

Invisible? Inscrutable? - Concerns, needs and support of Japanese students

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Abstract

This presentation focuses on concerns of Japanese international students, their attitudes toward seeking assistance and ideal advising, based on a survey of 30 Japanese students, individual interviews and participant observation in the Japanese student community. Most of the students saw their study abroad experiences positively as new and achieving experiences, while they found it fairly hard. Academic concerns emerged as a major issue followed by career concerns caused by the very unique Japanese employment system, and an issue of making friends particularly with Australian students. While the students positively seek help for their academic concerns, they try to self-help for various other concerns, regarding these as their "self-help" concerns. Likewise, hesitation to seek help from international student advisors was identified. For ideal advising, having Japanese speaking, older, experienced advisor, or an advisor who the students knew, was preferred. Recommendations with practical information for supporting Japanese students are suggested.

Keywords Japanese, advising, counselling, intercultural communication, career support, academic support

Introduction

As the number of international students in Australian higher education has been growing annually, the university's support services are becoming more essential to accommodate international students surviving overseas. Though the number of Japanese students is also increasing, it is said that Japanese students are not specifically noticeable for the international student advisors at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) where the author worked. Also, much of the literature on Japanese students in Australia focuses on study problems. What is the whole life and view of the Japanese students in Australia? What are the salient problems they have? How do they try to solve these problems? How do they view services in a university? How do they want support from advisors in the university, and what is a preferred advisor/counselor for them? This research was conducted to answer these questions, believing that an understanding of their views helps the international student advisor to provide ideas for better support for Japanese students.

Methodology, Target group, and Epistemological issues

QUT had 5,272 international students in 2005, which is 12% of the total student population, and the number of Japanese international students was 126. This research is based on a survey with 30 Japanese students enrolled during 2005 and 2006 at QUT to complete their Bachelors or Masters Degree, interviews with twelve of them, and my participant observation in the QUT Japanese Student Association. I used the survey to identify the common concerns in a bigger number of the group, and then used the interviews to explore their deep insights behind their survey results.

The survey (See Appendix D) was administered at an event of the Japanese Student Association in September 2005, and placed at the front desk area of International Student Services at QUT from October 2005, to February 2006. Part of the questionnaire was adapted from Mau & Jepsen's survey (1990, 1998). In total thirty students filled them out, however, not all the questions were answered. This questionnaire was written in Japanese, and answered in Japanese.

The demographics of the interviewees are in Appendix A. All interviewees except one had at least a one-year experience living and studying in Australia or another English speaking country. All of them were either a member of the Japanese Student Association in QUT or had participated in its activities at least once. The interview was held in Japanese and on a face to face basis and those were all tape-recorded and transcribed except for one who had a phone interview. Interviews were conducted individually from one time to three times, from forty-five minutes to two hours and half (See Appendix B). The interview was semi-structured, and I

encouraged them to keep telling their story.

I conducted my participant observation during the activities of the Japanese Student Association at QUT that was established in 2005 (See Appendix C) . In 2006, it was registered as an official university club with 99 members including both Japanese and non-Japanese students. I participated in the activities of this association and the board members' meetings as a facilitator of the club as well as a researcher.

In analysing data, not only did I identify the results or tendencies of the majority of students, but I also compared and contrasted their different views to introduce the different experience of the individual students. In analysing their attitude, status, and views in their adaptation, I used three different theories, the Culture Learning Approach, the Stress and Coping Approach, and the Social Identification Approach that are categorized in Ward (2004).

An epistemological issue was that my identity and experience as a Japanese, an international sojourner, a staff member at QUT may affect the students' reactions, depending on how they project my identity. Also, as a researcher, I have an authorship, the power to develop the text with the researcher's own interpretation of culture (Greenblatt, 1999). I conducted this research, considering the affect of these epistemological issues carefully.

Data Analysis

First, I explain the three major concerns of the Japanese students and their help seeking activities towards each issue. Next, their attitudes towards using advising/counseling services at an international student office are analyzed. I investigate the commonality among the students' perspectives and also compare the differences to examine various experiences of the students.

Academic concerns, relationships with friends, and career concerns were the three major issues the interviewees identified, and this was the same result as in the survey (see Appendix E).

Academic concerns

I wish I could have more time talking with my host family. But I have to be stuck in my room studying. (Ryoko)

...Uum... my friend[s] say[s] "let's go out for a break". I know I would not do a lot of work even if I kept studying, but at the same time I know I would not be able to enjoy it[going out] much, because I would keep thinking about my assignment. (Masahiro)

25 out of 30 students in the survey and all the twelve interviewees identified academic concerns as their major concern. Study is the center of these students' life. They found studying in a second language was the cause of their struggle. All interviewees went through the stage of not understanding their teachers or lecturers. Their English becomes better as time goes by, however, still the interviewees find it frustrating to study in English. Differences in the teaching system, such as having a tutorial, were identified as "messy" and "confusing", particularly for the students in the first semester. Also, it is not easy to change their learning style, with which they were educated for a long time, to the active participation style that is evaluated in Australia.

Though all interviewees found university study hard, there were some differences in the degree of struggle among them. Interviewees, who studied in a high school where they were the only Japanese, needed relatively less study time and did more, socializing outside. It may be related to their high English ability, confidence in living and studying overseas from a previous survival experience. Also the interviewees who previously attended an educational institution in Australia agreed that their study experience in Australia helped them to gain study skills and an understanding of the Australian Educational context.

Regardless of the difficulties and obstacles in their academic life, nobody regretted their decision to study in Australia. A feeling of responsibility for their decision to study abroad prompts them to positive coping and motivated them to complete their degree. They wanted to study abroad, knowing it would not be easy, which is inconsistent with Marriot's (2004) statement that many Japanese students are not aware of the difficulty of studying abroad on their decision making. Also, the comments on financial concern for their parents were commonly heard from the interviewees. Though it is common that parents pay the cost for their children's tertiary education in Japan, the interviewees felt that study abroad was costly. Thus, their strong motivation to complete their study in Australia within the minimum time and their sense of responsibility in studying with parent's income, made them study hard.

Classmates are identified as the first choice helper for academic issues, and secondly, academic staff. They did not hesitate to seek academic help from their classmates if they knew them well. The students who were in big classroom settings found it difficult to connect with other classmates, however the need for academic help changed some students' normal behaviors.

I kept asking my tutor questions..., because I did not know anybody [at her tutorial]. I was afraid to talk to them... because of my poor English..... But, I thought, it's not good to keep asking even small questions of my tutor every time.... I felt miserable.....that I couldn't participate in the discussion, cannot make friends.....The day before the tutorial, I really felt I did not want to go to it..... But one day, I looked at my face in the mirror and realized, "I am dying...." I became determined ...I made a big, big decision, I will talk to my classmates with a smile. (Ryoko)

Likewise, when most of the other students felt the need to change their behavior to solve their academic problems, most of them endeavored to do so, trying to find a connection in a big class without friends, or attempting to be an active participant in the class, even though these are not natural things for them to do.

On the other hand, there was a minority of students who had difficulties in changing their learning style and hesitated to seek help. The former students who employed approaching coping, survived better, with a sense of satisfaction in their study life. In contrast the latter who employed an avoidance approach, seemed to keep difficulties alive, being isolated from assisting resources. That is to say, positive coping encouraged better adaptation as in the Stress and Coping Theory. This also proves that changes of behavior to suit the host cultural context make students' lives easier as in the Cultural Learning Theory.

Career concerns after graduation

Career concerns were the second common concern in the survey, and they were also prevalent among the students in the Japanese student community. Though all the interviewees except one were not graduating in a year, their concern was quite high. The cause of this interest from the early stage seemed to stem from the timing of Japanese companies recruitment for new graduates that requires the students to prepare from the end of the 2nd year (Japanese university bachelor's course is 4 years with a normal study load). Thus, they need to determine where to work in the early stage of their university life.

As a result of their positive view of their experiences in Australia, most of the interviewees hoped to gain international work experience that is also seen in Andressen & Gainey's study (2002). While six interviewees were willing to go back to Japan after working overseas, the negative images of or experiences in working in Japan among four students discouraged them from working in Japan. Getting a visa and information about job-hunting in Australia or other countries were identified as problems. They were most interested in hearing about the experiences of Japanese graduates or international students who gained jobs in Australia or overseas, they did not know where they could get this information.

The students looking for a job in Japan desired to succeed in a big job-hunting season for new university graduates. To screen the massive number of job applications from the prospective university graduates in Japan, companies have a systematic process, and students need to attend the seminars and interviews held in Japan at a particular time.

... I know this is a pretty big opportunity to find a job at a big company...That's why I think I should try this first [rather than finding a job in Australia]. (Shingo)

As Shingo expressed, this is a life-time job hunting opportunity in Japan where the permanent employee system still is still widely employed. One of the main reasons why Ryoko chose Australia as her one-year exchange destination was doing this job-hunting activity on time in Japan just after finishing Semester two in Australia. However, the students pursuing their degree in Australia worried about their involvement in this, not knowing how they could manage it while studying in Australia.

Though they did not actively seek help towards this concern because they could not think of any resources available, once they knew the assistance was available, their desire to gain help was strong. There are some Japanese companies that provide free job information services to students. One of those companies offered having the information session for them in QUT, and this session had 36 attendees with positive feedback (My field note, November 2005). Also, some of their friends who experienced job-hunting in the same area of study or had similar career aspirations become their consultants, but they want to get advice from people who had exactly the same backgrounds or circumstances as theirs. Thus, there is a need of promoting available career information resources to them, and of linking them with the alumni who found their job in the same situation as them.

Relationships with friends

Relationships with friends were also identified as an important element in their lives. While this was the third

most common concern (thirteen out of thirty) in the survey (Appendix E), the students in the interview shared their concerns about experiences with friends, more than their career concerns, which was the second most common concern in the survey.

In the survey, nine students indicated they had difficulties in making friends at QUT. The interview revealed that lack of opportunity and lack of time became hurdles to making new friends. Students, who did not have a small class, and/or a friend network outside of university, found it difficult to make friends, unless they had time to attend the student association.

Though they had open and non-discriminative views of friendship, it was found that the formation and attitude towards friendship with Australians and Japanese were different.

S.I.: who do you talk to or ask questions ? International or Australian, or...

Taeko: No No No! Not Australian. I am scared [to talk to them]!

S.I.: Could you tell me why?

Taeko: Um.....English, I think. If they talk very quickly, I cannot understand.

In making Australian friends, a lack of confidence in their English had a negative impact for some students, like Taeko while the understanding of Japan/Japanese among host nationals encouraged friendship with them, that was also seen in the Kudo and Simkin (2003)'s study.

Their views of friendship with other Japanese students related to how they evaluated and managed relationships with their in-group and out-group in the Social Identification Theory.

...my first time in Australia, I even tried to avoid Japanese students. I wanted to improve my English, and make friends with different people. (Koji)

Sticking only with Japanese students is nonsense - this was a common and solid view among the interviewees. Studying in Australia was initiated by themselves, therefore they had very strong motivation to study and engage in the host culture. In some cases like Masahiro, this view developed into criticism of some in-group members acting against this value.

(About the Japanese couples) Why do we have to be together even in Australia, you know?! Oh, no! Isn't it? They can choose another place in Australia. Australia is big![other story].... I could not understand them... come here together, go to the same school together, stay in the same place together, cook and eat meals together,.....They can do it in Japan! Why come to Australia? (Masahiro)

However, a shift from the process of *Assimilation* to *Integration* in Berry's (1997) can happen when the students meet other Japanese students who have a similar value set to themselves like Miwa's case.

...Honestly, I don't want to hang out with somebody who has low motivation...like sticking together only with Japanese, Chinese, and Korean and so on... I hate hanging out only with people who are easy to connect with.....like my previous roommates [her previous Japanese roommates always hung out together]. But they [Japanese friends met at the university] are not like that. Even when we are with Japanese, it does not become a minus, it becomes a plus. They are the people who study diligently in Australia. (Miwa)

All interviewees who had negative views of Japanese changed this attitude when they are able to share the same experiences and values, and created their positive view of their host nationals, and even, meeting these Japanese students brought satisfaction to their life.

In help seeking in making friends, some did not seek help while some were still trying. For current friendship concerns, someone not in their community was chosen as their most preferred consultant, and some did not ask for any help. Though it was not found in the majority of students, a non-help seeking attitude was identified in relation to this issue among some students.

Attitudes towards seeking advice/counseling from the International Student Advisors, and ideal advising/counseling

...my problem is my problem. I got to solve it by myself. (Tsuyoshi)

...I don't want to make other people worried, too. (Ken)

Only three interviewees who had a positive help seeking experiences overseas before showed a positive attitude toward asking help. The self problem-solving attitude seems to be cultural among most of interviewees. In addition, the consideration towards others could be seen in this attitude. The self-help type students also showed hesitation in seeking advice from international student advisors because of their uneasiness in seeking help from someone who they had never met before, and a negative image attached to receiving counselling. Interviewees found counselling was the place for people suffering from serious mental or psychological problems, and these people cannot help themselves, which was against their "self-help" motto. Even though they went to counselling, all of them wanted to make it as secret.

Language issues were identified as their concern in having advising/counselling. Smooth and precise communication and expressiveness in using their first language were identified as beneficial to the development of rapport. In addition, use of the first language erased the fear of English communication and encouraged expression of emotion. Though the same ethnicity was not indicated as significant in the survey (Appendix E), two interviewees commented that they preferred to have a Japanese counsellor because they assumed that he/she would understand their cultural background easily. Most of the interviewees preferred to use Japanese if they can, however, all of them did not mind having English in advising/counselling as long as the advisors have understandings of the feelings of second language speakers.

Also, the survey result and the interview revealed that the students preferred to have an advisor who was older, experienced, and had seen them previously. The older person was considered as more experienced and knowledgeable. The views found in Gallois, Giles and Ota's study(2002) that respect for middle age and older people is declining among Japanese young people, have not been seen among the interviewees in this research. Furthermore, they expected the advisor to be a specialist who was able to give appropriate advice on their concern; however, all the interviewees claimed that they wanted to make the final decision if there were choices for the solution to their problem.

Summary and Conclusions

This research examined the views of the Japanese international students in an Australian university, the current concerns in their lives and their help seeking behaviors towards them, as well as their attitudes towards asking for assistance from the international student advisors. Although their studies were fairly demanding to them and study became the central concern of their lives, they saw their study abroad experiences positively, wishing to develop friendships with people from different cultures and to gain international work experience as well.

Specifically, their three major concerns were study, their career concern, and relationships with friends. The students recognized that use of a second language and a different learning style put them in a disadvantaged position in study. Regarding career concerns, for both the students wishing to work in Japan and overseas, inaccessibility to information concerning job seeking was identified as their problem. Concerning friendship issues, connecting with friends with a big classroom setting was identified as their difficult issue.

Since their central and major concern is catching up with their studies, they actively sought help for this issue more than other issues. Seeking help from their classmates was their first choice. The significance of getting academic help encouraged them to modify their behavior in connecting with their classmates, doing active participation in the classroom, or seeking assistance actively. Regarding career and friendship concerns, the students initially tended to keep it to themselves since they did not think about asking for help. Also, the study was generally hard enough to limit their time to sort out any issues other than study, except a small number of students who have had positive experiences overseas as a lone Japanese in previous educational institutions.

In terms of approaches to cultural contact, all three approaches in Ward (2004) were found among the students. Many students believed that gaining the host cultural language, one of the important elements in the Cultural Learning Approach, was crucial to their current life. They saw their lack of English ability made their study difficult, and the lack of confidence in English kept them from becoming friends of Australian classmates. Also, though it was not easy, most of the students tried to adapt their learning style from Japanese to an Australian one, so that they could survive in the academic culture in the local context.

The second approach, the Stress and Coping Approach, was seen in their motivation to study abroad. Since their motivation to study abroad was strong, they were ready to take up the challenge arising from overseas study. Moreover, their attitude towards friendship - their desire to become friends with people from different cultures - proved to be an active coping. On the other hand, for connecting with classmates, making friends, participating in the Australian classroom, and seeking help for academic issues, students used two different coping styles - approach or avoidance. While the students who used the avoidance coping style kept their problem to themselves, the students employing the approach coping style tended to have satisfaction with their successful coping experiences.

As in Berry's(1997) acculturation theory in the Social Identification Approach, the Japanese students adopted either the Assimilation or the Integration strategies. Some students who had negative experiences or images of the Japanese work environment did not wish to work in Japan in the future, believing the Australian work environment was better with the Assimilation approach. The Assimilation approach was found in friendship formation with Japanese friends. They disapproved of Japanese who stuck together, and they tried to become

friends with Australian or non-Japanese people in order to assimilate into the host culture. However, they changed their approach to Integration when they met similar home nationals who were keen to study and make the most of their study abroad life like them. These experiences of friendship gave them satisfaction of their study abroad life, approving the good values in their own culture as well as the host culture.

While a small number of students who had a positive experience for help in their overseas life positively sought help, most of the students saw self-help and seeking advice from an international student advisor as somewhat unnatural. An ideal advising context for these students includes having a Japanese speaking advisor, an older and experienced advisor, and/or an advisor who they know. Though they did not mind having advising/counseling in English, the advisors' consideration of their English ability was greatly appreciated. Also the students wanted to receive suggestions, but preferred to make their own decisions.

The research results may not be applicable to all Japanese international students, simply because each individual is different like the interviewees in this research. However, I hope this research will help international student advisors to understand the perspective of Japanese students and their attitude towards help seeking in general for better advising/counseling of their future Japanese students. Recommendations for the advisors and the student support office are introduced in the following chapter.

Recommendations

Institutional effort can be made in the international student office

1. Increase awareness of the services provided at the international student office

Students do not use the services if they feel the service is not relevant or useful for their concerns. Including examples of the issues students bring would be effective in giving them an actual image of seeking support from an international student office. It is advisable to remind them of the services repeatedly throughout their stay in the university.

2. Promoting understanding of the concept of advising/counseling services provided by the international student office

In promoting the services, it is important to let them know the nature of advising/counseling services offered by the university, such as the advisors' qualifications, the code of ethics (confidentiality), and consideration of language use. This group of students may lack correct understandings of the services and the nature of advising/counseling in an Australian setting.

3. Make the office/advisors familiar to them

Creating opportunities to meet the international student advisors outside of advising sessions by attending social events in the office would decrease their psychological barriers to asking for help from the advisor in the future. Personalizing advisors, for example, putting relay essay articles by the advisors in newsletters or website can facilitate their familiarity to students without meeting them. Furthermore, booking for sessions needs to maintain their privacy by using paper inquiry forms, an online secured booking system, and the use of a pseudonym in self-booking systems and so on.

4. Educating about learning styles in orientation sessions or workshops for new international students

Educating about the different learning styles and values of Australian academic culture would assist to make them aware of specific behaviours desired in an Australian learning environment, as well as to alter their help seeking behaviours. In orientation sessions or workshops, the conception of learning styles, awareness of their own learning styles, learning styles valued in their home countries and Australia with detailed examples of learning behaviours, and encouragement of positive help seeking, would be included:

5. Establishment or encouragement of use of a mentoring or buddy program

A mentoring or buddy system that pairs each new incoming student with an Australian buddy or existing international student would be one effective way to assist their new life in Australia, particularly for students who are reluctant to make a social network by themselves.

Considerations in the counseling/advising session

6. Be aware of the language issues

If available, and if the students wish, it is advisable to set up the session with a Japanese-speaking advisor. When providing advising in English, it is essential for advisors to make them comfortable by paying attention to language issues, using clear speaking, paraphrasing, and active listening.

7. Be aware of their advisor preference- older and experienced

If possible, matching them up with an advisor who is older than them or an experienced advisor would be suitable, as these qualities are valued by this group of students.

8. Affirm the confidentiality

Since these students are not familiar with this principle of advising/counseling, it is important to reaffirm that students' privacy rights are protected by universities' policies and the law of Australia.

9. Be aware of their way to establish the rapport

It is advisable to be aware that rapport with Japanese students may take a while to establish due to the way they establish relationships with people. Fundamentally, the advisors need to show a supportive attitude to gain trust, such as responding to their feelings with empathy, giving undivided attention and constructive advice, and responding to them in a respectful manner.

10. Pay attention to indicators of other problems

Due to students' reluctance to share problems, the problems behind the presenting problems may be concealed. Once they come to the advising session, it is advisable to be aware of indications of other problems.

11. Referral to the Japanese student community

For students who have problems with friends or career issues, the advisor can refer them to the Japanese student community in the university if available. To give them the information on the association, it is important for the international student office to network with the student association.

12. Encouraging the use of career services at a university

Career counseling services need to be visible to them from an early stage. Developing systems connecting them with alumni or Japanese companies that offer job information would assist them greatly.

13. Educate to seek help

In advising the students, or referring them to services, the advisor can help them understand the importance of seeking assistance from support services, such as utilizing student advisor services, which will enable them to get the most from their study abroad life.

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APPENDIX A: The interviewees' profile

Name (Pseudonym)	Degree	Faculty	Gender	Age range	Length of stay in Australia	Previous Education in Australia	Length of stay in QUT
Goro	Masters	Business	Male	30-34	3years	General English	2 sem
Lisa	Masters	Business	Female	30-34	2years	English for Academic Purposes	3 sem
Taeko	Masters	Business	Female	30-34	2years and 2months	Masters course	1 sem
Kay	Bachelor (Exchange)	Education	Female	20-24	2months, 1year (U.S)	Highschool (U.S)	1 sem
Ryoko	Bachelor (Exchange)	Linguistics	Female	20-24	2months	None	1 sem
Akiko	Bachelor	Business	Female	20-24	2years	Secondary School	1 sem
Miwa	Bachelor	Business	Female	20-24	2years	General English, Diploma	5 sem
Masahiro	Bachelor	Build Environment	Male	20-24	2years and 11months	General English, Foundation	3 sem
Shingo	Bachelor	Information Technology	Male	20-24	1years and 10months	General English, Diploma(QUT)	3 sem
Tsuyoshi	Bachelor	Business	Male	20-24	3years and 11months	English for Academic Purposes, Foundation	5 sem
Ken	Bachelor	Creative Industries	Male	20-24	4years	Secondary School, Diploma (QUT)	3 sem
Koji	Bachelor	Business	Male	25-29	3years and 6months	General English, EAP, Diploma(QUT)	5 sem

APPENDIX B: Record of the interviews and participant observation

Interviewees	Date	Time	Hours	Place
Goro	01/04/06	1:15-2:35	1:20	Goro's home
	23/04/06	2:15-3:20	1:05	Goro's home
Lisa	25/04/06	11:00-1:15	2:15	Phone interview
Taeko	04/04/06	3:30-4:40	1:10	Author's office
	11/04/06	3:30-4:30	1:00	Author's office
	12/04/06	4:00-4:50	0:50	Author's office
Kay	04/04/06	5:25-8:00	2:25	Author's office
	13/04/06	10:00-12:10	2:10	Author's office
Ryoko	25/04/06	5:00-6:45	1:45	Author's office
Akiko	28/03/06	1:05-2:30	1:25	Author's office
	12/04/06	1:05-2:05	1:00	Author's office
Miwa	20/04/06	4:10-7:00	2:50	Author's office
Masahiro	20/04/06	2:00-4:00	2:00	Author's office
Shingo	30/03/06	1:05-3:35	2:30	Author's office
	20/04/06	1:15-2:10	0:55	Author's office
Tsuyoshi	24/03/06	10:00-12:10	2:10	Author's office
Ken	24/02/06	4:00-5:30	1:30	Author's office
	17/04/06	4:10-5:55	0:45	Author's office
Koji	27/04/06	4:30-6:10	1:40	Author's office
Total	19 interviews		32:30	

APPENDIX C: Record of the participant observation – Japanese Student Association

Events	Date	Time	Hours	Place
Board meeting	26/08/05	4:00-6:30	2:30	Classroom
Board meeting	08/09/05	4:00-7:15	3:15	Classroom
Preparation for event	14/09/05	3:30-5:00	1:30	Classroom
Gathering and preparation	23/09/05	2:00-10:30	8:30	Classroom, Pub
Board meeting	14/10/05	4:00-7:35	3:35	Classroom
Meeting	19/10/05	3:00-4:00	1:00	Classroom
BBQ	18/11/05	12:30-2:40	2:10	Park
Board meeting	04/12/05	7:00- 9:40	2:40	Pub
Job information session	06/12/05	4:30-7:50	3:20	Classroom
Board meeting	15/12/05	6:00-7:10	1:10	Classroom
Board meeting	17/01/06	5:00-7:10	2:10	Classroom
Board meeting	03/02/06	5:00-7:20	2:20	Classroom
Board meeting	13/02/06	5:00- 6:40	1:40	Classroom
Information session for new students	22/02/06	10:00-11:45	1:45	Classroom
Board meeting	22/02/06	3:30-7:15	4:15	Classroom
Board meeting	25/02/06	11:05-1:15	2:10	Library
Information session for new students	28/02/06	9:00-12:15	3:15	Lawn in the campus
Board meeting& lunch	04/03/06	11:15- 3:45	4:30	Llibrary
Welcome Party and preparation	10/03/06	4:00- 8:30	4:30	Classroom
Language Exchange	21/03/06	3:50- 5:45	1:55	Canteen on campus
Language Exchange	28/03/06	4:00- 5:20	1:20	Canteen on campus
Language Exchange	11/04/06	4:45- 5:50	1:05	Canteen on campus
Total	18 events		60:45	

APPENDIX D: Survey for the Japanese students (The version given to the students was in Japanese)

Section A: I will ask about your experiences in your academic life at QUT.

1. Please circle the problems/ concerns you have had in your academic life.

- (a) Financial Difficulties (e.g., needing money to support education)
- (b) Academic Problems
 - Please specify
 - Language problem (Reading, Writing, Making presentation, other-),
 - Study Skills (Reading, Writing, Making presentation, other-),
 - Different classroom culture (i.e. speaking out in tutorials etc),
 - Academic work load, Other()
- (c) Social Relationships (e.g., not getting along with others)
 - Please specify
 - Making friend from (Japan, Australia, other)
 - Problems with friends Problems with classmates or team mates
 - Problems with the faculty members Other ()
- (d) Courtship, Sex, and Marriage (e.g., not being satisfied in sexual or marital relationship)
- (e) Personal-Psychological Problems (e.g., lacking in self-esteem)
- (f) Homesick
- (g) Morals and Religion

- (h) The Future
Please specify
 Job hunting in Japan Job hunting in Australia
 Concerns about which country to stay in after graduation Other ()
- (i) Visa problems (e.g. to maintain visa, applying permanent residency)
- (j) Health Conditions (e.g., getting sick too often)
- (k) Psychological Pathology (e.g., displaying hysteria, depression).
- (l) Other ()

2. Please choose the top 3 salient concerns you had in the question above. Then, please choose the ideal helper and an actual helper from the choices below for each concern.

Choices for the ideal helper and actual helper

- (a) friends from (Japan/Australia/other) (b) partner/spouse (c)parents,
 (d) academic advisor, (e) international student adviser (f)counselor
 (f) clinical psychologist, (g) psychiatrist, (h) doctor other than psychiatrist,
 (i)priest or clergy person, (j) no one= do not seek help, (k)other ()

1. Most salient concern was () The ideal helper for this issue is ()
 Actual helper was ()
2. Second salient concern was () The ideal helper for this issue is ()
 Actual helper was ()
3. Third salient concern was () The ideal helper for this issue is ()
 Actual helper was ()

Section B: I will ask you about your preference for and image of the international student adviser/counselor.

1. Please rank from 1 to 6 in descending order of importance the international student adviser/counselor characteristics of greatest concern to you when seeking help for a personal social problem (i.e. the international student adviser /counselor should be older than you)

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Your order | The characteristics |
| () | <input type="checkbox"/> older than I am <input type="checkbox"/> |
| () | (someone with whom I am familiar) |
| () | (same racial background as I) |
| () | (same religious background as I) |
| () | <input type="checkbox"/> same socioeconomic background as I <input type="checkbox"/> |
| () | <input type="checkbox"/> same gender as mine <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. Please rank from 1 to 7 in descending order your ideal image of international student adviser/counselor

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Your order | The ideal role |
| () | <input type="checkbox"/> mother <input type="checkbox"/> |
| () | <input type="checkbox"/> father <input type="checkbox"/> |
| () | <input type="checkbox"/> friend <input type="checkbox"/> |
| () | <input type="checkbox"/> expert <input type="checkbox"/> |
| () | <input type="checkbox"/> moral judge <input type="checkbox"/> |
| () | <input type="checkbox"/> listener <input type="checkbox"/> |
| () | (teacher) |

3. Please read the following statement about advising/counseling and rate 1 to 4 (Strongly agree=1, Agree=2, Disagree=3, Strongly disagree=4)

- A) International student adviser could be very helpful for people with a variety of problems. ()
- B) I would be willing to see a International student adviser if my problems were serious. ()
- C) When I seek advising/counseling, I prefer a direct, concrete answer to my concern. ()
- D) I like the adviser to make decisions for me. ()
- E) I feel it is difficult to express my feelings to an international student adviser. ()
- F) When I seek advising/counseling, I prefer one to one advising/counseling rather than group counseling. ()
- G) I prefer to have the advising/counseling session with my first language. ()
- H) I would not want my friends or family to know if I ever see an international student adviser. ()
- I) I am aware of the advising/counseling resources and location on this campus. ()

J) Financial limitations might prevent me from seeking advising/counseling. ()

4. Please answer the following questions

- A. How do you feel about sharing your concerns or feelings with an international student adviser/counselor? What are the sensitive topics, which you feel are difficult to share with an international student adviser/counselor? What makes it easier to share them? If you have had counseling experiences before, please include your thoughts from the experience.
- B. If you have had advising sessions in English, what makes you talk more easily?

Section C: I will ask about the services at International Student Services (ISS) at QUT.

1. Please check the ISS services below which you know, and how did you get to know them?
Language & Learning services, individual counseling, Accommodation services, Cultural events, Study skill workshops, Trips, Family support group, Immigration information session, Language exchange Program, International student orientation, ISS news, other()
How did you hear about these services? Please choose.
At Orientation program, from friends, professor, course coordinator, tutor, student centre, posters, website, ISS news, other()
2. Have you ever used the services at International Student Services or Counseling center in QUT? Yes/No
If yes, what kind of services did you use? And do you have any feedback to the services?
Language & Learning services, individual counseling, Accommodation services, Cultural events, Study skill workshops, Trips, Family support group, Immigration information session, Language exchange Program, International student orientation, ISS news, other()
Feedback ()
3. What kind of services would you like to have from ISS in the future?
Language & Learning services, individual counseling, Accommodation services, Cultural events, Study skill workshops, Trips, Family support group, Immigration information session, Language exchange Program, International student orientation, ISS news, other()

Section D: I will ask about yourself. Please circle your answer.

Course: Ph.D, Postgraduate course, Undergraduate course, Diploma, Bridging, English Language Program, Other ()

Gender: Male, Female

Age: 17-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55+

Length of stay in Australia: less than 3months, 6months, 1year, 1year and a half, 2years, 3years, more ()

Length of stay in QUT so far: less than 3months, 6months, 1year, 1year and a half, 2years, 3years, more ()

Appendix E: The summary of the survey results

Section A

Q1 The problems/ concerns the students have in their academic life

a	Financial Difficulties	6
b	Academic Problems	25
c	Social Relationships	13
d	Courtship, Sex, and Marriage	3
e	Personal-Psychological Problems	5
f	Homesickness	4
g	Morals and Religion	0
h	The Future	18
l	Visa problems	6
j	Health Conditions	5
k	Psychological Pathology	2
l	Other	0

Q2 3 salient concerns, ideal helpers, and actual helpers

1 Academic problems

22 students answered academic concerns as one of their salient problems

The top actual helper was a friend (10 students)

Academic staff were seen as the most popular ideal seeker (6), and 3 of these students actually seek help from them.

2 Social Relationships

8 students answered social relations as one of their salient problems

2 actually sought help from friends, 3 solved it by themselves, 1 sought help from a counsellor, others - no answer

3 Career concerns

4 students answered career concerns as one of their salient problems

3 students do self-help, one no-answer

Section B

(In Q1&Q2, the number of the order was added, and the lowest score was seen as the most popular)

Q1 Importance of the international student adviser/counsellor characteristics

older than I am	50
someone with whom I am familiar	56
same racial background as I	66
same religious background as I	116
same socioeconomic background as I	80
same gender as mine	88

The Advisor older than them ranked the most important

The Advisor whom they know was second

Q2 Ideal image of international student adviser/counsellor

mother	83
father	99
teacher	68
friend	78
expert	48
moral judge	92
listener	92
Expert was distinctly ranked most important	

Q3 Statement about advising/counseling

rate 1 to 4 (Strongly agree=1, Agree=2, Disagree=3, Strongly disagree=4)

ISA=International Student Advisor

	1	2	3	4	1&2	3&4	Total
a ISA could be very helpful for people with a variety of problems	15	13			28	0	28
b I would be willing to see a ISA if my problems were serious.	4	15	7	2	19	9	28
c When I seek advising/counseling, I prefer a direct, concrete answer to my concern	10	17	1	1	27	2	29
d I like the adviser/counselor to make decisions for me.	2	9	13	5	11	18	29
e I feel it is difficult to express my feelings to an ISA	3	14	10	2	17	12	29
f When I seek advising/counseling, I prefer one to one advising/counseling rather than group counseling.	20	8		1	28	1	29
g I prefer to have an advising/counseling session in my first language.	15	9	3		24	3	27
h I would not want my friends or family to know if I ever see an ISA.	4	9	10	5	13	15	28

i	I am aware of the advising/counseling resources and location on this campus.	7	7	8	6	14	14	28
j	Financial limitations might prevent me from seeking advising/counseling	10	10	6	1	20	7	27

Q4 Comments toward advising

A How do you feel about sharing your concerns or feelings with an ISA?

What are the sensitive topics, which you feel it is difficult to share with an ISA?

What makes it easier to share them? If you have had counseling experiences before, please include your thoughts from the experience.

* Though this depends on the person, I believe in the concept "you have got to solve your own problems"

* I don't go to ISA if I believe my problem is my own

* I am afraid what I say will not remain confidential

* I concerned about whether I can rely on (the advisors) or not. (2 students)

* I want the ISA to be closer to us

* It was difficult for me to go to see the ISA, as the word "counselor" implied the advisors were for mentally sick people, as in the Japanese sense. However, when I wanted to quit QUT because of my trouble with the lecturers, the ISA at QUT did not say "you leave if you want", but tried to find a way I can study as much as possible. Since then, I started to think that QUT is a reliable school.

* In my highschool, I went to see the career advisor but she was not helpful to the international students. She did not listen to me and my concern became increased.

* When I was in the other university, my program coordinator did not do anything to help me with my problem and did not understand international students problems.

* Emotional issues may not be discussed, as I prefer a psychologist, however, I do know that ISA will become helpful when the issue is regarding university.

* It's difficult to share my mental problem

* It may be difficult to share sexual issues and relationship issues (two students)

* English is difficult

* Counselor should be bi-lingual.

* I prefer to have an ISA who has the same gender as me (two students)

* ISA should not judge students

* I have no opportunity to go to the International student services

B If you have advising sessions in English, what makes you talk more easily?

* Slow speaker (4)

* Attitude that they try to understand what I am saying (3)

* Take time when I am speaking (2)

* Speak Clear English

* Kind attitude

* Have gentle eyes

* Smile

* I want to have much time and a relaxed room

* Politeness

* I am afraid to have my poor English pointed out

* If my concern is about English, I prefer a session in my mother tongue

* I don't want to hear that my English doesn't make sense, especially when I am emotional.

When I think about this, I hesitate to go to see the ISA.

* In English, I cannot express all my feelings, so I cannot have satisfaction in the counseling.

* Have an ISA who is not a native speaker (3)

* If the counselor only has slight Japanese knowledge, I would Prefer to have a session in Eng.

- * English is better for some concerns. (2)
- * No problem having it in English
- * Have an advisor who has study abroad experience.
- * Have an advisor who has a lot of experience with non-native speakers
- * Have an advisor who does not judge based on western values
- * Have an advisor who can sympathise with me
- * Have an advisor who understand different cultures
- * I can relax more with a female advisor

Section C

1. the ISS services that they know

Total number of students answered	27
Language & Learning services,	14
individual counseling	11
Accommodation services	16
Study skill workshops	6
Trips	5
Family support group	0
Cultural Events	10
Immigration information session	0
Language exchange Program,	5
International student orientation	10
ISS news,	8
other	0
none	4

2. the ISS services that they have used

Total number of students answered	28
The number of students who have used the ISS services	14
Language & Learning services,	7
individual counseling	4
Accommodation services	2
Study skill workshops	0
Trips	2
Family support group	0
Cultural Events	3
Immigration information session	0
Language exchange Program,	0
International student orientation	0
ISS news,	1
other	0
none	14

3. the ISS services that they want to use in the future

Total number of students answered	26
Language & Learning services,	13
individual counseling	3
Accommodation services	3
Study skill workshops	4
Trips	4
Family support group	1

Cultural Events	6
Immigration information session	7
Language exchange Program,	6
International student orientation	1
ISS news,	1
other	0

Section D

Course

Total number of students answered	28
Phd	2
Postgraduate	8
Undergraduate	12
Diploma	3
Bridging	0
English Language Program	0
Exchange	3
Other	0

Gender

Total number of students answered	25
Male- 14, Female -11	

Age

Total number of students answered	27
17-19	1
20-24	16
25-29	3
30-34	5
35-39	2
40 or above	0

Length of stay in Australia

Total number of students answered	28
less than 3months	3
6months	1
one year	3
one year and half	3
two year	3
two years and half	5
3 years	2
3year and half	1
more than three years	7

Length of study period in QUT

Total number of students answered	30
less than 3months	6
6months	5
one year	5
one year and half	4
two year	7
two years and half	3
3 years or more	0