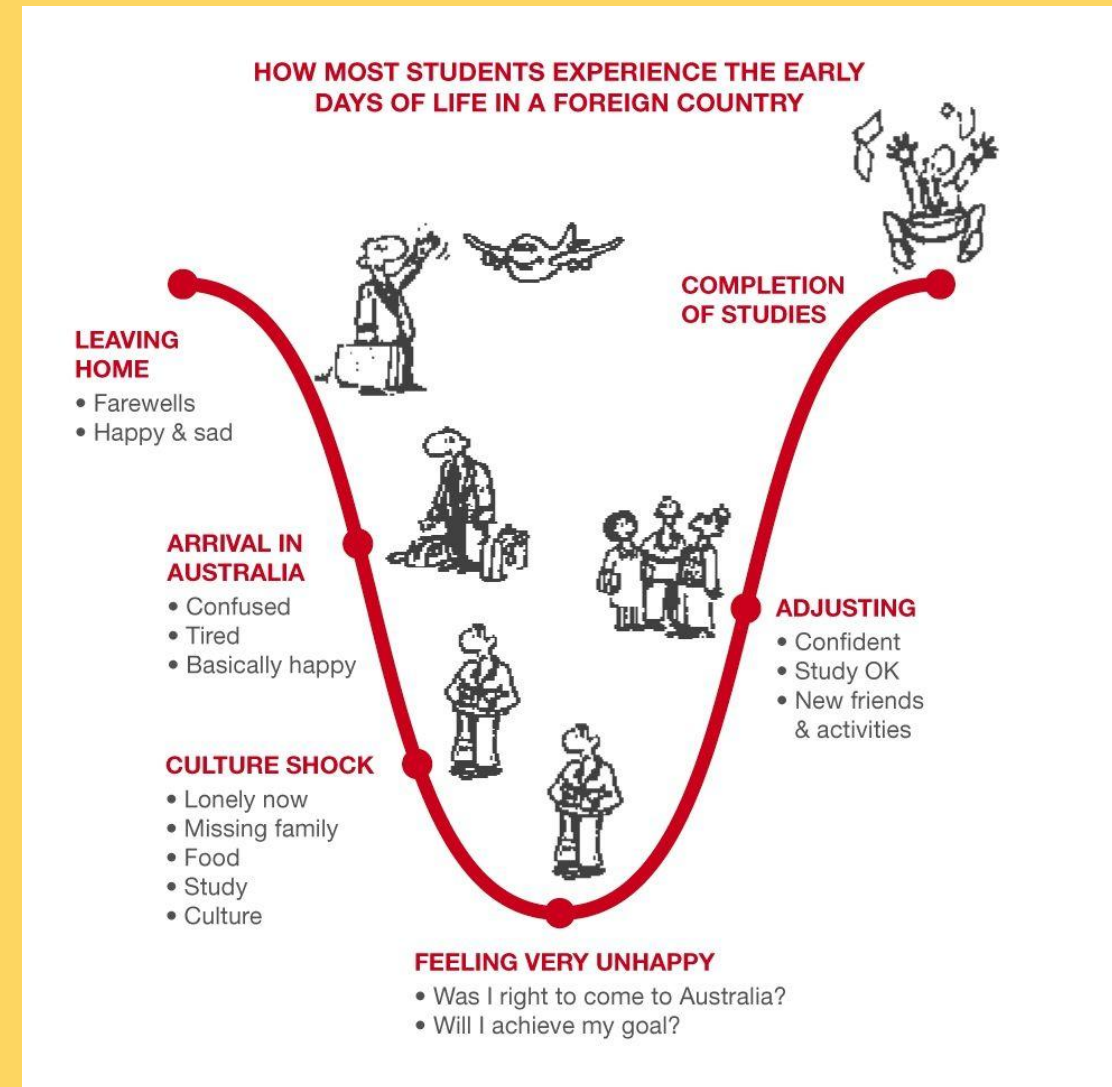
Iceberg theory

Teaching as a Staff in the UK



Living in the UK can have more life-change units (residential move 20, work 29, and finance 38) or be more stressful than imprisonment (63).

Oishi, Shigehiro, et al. "Residential mobility increases motivation to expand social network: But why?." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 49.2 (2013): 217-223.



Teaching as a Staff in the UK

- **Characteristics of undergraduates**
 - ✓ 1/3 to 1/2 study workload
 - ✓ Voice queries very often
- **Characteristics of taught postgraduates (block teaching)**
 - ✓ Very intensive learning within 3 weeks
 - ✓ Keen to learn
- **My teaching approach**
 - ✓ Course design: add research-based teaching and assessments (Level 4 & 5)
 - ✓ Lectures and tutorials: cultivate thinking skills, **harsh approach**

Challenges of Teaching Students from Diverse Ethnic, Cultural and Educational Backgrounds in the UK



- Adapt to diverse English accents
- Learn to interact with students face to face and through emails in a proper way
- Figure out what students expect from lectures through feedbacks
- Balance various or conflicting needs of students

Solutions

- **Key principles**

- ✓ No matter how diverse students are, students have commonalities.
- ✓ Each request/query is specific. Just find a solution!
- ✓ Be student-centered!

- **What I find useful**

- ✓ Be patient to get to know a new teaching and learning environment
- ✓ Predict diverse learning needs and satisfy those needs beforehand
- ✓ Constantly improve course designs and activities according to feedbacks
- ✓ Show genuine care for all students

Consider diversity throughout online teaching

Have online block teaching of BU5579 (254 students) during March 2020

- **Coordination becomes critical.**

- ✓ Create perception of **teacher's presence** through frequent interaction
- ✓ Address each individual's needs and query timely

Student comments

“Thank you for making me feel warm and giving me the chance to find out how much I love my study, give me confidence, give me infinite power, and let me know how amazing the Aberdeen teacher is!”



**Thanks for
listening!**