

# Workplace Experience Program for International Students

Culture

Confidence

Connections



**Workplace**  
**Experience Program**

# Introductions

Anna Cranston



Jennifer Coombs

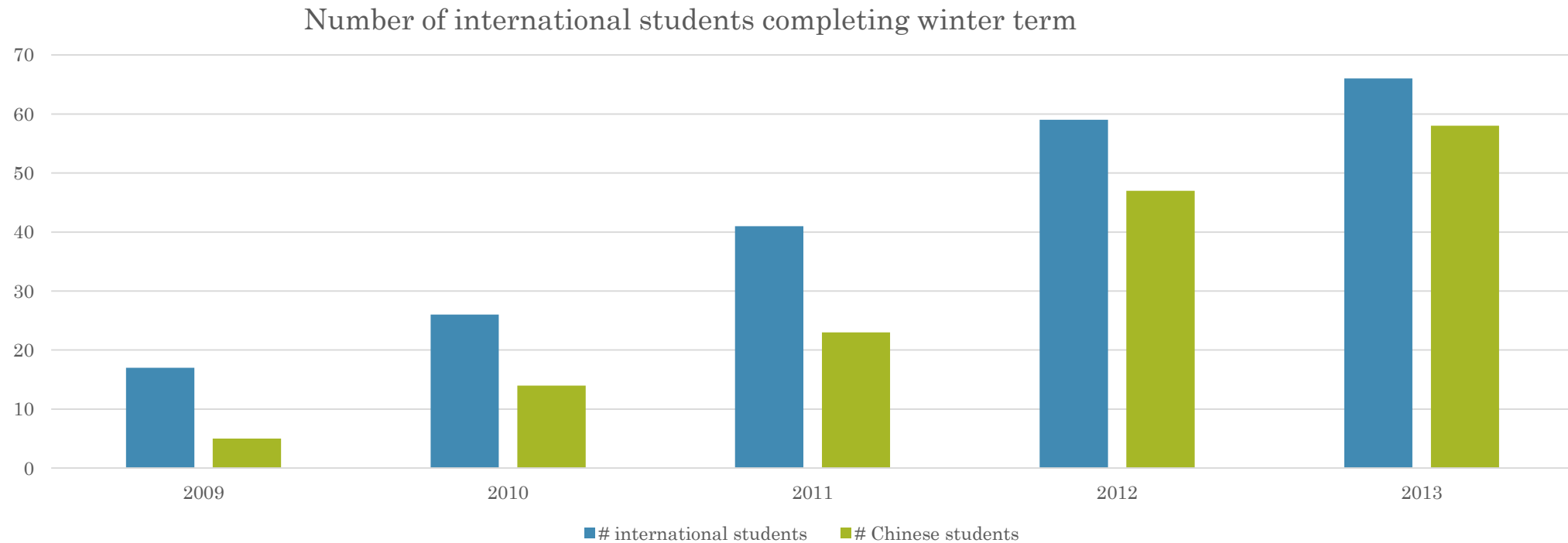


# The Background

- Management Career Services, Faculty of Management, Dalhousie
- Commerce program
- Mandatory Co-op
  - 250 co-op work-terms per semester



# Growing International Population

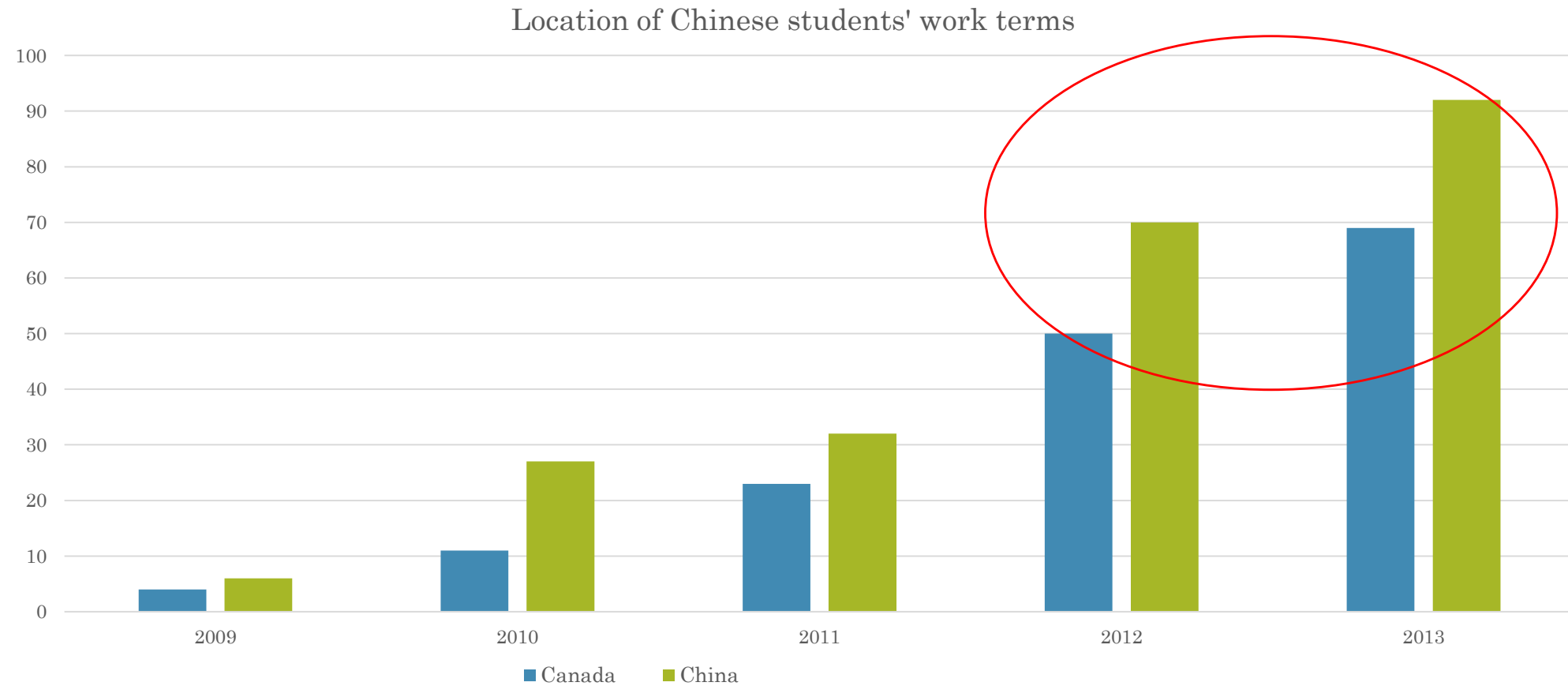


# Initiatives to Support International Students since 2012



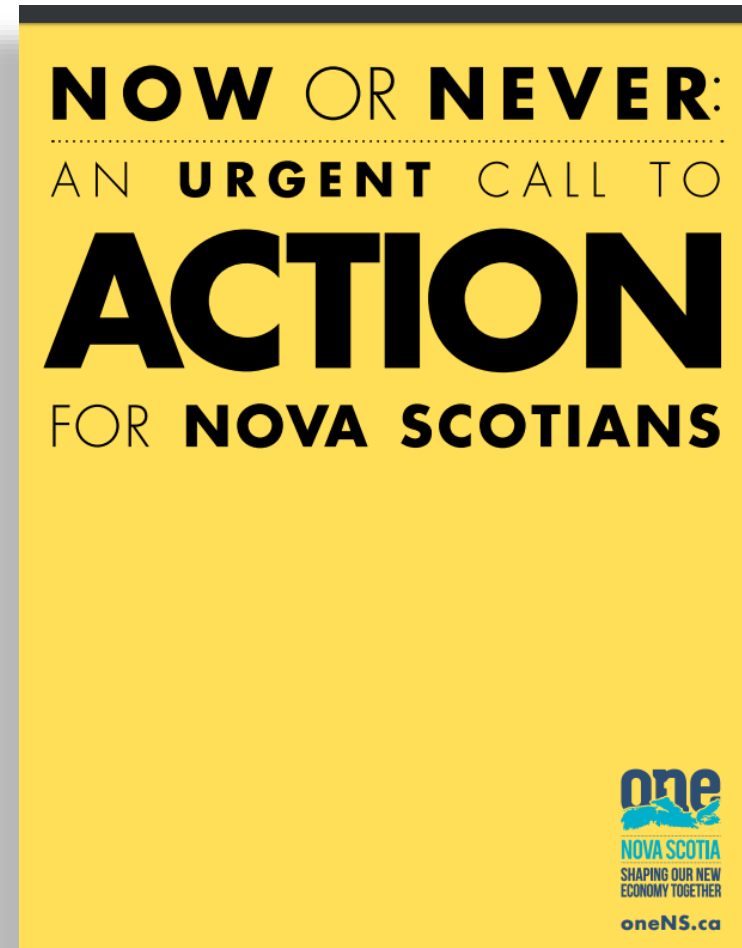
- International Student Success Program (ISSP)
- COMM 1700: Preparing for Study and Work in Canada
- Intercultural awareness staff training
- Specific resource development

# Increasing number of work terms completed in China



# Nova Scotia: Now or Never

- *“Yes, there is a crisis, and it does threaten the basic economic and demographic viability of our province...”*
- Immigration is essential
- Created movement to expand effort to retain international students



# The Dilemma

NS needs  
immigrants

International  
students don't feel  
comfortable  
seeking work here

How  
do we  
affect  
change?



# This is How...

**The Time is Now!**

**Rapid Task Force**

**Pilot June '14**

The stars aligned

AC: "Let's Make it Happen!"

May 2014

Guiding principles:

1. Keep it simple
2. Doesn't have to be big
3. Make an impact

Experimental trial

See what happens:  
adjust and reset



# **Workplace**

## **Experience Program**

### *Objectives:*

- To provide international students with an opportunity to gain familiarity with the Canadian workplace culture;
- To build connections with Canadian employers;
- To build confidence in our international students when job searching

# The Fundamentals



Flexible  
Scheduling



35 Hours  
Total




Host  
Organization



Corporate  
Culture  
Experience



Job  
Shadow



Unpaid  
(gulp)

# The Shoe on the Other Foot



## *Ask Yourself:*

- How would you feel about finding work in China?
- What would Chinese workplace culture be like?
- What would your concerns be?

## **LINEAR-ACTIVE**

**Talks half the time**

**Does one thing at a time**

**Plans ahead step by step**

**Polite but direct**

**Partly conceals feelings**

**Confronts with logic**

**Dislikes losing face**

**Rarely interrupts**

**Job-oriented**

**Uses mainly facts**

**Truth before diplomacy**

**Sometimes impatient**

**Limited body language**

**Respects officialdom**

**Separates the social and professional**

## **MULTI-ACTIVE**

**Talks most of the time**

**Does several things at once**

**Plans grand outline only**

**Emotional**

**Displays feelings**

**Confronts emotionally**

**Has good excuses**

**Often interrupts**

**People-oriented**

**Feelings before facts**

**Flexible truth**

**Impatient**

**Unlimited body language**

**Seeks out key person**

**Interweaves the social and professional**

## **REACTIVE**

**Listens most of the time**

**Reacts to partner's action**

**Looks at general principles**

**Polite, indirect**

**Conceals feelings**

**Never confronts**

**Must not lose face**

**Doesn't interrupt**

**Very people-oriented**

**Statements are promises**

**Diplomacy over truth**

**Patient**

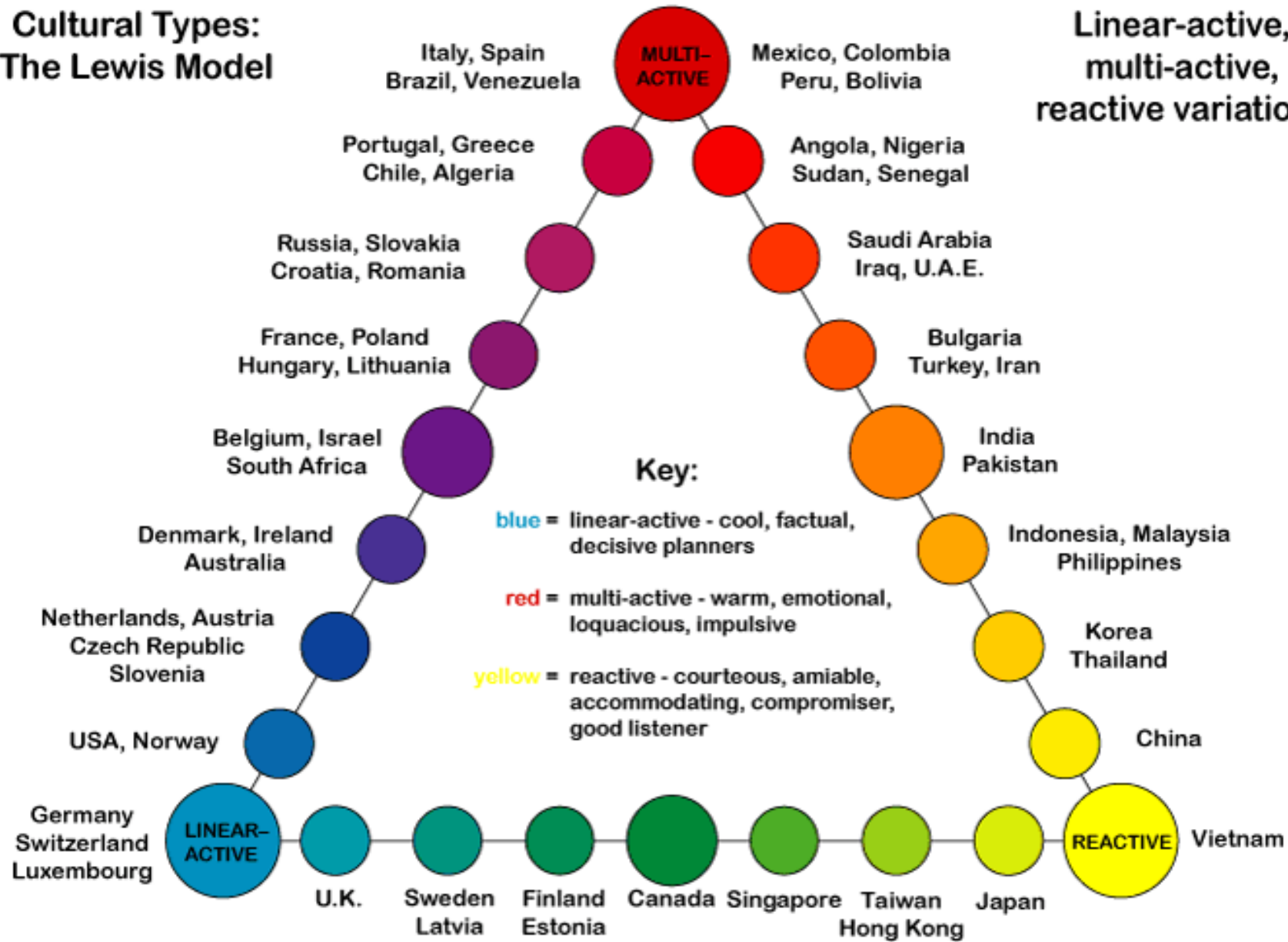
**Subtle body language**

**Uses connections**

**Connects the social and professional**

# Cultural Types: The Lewis Model

Linear-active,  
multi-active,  
reactive variations



# Program Blueprint

# Recruitment Process

Students



September Classroom Announcements

Information Session with ISSP



Info Session  
Wed., Feb 10, at 11:30 a.m.  
Details + Registration at [myCareer](#)



Continued Information Sessions – MCS & ISSP

Applications due



Assessment of applications & individual appointments if needed

Prep Session



Match made: final individual appointments with students



Employers



Partnership Appreciation Event

Initial emails to employers & marketing



Targeted emails and phone calls to returning and potential hosts



Introduction meeting with student and host



# Making the Match



Step 1

*WEP Prep Session*

# Making the Match



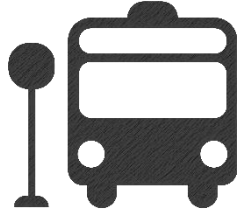
Step 2

*Match Made*

Step 1

*WEP Prep Session*

# Making the Match



Step 3

*Host Introduction Meeting*


Step 2


*Match Made*

Step 1

*WEP Prep Session*

# Making the Match

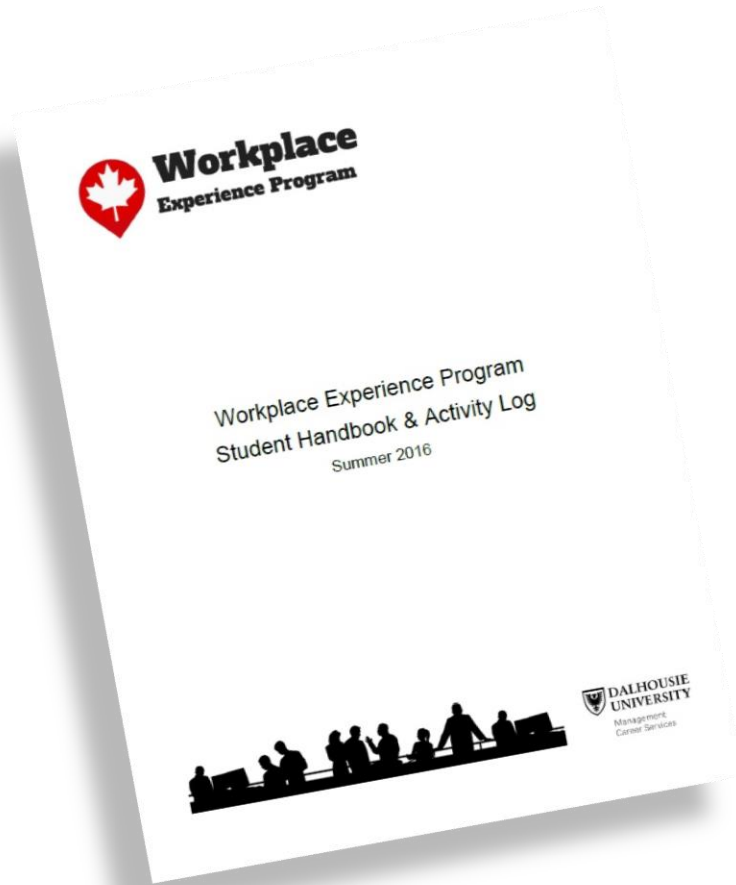
Huaxun Wang  
+  
**COSSETTE**  
=  
 Workplace  
Experience Program



*Congratulations!*



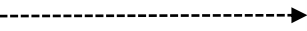
# During WEP



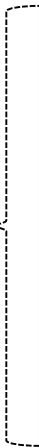
- Learning and reflection through the Activity Log
- Provide direction to the host organization
- Centered around 4 learning goals:
  1. Gaining an understanding of Canadian organizational culture
  2. Developing awareness of Canadian office etiquette
  3. Growing personal network by performing informational interviews with company employees
  4. Appreciating personal learning through guided reflection

# Activity Log

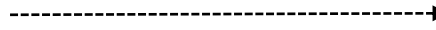
*Student name,  
organization &  
supervisor*



*Timesheet*



*Total hours &  
signatures*



**Workplace Experience Program**

**MY ACTIVITY LOG**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
Host Organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lead Supervisor Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lead Supervisor Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Start / Finish Time	Area(s) time spent in	Hours Completed
e.g. May 05, 2015	9:00 am - 4:00 pm	Human Resource and Payroll Department	6 hours

**TOTAL HOURS COMPLETED:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lead Supervisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Activity Log

*Ideas on how to gain exposure to complete learning goals*

*Behaviours and/or situations to observe & reflect on*

## Learning Goals

The time you spend with your host organization is an opportunity to observe and experience different parts of Canadian workplace culture. Your activity log is to help ensure you gain the most out of your experience and apply that knowledge to your future work term and career success.

There are a number of ways to gain information and exposure to complete your learning goals. Read through each goal carefully and work together with your host organization to complete each section. Here are some suggestions to assist you:

- Request a guided tour of the workplace and its facilities
- Observe or accompany staff members while they complete their daily tasks
- Review the company website and other organizational documents or reports provided
- Sit in on a team or staff meeting
- Meet with a member of the human resources department
- Have lunch with your host and/or their coworkers

## Goal #1: Canadian Organization Culture

Behaviour:	Observation:
<b>Office Environment</b> <i>Is the office quiet or busy? What does the office space look like? Is there a front reception desk? Do staff have their own offices? Cubicles? Is there a lunch room? Meeting rooms?</i>	
<b>Colleagues</b> <i>How do staff work together on projects? Do they keep the relationship completely professional, or do they talk about family, home, etc.?</i>	
<b>Work Performance</b> <i>How is work assigned to staff? Do staff lead projects themselves? Is there importance placed on initiative and self-directed learning? How are staff recognized for success?</i>	
<b>Customer Service</b> <i>What are the standards for customer service? Are clients seen in person? Phone? Email? Are clients address formally or informally (i.e. Mr. Smith or John)?</i>	

*Observations & reflection*

# Goal #1: Organization Culture

## *Office Environment*



Tao Tang  
+  
eastlink  
=  


A portrait of Tao Tang, a young man with glasses, wearing a white shirt and a dark blazer.

*The office is very busy and professional. There is a front reception desk and each staff have their own office and so many meeting rooms.*

*The office space is pretty big, and there are 4 seats for the front desks. Some staff have their own office in the cubicles. Also, there is a lunch room where everybody eats lunch and leaves their stuff.*



# Goal #1: Organization Culture

## *Colleagues*



*The staff work together when a problem comes up. Also, they don't keep the relationship completely professional. They talk about family and home as well. When they are not busy they were talking about summer vacation and other stuff.*

*Staff work together on projects. They keep the relationship professional when working but sometimes they talk about their personal life as well...*

# Goal #1: Organization Culture



## *Customer Service*

*The standard for customer service is very high. Everybody is very polite and the customers seem happy. Also, they chat a little bit to make the customers feel comfortable.*

*Professional. People work with clients through phone calls mainly. All clients are addressed formally.*

# Goal #2: Office Etiquette

## *Communication*

Wenyan Zhou  
+  
COX & PALMER  
=  
 Workplace  
Experience Program





*They like to share kinds of information with their colleagues. When they have a disagreement, communication and listening is the first step.*

*When they have different opinions on something, they will speak their thoughts directly; in this way they can handle disagreement efficiently.*

*They talk to each other directly in person... open to different opinions and willing to work on that.*

# Goal #2: Office Etiquette

## *Clothing*

Chunhui He  
+  
  
=  




*Business casual. Supervisors dress more formal than other staff... they have a “casual Friday”.*

*If it is a very important day for the company, every staff wears a suit, but normally they will not wear a suit every day.*

*They wear professional every day, but starting from June until September, they wear business casual, and the office has a “casual Friday” that they can wear jeans if they want.*

# Goal #3: Staff Interviews

## Goal #3: Staff Interviews

Schedule and complete two interviews with two different employees within your host organization. The interviews do not need to be longer than 15 minutes each. Try to have your interviews in two different work areas (i.e. human resources and accounting) or at difference levels of career (i.e. supervisor and co-op student).

### Interview #1

Staff Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your job title?
What role were you in when you joined the organization?
What does a typical day look like in your role? For example: team meetings, client appointments/visits, independent project work, special events.
What types of teamwork or collaboration are you/your staff involved in the most?
What do you like most about your work?
What do you find most challenging about your work?
Which skills and traits do you feel are important to do your job well?
For supervisors/department leads: What do you look for in an entry level employee within your department?
Insert your own question here:

- 2 informational interviews
- Build connections
- Gain industry information and advice

*When deciding to where to work, what made you decide to work here?*

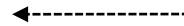
*What was the toughest accounting task you had to solve in your career so far?*

*What suggestions would you give me as an international student starting a career in Halifax?*

# Goal #4: Personal Learning & Reflection

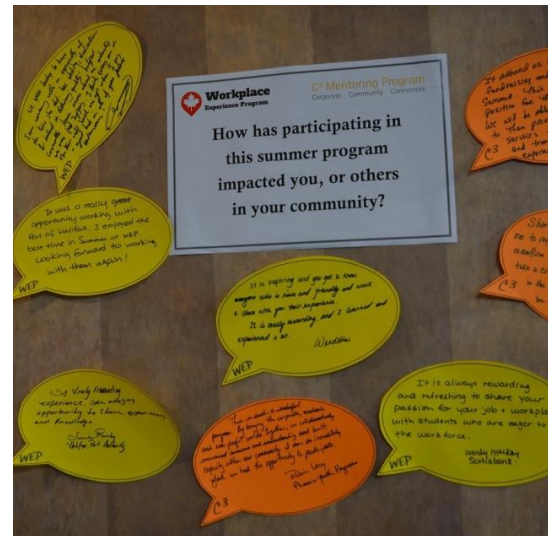


- Completed at the end of WEP
- Guided reflection
- Returned to Coordinator



*Training &  
Development*

# Partnership Appreciation



# Employer Evaluations

**13** Host Organizations



**100%**

**Organization benefited by participating in the program**

*“We had the chance to showcase what we do each day and work together as a team to make our students’ experience valuable.”*

*“Our reputation is enhanced in the internal and external communities when we support this type of initiative.”*

*“We need these students to stay in Halifax and add to the quality of our workforce. Immigration is very important to our future.”*

**71%**

**Returning**

**46%**

**New**



Summer 2016





# Student Evaluations



**20**  
Students

**40%**  
**60%**

**1<sup>st</sup> year**

**2<sup>nd</sup> year**

**73%** Participated in workplace activities and/or discussions

**93%** Canadian workplace was different than expected

*“I did not expect that the workers would be so opened to help and answer questions.”*

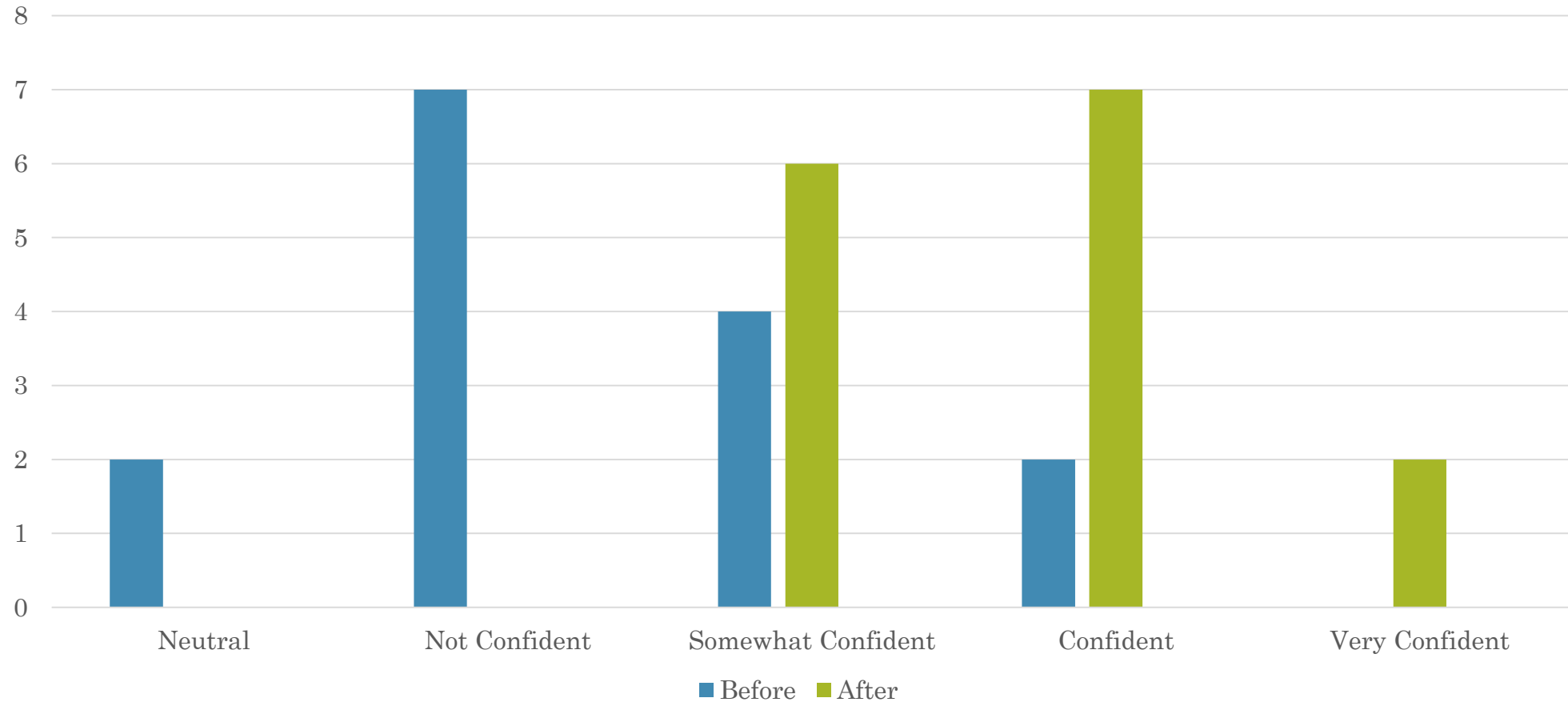


*“The culture was totally different than I thought... people respect each other, and the company gives people more opportunity to share their ideas.”*

*“I thought most people would be serious, but they are funny... and willing to listen to my opinion”*

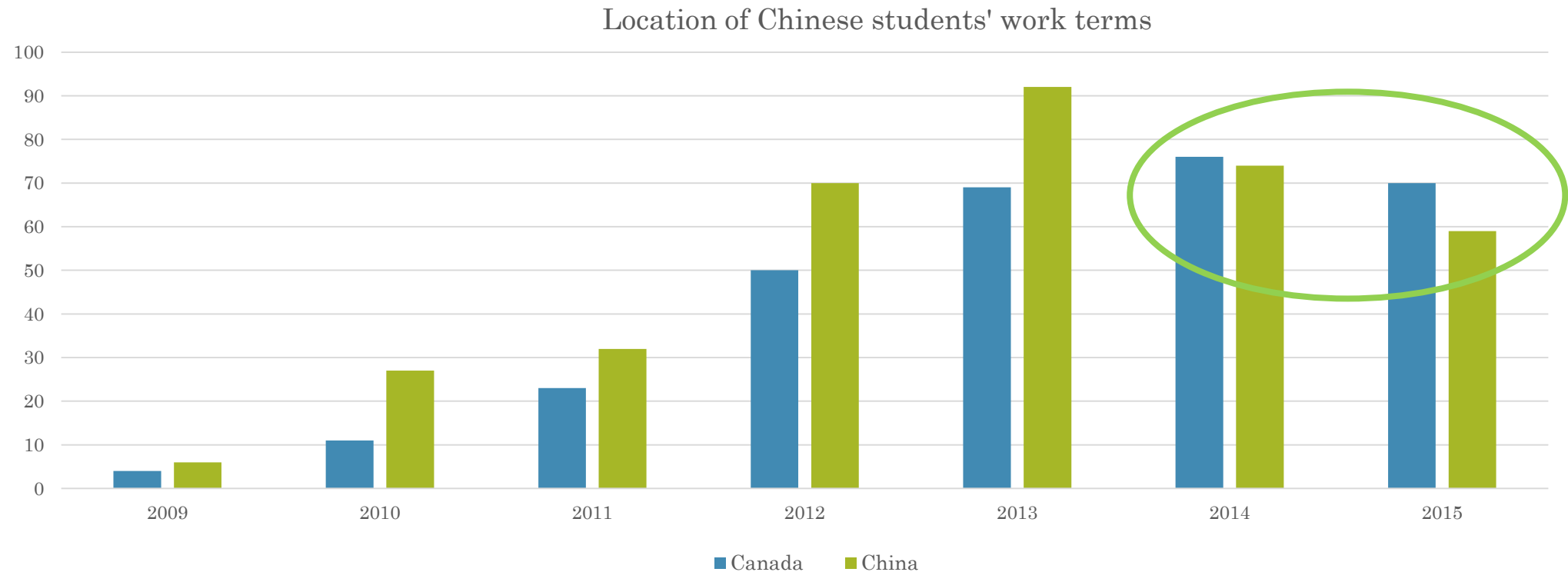
# Student Evaluations

Confidence: Before & After



# Outcomes

2014 was the first time that the number of Chinese students working in Canada surpassed those in China.



# Successes



**Miranda - *Clearwater***



**Pengpeng - *McInnes Cooper***



**Wendi - *Scotiabank***

# Key Learning for Future Success

ANY  
QUESTIONS

?