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Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK

Globalisation, Societies and Education

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cgse20>

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Available online: 08 Jul 2009

To cite this article: Michael Singh (2009): Using Chinese knowledge in internationalising research education: Jacques Rancière, an ignorant supervisor and doctoral students from China, *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 7:2, 185-201

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14767720902908034>

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Using Chinese knowledge in internationalising research education: Jacques Rancière, an ignorant supervisor and doctoral students from China

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The problematic of the research reported in this paper, namely the place of Chinese knowledge in educational research in Australia provides an opportunity to use Rancière's work to rethink the place of ignorance in the supervisory pedagogies used in internationalising education. Because its scope and character is quite variable, consideration is given to four heterogeneous but interdependent approaches to deciding what counts as ignorance. This raises several important theoretical and pedagogical questions about the correspondence between economic power, what we know and what we do with our ignorance; the agency of international students in articulating their intellectual heritage through Western educational research, and the potential of intellectual resources available from China being used by students from there when undertaking research abroad. Eight working principles are provided to inform debates among care-full and conscientious supervisors' interested in engaging, pedagogically with their cross-cultural ignorance.

Keywords: argumentative Chinese students; ignorance; international education; Jacques Ranciere; knowledge; postgraduate supervision; research education; research higher degree pedagogy

Introduction

In 2007 students from Shanghai University of Finance and Economics (China) visited Mount Royal College in Calgary (Canada). There they met with Italians undertaking an intensive English program. Such fee-paying courses are one response to and expression of the internationalisation of higher education. During a break an Italian student asked her Chinese peer, 'Do they have supermarkets in Shanghai?' Here bilingual speakers of English meet a particular Western imagining of mainland Chinese people as living without the complexities of economic, political and cultural globalisation manifested in consumerism. In effect it is a question about the possibilities of China existing beyond the global forces, connections and imaginings borne of transnational flows of technology, finance, people, images and knowledge. As an expression of cross-cultural ignorance the Italian student recognised a lack of knowledge and expressed a desire to be informed.

This raises a related question, 'Does China have any intellectual capital that could be used to enlarge the theoretical resources for doing educational research in countries on the periphery of the world's knowledge producing centres?' Bridges (2007, 72)

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states that the ‘last twenty-five years have seen a huge and bewildering enlargement in the intellectual resources from which educational researchers have drawn’. His account draws on the intellectual heritage of the UK, continental Europe and the US. Apparently, the internationalisation of educational research has seen no enlargement during this time in the places from which Euro-American educational researchers have garnered intellectual resources. Seemingly, for Bridges (2007) this process has not encouraged the diversification and hybridisation of Western educational research through engagement with knowledge traditions from the periphery of the world’s knowledge producing centres. Of course, this is not the case. For example, Trowler, Fanghanel and Wareham (2005) use ‘chi’ [*qi*], a concept from Chinese philosophy referring to the gentle flow of physical energy through relations built on affinity and leading to material prosperity, to theorise processes of higher education policy change.

This paper adds to these efforts to investigate the global dynamics of knowledge flows by exploring how a professor from a marginal Anglophone nation might induce learning in research students from China using that country’s intellectual heritage when s/he knows so little about their scholarly resources but recognises the importance of such intellectual interconnections. For those educational researchers from Australia and other countries on the periphery of Euro-American centres of international research education, who know little of the language and intellectual heritage of research students from multilingual, multi-ethnic China, this creates opportunities for rethinking the place of ignorance in principles of supervisory pedagogies. In doing so, it furthers the dialogue initiated by Lingard (2006, 2007) regarding the internationalisation of postgraduate supervisory pedagogies in terms of the challenges for deparochialising research education. Here research education is thought of as involving more than teaching students about using theoretical concepts, research methods and the analysis of findings. Sociologically speaking, the internationalisation of research education focuses on building connections between the intellectual resources international research students can draw from varying points in the global hierarchy of knowledge to inform research, thereby making unanticipated and unexpected contributions to knowledge.

The proposition explored in this paper, is that while the sociocultural diversity of international students may be celebrated increased recognition needs to be given to the epistemological diversity their presence in Australia and similar nations on the margins of the world’s intellectual centres represents for the internationalisation of research education. Evidence relating to this question is explored in relation to possibilities for enhancing the scholarly capabilities of international research students through the various knowledge traditions they can access, in addition to the diverse intellectual resources of the West for which they pay handsomely. The evidence comes from China, England, France, Australia and Sierra Leone via North America, and includes excerpts from a novel, textbook, statistics and anonymous peer reviews. This paper concludes with eight working principles to inform the practical reasoning of a conscientious but ignorant supervisor of research higher degree students from China. However, the verbal tussle over the sociological relationship between education, ignorance and their structuring provides the point of departure for this paper.

Conceptualising cross-cultural ignorance

From a sociological perspective, Connell (2007, 228) provides a helpful way of thinking about research-based knowledge production and circulation, defining it as ‘an

interconnected set of intellectual projects that proceed from varied social starting points into an unpredictable future.’ Key problems for the internationalisation of research education is how a country such as Australia, supplicants to the Euro-American power-houses of knowledge creation and transmission, might connect with the intellectual projects being undertaken in the homelands of its international students, many of whom are from Asia. This means bringing this intellectual capital to bear in the production and flow of research-based knowledge as much as the dialogic education of transnational educational researchers. The presence of international students makes possible real world interventions in education research by using the intellectual resources they can access from their homeland to inject concepts from developing nations into educational debates in the West that typically are not considered in this context. By relating the evidence they generate to such knowledge it may be possible to (re)constitute the practice of internationalising research education and (re)form the subject of the transnational educational researcher. Such interventions might be taken as part of the struggle for ‘global cognitive justice’, which Santos (2006, 11) argues is based on an appreciation of the world as far exceeding any Western understanding of it; that more non-Western understandings of the world remain to be identified; that many hybrid understandings, the mixing Western and non-Western knowledge, remain to be given form, and that current knowledge of globalisation, because of Euro-American dominance, is much less global than is possible.

The forms of ignorance implied in the forgoing sociological account of the global dynamics of knowledge are heterogeneous and interdependent. Because its scope and character is quite variable four different approaches to deciding what counts as ignorance are considered here. First, ignorance might be taken to mean the want or lack of knowledge, or of being uninformed. For instance, Rattansi (1992, 25) observes that the prescription offered by multicultural education for addressing racism experienced by students from Asia ‘is the sympathetic teaching of “other cultures” in order to dispel the ignorance which is seen to be at the root of prejudice and intolerance’. Britzman et al. (1993, 196) give an added sense of complexity with the observation that the students’ ‘ignorance’ of how identities work is, actually, an effect of the ‘knowledge’ these students already hold, namely that race, class, gender and sex are the explanations of ‘trouble’ and ‘discomfort’ and thus are best left alone. Thus, the ignorance inherent in racist and sexist stereotypes may be attributed to the lack of opportunities students and/or teachers have for making sense of the exchanges between their own and other intellectual heritages, or the contradictions in curatorial, magisterial and exotic markers of differences (Sen 2005). Here ignorance is seen as involving a strong element of irrationalism to be driven out through care-full teaching.

Second, ignorance can be defined as a mechanism which provides an incentive for learning. For instance, Dewey (1916, 189) saw an awareness of one’s ignorance and its structuring as a stimulus for learning, observing, ‘A Socrates is thus led to declare that consciousness of ignorance is the beginning of the effective love of wisdom’. Likewise, Willis (1993, 112) defines the ‘process of being educated [as] coming to understand our own ignorance about the world’. In Xin’s (2007) sociological novel it is the ignorance of young women, ‘chopstick girls’, that stimulates them to migrate from rural China to cities such as Nanjing in a quest for knowledge and economic security. However, the quest reinforced their self-deprecation: ‘Although their ignorance gave them courage to leave their homes, this same ignorance could very quickly become a source of fear and self-loathing when they realised how little they knew’ (Xin, 2007, 63)

Third, ignorance can also be defined as more than just a form of irrationality or an absence of information, but is integral to the structuring of knowledge. In this sense, ignorance is produced by forces that block the development of certain knowledge; this includes one's own refusal to address or consider forms of knowledge that threaten one's world view. Aronowitz and Giroux (1986, 159) define ignorance as 'a form of knowing that resists certain forms of knowledge. Ignorance is a sense, a form of knowledge defined by the way it actively resists certain knowledge'. This form of ignorance is borne of the manipulation of the public via education, examinations, the media and historical knowledge. The Indian-born sociologist–novelist, Eric Arthur Blair (aka George Orwell) provides insights into how a 'new aristocracy', namely 'the salaried middle class and the upper grades of the working class' (Orwell, 1974, 728) could consciously perpetuate ignorance. The purposes for consciously promoting ignorance are to ensure that people never become aware of their oppression; lack the capabilities for articulating their discontent, and are denied any ability to grasp a sense that the world could be otherwise. Here ignorance means being:

... unwilling and unable to think too deeply on any subject whatever... It includes the power of not grasping analogies, of failing to perceive logical errors, of misunderstanding the simplest arguments... of being bored or repressed by any train of thought which is capable of leading in a heretical direction [and] holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them. (Orwell 1974, 731, 732, 733)

Fourth, there are fields of education where we as teachers find ourselves at least uncertain if not ignorant. For instance, Prensky (2001) highlights this ignorance when comparing 'digital natives' who are at home dealing information and communication technologies, and those of us who are 'digital immigrants' for-ever learning to adopt and adapt to these ever-advancing technologies. Likewise, Spivak (1988, 145) points to a similar ignorance, noting that the internationalisation of higher education transforms academics' intellectual ordering of the world, rendering so many of our concepts null and void, and making us mindful of our cross-cultural ignorance. Let us trouble this particular idea of ignorance a little further.

Consider for a moment the pedagogical uncertainties experienced by academics engaging in international education, teaching students from different educational cultures. Ranciere (1991) gives an account of the pedagogical use of ignorance experienced by a nineteenth century French professor who had to teach Flemish students. Although neither party knew the other's language or intellectual heritage this ignorant professor conscientiously taught his students bilingually (Grinberg and Saavedra 2000). This French teacher was guided by the principle that 'one teaches what doesn't know through [making] space for others to learn' (Dillon 2005, 443). This saw the professor teaching what he did not know by assisting his students to use their own intelligence so as to reveal their own capabilities and intellectual heritage to themselves and others. For Blumenfeld-Jones (2004, 275) this pedagogically valued ignorance makes it possible to address a difficult educational problem, namely 'humbly acknowledge[ing] our inability to exhaust another's reality'. Pedagogically, this enables teachers 'to have a much broader vision of what we do not know, as well as what we do know, and also to be aware that what we do not know is our own ignorance, not a general ignorance' (Santos 2006, 43).

The problem of cross-cultural ignorance inherent in the internationalisation of education raises some interesting questions. Is there a correspondence between economic power, what we know and what we do with our ignorance? What signs of

agency do we find among international students from the developing world for articulating their intellectual heritage in the contested field of Western educational research? Are there intellectual resources available from China's majority or minority nationalities for research students from that country to use to enhance their capabilities for scholarly argumentation? Taking ignorance as integral, pedagogically to the education of early career researchers and their efforts to make an original contribution to knowledge, I now turn to three illustrations that address each of these questions.

Questionable ignorance enables intellectual development

It is interesting to consider reasons for the ignorance many in the West have of other knowledge traditions from outside the Euro-American sphere. Xin's (2007) novel, *Miss Chopsticks*, poses this issue thus:

The ignorance of the Westerners who came to the teahouse also amazed Six. She had learned all about Western history at school. She knew of Britain's dark colonial past and its exploitation of slaves, America's bloody civil war, Holland, Spain and Portugal's battle for hegemony of the seas; she had studied French *bas-relief*, the ruins of ancient Rome, and Greek myths. She had therefore expected that foreigners would know all about Qin bricks and Han tiles, the poetry of the Tang and Song dynasties, the Four Great Inventions and the novels of Ming and Qing. (Xin 2007, 136–7)

What might explain to Six (Liu) the cross-cultural ignorance of these particular Westerners drinking tea in Nanjing? More generally, what might explain this exclusion of the intellectual resources of peripheral knowledge traditions from those which educational researchers in Anglo-phone nations might draw? Is it, as Lingard (2006, 295; 2007, 242) suggests, that 'the link between economic power, knowledge, and language' is such that learning something about China's scholastic canon will have to wait until that nation becomes a superpower? If so, it is likely to be a China with many young women like Six frustrated and angry with this structuring of a seemingly widespread Western ignorance or refusal to learn about or from their intellectual capital.

What level of economic power would constitute a sufficient and necessary material basis for Australians, for example, to learn more about China's intellectual resources? According to the Australian China Business Council (2008) the two-way trade between Australia and China in 2007 was valued at \$AUD 52.6 billion, underwriting Australian consumerism, employment and mortgage repayments. In 2006, 90,287 (23.5%) of Australia's international students ($n = 383,818$) were from mainland China (AEI 2007). The \$AUD 3.6 billion generated through education and travel services for students from China underwrite the viability of Australian universities. Australia's economic drivers for recruiting international students are not exceptional. For instance, Bolsmann and Miller (2008) found that, in Britain, economic considerations dominate the thinking of university administrators, senior managers, international officers and heads of schools. However, financial factors appear not to constitute sufficient incentive for learning either the written (*Hanzi*) or spoken (*Putonghua*) forms of China's national language, let alone engaging Chinese theoretical ideas in Australian educational research.

Is it material self-interest that drives the engagement of Australian educational researchers with the intellectual resources of French avant-garde theorists? There appears to be little grounds for claiming such a link. France is Australia's sixteenth

largest trading partner and fifteenth largest supplier of imports but is ranked only twenty-fourth as a destination for exports from Australia (Australian Government 2008). Exports to France from Australia totalled \$AUD 1.3 billion in 2006–2007, while imports during this period totalled \$AUD 3.9 billion; some \$47.4 billion short of the two-way trade between Australia and China. The link between economic power, knowledge and language is not self-evident in the use by Australian educational researchers of concepts from Kristeva's (1986) *About Chinese women* or Derrida's (1976) *Of grammatology*. Moreover, following Ranciere (1991), the work of these French scholars on China might usefully be examined for what they lack and how this affected or even disrupted the operational conditions for their scholarship.

Kristeva's (1986) work has, for example, been criticised for its cross-cultural ignorance by Spivak (1988, 134–53) who dismissed it as First World feminist colonialism. She is critical of Kristeva's narcissistic self-absorption with exploring her own identity and obliterating the interests of Chinese women. Further, she points to Kristeva's failure to use primary evidence; for turning speculation into claims of fact, and the over-generalised use of terms such as the 'Christian West'. The ungrounded and uninformed way in which Kristeva writes about China's culture, language and history sees Chinese women positioned in a revered, misty past, set off from a supposedly modern Western time. Spivak (1988) sees this work as oscillating between colonialist benevolence and contempt.

With respect to Derrida's (1976) knowledge of China, Chow (2001) questions his idea that *Han zi* are ideograms. This reductionism robs this script of its grammar, syntax, sound, history and the voices of actual speakers (DeFrancis 1984). Without studying the Chinese language's script, Derrida (1976) used it to theorise about 'Western culture' and its globalisation. His attribution of fantastical qualities to Chinese writing enables him to assert differences with the 'West'. Chow (2001) argues that this intervention, made on the basis of a lack knowledge, reflects an indifference to the workings *Han zi* and *Putonghua*.

The cross-cultural ignorance of Kristeva (1986) and Derrida (1976) reproduces stigmatic stereotypes attached to China's multiple languages, cultures and peoples. However, it must be noted, that this ignorance has been productive of their other important intellectual developments. In this instance, ignorance has enabled significant theoretical achievements to be made by these scholars. Below, the discussion section of this paper engages another French theorist Jacques Ranciere (1991), speaking back to his pedagogical positions and principles in terms of what they suggest about enhancing the capabilities of educational research students from northeast China for scholarly argumentation. What signs of agency do we find among international students from the developing world for articulating their intellectual heritage in the educational research published in the English speaking world?

Articulating agency through other knowledge traditions

The spatial distribution of the intellectual resources drawn upon by educational researchers from Anglophone nations, and Australia in particular (Connell 2007), is largely limited to the Euro-American sphere and its postcolonial outposts. However, the globalisation of educational research is seeing an enlargement of its intellectual resources through the flows of international research students (Wright 2003, 1998). This internationalisation of research education is making possible the diversification

and hybridisation of educational research in Australia and similar countries on the periphery of the world's knowledge producing centres. Student researchers from over there are coming here, and some are testing the repertoire of concepts and arguments they can access from their intellectual heritage for informing research here (Han 2006). This seems especially promising given what ignorance of Chinese language(s), culture(s) and peoples enabled Kristeva (1986) and Derrida (1976) to achieve. Intellectuals within the ethnically diverse Chinese diaspora such as Xin (2007) write to articulate a conversation between Chinese and Western intelligence:

One day, a friend of Ruth's had actually asked Six to list the Four Great Inventions, as if he had no idea that they were 'paper, movable type, gunpowder and the compass'! And not one of these foreigners seemed to know about the *Book of Odes* or *Dream of the Red Mansions*. 'Impossible, impossible!' Six would cry. 'Every middle-school student here knows your Shakespeare, Dickens and Victor Hugo. How can you not know our Cao Xueqin and Tang Xianzu? We're not a small country, we have so many people and such a long history! Why don't you know this?' (Xin 2007, 137)

Apparently, along with the economics of trade, the materiality of space, demographics and time are not sufficient grounds to justify engaging the intellectual resources from peripheral nations of the world. But international research students are making significant scholarly contributions to the internationalisation of educational policy and pedagogy. For instance, Wright (2003) has documented his local/global travels from his days as a student and teacher in Sierra Leone through to graduate studies and university teaching in North America. He has articulated a conversation between African and Western knowledge, in full expectation that non-Africans will engage such knowledge, even if they have no materially determined interest in doing so. Specifically, Wright (1998) has challenged the parochial assumption that cultural studies in educational research originated in Britain at Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. Other locations, times and people are given agency in his accounting for this field's multiple origins. These include community education in Kenya; culturology in Russia; the Harlem Renaissance in the US; and the Negritude Movement in France, Francophone Africa and the French West Indies. Here it is useful to reflect on Lingard's (2007, 243) observation that 'Deng Xiaoping is seen as the centrally important figure for the Chinese students in relation to globalization ...' This suggests a less Euro-American perspective that might take the Deng government's open door policy as providing one of the many originating points for the world's contemporary globalisation.

Wright (1998) questions the ignorance to be found in Anglo-American countries which assumes that the cultural studies of education can only exist in developing countries because it has been imported from Britain or the US. To accept this is to deny such scholars and research students an authoritative place from which to speak, relegating their intellectual heritage to the margins. Wright's (1998) mapping of the multiple origins of this field shows that the exclusion or marginalisation of the intellectual heritages of peripheral nations is not a purely economic matter. It involves the cultural politics of education and signals the absence of an everyday commitment to 'global cognitive justice' (Santos 2006, 11).

Here Sen's (2005, 239–40) concept of agency is pertinent, because it includes but stretches beyond the concern for international students' care and well-being, to enhancing their capabilities for scholarly disputation using their intellectual capital in Western educational research. This is the focus of Wright's (1998) intervention. From

Sen's (2005) perspective, the informed, critical and reasoned agency of international students includes them caring for the well-being of others and their capability for redressing the sufferings, deprivation and ill-being of others, not in the least through intellectual argumentation. This suggests that an international research education may enhance the capability and thus the agency of research students from China to pursue goals they have reason to value and progress. To develop such capabilities calls for an examination of China's diverse heritage of intellectual disputation.

Extending education's community of arguers

Consider for a moment the pedagogical experiences of teaching international, full-fee paying, female research students from China in England. Lingard (2006, 296; 2007, 243) found that his 25 Chinese women postgraduates expressed 'muted criticisms, [being] able to be critical to a point, within certain parameters'. Egege and Kutieleh (2004) also reported that Australian academics bemoan the lack of critical thinking among international students from Asia. Apparently, some academics see this as a deficit to be rectified by them assimilating one of varying models of critique, perhaps one from France, Germany, Britain or North America. In these Western nations, different assumptions about supervision are informed by, and inform differing traditions of critique as much as they do assorted understandings of creativity or originality in intellectual work and knowledge production.

It may be that ignorance of China's varied heritage of scholarly argumentation confronts the positioning of Chinese students as being unable to write critically. Consider the following statement which appears in an English language textbook for undergraduates studying in Yuncheng University (Shanxi Province):

Mao launched the Great Leap Forward in 1958. This program forced farmers into communes, abolished private property, and set up backyard steel mills to speed China's entry into the industrial age. The program was a catastrophic failure and brought the country to bankruptcy. President Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, General Secretary of the Communist Party, took over day-to-day control to restore the economy. (Qin 2006, 252)

This instance of muted criticism is made within the parameters of the conventions governing scholarly argumentation in China (Peterson 1979). It hints at the policy debates that occurred within and outside the Chinese Communist Party from the late 1950s onwards. Such seemingly belated criticisms of the Chinese government's policies continue, often in the form of public protests. For instance, according to official statistics from the Chinese Ministry of Public Security, Lim (2004) reported that more than three million people took part in 58,000 'mass incidents' in China in 2004. They made known their criticisms of low wages, social welfare problems, the restructuring of state-owned enterprises and evictions. Returning to the textbook, its subdued critique continues:

Beginning in 1966, Mao led the country through his infamous Cultural Revolution... tens of thousands were executed. Millions were exiled to rural labor brigades. ... On September 9, 1976, Mao died. ... Shortly after, even the Chinese Communist Party officially declared Mao's concept of continuing class struggle an ideological mistake, and his call for cultural revolution was commonly believed to have been a terrible disaster. (Qin 2006, 252)

The low-key criticisms in this English language, university textbook from central China question Mao's inciting of 'The Chaos.' Here it is useful to appreciate the historical parameters governing the exercise of criticism in China. Those who criticised the Qin government (221–206 BCE) were executed. Mah (2002, 252–3) recounts seven different ways in which people in ancient China could then be officially put to death, including the execution of the entire family to the third degree (wife, parents and children) or to the ninth degree (wife and siblings' families, parents' families and children's families). It is useful to consider how Chinese people have learned to make even muted criticisms within these historically grounded parameters. During 'The Chaos' (1966–1976), for instance, intellectuals were condemned by illiterate peasants. Xin (2007, 34) explains the possibilities for critique available through the Chinese language's affordance of double meanings:

Because some Chinese characters [*Han zi*] are pronounced in the same way, the language offers many opportunities for puns. ... Old Guan made clever use of this possibility for misunderstanding when he wrote his Letter of Resolution. If you were listening to someone reading it out, and couldn't see the characters, it could mean this:

I resolve every day to clean away shit, to brush the white-tile floor and not to forget the teachings of our peasant leaders.

But if you were looking at the characters, you could also take it to mean the following:

Every day I must clean away History, get rid of the professional class and follow the dirty feet of our peasant leaders. (Emphasis in the original)

This, then, hints at the intellectual heritage of the Chinese peoples as a 'community of arguers, enquirers and critics' (Bridges 2007, 66). There are debates among Chinese intellectuals and the populace generally. Integral to forming a community of argumentative Chinese research students is 'their recognition and reference to come common rules of ... intellectual and creative behaviour' (Bridges 2007, 66). Lingard's (2006, 296; 2007, 243) point that his students made their muted criticisms within certain parameters is consistent with the argument that educational research is, in part a rule governed activity. Educational research can also provide participants with the opportunities and know-how to use their agency strategically and tacitly to capitalise on the conditions which make critique possible. In China, Australia and elsewhere research is governed by research ethics committees, state research funding authorities and industry research partners as much as any research community.

In this context Chinese research students studying in Australia are likely to benefit from reading the accounts by Lowe (2007) and Macintyre (2007) of the Orwellian tactics used by the Howard government (1996–2007) to silence critiques emanating from Australian universities and researchers. While state executions were not part of the parameters for silencing their criticisms, these criticisms have made visible the plurality of knowledges within Australian research. Xin (2007) has a peasant girl, Six, express the muted criticism some Chinese have for the apparent refusal of tea-drinking Westerners in Nanjing to engage the intellectual heritage of China. A key pedagogical question that emerges is how an Australian supervisor might induce research students from China to use that country's intellectual resources to theorise evidence relating to Australian education given a consciousness of one's own cross-cultural ignorance and the factors structuring it.

The conscientious but ignorant professor

The expectations governing research supervision vary across Europe, North America and Asia and differ for research students within and across disciplines. Among the range of pedagogical moves available two interdependent positions present themselves for reflection about the character of supervisory pedagogy. One approach to the internationalisation of research education is evident in the work of conscientious academics, those characterised as 'knowledgeable, enlightened, and of good faith' (Ranciere 1991, 7). Through their teaching, these efficacious academics work to elevate the academic performance of international students (Morrison et al. 2005) and to enhance their adaptation to an unfamiliar educational culture (Zhou et al. 2008). These conscientious academics are numbered among those people of goodwill who care for the well-being of their students. They include those who want to elevate these students' knowledge of research; make them conscious of their rights; narrow the gap between 'us and them', and promote their socio-economic well-being.

These conscientious academics transmit their knowledge to international students to bring them up to their own level of expertise. Expert supervisory pedagogy involves them in teaching what they know: 'the one who knows transmits what he or she knows to the ignorant or unlearned, [thereby continuously renewing] the teacher's authority' (Dillon 2005, 444). They do so by adapting their knowledge to the intellectual capacities of international students and assessing them to ensure they satisfactorily understand what they are taught. Acting on good faith, conscientious academics care about seeking out new ways to explain to international students what they do not understand. For instance, Skyrme's (2007) study of Chinese students who did not pass their course at a New Zealand university points to the need for entry requirements that consider their capabilities for do-it-yourself learning as well as greater teacher guidance in the first year of their studies. In effect, whatever knowledge is established as valuable also serves to define a group of students who do not possess it.

With this conscientiousness, however, come complaints against ignorant students for their lack of critical thinking skills, focused writing, academic honesty and strategies for deep learning. Asmar (2005) reports, universities in Australia see many international students needing remedial education to compensate for these deficits. While much too sharp in its contrasts, this relationship between homogenised constructions of 'Eastern' and 'Western' intelligence might be characterised in the following terms: 'ripe minds and immature ones, the capable and the incapable, the intelligent and the stupid' (Ranciere 1991, 6). However, for some academics and students this might also suggest that the deficit-driven pedagogy of the conscientious academic is less than efficacious (Dillon 2005, 443). If so, this may necessitate some re-working of the varying principles that go into the pedagogies of postgraduate supervision, especially in those countries on the margins of the world's knowledge producing centres, Australia included. This is where the care-full, conscientious professor looks to his/her own cross-cultural ignorance and what it means for enabling the agency of research students from China.

The less than efficacious benefits of explicative pedagogies of supervision suggest the need for a supplementary approach, one appropriate for a none-the-less conscientious but ignorant professor. In this case, the internationalisation of research education presents the challenge of learning about new ways of engaging research students from other educational cultures in ways that use their intellectual capital, about which the supervisor knows very little. These contacts with international research students about

who little is known of their intellectual heritage accelerate and intensify the experience of cross-cultural ignorance of at least some conscientious supervisors (Connell 2007; Lingard 2006, 2007). The pedagogical relations between supervisors and research students, who speak different languages, are from different educational cultures and confront varying expectations across nations and disciplines, necessarily involve cross-cultural ignorance. This would seem to be so no matter how imbued with respect and care for their well-being.

As Sen (2005) argues, many in the West do not know much about the traditions of scholarly disputation in India due to problems of cross-cultural ignorance. It may be that recognition of one's ignorance as a care-full supervisor holds some potential for changing one's pedagogical principles, if not the narrow economic climate in which one's labours are judged, such as performance-based income generation. The point is not to pretend that a supervisor can easily remedy such cross-cultural ignorance, for instance by ridding oneself of the more banal stereotypes that plague the work of Kristeva (1986) and Derrida (1976). Thus, it is probably useful to begin with the assumption that the internationalisation of research education can not occur, by definition, without cross-cultural ignorance. An Anglophone Australian supervisor and his/her Chinese research students are sutured into a relationship in which 'there can never be a full and definitive summation of the whole of which they are a part, [or] of each part's due measure as an integral part of the whole' (Dillon 2005, 442). If so, then the following working principles might provide a useful point of departure for debate among care-full supervisors' conscious of being faced with our own cross-cultural ignorance.

First, reasonable pedagogies are based on the equality between self-esteem and the esteem of others (Ranciere 1991, 79). This egalitarian contingency with respect to esteem for reasoning beings is acquired and expressed by the supervisor and research student who acknowledge and recognise themselves and others as intelligent, and as capable of making a small but nonetheless significant mark on the world's intellectual resources. Their co-presence means that they are equally contemporaneous, rather than differentially positioned in terms of modernity and tradition (Santos 2007). Pedagogically, it is a matter of a supervisor working with an international student to develop her/his capabilities to say, 'Me too. I'm a transnational educational researcher'. It means producing early career researchers who can say, 'Me too, I have the capability for using my intellectual heritage to produce knowledge that contributes to informed intellectual debates internationally'. This is not an immodest or boastful expression of pride, but a statement of the desire and power of being a reasonable and reasoning being. To do so means approaching research students from China with the presumption 'that their mouths [emit] a language and not just noises; speaking to them, supposing they [have] the intelligence to understand... in short, considering them equally reasonable being' (Ranciere 1991, 87).

Second, the role of an ignorant professor is to give research students 'the consciousness of what an intelligence can do when it considers itself equal to any other and considers any other equal to itself' (Ranciere 1991, 30). This principle of intellectual reciprocity sees the supervisor and students acknowledge their mutual ignorance, including mutual ignorance of research and supervisory practices, while recognising each other as intelligent beings. What stultifies research students from China are assumptions about 'the inferiority of their intelligence' (Ranciere 1991, 39). Regarding international students from Asia solely as rote learners, uncritical thinkers, unfocused writers and plagiarists with limited English proficiency reinforces such a contestable

belief. Perhaps more importantly, it provides a basis for investigating procedures for translating and relating knowledge from China about these issues to their positioning within Anglophone nations (Liu 1996). The critical analysis of these particular forms of subjection by a research student from China's Manchu minority enabled her to make visible much that is excluded from Australian research education, for example China's diverse heritage of scholarly argumentation (Singh and Fu 2008a). The idea of intellectual reciprocity is not about proving all intelligence is equal but seeing what can be done by working with this pre-supposition. It is this claim to equality of intelligence that can impel and empower these research students 'to challenge the ways in which they are unequally installed' (Dillon 2005, 431) in the current geo-political ordering of knowledge flows and education internationally (Connell 2007).

Third, an ignorant but conscientious professor may teach what he/she does not know (given that there is much she/he does know about teaching and research) by believing that his/her research students from China are able to realise their capabilities by them using their own intelligence to learn. In particular, they might enable their students to use their multilingual communicative repertoire so as to identify knowledge from China that might be made a theoretically useful component in their educational research in Australia (Singh and Guo 2008). To invoke such multi-competence in a world of global bilingualism is to give recognition to the plurality of knowledge and the diversity of concepts available to students of China's Han majority for knowing the world (cf. Santos 2007). The operating assumption of a professor ignorant of his/her students' language/s is that such students learn through their communicative repertoire 'because the same intelligence is at work in all the productions of the human mind' (Ranciere 1991, 18). Pedagogically, a professor ignorant of *Han zi* and *Putonghua* works to help these students draw concepts from China to open up new ways of thinking about education and educational research in Australia, a nation which lies outside the globally dominating Euro-American sphere of influence, and in doing so also formulating new ideas about the internationalisation of education and research. Together the supervisor and students each discover the intelligence they put into this research is the same. In particular, the bilingual students benefit by developing advanced knowledge in both languages.

Fourth, a professor ignorant of China's educational culture(s) relates what these students already know to what they are trying to learn through their research in and about Australian education. This involves having them reflect about what they have learnt previously in China or what they can now learn from there (for instance via the multilingual internet), and where it now fits into their intellectual trajectory. The principle here is that 'one must learn something and relate everything else to it' (Ranciere 1991, 20). For instance, Han (2006) demonstrates that as she experienced the research process as an international student studying in Australia, she compared and contrasted what she learnt in northeast China. She drew on China's scholastic canon to compare what she was learning through her research and her experience of becoming a transnational educational researcher. There were many things this student knew that could be used as a conceptual resource for theorising her research, that is 'something to which a new thing to be learned can be related' (Ranciere 1991, 28). Moreover, learning another language and its knowledge while learning more of one's own is a prudential move.

Fifth, an ignorant professor can work with research students from China to make educational advantages of the knowledge detours made possible by them using their capabilities, for instance as 'digital natives' (Prensky 2001) or having skills in writing

sociological novellas or plays (Xin 2007). This means finding ways to link the learning essential to their successful and timely completion of their studies with that other knowledge which seems marginal, but can be important for transnational educational researchers (Singh and Fu 2008b). Here the spotlight is on the students' 'will to learn,' that is their 'will to communicate, the will to figure out what the other is thinking' (Ranciere 1991, 62). Focusing on their 'will to learn', an ignorant professor is attentive to the students' desire to learn, and how the university and its operating conditions propel this desire as much as constrain it. For instance, this will to learn might involve the will to discover the role of new technologies in creating transnational research communities or the will to combine different genres in reporting research evidence. The will to learn produces original knowledge by doing the hard work involved in daring to be adventurous, in linking essential and marginal knowledge, essential and marginal learnings.

The sixth principle for an ignorant professor is to '*reveal an intelligence to itself*' rather than always dwelling on deficits, presumed or otherwise (Ranciere 1991, 28). In this case, this involves making Chinese research students conscious of their characteristics as 'intellectual subjects' or more specifically transnational researchers (Ranciere 1991, 35). More than this, it means becoming conscious that they are part of the diverse intellectual heritages of the 'East' and the 'West', and that both do have complex traditions of scholarly disputation (Graham 1986; Sen 2005). The students might examine how they find themselves positioned overseas, usually as lacking or ignorant of something, and reflect on how knowledge of this enables them to produce new knowledge; perhaps by standing on the shoulders of Kristeva (1986) and Derrida (1976). They can examine their intellectual actions, taking notice of their power as intelligent beings with the capacity to think critically. Reflecting on their abilities they can become aware of the manner in which they have acquired them. Such meta-cognitive processing is about recognising the social basis of reflection:

... that return to oneself that is not pure contemplation but rather an unconditional attention to one's intellectual acts, to the route they follow and to the possibility of always moving forward by bringing to bear the same intelligence on the conquest of new territories. (Ranciere 1991, 29)

Seventh, in terms of assessment, an ignorant professor can verify what the research students are learning by having them say what they now see, what they now think and what sense they are making of their learning. Thus, the students are asked to show the materiality of what they are learning. In short, the supervisor verifies in writing or orally what the students claim to know. The written and spoken materials form a 'bridge of communication between two minds' (Ranciere 1991, 32). An ignorant supervisor's art is to 'bring the examinee back to the material objects, to a thing that [s/he] can verify with [her/his] sense' (Ranciere 1991, 32). The task is to verify that the students are engaging in a quest to learn and to produce new knowledge: 'Whoever looks always finds. [S/he] doesn't necessarily find what [s/he] was looking for, and even less what [s/he] was supposed to find. But [s/he] finds something new to relate to the thing he already knows' (Ranciere 1991, 33). Supervisors can tell reasonably well when students do not know what they are doing; they know 'very well when someone speaking doesn't know what [s/he] is talking about' (Ranciere 1991, 58). Thus, an ignorant professor 'verifies that the work of the intelligence is done with attention' (Ranciere 1991, 29).

The eighth principle informing this approach to internationalising research education is the need for caution regarding expected outcomes. These working principles do not provide any definitive answers. Their use in real-world interventions in 'Western' educational research requires an assessment of what makes them possible and the conditions of resistance (Santos 2006). While these pedagogical principles might be expected to deliver much, there are limitations, three of which are worth noting here.

First, the idea of teaching what one does not know is a major challenge because as Ranciere (1991, 123) observes 'not everyone who wants to be can be ignorant'. Connell (2007, 112) is quite comfortable in acknowledging her ignorance, 'I have no knowledge of Farsi (Persian) or Arabic. I am not only dependent on translators' renderings of text, but also on their choice of texts to translate'. However, Blumenfeld-Jones (2004, 275, emphasis in original) observes that acknowledging such ignorance 'requires an imaginative leap because our culture is so steeped in the attitude that we can know the Other completely that it is difficult to conceive of *not knowing* as the basis for action'. Further, the students themselves are likely to be resistant to such a position. Many students in China want to learn 'Voice of America' English; want to travel to the US to study, and want to become citizens of that nation: paying to realise these desires contributes to them ignoring China's intellectual resources. Connell's (2007, 122) observations with respect to Iranians would seem to apply to at least some Chinese students, namely the 'desire to enter the globally dominant culture, to possess its artefacts, to follow its customs and to be esteemed by its emissaries, is both powerful and protean'.

Second, not every supervisor wants to 'talk about the equality of intelligence' (Ranciere 1991, 123). Some intellectuals may resist attempts to reverse and displace the opposition between the conscientious but ignorant professor and the Chinese research student, preferring to rationalise intellectual inequality. This is perfectly understandable given the role of teachers in developing knowledge and understanding in their students, at the same time this very expertise reinforces a generalised sense of the ignorance of students.

Third, the idea that these principles represent good news for research students from China need to be treated cautiously (Dillon 2004, 445). Even for these pedagogical principles there must necessarily be a remainder – an ignorance – which will disrupt the conditions of their operability. These principles operate in the space provided by the ongoing internationalisation of research education that admits a future that cannot be known or anticipated in advance. Pedagogical judgements based on practical reasoning are necessary. Thus, these principles may be hopelessly idealistic as there are no grand solutions to the problems of internationalising research education. Even so, these working principles of postgraduate pedagogy may offer a means for debating a supervisor's cross-cultural ignorance, having some limited application in conversations about these matters in particular contexts.

Conclusion

In China the images and imaginings of modernity drive the aspiration to learn 'Western' knowledge; personal connections make such learning even more desirable and, political and economic forces reinforce this yearning. Xin's (2007) character Six sees the dynamics of global knowledge flows as an experience of exclusion rather than the inclusion of China's intellectual heritage. Six is expected to learn knowledge about Western

countries and their diverse cultures, while the Westerners she meets have not learnt knowledge from outside the Euro-American sphere of influence. For Six there is an inkling that she is expected to forgo her own intellectual heritage, and that the internationalisation of education may be another instance of Western colonialism and imperialism, albeit with many more complications. For Six the dynamics of global knowledge flows render inferior, deride or snuff out China's intellectual heritage in favour of the knowledge of the English-speaking West. Enlightened, care-full proclamations about the inclusivity of international education proceed in tandem with the maintenance and imposition of boundaries that exclude or marginalise other knowledge traditions.

The problematic of the research reported in this paper, namely the place of Chinese knowledge in educational research in Australia provides a valuable and fertile opportunity for rethinking the place of ignorance in the supervisory pedagogies in internationalising education. A number of important theoretical and pedagogical questions have been raised from afresh perspective through a novel constellation of experiences and concepts. Some may find this helpful in thinking about the extent of the international higher education market and the limited literature available on the contribution of other knowledges to education in peripheral nation-states, such as Australia. In advancing consideration about the internationalisation of postgraduate supervision in these countries, it might be desirable to think through the ways in which ignorance of students' intellectual resources drives the construction of learners from there as being deficient and lacking.

The issues raised in this paper are likely to have salience beyond the Han Chinese students and the field of educational research addressed in this paper. For instance, it would be interesting to investigate what differences could be made to this approach for students from China's fifty six national minorities – males and females – and their intellectual heritages. Likewise, there would be considerable interest in investigating the knowledge that might be produced by engaging theoretical concepts provided by Chileans, including Indigenous research students – males and females – and the intellectual resources of Latin America. In addition, it is possible that the pedagogical principles presented here could be reworked, elaborated, stretched and elongated in areas of international education other than research education such as undergraduate study or secondary schooling. Even so, the issue of cross-cultural ignorance in the context of the internationalisation of research education leaves a key question. How many full-fee paying, international students from how many non-European countries with what amount of intellectual heritage will it take to get Australian research education to recognise, acknowledge and engage these other knowledge traditions?

Acknowledgements

This research was supported under the Australian Research Council's *Discovery Projects* funding scheme, Project DP0988108. The insightful critiques from anonymous peer reviewers provided a basis for reflecting upon and strengthening this research report.

Notes on contributor

Michael Singh is currently investigating the role of the intellectual heritages that students from China, India and Chile bring to, or can access as part of their research education in Australia as a means of enhancing their capabilities for educational research and scholarship.

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