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International Students' Perspectives of an Introductory Course as Preparation for Entry into a Postgraduate Physiotherapy Program

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Introductory or preparatory courses are often provided to international students in Australia as means to help them adjust to a new cultural and communication environment and a foreign educational setting. However, there is very little evaluation research on these introductory courses, especially from students' perspectives, on their merits and demerits. **Methods:** This research utilised primary and secondary research methods. Firstly, a systematic review of the literature was undertaken to identify international students' perspectives of education in Australia. Secondly, using qualitative and quantitative research methods, international postgraduate physiotherapy students' perspectives of an introductory course at an Australian educational institution were identified. **Results:** Literature evidence from the systematic review of the literature identified that international students in Australia are confronted by a range of issues. These multidimensional issues reflect a range of concerns including those intrinsic to education itself (such as learning style, educators) as well several extrinsic issues ranging across a wide spectrum (such as cultural and social). Primary research evidence on the evaluation of an introductory course points to mixed findings. While students valued the introductory course, they also identified numerous areas for improvement. Key themes identified included repetition, workload, altering expectations, lack of learning support, and value for money. **Conclusion:** Findings from this research indicate that international students are confronted with numerous concerns when embarking on education in Australia. While introductory courses address some of these concerns, there are opportunities for improvement. As education moves towards a student-centred model, it is important to recognise and respond to students' perspectives.

INTRODUCTION

There are growing numbers of international students seeking higher education in Australian educational institutions. In 2007, there was a reported 210,956 international students enrolments, which represents a 3.3% increase from 2006.¹ It has long been recognised that international students face numerous issues when undertaking education at overseas institutions. It has been acknowledged that international students undergo a degree of "culture shock" that often impacts their psychological, behavioural, cognitive, and physiological well being.²⁻⁴ Researchers have found that as well as suffering the practical and emotional stresses of being away from home, students are also unfamiliar with local, academic, and professional culture and conventions.²⁻⁶ Handa and Fallon point out that by accepting international students into higher education programs, Australian universities carry a moral responsibility to educate those students in local academic culture and conventions.⁵ Academic preparation or orientation courses

have been suggested and appear to be successful in terms of student satisfaction, skill awareness, study strategy, and even grade point average.^{5,7,8}

At the University of South Australia, within one of the postgraduate physiotherapy programs with a dominant international student population, anecdotal evidence indicated that many students encountered similar difficulties. In particular, educators observed that students struggled in the areas of involvement in classroom discussion, critical thinking, academic writing and referencing, clinical reasoning, and clinical communication. These findings have been supported by other research conducted on international students' perspectives of education in Australia. Harman, using qualitative research methodologies such as surveys and interviews, identified that many international students expressed concerns relating to quality and effectiveness of supervision, language, and learning styles.⁹ Similar research undertaken by Cadman, Robertson et al, Hellsten, and Choi identified numerous issues confronting international students in Australia.¹⁰⁻¹³ These include cultural differences, language difficulties, styles of teaching and learning, relationship with peers and teachers, lack of resources, classroom norms, financial issues and feelings of isolation. In research conducted by Robertson et al, it was identified that academic staff were often judgemental of international students' writing and critical thinking skills.¹¹

Beasley and Pearce provided an interesting perspective on a successful extra learning program to facilitate the learning of international students who are making the transition from overseas colleges to an Australian university.¹⁴ Their research took into account 1623 students over a period of seven years and compared failure rates of international students before and after the program. It was found that the program led to improved overall student participation and performance. This evidence indicates that international students may benefit from additional learning or introductory programs. In addition to literature evidence, historical evidence indicates that within these cohorts of postgraduate physiotherapy students, previous undergraduate programs rarely exposed them to the degree of training in manual physiotherapy skills sufficient to allow an easy transition into Australian clinical practice.

In order to address these generic educational and specific manual physiotherapy issues, a bridging or introductory course was introduced prior to entry into a mainstream postgraduate program. In this introductory semester, several introductory physiotherapy content specific courses as well as a course designed to help prepare students for academic writing and communication skills were provided. The content specific courses included clinical reasoning theory, principles and practice of examination of the neuro-musculoskeletal system, principles and practice of management of the neuro-musculoskeletal system, and movement studies. The language and communication course provided experiences with cultural comparison, critical thinking, literature reviewing, academic writing, referencing and presentation, and professional communication. The aim of this research was to evaluate, from international students' perspectives, the usefulness of the introductory or preparatory course provided at University of South Australia as a preparation for entry into mainstream postgraduate program.

METHODS

Design

This research utilised a mixed methods approach. Focus groups (qualitative) were conducted in order to capture international students' perspectives of introductory course. Subsequent to this, and based on information identified from the focus groups, an online survey (quantitative) was also conducted. Multiple methods of data collection were undertaken as means of triangulation and to improve rigour and credibility in the data collection process.

Sampling for focus groups

Purposive sampling was used to select participants for focus groups.¹⁵ All students enrolled in the postgraduate physiotherapy program involving the introductory courses in the years 2002, 2003, and 2004 (and who were still available for consultation) were invited, via email or mail, to attend a focus group specific to their cohort (i.e. there were no exclusion criteria). For the online survey, all students who participated in the focus groups were invited to participate in the anonymous questionnaire survey.

Focus groups

Focus groups were chosen as it provided an opportunity for groups of students, all of whom had experienced an introductory course, and could discuss issues of concern.¹⁵ Furthermore; it encouraged interaction between participants in the group.

For each group, a semi-structured focus group was conducted to explore view points and experiences of students who had participated in the introductory courses prior to entering the mainstream postgraduate program. These focus groups were conducted within University of South Australia grounds at a convenient time for students. The focus groups were conducted by an independent, experienced focus group facilitator in order to allow for safe expression of views.¹⁶ Participants were provided with an outline of the introductory courses to remind them of the various topics and assessment that had been included in each

course. Informed consent was also obtained at this time. The facilitator began with an overall question regarding the usefulness of the introductory courses and then guided subsequent conversation, exploring the issues raised by students and ensuring that all the courses under investigation were discussed. When relevant, the facilitator also cross checked themes that had developed from earlier focus groups. All focus groups were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim by an independent transcriber.

Questionnaire

As part of a triangulation of data intended to improve the credibility of the data collection process, a quantitative online survey was undertaken with those who participated in the focus groups. A questionnaire tool was developed based on the emergent themes of findings from the focus groups. This questionnaire was an anonymous five-point Likert scale designed to further explore students' perspective of introductory courses. A copy of the questionnaire has been included in Appendix A.

Sampling for questionnaire survey

The questionnaire tool was designed as an online survey instrument and access to the questionnaire was emailed to all students who had participated in the focus group. Two reminder emails were also sent as follow-up to maximise response rates. These follow up emails occurred over a three-month period. The questionnaire was developed and subsequently utilised as part of data collection six months after completion of the focus groups.

Ethics

Ethical approval for this project was obtained from University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee.

DATA ANALYSIS

Focus group

Each focus group was tape recorded and was subsequently independently transcribed. Two independent researchers undertook content analysis of each transcript. Content analysis allows for coding and classifying data as identified from transcripts of focus groups. This process ensures extracts of data that are informative and pertinent to the research, are coded and classified. Based on the framework for content analysis as provided by Hancock, two researchers independently coded each transcript.¹⁷ Hancock's framework for content analysis involves ten key steps. Step one involves reading and making notes on the margin of the transcript. Step two involves identification of margin notes and different types of information. Step three involves categorising of each item. Step four involves identification of any relationships between categories and grouping them into major and minor categories. Step five involved checking for duplicate categories. Step six involves extraction of any new categories for other transcripts. Steps seven and eight involves grouping and reviewing of categories to identify any potential movement of categories. Once all categories and sub-categories have been sorted to satisfaction, a major theme is formulated by unification of major categories. This is step nine. Step ten involves, reviewing of original manuscripts to investigate inclusion of previously excluded data to be included in the results. Themes were then compared between researchers and any discrepancies resolved by reviewing the original transcript.

Questionnaire

Responses to the questionnaire survey were analysed using descriptive statistics. As the questionnaire survey was intended to complement focus groups, only basic descriptive analysis was conducted.

RESULTS

Participation

Focus groups

Invited focus group participants were either currently enrolled in, or had completed the postgraduate physiotherapy program and had been part of the introductory course cohort. In total, 23 of a possible 28 (82%) students participated in these focus groups with six students representing 2002, eight students representing 2003, and nine students representing 2004. All students who participated in these focus groups were specialising in the field of musculoskeletal physiotherapy and had some years of clinical experience, having worked as physiotherapists in their country of origin. No demographic data were collected as it did not directly address the primary aims and objectives of this research.

Questionnaire

All 23 students were then invited to participate in the anonymous questionnaire survey; however, only 14 (61%) students completed the survey.

Key research findings

The composite results of focus groups and corresponding survey results are presented below. Content analysis of focus groups identified six key themes reflecting students' perspectives of the introductory course. These themes are subsequently supported by evidence from the anonymous survey. This innovative presentation model has been chosen as part of triangulation.

Theme one: Usefulness of introductory courses

The first theme identified from the transcripts related to participants' overall satisfaction with the introductory courses. While participants reflected that these introductory courses were helpful in preparation for the subsequent mainstream course, they also highlighted that some courses were more beneficial than others. One student commented that,

- *The introductory course was good for us; it did prepare us pretty well for the upcoming semester.*

This issue was further explored by another student who indicated his/her partial support for the introductory courses. The student commented that

- *There were some things that are very, very important and we really.....I really liked those things. I'd say fifty percent was very, very good and productive, fifty percent was just not really up, yeah.*

Another student commented eloquently on the usefulness of the introductory courses.

- *Because I think these ... courses were the cement, the foundation blocks because we were taught our basics so well that it helped us.*

These qualitative findings were supported by quantitative survey data with 79% (n=11) students agreeing with the statement that "Overall, I think the introductory courses prepared me well for the subsequent courses."

Theme two: Repetition

The second theme identified from the transcripts related to participants' perspective of repetition of content between the introductory and mainstream courses. It was interesting to note that while some students valued repetition, particularly learning practical skills, other students did not. Students who did not value repetition felt that repetition of content wasted precious financial resources and the time spent on these courses could have been better utilized learning further new content or to lighten the load for mainstream courses.

- *I think you get stronger with practicing the same thing, you get stronger with everything.*
- *In first semester they taught us "a" and in second semester they taught "a" and went up to "d", so it was like a progression...so in a way that was good.*

But then this,

- *We have extra for which we are paying and we don't need it.*
- *And then it is all repeated again, everything. I think the repetition is really bad...because we really are repeating from A to Z in the 2nd semester.*

These conflicting findings were also identified in the questionnaire survey. When posed with two separate questions about content repetition ("The repetition between the introductory courses and subsequent courses was useful" and "There was too much repetition between the introductory courses and subsequent courses"), 43% (N=6) of students agreed or strongly agreed to each question individually, while the remainder disagreed or remained neutral.

Theme three: Workload

The third theme identified from the transcripts related to participants' perspectives of workload being unbalanced between introductory courses and mainstream courses. This sudden increase in the workload seemed to have a demoralizing effect on the student cohort. One student commented on the workload of the mainstream course as "*the last semester ..it was a nightmare.*" One student commented on the issue of workload and how it could be addressed.

- *If they move something from the second semester and add it to the first semester then we have less load in the second semester*

One student reflected how he/she had managed well in the introductory course but could not do so in the mainstream course.

- *It is a big leap [in workload] and then you think, oh, I am nowhere, what happened to me? I was doing so well and suddenly I am nowhere.*

Some students acknowledged the introductory courses had provided them with the opportunity to prepare for the upcoming mainstream course and its workload issues. However, this advice was not acknowledged by many students during the introductory courses leaving them exposed to perceived higher workload in mainstream courses.

- *They told us that this is not the load you will see in 2nd semester, they kept telling us.*

The issue of workload was also explored further in the questionnaire survey. One question related to students' perspective of difference in workload ("There was too large a difference in study load between the first and subsequent semesters") while another question explored their perspective of workload in the introductory course ("It is useful to have a lighter load in the first semester"). Ninety-three percent (n = 13) of students agreed that there was too large a difference in the workload between the introductory and subsequent courses, whereas only 57% (n = 8) agreed that it was useful to have a lighter workload in the introductory course.

Theme four: Altering expectations and marking standards

The third theme identified from the transcripts related to participants' perspectives regarding perceived differences in altering expectations of educators and marking standards between introductory and mainstream courses. Several students, often in heated debate, discussed the shift in expectations and assessment standards of academic staff involved in introductory courses and the following mainstream courses. One student reflected on this issue;

- *In that first semester if you do something and you get a distinction for it, you are thinking okay that is what I do to get a distinction, whereas then you go into the 2nd semester, you think, "I know this, this is what I do" and suddenly you get a P1 ("pass level 1").*

Other students supported this view with statements such as

- *Yes the marking from the first semester is totally different from the marking in the second semester.*
- *The expectation rose from first semester to 2nd semester the expectation was quite high, a big jump.*

Given the strong emotions and personal perspectives engulfing this issue, it was further investigated in the anonymous survey. Two questions were asked. One asked if students found that the marking standards differed between the introductory and mainstream courses, and 93% (n=13) of respondents thought that they did. The second asked if the expected levels of achievement differed, but this time only 57% (n=8) agreed that they did.

Theme five: Lack of learning support

Some students also reported a distinct lack of support from the teaching staff. Given that many of these students were international students, students highlighted the need for support to extend beyond mere education to include emotional support as well. The need for emotional support was due to the lack of family support and home environment.

- *Especially when we are away from families and there [is] no-one to support us, its really the teaching staff we depend on, like even the emotional...stuff.*

Exploring this issue further, students commented that while there was some support during the introductory courses, this did not extend into the mainstream course. Students commented that during the introductory course, some staff took interest in students' personal lives and recognised the need for such support.

- *Most of the people were very nice. I remember (lecturer from an introductory course named)... looking into our daily learning...she has done so much. And yes, one thing (was) definite, (with) both the tutors it felt like they were putting*

in a lot of effort for us during the first semester (introductory courses)... definitely and we could feel the personal contact there.

One student commented that, upon transition from introductory to mainstream course, “*everything changed.*”

- *Everyone was very nice in the first semester and in the 2nd semester everything changed, it was like you are nowhere, you don't belong to this place, you better pack your bags and go back home.*

Expanding further on the issue of lack of learning support, a few students commented that there were instances where they perceived discrimination and even racism during mainstream courses. Students commented that there was a perception that they were being judged differently compared to their peers in the mainstream classes, even though the purpose of the introductory course was to bridge this gap.

- *I think there is...discrimination, it's not in the first semester at all, but when you're put in with other students...*
- *I saw a lot of discrimination as well, at times you feel you are judged...and they mark you according to that.*
- *I felt strongly the feeling of racism.*

One student commented that as they were international students, with different cultural, language, educational backgrounds, they did require additional learning support.

- *The whole idea that we are in a new place is also part of it because our learning patterns back in India or wherever we come from are different. [We are] not the first batch – I think they (teachers) should be able to understand, yes, these people come from a different world and have a different way of understanding. I don't think it would be difficult to cater to our needs in that sense, as in giving us that further push or helping us.*

The discrepancy of learning supports between introductory and mainstream courses was further explored in the anonymous questionnaire survey. These findings support the qualitative findings as well. Questions in the survey confirmed the difference in learning support between the two courses with 93% (N = 13) strongly agreeing to the statement “*My learning was supported by the staff of the introductory courses*” and only 50% (N = 7) agreeing to the statement “*My learning was supported by the staff of the subsequent courses*”.

Theme six: Financial pressures and value for money

Students also commented on the financial pressures and the value for money from their chosen courses. This theme was particularly complex and multifactorial, with the concept of value for money being raised in different contexts. “Value” was considered in terms of teaching expertise, the content of the courses, facility conditions, and in particular, financial sacrifices they themselves or their families had made to achieve study overseas and the sense of waste if they failed a course. This sense of waste was exacerbated by perception of injustice in why they failed. This perception of injustice was linked to the previous themes of lack of learning support and altering expectations and marking standards.

- *The course was good but I think we could have got lots more...I had a year extra with the experts and I was not given enough of them...*
- *Nobody can afford out of their pocket, you need some financial support and mostly from your family, your father or somebody who's supportive. And you know when you come here and even if you fail one semester or maybe a course it's another two thousand five hundred dollars at least*

One student reflected that the financial resources required to study overseas may be sufficient in their home country to “*settle down for life.*” This dominant finding from focus groups was not necessarily reflected in the anonymous questionnaire survey. When faced with this question, “*Was the IMMP program good value for money?*” fifty percent of students (n=7) answered that it was good value for money, as compared to only twenty nine percent (n=4) who answered in the negative. The remaining twenty one percent (n=3) maintained a neutral opinion.

DISCUSSION

There is growing evidence on international students' perspectives of education in Australian tertiary educational settings. Findings from the literature clearly indicate several intrinsic and extrinsic issues confronting international students in various fields of study in Australia. Intrinsic educational issues include language barriers, learning style, educators and supervision, and facilities and administration. Extrinsic issues include cultural adjustment and social and financial support. Introductory or

preparatory courses aim to address as many as possible on the educational issues that are commonly faced by international students, in preparation for entry into mainstream courses. However, no literature was found purporting the value of or satisfaction with introductory courses as preparation for other mainstream programs in any field of health education. This research, for the first time, sheds light on the value and pitfalls of an introductory or preparatory course for international physiotherapy students at University of South Australia, from the perspective of the students themselves. In regards to the research aim, it was apparent that the majority of students did find the introductory courses useful in preparing them for the mainstream program. However, there were a number of lessons gleaned and drawbacks identified from students' perspectives.

Our results indicate that student perception of unnecessary repetition is a potential risk when providing international students with introductory or preparatory courses. Introductory courses should provide building blocks for more advanced courses in the same domain. These building blocks include basic fact, familiarization with terminology, and framework for thought around a topic.¹⁸ In the physiotherapeutic area, the acquisition of practical skills are a large component of the curriculum. Repetition, therefore, may be intended by educators and perceived as necessary. For example, in learning new practical skills, it may be seen as desirable to incorporate staged practice across a program. Introductory courses may intend students to progress through early stages of skill acquisition, with mainstream courses then allowing progression through the more advanced stages. However, in order to minimize negative perceptions of repetition by students, it is suggested that educators carefully communicate this intent to students and design practical classes to have enough visible progression that the opportunity to develop skill is obvious. Carefully articulating to students the required levels of achievement, some of which are dictated to universities by various professional bodies, may also serve to highlight the importance of repetition in some areas. Finally, it may also be worthwhile to consider whether the criteria used to determine if a student needs to undertake introductory courses are adequate. Students who find repetition useful may well also be those who were rightly required to undertake introductory courses, whereas those who found it wasteful may well be students who could have managed without it.

The issue of workload discrepancy between introductory and mainstream courses is an interesting one. The imbalance in workload, and in particular the perception that workload in the subsequent courses was too high, has implications for student learning. High perceived workload has been shown in previous research to be correlated with poorer understanding of material, decreased grades, lesser satisfaction with courses, and a dominance of "surface" rather than "deep" learning.¹⁹⁻²² Opinion was divided however, as to whether the lighter load in the introductory courses was a good feature as it allowed students to "ease in" to mainstream courses or whether this was an unhelpful feature that did not adequately prepare them for what was to come in mainstream courses. These issues highlight the need for careful analysis of workload, along with emphasis on gradual introduction to increasing workload and clear communication on future workloads.

The students' perspectives of altering expectations and marking standards related to perceptions of inconsistencies between staff in terms of teaching style. Maintaining a low student to teacher ratio is important to allow close supervision of practical skills in a physiotherapy coursework masters program, where clinical skill is a key intended outcome. This often necessitates the involvement of a number of staff in the teaching and supervision of any one skill or technique being taught. In general, this is seen as very positive, as each staff member brings their own experience to share, and students acknowledged this in the focus groups. However, students found that whilst they appreciated variations in the way they were taught particular skills, when it came to assessment, variations in expectations between staff were perceived as both confusing and unfair. For the most part, students seemed to explain differences between teaching style as simply individual ways of doing things specific to particular staff members and simply recommended that more communication between staff, and the application of more consistent marking criteria would solve the problem.

The issue of lack of learning support and the drivers for this, including perceptions of racism, requires discussion. It was identified that whilst students perceived some discrimination during mainstream courses, they had not perceived any during the introductory courses. In some ways this is not surprising as the introductory courses were specifically designed for this cohort of students alone, whereas in the mainstream courses they joined a wider cohort of both local and international students from other countries. Whilst the student-staff ratio was similar across all courses, there were less numbers of staff teaching in the introductory courses, and therefore it was easier for staff and students to get to know each other. However, the students' perception of discrimination cannot be discounted as merely a contrast between being in a small class to being in a large class. It is an issue that needs careful consideration in any program where international students and local students learn together. It is certainly important to note that the students in this research clearly valued support from their educators. Despite the fact that there are many general supports in place for international students at the University of South Australia, it appeared that if students did not receive support from their immediate educators, these general supports did not make up for this loss. This is consistent with the findings of Hellsten and Prescott, whose international student group felt strongly that the responsibility of understanding and mentoring was that of the educators rather than the institution, and those educators should make themselves

available for this purpose.²³ This highlights the need for staff to be culturally competent in their teaching practice. Indeed, it has been demonstrated that the chief way students learn to be culturally competent in their clinical practice is by experiencing cultural competence in the way their teaching staff interact with them.²⁴ Furthermore, it has been suggested that as well as educators, both international and local students have a responsibility to be mindful of cultural competence in their behavior and attitude.²⁵

Finally, it is of some concern that only 50% of students responding to the survey concluded that the program was good value for money. Given that 79% of students agreed that the introductory courses were useful preparation for mainstream courses, this perception of lack of value cannot be related purely to the issues of repetition or workload and altering expectations and marking standards between courses. Careful analysis of all of the contexts in which discussion about value for money appeared reveals that it was indeed a multi-factorial concept. Many of these issues went beyond the research question posed, but make interesting food for thought.

Implications for practice

Designing a program to include introductory courses prior to mainstream courses is one strategy to assist international students to adapt to new cultures of teaching, learning, and clinical practice. Our research indicates that whilst it can be an effective strategy, there are many issues that need to be considered in order to optimize students' experiences. Program design should both minimise and carefully explain any repetition between introductory and mainstream courses. Furthermore, issues of workload, expectations, and marking standards need to be discussed amongst all staff to ensure consistency and minimize variability. These are principles of good teaching that could apply to all student cohorts. Finally, as overseas students are under considerable financial pressures, it is important that all staff involved in educating international students consider carefully the importance of cultural competence in teaching practice in order to ensure that students feel that they have received value for money and have been provided with sufficient support for their learning.

Implications for research

It is surprising to find a distinct lack of research on international students' perspectives of introductory or preparatory courses. As many western nations open their educational institutions to overseas students and utilize introductory courses, it is imperative that these introductory courses are evaluated to identify core issues from students' perspectives, and that these issues are responded to in a timely manner. Future research should also aim to explore perceptions of discrimination by international student cohorts and evaluate implementation of targeted and timely supportive strategies, as discrimination can have a debilitating impact not only on student cohort but also the institution itself.

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Appendix A Questionnaire

*The questionnaire, developed based on emergent themes of findings from focus groups, was an anonymous five point Likert scale (**strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree**) survey designed to further explore students' perspective of introductory courses.*

1. Overall, I think the introductory courses prepared me well for the subsequent courses.
2. My learning was supported by the staff of the introductory courses
3. My learning was supported by the staff of the subsequent courses
4. There was too large a difference in study load between the first and subsequent semesters.
5. It is useful to have a lighter load in the first semester
6. There was too much repetition between the introductory courses and subsequent courses
7. The repetition between the introductory courses and subsequent courses was useful
8. There is a difference between the marking standards in the introductory courses compared with the subsequent courses
9. Please choose one of the following options for any perceived difference between the marking standards in the introductory courses compared with the subsequent courses.
 - Option 1: The marking standards in the introductory courses are too lenient compared with the subsequent courses
 - Option 2: The marking standards in the subsequent courses are too harsh compared with the introductory courses
10. There is a difference between the expected level of achievement in the introductory courses compared with the subsequent courses
11. Please choose one of the following options for any perceived difference between the expected levels of achievement in the introductory courses compared with the subsequent courses
 - Option 1: The expected levels of achievement in the introductory courses are too lenient compared with the subsequent courses
 - Option 2: The expected levels of achievement in the subsequent courses are too harsh compared with the introductory courses
12. Feedback was adequate throughout the program
13. The assignments in the program are not well timed
14. I was disadvantaged by doing the research courses later than the other group
15. The research orientated classes in LCP were not sufficient to prepare me for the subsequent courses
16. Variation in the way techniques were taught was useful
17. Inconsistencies in the way techniques were taught was confusing
18. It would have been helpful to have more theory on clinical reasoning in the introductory courses
19. It would have been helpful to have more clinical exposure in the introductory courses
20. It would have been helpful to have more orthopaedics in the program
21. It would be helpful to have more treatment approaches or techniques included in the program
22. It would have been helpful to have more introduction to the Australian Health Care System in the introductory courses
23. There was discrimination evident in the way we are treated in the introductory courses
24. There is discrimination evident in the way we are treated in the subsequent courses
25. The staff of the introductory courses demonstrated cultural competence in their teaching
26. The staff of the subsequent courses demonstrated cultural competence in their teaching
27. There should be stricter entry criteria for the program
28. The IMMP program was good value for money