

# 'Cultures of learning' and international student success in professional programmes

**Mary Furnari**<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Otago, PO Box 56, Dunedin, 9023, [mary.furnari@otago.ac.nz](mailto:mary.furnari@otago.ac.nz)

International students enrolled in professional programmes face unique challenges in acculturating to and being successful in the professional education environment. Students must not only gain command of a body of knowledge, they must also negotiate interactions with clients. This requires a nuanced understanding of profession specific language and appropriate interpersonal skills to effectively interact and communicate with both clients and staff. In this workshop, I draw on research conducted at the University of Otago which revealed factors that helped or hindered international medical students' learning. I begin the workshop by inviting participants to explore their own 'culture of learning', and how it influences their expectations of the academic environment. We will discuss the implications for international students of the 'cultures of learning' they may bring to the New Zealand context. Then, after reviewing some key findings from the Otago study and the broader literature on international students' academic journeys, we will together, brainstorm some practical ways to support international students in overcoming barriers, and achieving academic success in professional programmes.

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## **Biography:**

Mary has worked in international education for over 20 years in the U.S., New Zealand, and China. Mary's core activities have been in international student support and intercultural education of staff and students. Mary is currently completing a PhD examining the relationship between reflective thinking and the development of intercultural competence in 2nd year medical students at the University of Otago.