



International Education and the Chinese Learner



Edited by **Janette Ryan and
Gordon Slethaug**

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Introduction

Gordon Slethaug

During the past decade, international education (that is, intercultural and cross-cultural education that transcends the geographical and pedagogical boundaries of a particular nation) has been growing at an extraordinary pace and shows no signs of abating. According to the Office of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), over 2.7 million university students went abroad in 2006 alone (“Education” 2007, 8, 45), and, according to the International Institute of Education (IIE), these figures went up significantly in 2007 and 2008, though they attach no numbers to that assertion (“Open Doors” 2008). In this activity, China has played a central role in both sending and receiving students. In 2008, for example, 55% of American colleges and universities reported an increase in the number of new Chinese students registering — the highest of any country (“Open Doors” 2008), while the number of Americans going to China also jumped, as noted by Tamar Lewin: “In the 2006–07 academic year . . . 11,064 Americans studied in China, a large jump from 1995–96, when only 1,396 Americans studied there” (2008b, 10).

These statistics do not include the many high school students who also went abroad or the teachers who went on exchange, to teach in international schools, or to take up appointments at foreign universities. Nor do they indicate that some 2 million students are educated every year in so-called international schools located across the planet. In short, the number who go abroad to study or research, together with those who attend schools with a curriculum specifically designed for international students, is certainly upwards of 6 million.

University and school administrators have kept their eyes on the rise in international students, hoping that their own students can participate in programs

abroad and that even larger numbers of foreign students will come to study at their institutions, creating intercultural diversity and helping to cover educational costs. Australia, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States (USA) have been the chief beneficiaries of this university mobility, but other countries have shared as well. International primary and secondary schools have been sprouting up rapidly as globalization has spread to the far corners, but Asia in particular has seen the biggest increases as a more prosperous local and international workforce tries to secure the best education and opportunities for its children.

Indeed, many of the students traveling abroad to universities are also from Asia. In 2008 in the United States, students from South and East Asia, including China, as well as India and the sub-continent comprised 61% of new international students ("Open Doors" 2008), with Indian and Chinese learners being the largest groups; this is generally the case in Australia and the UK as well. Although there has been much research by university academics into issues concerning this student migration, it has generally not been available to teachers. The so-called "Chinese learner" (normally from China and related Confucian-heritage cultures such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore), then, is increasingly visible at all educational levels internationally, but educators and researchers in universities and schools have not generally "reached across the aisle" to talk to each other about their experiences with, and attitudes toward, Chinese learners, so much of the new understanding remains in particular pockets of expertise.

This lack of sharing between university and school teachers induced the Faculty of Arts at the University of Hong Kong to underwrite the "Symposium on International Teaching: the Chinese Student" on March 21, 2007 as a means of fostering discussion about the growth of international education and the Chinese learner between educators from schools and universities in Hong Kong and abroad. The value of that symposium and the need for ongoing dialogue on the subject helped to prompt and shape this volume of essays from school teachers and university faculty, exploring the concerns and possibilities that are at the heart of this issue. These essays are both theoretical and practical, coming out of the direct experiences of those who have been teaching Chinese learners in international contexts.

This volume consists of nine essays in three sections dealing with various aspects of the Chinese learner and international education. In the first section, Gordon Slethaug and Janette Ryan lay the groundwork in considering the new emphasis on international education and the central place of teaching Chinese learners within this. In the second section, Chris Forse, Eric Jabal, and Martin Schmidt explore the Chinese learner specifically in the international school setting. In the third section, Jane Vinther, Jennifer Miller, Ivy Wang, and Zhu Weibin explore the teaching of Chinese learners by "outsiders" to their

culture in Denmark, Australia, and China itself and also look at some of the issues of adaptation.

In Chapter 1, “Something Happened While Nobody Was Looking: The Growth of International Education and Chinese Learners,” Gordon Slethaug explores the increasing demand for high-quality international education in this age of globalization, expansion of student-exchange opportunities, and rise of international schools and university programs abroad. He also discusses the important part that Chinese learners play in these developments.

As he notes, achieving universal parity and international excellence in learning is not easy. For instance, although the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed education as a fundamental right for all human beings, it was not until 1990 that UNESCO set a goal for the fulfillment of that mandate, but its target date for universal literacy has been moved back at least twice, and achievement of the goal is still not in sight. Universal literacy in itself, however, would not address the desire for the kind of international education that many countries (including China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and other primary locations for Chinese learners) require to meet the increasing demands of global development and competition.

Still, the fact that the OECD implemented international literacy examinations in reading, mathematics, and science and that several different agencies now rank universities internationally on an annual basis suggests that quality international education is increasingly of high importance. Another example of this high importance is the rapid expansion of private international schools that take in students from a wide variety of countries. These schools are more and more likely to choose the International Baccalaureate (IB) programs as a means to promote a high-quality liberal studies education. And in Asia especially, these students are progressively more likely to be Chinese learners rather than the children of expatriates. Universities, too, are competing for these students and have begun to reflect more carefully on the kinds of programs and approaches that comprise international-level education and the kind of learners they wish to foster.

As Janette Ryan notes in Chapter 2, “‘The Chinese Learner’: Misconceptions and Realities,” the notion of a single kind of Chinese learner has been put to the test within the past decade as scholars more fully explore cultures of learning, institutional contexts, and ethnic and national diversity. Previous to that, Western views of the Chinese learner were based on enduring “deficit” stereotypes (rote, passive, unimaginative, hierarchical, collectivist) as well as more recent “surplus” Confucian-heritage-culture stereotypes (good at mathematics, cooperative, hard-working, family-oriented), but both of these patterns, often held at once though contradictory, have a certain enduring power. Ryan argues for a full interrogation of these “pathologizing” and essentializing stereotypes by assessing students’

particular cultural backgrounds and educational experiences, the potential impact of stereotypes on their subsequent behavior, and their sense of isolation and loss of identity in foreign settings. She also notes the need for teachers to assess their own cultural and even imperialist assumptions, to develop a kind of meta-cultural sensitivity, and to become more aware of the great changes that have taken place in the societies of Chinese learners, the principal one being China itself.

In the second section, “The Chinese Learner in International Schools in Hong Kong,” Chris Forse, Eric Jabal, and Martin Schmidt discuss Chinese students in international schools, but from three different perspectives. Forse looks at the structural implications for Hong Kong of the inclusion of many Chinese learners within international schools, especially the English Schools Foundation system (ESF). From his experience in France and Hong Kong, Jabal explores the sociological implications of the influx of Chinese learners within the international schools. And Schmidt recounts the experience of the Hong Kong International School in constructing a values-based curriculum.

A school administrator in the ESF, the largest English-speaking school system in Hong Kong, Forse documents the change from a British-national school system catering almost entirely to the children of UK civil servants, businessmen, and missionaries (and restricting local Chinese to 10% of available spaces) to one that now admits between 40% and 50% local Hong Kong Chinese learners. According to Forse in Chapter 3 (“Fit for Purpose? Why Chinese Families Choose International Schools in Hong Kong”), the ESF is no longer so concerned whether Chinese students come from abroad, from a Cantonese-speaking local background, or from an English-speaking Eurasian heritage. In short, students are no longer coded by ethnicity and language. Indeed, a significant number of these postmodern families have more than one passport and claim residency in more than one country, so that this recent influx of Chinese learners has changed the culture of the ESF system and problematized the dichotomy of “Chinese learner” and “expatriate.”

The Chinese families of whatever background want their children to be part of an English-language environment in which the teachers are native speakers. They wish to equip their children with the language that they believe will give them a passport to global opportunities in education and work. Nonetheless, the families not only see themselves as international but part of the local Hong Kong and mainland cultures as well. In fact, many of them now come from areas of Hong Kong that lie geographically and emotionally close to mainland China and its culture: at one time, most ESF students would have come from British enclaves with exclusive Hong Kong Island addresses, but now are just as likely to come from newly emerging places in Kowloon and the New Territories that are 100% Chinese. As a result, many of these parents want their children to

maintain a Chinese identity and learn Chinese, generally Putonghua rather than Cantonese. Typical of many of the international schools in Hong Kong at present, this phenomenon has not only changed the language offerings of the school and reformed the requirements and electives within humanities, but altered the identity of the student body as well.

Forse makes it clear that one of the unintended effects of the expansion of the ESF and international schools and inclusion of more local Chinese learners is that it deprives the local English-medium and Chinese-medium schools of many of their best students. One of Forse's main concerns is that the Hong Kong government has been short-sighted in not providing sufficient English-medium instruction in the public schools so that parents have felt compelled to place their children in the semi-private ESF system or the costly international schools in order to learn English well and thereby gain access to the best Western universities. In effect, this transfer of students from local Chinese- and English-medium schools to international English-medium schools has helped to gut a public school system already under duress from a sharply falling birth rate. This transfer of students and consequent closure of local schools can build resentment against the expanding international sector.

Based on his experience as a teacher and administrator in international schools in France and Hong Kong, Jabal's study (Chapter 4, "Being, Becoming, and Belonging: Exploring Hong Kong-Chinese Students' Experiences of the Social Realities of International Schooling") centers on the twin goals of inclusivity and excellence, values that are of special concern to the many Chinese learners who want a level playing field for their study. Because Hong Kong's 59 international and 20 ESF schools together represent 35,000 places, increasingly occupied by Chinese learners, curriculum and quality are extremely important, but so are context and diversity.

These Chinese learners in Hong Kong occupy an unusual space and may represent a "fourth culture — one that is not their home system, not a foreign system in a foreign land and not an international school abroad, but an international school in their home country which does not represent their native culture and beliefs" (Deveney 2005, 161). This specific environment creates what Jabal calls "adaptive complexities" for Chinese learners that may differ considerably from the "values, beliefs, expectations, behaviors, and norms" of the school context and other expatriate groups who inhabit it. The purpose of Jabal's research, then, was to survey 1,270 and to interview 34 international school students in Hong Kong, ascertain attitudes to diversity and school engagement, and describe his conclusions in terms of 10 student cases at Windsor Secondary High (a fictitious name for an ESF school) and Waratah High (a fictitious name for an international school).

Jabal finds that Chinese learners agreed that these schools do practice inclusivity and cultural diversity in different and better ways than in schools of other countries where they have previously lived or even than in their local Hong Kong communities. Both the ESF and international school systems have students of various races and ethnicities, as well as diverse nationalities and places of origin, and there seemed to be no overt racism or elitism.

Still, Jabal notes, friendship groups formed on the basis of race, nation, language, East/West configuration, and gender, raising questions about the depth and quality of the apparent diversity. At least one student noted that language was a big divider, though the school had an English-only policy, and another commented that he/she had “to be careful about which group I get into.” In the ESF-based school, one student commented that four groups formed on the basis of color, culture, and language — Indian, White, Chinese, and international. So, although international schools may do a better job of promoting diversity than local schools, they appear to have some distance to go in ensuring that everyone feels fairly treated and represented.

In Chapter 5, “Educating Chinese Learners for Social Conscience in Hong Kong: An International School Perspective,” Schmidt explains the merit of a values-based curriculum for everyone, including Chinese learners. (Although his school does not record statistics about student ethnicity, Schmidt found, in a survey of grade nine students, that Chinese learners could represent some 70% of the students, so their numbers are meaningful.) He argues that, in educating children of the cultural and financial elite, international schooling — especially with Hong Kong’s emphasis on a knowledge- and skills-based economy — can result in a deficit of social conscience. His school, the American- and Lutheran-based Hong Kong International School (HKIS), however, has as its mandate not only the pursuit of academic excellence and presentation of many forms of knowledge (including spiritual) but the promotion of tolerance and social responsibility. Schmidt argues that a values-based curriculum can go a long way to meet the Hong Kong government’s goals for educational reform, building bridges between the cultures of East and West, providing a competitive edge in this age of globalization, and serving as a model of social responsibility and compassion. As the Hong Kong government has moved to require liberal studies as a core senior-secondary subject in its local schools in 2009, the similar incorporation of values-based curriculum could have a profound impact.

Schmidt argues that, among others, Paul Morris’s four quadrants of education (academic rationalist, social and economic efficiency, child-centered, and social reconstruction) embody alternative ways of envisioning curriculum, which, taken together, can create the very model of a progressive school and culture. He finds, however, that the category of “social reconstruction” that includes building values

has often been minimized within education, or left out altogether in pursuit of academic excellence and relevance to a business-driven society. Consequently, the need for “caring virtues” and “social conscience” goes unaddressed within the education system.

This, he argues, leaves Chinese learners in Hong Kong unmoored. He finds that, while the Confucian writings urge an “embedded self” with personal and family values extending into the social domain, the unique Hong Kong environment has truncated social responsibility because many citizens were political and economic refugees, more intent upon survival than fostering social conscience. Moreover, because political responsibility was never granted to Hong Kong people under British rule, many do not think it their right to participate in community affairs or their responsibility to intervene in others’ social affairs. Students especially do not think it their responsibility. Consequently, economic dynamism and political passivity creep into the education system as well, creating a deficit of social responsibility.

Because of Hong Kong’s unique cultural context, Chinese learners there, Schmidt argues, have a weak sense of self-efficacy and are reluctant to believe that they can make a profound difference in society. However, in courses with a community service component that take the students into China to help at an orphanage for a short period, these learners discovered that they could make a difference, giving them a sense of empowerment and transforming their views of themselves. Many students described this experience as life-altering. Their experiences and developing sense of a social conscience and ability to share them — the discourse of social responsibility — seem to go hand in hand in rounding out the educational imperative.

The four chapters in the last section, “Teachers and Chinese Learners in Transnational Higher Education Settings,” all deal with classrooms in which teachers and Chinese students alike are “learners.” Jane Vinther discusses the issues for the Danish teachers and the Chinese learners who come into Denmark’s somewhat unique European system. Jennifer Miller considers adult Chinese learners who enter teacher education programs and hope to take up teaching responsibilities in Australia, while Ivy Wang and Zhu Weibin discuss the complexity of cross-cultural exchanges when foreigners teach Chinese learners in China, the first of these chapters from the foreigner’s perspective and the second from a Chinese perspective. Together this group of essays suggest that the real challenges involve the socialization of teachers on issues of identity, cross-cultural relations, and pedagogical practice.

In Chapter 6 (“A Danish Perspective on Teaching Chinese Students in Europe”), Jane Vinther notes that Chinese learners in Denmark are the second-largest group of foreign students (just behind other Scandinavians), larger than

the rest of the EU countries combined, and the fastest growing. Most go into economics, engineering, and science, but increasing numbers have been coming into the humanities, raising questions about the best ways to incorporate their needs and ensure the highest standards of teaching and learning and their own well being.

In a similar vein to Ryan, Vinther notes the existence of both the negative and positive, traditional Confucian and adaptable Confucian-heritage stereotypes of the Chinese learners, but believes that, because Chinese students are relatively new to Denmark, these stereotypes have not become systemic in ways they have in certain other cultures. She also argues that, because Chinese students coming to Denmark know they are a small minority in a distinctly different place from their origins, they actually adapt more easily and quickly than do other foreign students, who imagine their culture to be similar to Denmark's. To a certain degree, the Chinese learner has a special kind of lesson to learn in this culture because it is so heavily indebted to nineteenth-century philosophy. As Vinther notes, Denmark's modern culture has been heavily influenced by Søren Kierkegaard, Hans Christian Andersen, and Nikolaj Grundtvig, who strongly contributed to the transition from a hierarchical monarchy to the modern democratic state with its strong emphasis on egalitarian empowerment and responsibility in politics, education, religion, and personal identity.

As a result of this pervasive understanding of personal responsibility in Denmark, all students are expected to adapt largely on their own, though administrative help is given for accommodation, medical care, and legal matters. Otherwise, no special services (such as courses in English or seminars in enculturation) have been institutionalized because it is assumed that students — foreign or domestic — will want to find and pursue their own direction rather than having it thrust upon them. It is also assumed that all students will take full advantage of a democratic classroom in which students learn as much from students as teachers and in which everyone is expected to contribute readily to class discussion and projects. And it is assumed that all students will undertake the required research for their projects and dissertations. The new Chinese learners seem to assume responsibility for all of these implicit and explicit requirements, perhaps even more readily than non-Scandinavian European counterparts who have grown up in a hierarchical mode of education but in other respects share some of the common features of European cultural life with the Danes.

In Chapter 7 ("Chinese Pre-Service Teachers in Australia: Language, Identity, and Practice"), Miller uses theories of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu to reflect on the issue of identity for Chinese learners studying to become pre-service teachers in Australian schools. She argues that diversity is critical for the classroom but acknowledges that, because identity is relational,

negotiated, discursively constructed, socially enacted, and deeply embedded in language usage, Chinese learners do question the enactment of their identity through language in the classroom. Of course, the Chinese learners question this relationship of identity to language because English is an additive language for them, not their original mode of expression and because they want to be good teachers whose students will respect them. They may gain some comfort knowing that more non-native speakers of English exist worldwide than native speakers, but this cannot meet their personal anxiety about speaking a form of English that may seem non-standard to students in their classroom.

Miller highlights this question of identity and language through two case studies of Chinese learners in Australia, one who had been there for ten years but still had non-standard, accented speech and the other who had only been there for two years but had more standard English usage. Each had slightly different reactions to their experiences in the school based upon their English-language proficiency. Both felt confident enough of the subject matter they were teaching, but were concerned that their non-standard usage could compromise their effectiveness. Yet each took a different tack concerning the situation.

“Andrea,” who had been trained as a teacher in China and had been in Australia the longest but had the most egregious errors in communication, took a cavalier approach, believing that her knowledge of the material and stimulating presentation could compensate for deficiencies in speech. She also believed that joining other staff recreationally and eating lunch with them would help overcome socialization issues. “Julia,” who had been in Australia for only a short time but had the most sophisticated speech of the two, had the greatest reservations about her abilities in the classroom, in part because she had no previous training as a teacher, but mostly because she lacked Andrea’s sense of risk, enthusiasm, and social capital. Miller’s point is that the interweaving of identity, language ability, and pedagogy is a complex issue and needs to be researched more fully and taught in education programs to heighten awareness and self-confidence of non-native English speakers.

The concern about the best methods of teaching when teachers and students come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds is picked up by Ivy Wang in Chapter 8, “Realizing ‘Cross-cultural Exchange’: A Dialogue between the USA and China.” An American by birth and academic training, Ivy Wang taught English as a second language (ESL) to Chinese students at Sun Yat-sen University (SYSU) in Guangzhou, China, under the auspices of the Yale-China Association and the Lingnan Foundation, the latter of which has helped with funding at SYSU since its inception as Canton Christian College in the late nineteenth century. Dedicated to projects that promote liberal arts, develop intercultural skills, and enhance goodwill between China and the

USA, the Foundation has supported ESL teaching at its namesake Lingnan College on the main campus for a number of years.

As Wang notes, it is relevant to this learning situation that scholars re-evaluate what culture and identity mean when people have fewer geographical boundaries, national limitations, and cultural absolutes than did previous generations.

Although students are certainly based in given cultures — and that needs to be understood in every classroom — they are more flexible in what they take to be their identity. Given this postmodern phenomenon, critics see culture and identity as fluid, and attempts by one culture to claim superiority over another as “imperialist.”

Students especially benefit from this new postmodern cultural paradigm as they move almost seamlessly from country to country in search of educational experiences and degrees, and students in China are no exception. Not only do Chinese students move around China and abroad to pursue educational opportunities, but many descendents of the Chinese diaspora in the USA, South America, and South Africa come to China to expand their own educational horizons, as well as increasing numbers of students from other countries wishing to take advantage of the economic and career opportunities now afforded by China’s economic rise. Consequently, Wang’s classes were not restricted to learners from Guangdong in particular or China in general, but comprised a wide variety of students from across the ethnic, racial, and global spectrum.

Wang also notes that teachers have changed. At one time, teachers assisting in the Yale-China program would have been American-born, Caucasian, native English speakers. Now, it is no longer a requirement that the teachers be American, Caucasian, or native speakers of English. And the perception of the classroom itself has changed, so that, increasingly, ESL learning is seen as a complex cross-cultural endeavor in which teachers and students are involved together in the educating process. The Yale-China team finds that rote memorization of English as generally practiced in the Chinese school system is not a good mode of instruction and tries to explore new methods that can better involve the learners collectively and lead to better long-term results. Often, these can involve pairs or groups of students to build skills and explore a range of classroom and cultural issues, including assigned course readings, varieties of language (including slang and idiom), and plagiarism as well as politics, literature, and art.

In the final chapter, “Learning for All: Cross-cultural, Interdisciplinary Team Teaching between China and the USA,” Zhu Weibin picks up on the teacher as learner in his role as administrator and team teacher in another Lingnan Foundation project, “Transnationalism and America,” offered over a three-year period at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou. In this project, a team of American faculty members based at the University of Hong Kong offered courses founded on American history and culture in the age of globalization,

taught mainly in English with interdisciplinary enquiry and team teaching as the dominant methodologies.

The first task of the project was to decide on the composition of the teaching teams and to design courses that would be new to the campus and would involve core teachers and visiting lecturers of American culture. Each course was to have a core American faculty presenter, assisted by at least one other American staff member as well as one or two faculty members from SYSU, making up teaching teams of three members or so who normally would be in the classroom at the same time. In addition, each course was to have good coverage from many disciplines. Core members from SYSU came mainly from anthropology, visual design, and history, and American core members came mainly from American studies, cultural studies, literature, history, and film, though others from different disciplines (both faculty members and students from abroad) were invited as guest presenters and panel members. As Zhu notes, this array of specializations, good cooperation among the staff, and division of labor created an innovative classroom unlike anything else at SYSU. The mixture of local and international experts provided a crucible to spark cultural debate that deepened comprehension, facilitated communication, and led to new knowledge. Although English was the main medium of instruction, Mandarin and Cantonese were used by the Chinese specialists.

Another of the differences between courses in this project and other local courses involved the course content, student teamwork, and an emphasis on ways in which the liberal arts could serve the community. The content was not traditional by Chinese standards and involved contemporary political, religious, and gender issues drawn from everyday life. Students enjoyed the relevance of these topics as well as the ability to work together inside and outside of class. As an example, students in one course worked in teams choosing a film project, dividing up responsibilities for writing and production, and creating a documentary that could be used by a local organization to promote its work in the community.

This “Transnationalism and America” project had significant positive results. It generated a constructive cross-cultural environment for the cooperation of lecturers from different departments, cultures, and nations, creating an international space for multicultural, interdisciplinary teamwork. It gave the Chinese students the feeling that they were in a transnational classroom through the reading materials, content of the lectures, interactive presentations, and international online advisement arranged by SYSU. It taught students how to work together as teams for classroom presentations and production of documentaries and instilled in them a sense of community service and values-based education.

The project also had three obstacles for the Chinese learners — whether faculty members or students. The first was the dominant use of English in

lectures, reading materials, and videos, and the second was the amount of required reading. Although registration was always large in these courses, some learners had difficulty in understanding spoken English well enough to keep up with the lectures and also in making their way through the required readings in a timely way. The third was the difference in teaching methodologies. The Chinese practice is for the lecturer alone to create a syllogistic dialectical framework to raise questions, present differing viewpoints, and come to a resolution. The American practice is to open up a subject, raise questions, engage students in discussions, provide perspectives, but not come to definitive conclusions. These differences did have some advantages but also created some obstacles to learning.

All in all, however, the project left a footprint on learning practices at SYSU, which could provide useful guidelines for the future. Departments might consider more current, popular, international, and interdisciplinary topics in addition to traditional areas of study. They also might consider a greater variety of teaching materials, including video clips and course readings. Student engagement and teamwork in the classroom are certainly worth pursuing as are team-teaching and interdisciplinary collaboration among the teachers. The increasing use of English in courses is also worth pursuing, especially since the government wants to increase exposure to English throughout the entire school system, and this can be phased in gradually.

This last chapter is perhaps the best illustration of the generative possibilities that exist and can be realized in more cross-cultural and collaborative teaching and learning approaches that take advantage of the best features of both Western and Chinese approaches. Although there is now tremendous scope and fertile ground for such endeavors, as demonstrated by the various accounts of changing educational contexts in the chapters in this book, it also serves as a reminder of the need to be cognizant of the very real barriers and difficulties that can exist in such encounters and the need for sensitivity, flexibility, mutual respect, and dialogue. We hope that this volume serves to promote such dialogue.

The range of these chapters suggests that Chinese learners exist everywhere and at every age. There is no such thing as one kind of Chinese learner, and no particular site of instruction can be discovered. Also, the best teaching practices to pursue depend heavily upon the cultures of the learner and the teacher and the interaction between them.

— I —

Interrogating International Education
and Chinese Learners

Something Happened While Nobody Was Looking: The Growth of International Education and the Chinese Learner

Gordon Slethaug

In the rapidly globalizing world of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, where money, ideas, and people move readily across the planet, it has become clear that the circulation of knowledge plays an increasingly critical part in economic productivity, potentially spelling problems for those who cannot share in this linkage and presenting opportunities for those who can:

Educational systems tied to the formation of nation-state citizens and consumers bonded to local systems to the neglect of larger global forces are likely to become obsolete, while those that proactively engage globalization's new challenges are more likely to thrive. (Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard 2004, 23)

In becoming part of the global economy, China wants to share in the most effective strategies of international education for its people at home and abroad. It is the development of international education and the impact on Chinese learners that I would like to take up in this chapter, which forms the basis for the rest of this volume's considerations about the Chinese learner at home and abroad and in schools and universities.

Recognizing the force of globalization and the need for basic education, international leaders as far back as the mid-twentieth century created strategies and guidelines to make educational opportunities available worldwide, so that individuals and countries could participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, globalization:

In 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed free and compulsory education to be a basic human right. In 1990 the World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand, pledged to

provide primary education for all by 2000; this pledge was reaffirmed in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000. In 2000 the United Nations Millennium Development Goals promised universal completion of primary education by 2015. And in 2002 the Plan of Implementation that emerged from the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg highlighted the central role of education in promoting good health, environmental protection, and sustainable development. (Bloom 2004, 56)

Although these goals have yet to be fully realized, basic, primary-level education has advanced; internationally the 2002 enrollment rate in primary school stands nearly at 96 percent in developed countries, 89 percent in countries “in transition,” and 83 percent in developing countries. These regions include Central Asia, East Asia, Europe, and the Americas. In fact, of all regions, only in Sub-Saharan Africa at 63.5 percent does the rate actually go below 82.6 percent (UNESCO 2005, 44). The proportion of students in secondary schools has also risen above 90 percent in developed industrial countries and those in transition, although some developing countries still fall below 70 percent (UNESCO 2005, 52). As noted by the *World Development Report* (2007), because a high correlation exists between educational achievement and economic compensation, it is worrisome that any country falls short of full literacy at primary and secondary levels (World Bank 1).

Access to basic education and secondary schooling has been identified as an urgent international issue and studied by educators, governmental agencies, and NGOs across the globe. What has not been so well studied, however, is the demand for high-quality education that can nurture excellence and give an academic, economic, and social “edge” in this age of intense global business, politics, and education. Not long ago, the *South China Morning Post* produced a so-called “white paper,” “Enhancing the Quality of Hong Kong’s Education,” which argued that Hong Kong lacks mechanisms “to overhaul or weed out under-performers” among local schools because they are products of vested administrators, pedagogy, and funding. The answer to this, maintained the report, was a system that mirrored the English Schools Foundation (ESF) and international schools in promoting excellence across the board (“Facts” 2006, E5). As Chris Forse points out (Chapter 3, in this book), the ESF system has grown exponentially in Hong Kong because Chinese parents perceive it as giving high-quality education in the English medium with good access to Western universities. Hong Kong is not alone in thinking that international education may be a better alternative than local education. At about the same time as the *South China Morning Post* report, the *International Herald Tribune* profiled “foreign-run schools” in China as an alternative to local schools because of their liberal curriculum and English-language teaching (Pocha 2006, 4). These observations from Hong Kong and

mainland China voice a growing sentiment that, although learning is a “socially situated activity” deeply embedded in particular locations (Rao and Chan 2009, 14), “national education systems seem to be in a perpetual state of crisis (Phillips 2002, 159) and that high-quality international education has evolved well beyond them, preferred by expatriates and locals alike:

The economic rise of Asia and other parts of [the] developing world and the growth of international commerce have drawn millions of people to the expatriate life, and they have brought their children with them. Prosperity in developing countries is also manifesting itself in higher educational aspirations among local people. Many want their children to benefit from the better quality education and college opportunities available within the international school system. (Greenlees 2006, 18)

These comments, while particularly focused on the advantages of international schools, are strong indications that much more study needs to be given to the effects of globalization on education in schools and universities, the ways in which localization has worked against global understanding in education, and the impact of internationalization on students, in particular Chinese learners, at home and abroad. Economists and politicians have followed the flow of money and tracked political ideologies, and sociologists have researched the movement of migrants and culture from rural to urban environments and from Asia to the West, but most have paid too little attention to the radical changes in internationalized education and its effects on Asian learners.

In the first part of the chapter, I will discuss traditional education situated in the local, regional, and national. Then, I will talk about education as it goes global, with some of the first hints of the magnitude of the change seen in the OECD’s comparison of student examination results country by country as well as rapidly multiplying international rankings of universities. Next, I will talk about the escalation of boarding and international schools, International Baccalaureate programs (IB), and international exchanges of university students and faculty members. Finally, I will address the education of the Chinese learners in their home environments, as well as the current Diaspora from rural to urban areas in China and from one part of the world to another. These are the contexts and among the most important challenges and opportunities for education in the twenty-first century.

Education — curriculum, funding, and assessment: A local and national issue

Traditionally, education has been tied to local and national cultures, policies, and funding. Schools in almost every country are funded through city and county taxes

and are expected to reflect the priorities and values of the local citizenry. States, provinces, and regions usually govern the production and qualitative review of curriculum to establish a common basis for education in a particular society. In some countries, the central government itself well may oversee the formation and evaluation of curriculum and establish national examinations to ensure that there is consistency of curriculum, approach, and standards in schools across the nation, but in other countries these are local and regional concerns. Almost never — except under various colonial enterprises — has there been any attempt for representatives of one country to oversee the curriculum and educational practices of another, for education is designed for particular electorates, speaks to local social values, and arises from national interests and ideologies.

Universities often escape local governmental oversight, but they, too, are subject to similar principles of region and nation. In Australia, Canada, and the United States, states and provinces fund, and are responsible for, the quality of the universities as the practice of naming suggests — University of South West Wales, University of Alberta, and University of Pennsylvania. Though universities in Australia also receive recurrent funding from the Federal Government as do particular university initiatives in Canada and the United States, rarely do governments at the highest levels oversee all of tertiary education, so that, while there are national philosophies of education, the responsibility for funding and implementing these remains at a relatively local level. This principle is true in the East as well as the West, though in China majority funding often comes from the cities in which the universities are located. This practice is especially common in the larger, wealthier, globalized cities of Beijing, Guangzhou, Nanjing, and Shanghai, where the cities have more money to spend on education than do regional or national governments. Still, the central government ranks universities and allocates special funding to help the most exemplary in the research field. In Denmark, the physical assets of the school — land and buildings — can be owned and operated by the local government, and only the educational structure itself (curriculum and teachers) funded by the central government. In short, the responsibilities for primary and secondary education are mainly local and regional, but governments at the highest level do get involved in university education to varying degrees.

Because schools, colleges, and universities are grounded locally and regionally, those who study education also tend to focus on the region and nation. Faculties of education in Hong Kong focus on the Hong Kong curriculum and local learners; those in Toronto focus on the province of Ontario and Canada; those in Sydney focus on New South Wales and Australia; and so it goes. An exception to this is the European Union, which is trying to alter the education systems of member states to build a comprehensive program with similar degrees, requirements, and

rates of progress throughout the entire European system. Even so, each country establishes its own educational objectives, goals, and programs. And, although educators around the world are interested in comparing the learning structures and practices of other countries, they rarely have a focus — or even multiple courses — on transnational, cross-cultural, and international education. As Australia, Canada, the UK, and the US have become more culturally and racially diverse, universities have taken greater note of special learner needs, inner-city challenges, and multiculturalism at the local levels as well as learning patterns and standards nationally, but the emphasis is almost always on the students adjusting to the local context and the teacher's expectations, not of the teachers having to adjust to the students' expectations or having to rethink pedagogy to accommodate new kinds of students from different national and cultural backgrounds.

Assessments within — and of — educational systems at all levels have consequently been carried out either locally or nationally. Often, students in the primary and secondary schools take state, provincial, or national exams to gauge their progress over the entire system or compete for admission into preferred tertiary institutions. Rarely are there published comparisons or rankings of primary and secondary schools either within the public or private domain. Still, universities often have their own rankings of schools for the purpose of deciding who gets admitted to their programs. They construct these independently and very privately.

Universities themselves have been subject to comparative national scrutiny for a number of years. In the early years, the scrutiny took the form of accreditation exercises and nation-based rankings with empirical statistics about the distinctiveness of the programs; the number, quality, geographical distribution, and acceptance of applicants; and the number of PhDs teaching within the institution and their quality of teaching and research. The exercises also included some appraisal of the physical structures and library holdings; and comments about staff salaries and endowments. They were based in part on reputational surveys of educators, administrators, students (past, present, and prospective), and business leaders. These were used widely as evaluations of the colleges and universities and as advertisements for programs, and the application rates of individual institutions rose or fell depending on these evaluations, so that rankings themselves became part of the business climate.

The United States had some of the earliest university rankings, appearing in various books and magazines dedicated to that purpose. The first of the university rankings, in the *US News and World Report*, appeared in 1983. In Canada, *Maclean's Magazine* has published a ranking of Canadian public universities for some fifteen years. (There are only a very few small private universities in Canada.) Even the European Commission has gotten into the act since 2003,

publishing a ranking of some twenty-two European universities — by no means the entire list. These rankings suggest that people have become increasingly concerned about the relative importance of their educational systems nationally. As people traversed the United States in pursuit of jobs and education in the second half of the twentieth century, they wanted to know the comparative value of programs, colleges, and universities.

Education: Symptoms and signs of internationalization

Although faculties of education as well as magazines and books of university rankings first concentrated on their own regions, the world in general has become interested in the comparative achievements of national educational systems. There are many signs that this is happening through international assessments and symptoms of emerging international perspectives on teaching and learning. This has been one of the first signs of a new internationalization and globalization of learning.

Another of these signs is the decision of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to study and foster good education in its member states: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States. It has gone through massive amounts of social and educational data to determine what has been happening to education in these member states across the globe.

The OECD's purpose is not just to study the relation between education and society but to encourage better theory and practice that will bring societies along economically. Consequently, in 2000 it implemented the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) to assess "the skills and knowledge of 15-year-olds" in reading literacy, mathematics literacy, and science literacy and to judge "whether students approaching the end of compulsory education have acquired the knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in society" (Statistics Canada 2007, 1). "Full participation in society" means not just within each country alone but internationally across the organization's thirty member countries and selected partner countries and regions. PISA administers examinations every three years, and in each cycle focuses upon one primary skill, e.g., mathematics in 2006. PISA is not interested in the construction of the national curricula per se but how countries compare on issues that relate most directly to economic competitiveness, including, as mentioned above, mathematics, reading and science — those subjects considered the most

critical in any school system, the best indicators of success in further secondary and university education, and the most essential to economic development. Consequently, its findings on set examinations, calculation of the percentage of the students that enter and graduate from university, and tally of the number who study such fields as science, engineering, and teaching lead to conclusions about a country's comparative standing in education and ability to compete economically on an international scale.

This new agency formed at the cusp of the twenty-first century is interesting because it indicates a sudden awareness that countries no longer live in an education cocoon and proof that similar, if not the same, examinations can be given to hundreds of thousands of students across the world and educational results tabulated and compared, with serious implications about strategies for educating students nationally and internationally. This is only one of several indications that countries are beginning to recognize that the internationalization of education is every bit as important as globalization in economics and politics — indeed that the production of knowledge is the most important single factor in a country's ability to compete internationally in this growing knowledge economy.

The results of questionnaires and examinations from the OECD have, I think, been encouraging and surprising at the same time. For example, they indicate that more students are finishing secondary and tertiary education internationally than had been the case previously, though the United States has fallen behind as East Asia and Central Asia have risen. In this age of global migration, although first-generation migrants tend not to do so well in schools as their locally born counterparts, second-generation migrants do better than the local population. And, although the number of females educated in non-globalizing countries remains behind that of males, almost universally in globalized and globalizing countries, females have overtaken males in school completion. Certain countries, too, have demonstrated that their education results are almost always consistently ahead of other countries. Finland, Hong Kong, Korea, Norway, and Canada have emerged as model countries with excellence across the literacy spectrum and, given all of their strong economies, establishing the firm relationship between high literacy and monetary compensation. There are other countries as well that come out highly, but this mixture indicates that learners from the West and the East are recognized for their abilities across the spectrum and that educators do not have to follow stereotypes identifying one ethnic group as superior to others in mathematics and science abilities or inferior in reading literacy. They also indicate that both the East and the West have countries that are markedly superior in educating the young when the systems are well funded, and both have some that do not come up to the benchmark.

Arguably, this comparison of results in the testing of 15-year-olds is helpful in countries thinking about improving the education and scores of their students, for they can evaluate differing educational and funding models. However, another kind of comparison is at work at the university level with completely different motivations. At one time, recognition of universities' academic standing was largely nation-based and even nationalistic, reflecting not just academics but the age of the university, its endowment funds, and its country of origin. The English Oxbridge universities (Oxford and Cambridge) as well as the American Ivy League schools (especially Harvard, Yale, and Princeton) and a few of the American top state universities (e.g., University of California, Berkeley, and University of Michigan) always came out on top reputationally. In the English-language world, only the UK and the US tended to receive high recognition. As students began to move easily around the world in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, looking for undergraduate programs for full-time study and yearly exchanges as well as reputable places for postgraduate education, various agencies began to compare universities and publish their results, changing the perception of universities across the world and recognizing those that had been overlooked before. The results of this barely decade-old phenomenon point to a new competition in international higher education as well as a commercialization of tertiary education as universities profit immensely from student applications and enrollment fees when they are listed in the top echelon internationally.

There are a host of recent surveys that signify this internationalizing of education, but the results are never consistent and vary widely depending on the criteria. Many look at specific kinds of programs (e.g., medicine and MBAs), while others rank universities more generally. Four such agencies, their announced methodologies, and rankings of the University of Hong Kong (HKU) give some idea of the wide, and even wild, variability in their conclusions. The Institute of Higher Education at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, for instance, began to publish its findings in 2003 and has recently said that it "considers every university that has any Nobel Laureates, Fields Medalists, and Highly Cited Researchers, or papers published in nature or science. In addition, universities with significant amount of papers indexed by Science Citation Index-Expanded (SCIE) and Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) are also included" ("Academic Ranking" 2008). With a bias clearly in the direction of sciences and social sciences, it did not rank HKU at all in the top 300 in 2007, though in 2006 it did rank it 263, and in 2008 somewhere between 201 and 300. "The Webometrics Ranking of World Universities," launched in 2004 and carried out by a large research group in Spain, ranked HKU 156 in 2007 on a wide-ranging basis of alumni surveys, faculty accomplishments, and research based on "bibliometric and scientometric indicators for the evaluation of the scientific performance of scholars and their

research groups” (Webometrics 2007). *The Times Educational Supplement* of the United Kingdom also publishes its survey of top universities called the “THES QS World University Rankings,” and, though its methods seem to be restricted to peer review, in 2009 ranked HKU number 24 of all the universities in the world. An Australian site, “Top 200 Universities and Colleges Worldwide,” ranks universities only on the basis of “web popularity,” that is, the number of hits that the university website gets, and on this basis, ranked HKU number 8 in 2007, though 84 in 2010. Consequently, in 2007 HKU went from a no-show to 156, to 18, to 8 all in one year, depending on the evaluating agency and criteria, and these statistics are just as varied in other years.

The purpose of my comments on the scoring of HKU is not just to show the wide variability of approaches and results but to indicate the high importance of international rankings of universities in this decade and the way that numbers of different agencies have recently entered this arena. International scrutiny and rankings have become extremely important in this age of globalization, and not only the universities themselves but countries such as Australia rely heavily on these surveys to attract students and maintain their university systems. Indeed, it has been claimed that mainland China has been the largest consumer of Australian resources and its children the largest consumers of Australian education.

This globalized university competition has recently taken an unprecedented leap. For the last quarter of a century, universities have been building international presence in locations abroad, usually — but not always — in conjunction with another local university to offer limited programs, engage in research, and assist with faculty and student exchanges. As a rule, universities with home bases in Australia, the UK, and the USA would fly in teachers for short-term courses and duties and hire a few local instructors on a contractual basis. Many courses were also offered online or through some form of distance education delivery system, so that the universities would not have to commit much human or financial capital. These would help raise the universities’ “profile, build international relationships, attract top research talent who, in turn, [might] attract grants and produce patents, and gain access to a new pool of tuition-paying students” (Lewin 2008a, 4).

Recently, American, Australian, British, and Canadian universities have started or expanded programs with partnerships in various countries in Asia, including China, India, Malaysia, and Singapore and have begun to open comprehensive branch campuses in the Middle East with teaching and administrative staff more or less permanently located onsite in facilities that belong to a particular university or that are shared by many. According to the *International Herald Tribune*, “at Education City in Doha, Qatar’s capital, they can study medicine at Weill Medical College of Cornell University, international affairs at Georgetown, computer science and business at Carnegie Mellon,

fine arts at Virginia Commonwealth, engineering at Texas A&M and, soon, journalism at Northwestern” (Lewin 2008a, 1). There are many questions about these operations, ranging from obvious ones about market-driven policies and administrative and financial viability to more complex ones about the impact of grafting one culture onto another, imposing Western ideology and social practices on non-Western cultures, and the intercultural, pedagogical, and ethical implications of mixing people, subject matter, and classroom behavior. It is too early to know how many of these new global university campuses will survive, but their very existence marks an important step in education and globalization.

School and university exchanges and boarding and international schools

The concern of the OECD, the examination results posted by PISA, the international rankings of universities, and the existence of international branch campuses all point to the increasing globalization of education. But the movement of university students from country to country, the popularity of exchange programs, the ongoing importance of boarding schools, the growth and quality of international schools, and the diasporas of Chinese learners indicate that education and globalization need to be reassessed with these phenomena in mind.

Until well after World War II, the vast majority of students stayed in their home countries for their primary, secondary, and tertiary education. In general, this is still true, but there is a sea change at the university level in students’ spending at least part of their education abroad. Many universities now require that students studying a foreign language take some study abroad in the country where that language is the medium of communication by native speakers, and many colleges and universities recommend, and even require, their students to have a semester or year abroad, regardless of discipline.

Although it is clear that the absolute numbers of students studying abroad has increased exponentially, it is not easy to get a grip on the actual figures because there is no international agency that monitors all of this movement and because, when countries do provide the figures, they sometimes do not indicate whether they are school or university students or both. While the majority of students studying abroad likely consists of university students, massive numbers of Chinese and Indian students, for example, now go to Australia and the UK for secondary schooling, and many of the students in international schools may not count as studying abroad because their entire families may have lived abroad for many years and they do not register statistically as going abroad for study.

Still, it is possible to get some sense of the scale of increases. According to the OECD, over 2.7 million students at the tertiary level went abroad in

2005 (“Education” 2007, 8, 45) and, according to the International Institute of Education (IIE), the USA was the primary destination (see Figure 1.1).

According to the IIE, in actual numbers, rather than percentages, the USA received 564,766 international students at the tertiary level in 2006. Of these students, 60 percent came from Asia, predominantly India (#1) and China (#2). During this year, 196,000 Americans studied at international universities. Moreover, again according to IIE, of students who went to the United Kingdom and Australia, the UK received 344,335 students in 2005, and Australia received 167,954 students in 2006. However, according to Australian Education International (2005), these figures could be considerably higher, and they suggest that Australia received 344,815 foreign enrollments in 2005 (“Recent” 2005). According to Ryan and Carroll (2005, 4), Australia predicts that this international study body will more than double to 810,000 by 2018, and the UK predicts 677,000 by 2015. According to the OECD, “international students are most numerous in tertiary enrollments in Australia, Austria, France, New Zealand, Switzerland and the United Kingdom” (“Education” 2007, 44)

Although in a 25-year period between 1978 and 2003, 580,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students from China went to the USA to study (Levin 2003, 8), in 2007 alone, according to the *China Daily*, 200,000 students from China went abroad (Wang 2008). IIE puts the number still higher, at 349,506 students from China even in 2004 — a significant variation in statistics, but in both cases

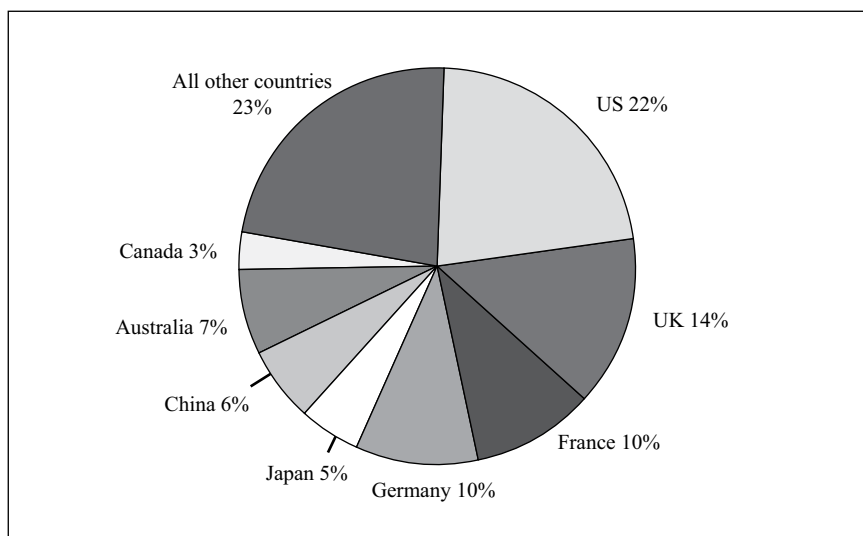


Figure 1.1 UNESCO UIS database, 2006 and *Open Doors 2006: Report on International Educational Exchange at the Tertiary Level* (“Atlas”)

suggesting that Chinese students are on the move across the globe. In the last decade especially, China itself has become an increasingly popular destination: in 2001, 61,869 university students from abroad went to China; in 2004 that had grown to 110,844 undergraduate and graduate students; and by 2005 that had increased still further to over 140,000 students (Slethaug 2007, 4; "Atlas").

Often people think that international education consists mainly of university students going abroad, and, as my statistics above might suggest, it often concerns such destinations as Australia, China, the UK, and the USA. Certainly, these countries are especially important because they are increasingly geared up to accept international students; as a case in point, the University of Southern Queensland has embraced transnational pedagogy as its operative mode (Dashwood et al. 2008) to be better equipped to deal with international students and the global educating process. Students of Chinese ethnicity from mainland China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan make up such a large percentage of international students that they are studied as a special group classified as "Chinese learners," although that term is not always restricted to learners from those countries.

However, another part of the equation is the number of students, including Chinese learners, who also go into private school systems internationally. This has become big business in many countries as boarding schools have grown steadily and international schools exponentially. Boarding schools have an interesting history, and, though begun during the Middle Ages for boys to be sent to monasteries and noble houses for education, they became highly popular during the colonial period when senior administrators and civil servants and well-to-do business families sent their children home to boarding schools in the UK or Europe to be educated. In that sense, boarding schools have been internationalized for some time, but, in another sense, they were designed to teach the students in a very European way and to educate them in all of the best habits and customs of their home countries, especially Great Britain. They did not exist to promote multiculturalism, and all but a few students in the UK had British heritage.

The breakdown of the colonial system after World Wars I and II put financial pressure on these schools, but that slack has been taken up recently by students coming from all over the world to be educated in what is considered to be an excellent English-speaking British environment. The schools now are much more multicultural and intercultural than they once were, but their mandate generally is still to teach in the language of the country where the boarding school is located and to educate the students out of the traits and customs of their home countries. Now, especially, they exist as stepping-stones to earn admission to top universities. Many Chinese learners have been sent by their families to the UK from Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan, and some from the mainland have gone

there as well as to Australia and New Zealand and, to a lesser degree, Canada and the United States.

Various websites on boarding schools indicate just what an important business this has become. The website for the UK-based *Boarding Schools Directory & Guide 2007* claims that there are more than 700 boarding schools in the British Isles, and these are estimated to educate over 100,000 students annually, among them an increasingly high number of Chinese learners. The Australian Education Network lists 101 boarding schools (mainly religious-based) throughout various cities in Australia, and they, too, have an increasing number of Chinese learners in their student body. In fact, being geographically closer to Australia than the UK, Asian students from the dominant Chinese cultures do not have to travel so far as the UK and Europe and have the advantages of a dollar valued well below pound sterling or the Euro and generally better weather than the UK — though not necessarily steeped in the same traditions. Canada, too, lists some sixty boarding schools, according to *The Handbook of Canadian Boarding Schools* (Lafortune and Thomson 1999), and they depend on Chinese learners for an increasing portion of their budget.

In contrast to boarding schools, which were located mainly in the country of origin with students traveling back and forth to locations where their parents worked, international schools were designed to cater to students away from their home country and provided schooling where the families lived abroad. In many ways, international schools have functioned in a similar way to those of boarding schools, though they generally do not include bed and board. (Some international schools in Australia and the UK, however, are also boarding schools.) Local schools throughout the British colonial empire, for example, were established to educate the children of junior civil servants, families of missionaries, others who could not afford to send their children abroad, those who disliked the idea of sending their children away, children of mixed marriages, and a few others from the local population. During the colonial period, British-based international schools were funded, in part, by the British government, in part by the employers (if they differed), and in part by the families themselves. In Hong Kong, the English Schools Foundation, begun by the Hong Kong government, first built schools mainly on Hong Kong Island but, increasingly, in Kowloon and the New Territories, creating one of the largest British school systems abroad. The British were by no means the only ones to open up such systems, and the Americans, French, Germans, Japanese, Portuguese, Spanish, and Swiss, among others, developed flourishing schools, so that there are now some 58 international schools in Hong Kong alone, as compared with 64 in all of mainland China and 76 in all of India (“All” 2008).

As with the boarding schools during the colonial period, these international schools were designed to educate students in the languages, customs, habits, and pedagogy of the country of national origin. They were not designed to promote multilingualism, intercultural communications, or multiculturalism and not intended to accommodate local pedagogical and cultural perspectives at variance with those from the home country. They were conceived as outposts of their home countries where their citizens could receive good schooling in a comfortable environment not unlike the one they left.

But something, indeed, has been happening that has altered thinking about international schools. Globalization in the past two decades has radically increased the number of international schools and changed their nature. In 1964, there were only about 50 international schools worldwide, and the majority of expatriate children went to their home countries for education, especially in the boarding schools. In the next thirty years, as more and more families went abroad for work, the tally of international schools rose to some 1,000, with 50,000 teachers and 500,000 students (Hayden and Thompson 1998, 333). That in itself, however, was a relatively modest increase compared with the additional 2,000 international schools that would be built in the next decade and the doubling and tripling in size of existing facilities, bringing the total to 3,000 schools and an estimated two million students by 2005 (Greenlees 2006), well beyond the 100,000 educated annually in the boarding schools of the UK. This break-neck speed has not abated, and new international schools are being planned and built almost on a daily basis, especially in the countries of Southeast and Central Asia, where there is galloping globalization and newfound wealth.

In these last forty years of growth, the target groups of these schools have also changed, as both Chris Forse and Eric Jabal note of Hong Kong (Chapters 3 and 4 in this volume). With the demise of colonial empires following World Wars I and II and with the handover of Hong Kong and Macau to China, for example, late in the twentieth century, the number and role of colonial administrators and civil servants diminished, so that the schools were not required to serve them in the same way. Moreover, as international trade, development, and finance accelerated, embassies and consulates needed to grow as well, so the children of traders, bankers, investment advisors, and new governmental administrators and trade officers wanted to find schools within the major world cities, but not necessarily those of their home countries. Then, too, with an awareness of the value of high-quality universities and their programs in the developed world, many people in developed and developing countries wanted to create strategies whereby their children had access to these educational opportunities — and they had the money to send them to the ever more costly international schools. Finally, many of the locals who wanted access to international schools did so because they

believed their children could develop a network of relationships and an education that would better serve them in the marketplace (Lowe 2000). Consequently, although many families at one time wanted their children to attend schools that were founded and fostered by their home countries, that was no longer requisite. Irrespective of their national background, people began to look openly for international schools that could offer a certain lifestyle, deliver high-quality education, and educate and train the children in skills for globalization so that they would be assured of getting into the best universities in Australia, Canada, the UK, and the USA. National origin was not the driving concern or, for most, even a consideration as international schools increasingly became “departure lounges” for university destinations (Yamato and Bray 2006, 60). Consequently, whereas in 1960, 70 percent of the students of the students were children of civil servants, missionaries, and traders from the country that founded the schools, by 2005 only 30 percent of the students would fall into that group. Although these examples might suggest that this movement away from national orientation pertains mainly to schools in a de-colonized Asia, this seems to be a universal phenomenon, for the American-based International School of Brussels

is now only 29 percent American, compared with 70 percent 10 years ago — a change in demographics resulting from increased local hiring by U.S.-based global companies. Increased local hiring has also translated into fewer tuitions being paid by employers — only 89 percent now at ISB, and falling, compared with 98 percent a decade ago. (Conlin 2006, 11)

In effect, the student body of older international schools has become increasingly denationalized, and newer schools will probably not start out with that firm national base (or ideological agenda) in any case, so that, of the 14 percent growth of international schools in Asia between 2005–06, few would be fully grounded in the societies of their countries of origin, though many of the teachers would be drawn from those home countries. The rising number of locals in international schools is quite visible in Hong Kong, where local Chinese learners (who might or might not have moved abroad for a while to acquire background and citizenship in other countries) increasingly fill the available positions in international schools, so that in the Canadian International School, for example, almost all of the students can be classified as Chinese learners, whether or not they have spent some time abroad. As Martin Schmidt notes in Chapter 5 of this book (“Educating Chinese Learners for Social Conscience in Hong Kong: An International School Perspective”), some 80 percent of the students in the Hong Kong International School (the principal American-based school in Hong Kong) are now of Asian descent and the majority of those with Chinese ethnicity. These figures are reinforced by those provided by Chris Forse and Eric Jabal of the ESF

system (Chapters 3 and 4 of this volume), who maintain that spaces once allocated to expatriates are increasingly taken up by local students in Hong Kong.

Many of the local parents prefer to have their children educated in these Western-style, English-speaking classrooms and live close to home at the same time so that they do not become too socialized in liberal Western ways. According to Camilla Russell (2005) in speaking of Thailand, “parents complain about their international school-educated children ‘acting like Westerners.’” She adds, “how then to encourage children to be bilingual while maintaining a strong sense of cultural identity?” (19). In countries such as Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia, the locals have not been allowed to attend international schools, but, in most countries, students are free to enroll in any school, so long as they meet the admission requirements and pay the tuition, but many struggle with maintaining their local identities in the face of the socializing processes that are identified with internationalization:

Wide-ranging social, economic, and technological changes have markedly affected educational policy and practice. Globalization . . . has also led to the devaluing of traditional values. In many regions of the world, there is tension between a culture promoted by globalization and that of traditional culture. (Rao, Ng, and Pearson 2009, 257)

However, this tension may not just involve general social processes but specific pedagogical and moral values as well. Li (2009) observes that teaching moral development is a very important part of Chinese pedagogy (49–50; Chan and Rao 2009, 326) — one that could be sadly missed in a Western classroom — and Carol Chan (2009) remarks that too little attention “has been given to detailed analyses of how . . . [global educational values] can be implemented in the Chinese classroom, negotiating the tensions between cultural beliefs, contextual demands and Western ideas” (173). This last observation raises the question of the relationship between the international school and the local community, and, according to Tristan Bunnell (2005), most locals do not know much about, and may not even like the idea of, international schools (Bunnell 2005, 56). Too often they are completely separate entities.

This new denationalized, multinational, and usually bilingual or even trilingual classroom has profound implications for education. First, a broader target group allows the school to grow well beyond a size required to serve only those from its country of origin, and, as a consequence, they are now faced with “staggering demand” (Greenlees 2006, 18). It also means that, if the school is serving a wider clientele than its own countrymen, the schools cannot ask for, or depend upon, their home governments or key national corporations for appreciable support. That, too, creates another requirement — the school has to charge the

students full fees rather than relying upon government and corporate support, in effect meaning that international schools cater to an elite group and increasingly participate in global fiscal competition or suffer systemic under-funding. As an example, annual fees in Hong Kong range from US\$10,000 to US\$20,000, and, to stay in business, schools have to view their students as clients, for whom they provide a range of services and ensure certain standards of education:

Perhaps more than most mainstream schools, therefore, international schools must orient themselves to the market. They must provide curricula that are in demand at a price that can be afforded by their target clients, and must pay attention to changing demographic and economic forces. (Yamato and Bray 2006, 60)

These high fees mean that the students more than likely come from upper and upper middle-class homes, compromising some of the diversity that has become a very positive part of international education.

Despite the drawback of being based on an elitist class structure, international schools' becoming more diverse and multicultural simultaneously challenges and provides opportunities for teachers and students, who will be required to confront and accommodate their differences more directly. This mix of students from different backgrounds and countries also means that schools have to rethink their curricula and perhaps even their pedagogical assumptions. No longer can they be so easily grounded in the affairs of their country of origin. This is particularly true in countries like Australia, which increasingly "attracts a vast number of Asian students from predominantly non-English-speaking backgrounds. Traditionally, low English communication skills are recognized as obstacles to student learning and participation in management programmes," but this also "impacts on the effectiveness of action learning of professional skills," including writing, presenting, speaking out, and working in teams (Soontiens 2004, 301–302). Another side to this question concerns the skills various students bring that could be used to create a stimulating and positive learning environment.

The issue of language cannot be separated from the cultivation of other learning skills, but there are other issues of personal and national identity as well. For instance, the increasing number of Chinese learners put pressure on the Canadian International School in Hong Kong to drop its Ontario civics course, which seemed irrelevant to those who likely would never live in Canada. As John Phillips remarks, "As national boundaries give way to the pressures of the global economy, such notions of citizenship lose their relevance" (Phillips 2002, 171). This view is supported by Janette Ryan (Chapter 2 in this volume), who finds that teachers in Australia, New Zealand, and the UK have also felt pressure to internationalize their curricula and move away from more local and national

concerns and issues. Chris Forse, too, notes that in Hong Kong international schools, the official Chinese language (Putonghua) has been introduced so that the Chinese students can be bilingual, if not exactly biliterate, and that has meant restricting or eliminating other subject areas. In that way, rightly or wrongly, the presence of certain groups can reconfigure the classroom and curriculum. In addition, because the students' goal might not necessarily be to get into a particular national university (e.g., Canadian) but another one in Hong Kong, the UK, or the USA, narrow national curricula might seem too confining, so many schools are changing to the International Baccalaureate system (IB) that has fewer national markers than do national curricula.

International Baccalaureate programs, international schools of education, and Chinese learners

Increasingly popular as an educational tool of global education — and especially for Chinese learners in Hong Kong, mainland China, Singapore, and Taiwan, the IB programs from primary through secondary are specifically designed for international schools with transferability in mind (Carber 2004, 340). Drawn from the practices of several international schools, they are now used as the primary programs of instruction in an increasing number of international schools as well as national schools from kindergarten through secondary schools. The IB website states that as of 2009 there are more than 709,000 IB students in 2,609 schools in 135 countries (“International”), including 994 in the United States, 698 in Africa/West Asia/Middle East, 362 in the Asia Pacific region, and 254 in Latin America. This is up significantly from statistics on their website in 2008, when they tallied 596,000 IB students at 2,218 schools in 125 countries (“International”). These figures register their rapid growth and suggest that more than one quarter of international schools use the IB curricula. It is also important to emphasize that this is a Western curriculum, so that these schools may be international in location, but there is Western ideological construct at work.

One of the principal reasons that educators and parents like the IB program is that it attempts to be ideologically neutral. James MacDonald of the Yokohama International School maintains that the “growth and success” of the IB program is “linked to globalization,” but “not driven by economic factors and is free from the dogma of politics and religion” (“Lifelong” 2007, 11). This means that it is adaptable to national schools but does not require any particular national creed or faith agenda, though it can be argued that teaching in English and requiring English-learning proficiency is certainly ideological — but that is almost a given requirement for the majority of international schools. Still, at least one teacher, Barry Drake from the Chinese International School in Hong Kong, has raised

questions about taking this program with its Western, Anglo roots directly into Asian schools that do not have the same cultural foundations because the emphasis on “multiple perspective taking and open-mindedness” and assumptions about teaching methods to achieve this can create tensions (Drake 2004, 189, 195). At stake here are issues about the effectiveness of global teaching methods in the Asian and European classroom (Ryan 2002; Slethaug 2007) and the degree to which these international schools are truly cross-cultural in recognizing both local and global values. Obviously, this is an issue that needs ongoing engagement by all international schools.

According to the IB website, its “three programmes for students aged 3 to 19 help develop the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills to live, learn and work in a rapidly globalizing world” (IB 2008). It is probably not accidental that this mission statement is akin to the explicit goals of the OECD in trying to help its member countries develop strong patterns of education in the schools. IB emphasizes the same three skill sets identified by the OECD — that is, reading literacy, science literacy, and mathematics literacy, but also stresses the students’ creative development and direct involvement in the ways that these are taught.

In the reading literacy area of the senior Diploma Program, IB requires a working knowledge of two languages, and in the mathematics area a working knowledge of mathematics and computers. They also require students to gain competence in writing, demonstrated by an extended research essay of 4,000 words for diploma completion. In addition, there is a social science component identified as “individuals and societies,” stressing identity formation as well as comprehension of the larger society. Students must take a “Theory of Knowledge” course that requires them to reflect philosophically on a variety of intercultural modes of gaining knowledge (sometimes even classroom methodologies), and the program also gives students the opportunity to develop and express themselves through a variety of arts activities, including music, drama, and sports. This incorporation of the arts has long been a tradition in the West, but it resonates in many other areas, including China, where there is a growing interest in the liberal arts. In addition, it has a strong service component, the so-called Community Action Service (CAS) that requires students to be involved in initiatives of service to the community. As Martin Schmidt and Zhu Weibin remark (Chapters 5 and 9 in this book), Chinese students in schools and universities are not used to thinking about service to the community as an important feature of an educational system and so can profit considerably from that inclusion. An illustration by the IB Organization indicates an education program that tries to give diversity and unity at the same time (see Figure 1.2 on p. 34).

One of the features of the IB Diploma Program is the combined marking — by internal and external markers — of students’ work in literature, language,

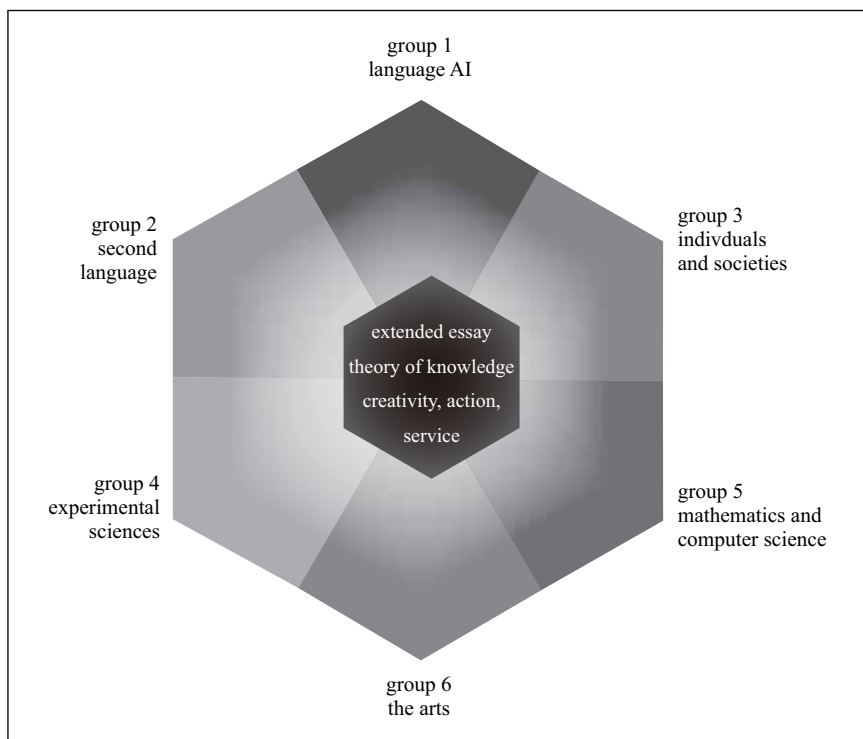


Figure 1.2 Illustration from IB Diploma Program website (2009)

and theories of knowledge. Long a feature of particular European countries and British education in the colonies, this marking procedure links schools and ensures similar standards across the international spectrum. Grade inflation has been a marked problem across the globe, and this is one attempt to keep that problem at bay and convince universities that students graduating from these schools have fair assessments and superior qualifications. This emphasis on a superior education gives the IB program a particular cache as local schools in many countries are perceived as struggling to maintain standards.

When international schools join the IB Organization and teach that curriculum, they have access to assistance from the head offices through the Online Curriculum Center, visits from representatives from the home office, as well as special seminars on teaching. They can also apply to become an assessor in establishing criteria for demonstrated excellence in studying and teaching and can help train others as well. This feature actually goes to the heart of a major problem of teaching in international schools — there are very few university resources and programs dedicated to this issue for “something happened while nobody was looking,” that is, international schools have developed at a supersonic rate

without schools of education addressing possibilities for international curricula or teaching university students how to teach in international schools.

Because education has traditionally been administered and funded on local and regional bases, few have paid attention to new administrative and financial difficulties facing international schools or to new teaching tasks and assignments that internationalization and globalization have inaugurated. Nor have they paid attention to a likely need for a different kind of teaching given the movement of curriculum and student bodies away from a national focus. If most of the students in the school are not of the nationality that the name, banner, and reputation the school celebrates, and if adjustments are made in the curriculum in favor of internationalization, then it follows that pedagogy itself needs “re-view and re-orchestration.”

Reviewing and re-orchestrating teaching, however, is more difficult to address presently than is internationalizing the student body and curriculum because there are so few programs that actually focus on international education. In Europe and the UK, only the University of Bath’s Centre for Education in an International Context, Oxford Brookes Centre for Educational Management (OXCEM), and the University of Cambridge International Examinations (International Teacher Certificate) actually have programs designed for international teaching. The USA, likewise, has few programs dedicated to international teaching. The few that do exist include: Michigan State University (Studies in Education Overseas); Endicott College (MEd in International Education) in Beverly, Maine; George Mason University (Center for International Education) in Fairfax, Virginia; and the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont that has courses on campus and online.

This lack of perspectives and models of international education allows provincial and national ideologies to dominate. This can be problematic for it means that intellectual colonialism is always at work, ignoring the teaching and learning strengths represented by the communities of the students themselves or not trying to construct new models that will incorporate different national pedagogical strengths and models. This also can mean that stereotypes from previous periods about Chinese and other kinds of learners can be perpetuated in the global community, inhibiting creative teaching and learning (Ryan, Chapter 2 in this book). Training in multiculturalism — which is usually a feature of education programs in many countries — is not the same as the teachers’ having to reckon with, and accommodate themselves to, completely different cultures so that everyone in the classroom, including the teachers, has a negotiated space and so that international education will have a chance to become something extraordinary (Slethaug 2007). Erika Schwindt found this lack of “international experience” a serious handicap among German teachers at international schools

in Germany because they had never had “to adjust to different lifestyles over an extended period of time” and never had to change their “perceptions of home” (Schwindt 2003, 77). As Jane Vinther, Jennifer Miller, Ivy Wang, and Zhu Weibin suggest (Chapters 6–9 in this book), part of the excitement and joy of the international classroom is being able to reassess conventional pedagogies and styles to better incorporate the groups that are actually taking the courses.

That, however, can have a downside as well. In the case of the Chinese learners, this can mean that only one kind of Chineseness might be considered (Ryan, Chapter 2 in this book) or that their Chineseness — whatever that represents — can be ignored in favor of the individual, family, and pedagogical values of the country of origin of the teachers. Chinese learners from mainland China do not want it to be assumed that they have the same identity, values, and preferences as Chinese learners from other parts of the world or even that all learners in China are the same, because they vary widely by region, age, gender, religion, and economic and culture status (Hu 2003; Louie 2005; Shi 2006).

In short, the complexity of international education in this age of globalized learning and the complexity of Chinese learners inside and outside of China in many different countries and contexts need a great deal of further study to get a better mix of the global and local, and this is the intention of the following chapters in this book on *International Education and The Chinese Learner*.

“The Chinese Learner”: Misconceptions and Realities

Janette Ryan

Despite intensified internationalization of education through “global cultural flows” (Appadurai 1996) of students and teachers between schools and universities in Anglophone countries and China, Western views of “the Chinese learner” remain largely based on outmoded and stereotypical assumptions long past their use-by date. Countries like Hong Kong and Australia are sites of intense flows of Western and Chinese people and ideas, yet often the opportunities that these interactions present are wasted when those on both sides continue to base their understandings of the “other” on idealized or outdated notions. Such narrow thinking and lack of attention to the very real challenges and dilemmas that can confront those working on both sides of these systems of cultural practice can cause misunderstandings and inhibit opportunities for the development of innovative, creative, and generative ways of teaching and learning.

Teachers and students at sites of rich cross-cultural interactions such as at international schools and universities in Hong Kong or in schools and universities across Australia (or indeed in other parts of the world where there are large numbers of international students such as the UK, US, and Canada) make connections across systems of cultural practice on a daily basis. Their experiences can contribute much to the development of new educational ways of knowing and doing. Yet, rather than basing their actions on what they are seeing and encountering, those working within these systems often base their actions on entrenched stereotypical views of the characteristics of “Western” and “Chinese” learners. As China becomes a more significant player globally, it is imperative that those working with Chinese students, either in Chinese or Western contexts, have an informed understanding of the contemporary realities and complexities of both Anglophone and Asian educational contexts.

Western beliefs about the “inherent” characteristics of “Chinese” learners need to be examined so that a genuine dialogue can be established between (and within) these systems, based on an understanding of, and a mutual respect for, the values and individuals within these systems. This requires an examination of whether the usual characterizations of “Chinese” and “Western” academic values are useful, accurate, or valid and the impacts that ill-informed characterizations can have on individuals. This chapter focuses on recent Western debates about “the Chinese learner,” and provides an analysis of both prevailing “deficit” and more recent “surplus” views of Chinese learners, to examine underlying preconceptions about Chinese learners and learner behaviors, and how the views of Western teachers and academics construct the ways in which these teachers operate within these systems.

Australian views of Chinese learners

Rapid changes to the nature of the student cohort over the past ten to fifteen years at universities in Australia have produced radical changes to educational expectations and outcomes for both teachers and students. This is due to a more multicultural Australian society generally, as well as government policies aimed at the expansion of postsecondary educational opportunities beyond an elite group. At the same time, there have been rapid increases in the numbers of international students studying in Australia. Twenty-four percent of university students and 10 percent of secondary school students are now international students, coming mainly from China, and other “Confucian heritage culture” (hereafter CHC) countries. Among university academics, these changes have produced a range of responses, from those who see this increasing diversity as a source for enriching learning environments for all students, to more negative and sometimes even hostile reactions, often in response to increasing workloads (Ryan 2002). Papastephanou characterizes these as “antagonistic responses cultivated by globalization” (2005, 533). At some Australian universities and secondary schools, especially in major capital cities, there are very large numbers of Chinese students, many whose parents have migrated from China in recent years. For school and university teachers, these changes often produce pressure to internationalize the curriculum and cater for students with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Similar reactions have been reported in other Anglophone education systems such as, for example, in the United Kingdom (Ryan 2000; Turner and Robson 2008; Tysome 2004) and New Zealand (Li, Baker and Marshall 2002) or even in Hong Kong, as Forse notes (Chapter 3 in this volume), though it is not an altogether Anglophone system.

It is well recognized within Australia that such educational globalization benefits Australia and enhances productivity and security, especially if these "flows" are used as a platform for better understanding of different cultural traditions, knowledge, and perspectives. However, stereotypical, and often "deficit" views of Chinese learners put at risk the benefits of these "flows" due to the ways that inappropriate stereotypes of "Asian" and "Chinese" students are often promoted in attempts to assist Western teachers to understand "unfamiliar" types of students.

Western research in Anglophone countries often homogenizes Chinese or CHC students and ignores the contemporary complexities and diversity to be found within CHC cultures in the East Asian region such as China, Singapore, and Taiwan (Louie 2005; Ryan and Louie 2005, 2007). Much of the literature on Chinese students in countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom has to date been written by Western instructors working with international students struggling to succeed in unfamiliar cultural and linguistic environments. These tend to identify "deficits" that their international students lack in contrast to academic values supposedly possessed by Western students (Ryan 2002; Ryan 2005a; Ryan and Hellmundt 2003) and are thus often couched as the antithesis of Western exemplars of academic virtue.

"The Chinese learner" debate

Due to these rapid increases in the numbers of Chinese students studying in Anglophone countries such as Australia, the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, the "Chinese learner" has become a key recent focus for Western studies in education (Clarke and Gieve 2006; Coverdale-Jones and Rastall 2009; Jin and Cortazzi 2006; Shi 2006; Turner 2006; Watkins and Biggs 1996, 2001).

But definitions of who is meant by "the Chinese learner" vary enormously and are often fuzzy. The terms "Asian" and "Chinese" are often conflated, and Western academics frequently use "Asian" when they are in fact talking about students from China or Confucian heritage cultures.

So just whom do we mean when we refer to "the Chinese learner"? The literature in this area variously refers to "Chinese," "Asian," or more commonly to "Confucian heritage culture" students. Definitions of CHC learners vary enormously but generally include people from the nations of East Asia such as China (including Hong Kong), Taiwan, Singapore, Japan, and Korea (Louie 2005). But the scope and breadth of who is included often varies widely, ranging from researchers such as Kirkpatrick (2004), confining his study to speakers of Modern Standard Chinese from the People's Republic of China, to authors such as Nisbett

(2003), who maps the “geography of thought” of “Asians” and “Westerners,” and includes anyone of Chinese ancestry in the former category:

When I speak of East Asia I mean China and the countries that were heavily influenced by its culture, most notably Japan and Korea. (I will sometimes abbreviate ‘East Asian’ to ‘Easterner’ and sometimes to ‘Asian’.) When I speak of Westerners I mean people of European culture. When I speak of European Americans I mean blacks and whites and Hispanics — anyone but people of Asian descent. (Nisbett 2003, xxii)

Nisbett thus implies, by including “anyone of Asian descent” in his definition, that anyone of ethnic Chinese background who has lived all of their lives in America has similar learning traits and ways of thinking as people living in remote, rural locations in China. This would be equal to claiming that a white student from New York will have similar learning and thinking behaviors as a white student from a rural area in Russia. Such generic characterizations of “Western learners” would be treated with some skepticism, yet Chinese or CHC students continue to be constructed as essentially “non-Western” and described by Western academics in the ways in which they are “different” from Western students. “Chineseness is in effect defined in terms of deviance from Western norms, and generally as being interestingly different within mainstream, that is Western, psychology” (Watkins and Biggs 2001, 4). And as Edward Said (1978) argued, the “East” and the accompanying notion of “Orientalism” are constructs of the West, defined in terms of how they are *not* Western.

Equally, stereotypes of Western learners also exist among Chinese educators. In comparing American and Chinese students’ characteristics, the influential Chinese educator Gu Mingyuan, in trying to highlight aspects of each other’s cultures that could usefully be adopted as well as their drawbacks, stated that American teachers “seldom place very high demands on students . . . American students do not have a sound foundation in reading, writing and arithmetic” (Gu 2001, 197).

The broader such cultural boundaries are drawn, the larger the geographical area becomes, and the less useful and more stereotyping these categories can become. Even within as narrow a definition of “Chinese” as Kirkpatrick’s, much diversity can be found within China itself. Research by Hu (2003) and Shi (2006) has shown that there are significant differences in the learning behaviors and beliefs between students from the more developed, coastal regions of China and those in inland, less developed regions. Singh (2005) similarly found “highly variable” accounts of the learning experiences of final-year undergraduate students from China studying at universities in Australia. Shi (2006) argues that when we consider “Chinese students,” we need to be mindful of “their national, regional,

economic, class and cultural backgrounds, as well as age, religion and gender" (139). As Louie (2005) points out, a student whose parents are professors from Shanghai will have very different "cultural baggage" from one whose parents are peasants from a village in Hunan (23). According to Hu (2005), the notion of *the* "Chinese context" ignores the diverse learning contexts to be found within China and other CHC countries and, Hu argues, is nothing but a myth.

Stereotypes of the "Chinese learner"

The "Chinese learner" literature is a response to Western literature about international students (such as Ballard and Clanchy 1991, 1997), which essentially characterized CHC students as passive learners lacking critical thinking skills (Kumaravadivelu 2003; Ninnes, Aitchison, and Kalos 1999). Chinese students' learning characteristics have tended to be identified by Western academics in terms of what they are "lacking" in comparison to their Western counterparts. As Clark and Gieve (2006) argue:

[T]here is a notable tendency in the applied linguistics literature to report the perceptions and reactions of Western instructors which, rather than being interrogated for ethnocentric bias and stereotyping, are validated by recourse to a Confucian heritage explanation which appears plausible rather than being empirically established . . . Much of the evidence produced for the way Chinese students behave in classroom settings has been drawn from reports and perceptions by Western instructors, thus filtered through their own values, expectations and standards. (60–63)

These perceptions have often been based on partial knowledge or misunderstandings of Chinese students but have given rise to negative stereotypes (Littlewood 2009; Ninnes, Aitchison, and Kalso 1999) that often define CHC students' learning behaviors and beliefs as the opposites of Western academic values. These deficit views describe Asian students as rote, passive, and superficial learners lacking critical thinking skills (Kumaravadivelu 2003; Ninnes, Aitchison, and Kalos 1999; Ryan 2002; Ryan and Louie 2005) and prone to plagiarism (Kirkpatrick 2004; Phan 2006; Ryan 2000).

Ballard and Clanchy's work (1991, 1997) has since been heavily criticized for posing deficit views of international students, and Asian or CHC learners in particular, but what is more interesting to note is how their messages have been accepted uncritically and continue to be used by Western academics, particularly those in Australia where Ballard and Clanchy's work has been enormously influential. Browsing any one of the usual multiple copies of their books in an Australian university library will reveal evidence of frequent use such as

being heavily “dog-eared” and annotated. An examination of the annotations is revealing in seeing how academics have interpreted their work. The sections where the “deficit” or “lacks” that CHC learners are described as having, are heavily underlined and annotated.

Ballard and Clanchy did explicitly warn against the dangers of stereotyping, advising readers to base their judgments on actual events and outcomes, but these warnings appear to have been little heeded. Many academics and educational developers appear to have been selective in the messages that they have taken away, often invoking the so-called deficits of CHC students in seminars and conference papers, focusing on the skills or qualities that international students lack, without any examination of their own cultural biases. Rather than recognizing the possible diverse practices and perspectives found in (all) students’ previous educational experiences, or examining their own failings, they turn these into “deficits” that their students are lacking and need to develop in order to pass the test of Western academic virtues. Not only does it reveal the lack of critical self-awareness on the part of those who ascribe to these macro categories, but it also does not assist them to better understand and appreciate the contemporary characteristics and abilities of those they teach. As Ayako Yoshino, a PhD student from Japan writing in *The Times* in 2004, stated:

It is particularly infuriating to hear problems with such rhetorical styles attributed to imagined inadequacies in the student’s education in their home country. I have often had conversations in which it has been suggested to me that Oriental students come from backgrounds in which originality and critical thinking are valued less than acceptance of orthodoxy. Apart from the lack of critical thinking apparent in the use of the category Oriental, such analysis is misleading because it confuses differences in style of expression with a lack of academic rigour. What it fails to understand is that a prizewinning English academic essay translated word for word into Japanese is likely to be received as clumsy and ill thought out. (Yoshino 2004, 10)

“Western” versus “Confucian” academic values

Further, analyses of “Western” and “Chinese” or “Confucian” student learning behaviors are often couched as binaries such as deep/surface, adversarial/harmonious, independent/dependent, in what Aly (2007) refers to as “taxonomies of difference.” These dichotomies rely on the notion of “ideal” Western students as models to compare with Chinese students (Ryan and Louie 2007; Shi 2006) and assume that individuals within these systems do indeed have these attributes.

Based on my own examination of the literature in this area, these can be classified as follows:

Western	Confucian
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Deep” learners • Independent learners • Critical thinking • Student-centered learning • Adversarial stance • Argumentative learners • Achievement of the individual • Constructing new knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Surface” or rote learners • Dependence on the teacher • “Follow the master” • Respect for the teacher • Harmony • Passive learners • Achievement of the group • Respect for historical texts

This juxtaposition of academic “values” was illustrated in the Call for Papers of the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia 34th annual conference, *Critical Thinking and Learning: Values, Concepts and Issues*, in Hong Kong in November 2005:

Education in the different countries of Australasia and Asia is informed by widely differing historical and cultural perspectives, from western to Confucian, from liberal to communitarian, from colonial to postcolonial. Hong Kong, in many ways, lies at the crossroads of many of these perspectives. To what extent, for example, are the dominant concepts of thinking and learning a product of “western” cultural values? Might they be in conflict with concepts and values prevalent in many Confucian-heritage cultures that stress the meditative mind, harmony of thought and harmony in relationships, filial piety and a tempered questioning of authority, and the transmission of received wisdom through time? Might the liberal ideal of the independent and autonomous individual clash with communitarian values of identity in relationship?

Intended to prompt discussion of these polarities, this excerpt (deliberately) draws on the binary logic often found in the literature which portrays Chinese and Western education as exclusive and definable. It illustrates the ways that both “Western” and “Asian” values are often described as discrete, homogeneous, and unchanging (Ryan and Louie 2007). These polarities continue to permeate the literature about CHC students and reinforce hegemonic and marginalizing pedagogy and practice. This encourages the labeling and positioning of whole groups of students without looking at contextual teaching and learning factors (Kumaravadivelu 2003; Ninnes, Aitchison, and Kalso 1999) such as the impact

on students' learning behaviors of different methods or types of assessment or learning tasks (Ryan 2002) or whether learning contexts facilitate or hinder more interactive learning (Littlewood 2009). As Kumaravadivelu (2003) argues, contemporary research on CHC or "Asian" students is often "ambiguous and contradictory" (710) and, as Louie (2005) reminds us, we need to be cautious about how individuals report their learning beliefs and practices as "what people tell us about their own cultures is often contradicted by other informants from the same culture" (18). Rao and Chan (2009) point to the primary importance of the social context of learning: "it is aspects of the social context, rather than cultural heritage per se that affects student learning . . . We need to consider teaching and learning, not just the Chineseness of students or teachers" (Rao and Chan 2009, 17–18).

Views of "Western" learners are often equally stereotyped. Critical thinking, deep learning, lifelong and "lifewide" learning are promoted as the outcomes of Western education, but these concepts are often under-theorized or lack agreed meanings, particularly pivotal concepts such as "critical thinking." The notion of "critical thinking" is highly contested even within "Western" educational contexts. Hang's (2005) study of the perceptions of this term by academics in a business faculty at a large Australian university found a remarkable lack of common understanding of the term; many academics in the study claimed that, although they could not easily define the concept, they "knew it when they saw it." There are diverse points of view among educational philosophers on how best to define this concept. Mark Mason (2000, 2008), an educational philosopher at the University of Hong Kong, has attempted to defend an integrated conception of critical thinking by considering the ideas of significant theorists such as Robert Ennis, Richard Paul, John McPeck, and Harvey Siegel. Despite such efforts, there is currently no agreement among academics about such an apparently crucial concept, yet international students, especially Chinese students, are often judged as lacking this attribute.

Ninnes, Aitchison, and Kalso (1999) have shown that the nature of students' previous educational experiences, rather than the geographical origin of those experiences, can have greater influence on students' teaching and learning behaviors, so that students who attend a school in India, for example, which uses English as the mode for instruction and is modeled on the British tradition, may have learning behaviors that more closely resemble those of students from a prestigious English "public" school rather than those of students from another school in close geographical proximity. Similarly, students attending schools in the more developed coastal areas of China may have vastly different educational experiences and behaviors from those who are attending schools in less developed, inland areas (due in large part to social and economic inequalities;

see, for example, Postiglione 2006, Wong 2009, and World Bank 2008) or those who are attending schools in Hong Kong.

“Whole culture” explanations

Clark and Gieve (2003) believe that these “large culture explanations” make it easier for teachers to “explain away” their difficulties, but they do not help teachers and students to establish a two-way flow of knowledge and understanding. Stereotyped descriptions of teaching and learning practices by Chinese students and teachers are becoming even more irrelevant due to rapid and profound shifts in cultural, social and economic conditions in China (Chan and Rao 2009; Hu 2003; Jin and Cortazzi 2006; Shi 2006; Watkins and Biggs 2001; Yang 2009). Recent research by Chinese scholars is attempting to correct negative stereotypes about Chinese learners. Shi’s (2006) study of 400 middle school ESL students in Shanghai, for example, found that “they show little difference from their Western counterparts by being active learners and preferring a more interactive relationship with their teachers” (Shi 2006, 122). These myths linger, however (Chan and Rao 2009; Littlewood 2009), and legitimize dubious normative teaching and learning practices in Western universities. They have become so prevalent and entrenched that CHC students often internalize these descriptions of themselves, even apologizing for being too “passive” in class (Ryan and Louie 2007). Aronson (2002) describes this as “stereotype threat”; when people are aware of stereotypes about them, and this results in an extra emotional or cognitive burden and “disidentification” — a lack of interest, motivation, and engagement, the stereotype then becomes a “self-fulfilling prophesy.”

Stereotyped views of CHC learners have also been influenced by the seminal work of Hofstede (1980) who defined the different “dimensions” of culture — “power distance,” “individualism-collectivism,” “masculinity-femininity,” and “uncertainty avoidance” — which provides a framework to chart the general characteristics of societies. As Louie (2005) argues, CHC cultures have been commonly characterized using this framework as being collectivist, having a low “uncertainty avoidance” and a high “power distance” (i.e., hierarchical). A group of Chinese researchers called “The Chinese Culture Connection” (1987) challenged the universality of Hofstede’s classification system and constructed a fifth dimension — “Confucian work dynamism” — encompassing elements found in the teachings of Confucius, such as persistence and perseverance, observing status distinctions, and valuing thrift. In a similar vein to Nisbett’s “whole culture” categorizations, Hofstede (1997) adopts this dimension to cater for what he calls the “Eastern mind” as opposed to the “Western mind” (Louie 2005, 20).

This categorization work acts to classify whole groups of students on the basis of culture. P. Smith (1996) describes this drawing of boundaries around certain types of people or individuals on the basis of those who belong or do not belong to particular categories as “cultural cartography” (in Smith’s study, this refers to people with a disability). This not only confines students within these boundaries but also can act to “pathologize” and marginalize those outside these boundaries. P. Smith (1996) argues that they then become “reified, commodified, and objectified, providing a rationale for continued de-humanization and oppression” (117). They act to generate myths about groups of students and create false “reputations,” often with severe consequences for students labeled as “different” (Winslade and Monk 1998). These myths linger and legitimize dubious teaching and learning practices based on cultural stereotypes long past their usefulness. They ignore the constantly changing, dynamic nature of cultures. As Clark and Gieve (2006) observe: “this entails a sense of cultural fixity, and a notion of historicisation only in the sense that cultures are determined by a historical heritage rather than emerging through history and thus dynamically evolving” (55). Gu Mingyuan (2001) argues that this dynamism is an essential element in the formation of new cultural ways of being and knowing: “cultural traditions are dynamic and ever developing . . . Only after a period of conflict, clashes and confrontation between cultural traditions and modernisation can culture be transformed” (105–106).

Many researchers acknowledge the dangers of stereotyping but nevertheless often proceed to do precisely that. Nisbett (2003) states, for example:

I wish to apologize in advance to those people who will be upset to see billions of people labeled with the single term “East Asian” and treated as if they are identical. I do not mean to suggest that they are even close to being identical. The cultures and subcultures of the East differ as dramatically from one another as do those of the West. But the broad-brush term “East Asian” can be justified. (Nisbett 2003, xxii)

Counters to stereotyping the Chinese learner

The myths about CHC learners as passive, rote learners have been effectively debunked through the work of John Biggs and David Watkins, educationalists at the University of Hong Kong (Watkins and Biggs 1996, 2001) and many others (Chalmers and Volet 1997; Chan and Drover 1997; Coverdale-Jones 2006; Geake and Maingard 1999; Hellmundt 2001; Jones 1999; Kember and Gow 1991; Littlewood 2009; Ninnes, Aitchison, and Kalos 1999; O’Donoghue 1996; Volet and Ang 1998). But these views continue to be pervasive in the literature about

CHC and Chinese students. Wen and Clément (2003), for example, characterize Chinese students as passive due to their willingness to submit to authority and claim that this explains their apparent unwillingness to participate in class (in this case, English-language classes).

Newer, what may be termed "surplus," theories of CHC learners (Ryan and Louie 2005), or "cultural proficiency" theories (Ninnes, Aitchison, and Kalos 1999), are attempting to counter these "deficit" theories. Surplus theories seek to identify more positive aspects of Chinese "cultures of learning" (Watkins and Biggs 2001) and to explain the "paradox of the Chinese learner" (Biggs 1996, 45) who achieves "good" results despite "bad" teaching and learning habits (Louie 2005). Surplus theories often portray CHC students as being cooperative, deep learners who are diligent, hard-working, and "[i]nvariably . . . have a high regard for education" (Lee 1996, 25). Although many CHC students do have a high regard for education, many do not, and typifying them in these ways can have negative impacts on those who are motivated by other concerns and interests. As Murphy (2005) has shown, the surplus view of Chinese people as a "model minority" can in fact be traced back to the post-Civil War immigration period in America and is also sometimes seen in contemporary debates in the United States on student test attainment based on ethnic background, without necessarily paying due regard to social and economic influences.

Although the "cultural proficiency" literature is welcome in redressing views of Chinese or CHC learners as "inferior" to their Western counterparts, and has thus performed a vital service, caution needs to be exercised to ensure that one set of myths is not merely replaced with another and that so-called Confucian educational values are not invoked to create equally stereotyped views of Chinese learners (Ryan and Louie 2007). Moving from a "deficit" set of theories to equally problematic "surplus" ones may also have negative impacts on individual students and may not be helpful for teachers trying to understand the learning needs of their students. Neither of these polarized views is helpful in establishing genuine dialogue between these systems which is based upon mutual appreciation of the values and knowledge within both systems.

This is not to say that well-founded and informed contemporary knowledge about learners from different types of educational backgrounds (both geographic and demographic) is not helpful in understanding possible differences in students' experiences and expectations; it is, and students' (and teachers') difficulties are very real. However, it is not useful to attribute the source of these difficulties to "large culture" explanations; rather, what is needed are broader and more holistic attempts to understand the possible multiple sources of these difficulties or misconceptions, as arising from individuals' cultures (large or small, local or national) as well as many other individual or group-based features.

“Confucian” values

CHC students’ learning characteristics are often inaccurately attributed by Western educators to the influence of Confucian values. Rather than being interrogated for ethnocentric bias, the perceptions of Western instructors “are validated by recourse to a Confucian heritage explanation which appears plausible rather than being empirically established” (Clark and Gieve 2006, 63). Recent claims about the influence of Confucianism on the behaviors of Chinese students and scholars ignore the “multi-dimensionality” and diverse manifestations of Confucianism (Shi 2006; Yao 2000) and demonstrate the ways that Confucianism has been interpreted over the centuries to suit various political, economic, and social agendas (Bell 2008; Jensen 1997; Louie 2005; Watkins and Biggs 2001; Wu 2008). Assertions about values such as communitarianism, respect for knowledge and the traditional can be questioned in terms of whether these values are even exclusive to Confucianism. Chinese scholars, as shown by Louie (1986), have in recent decades been engaged in heated controversies in negating these values as inherent to Confucianism:

[T]hese values are not just Asian: they can be found in other societies as well. While some good work was done in this area, the so-called “Asian values” or “Confucian heritage” could be devised by putting together conservative ideas and calling them Asian and Confucian. (Ryan and Louie 2005, 5)

Contemporary interpretations of Confucianism are varied and complex, and, many argue, are often far removed from the original ideas: there is a problem in that “Lee Kuan Yew can call Singapore a ‘Confucian’ society, when many of its values are far indeed from what Confucius would even recognise” (Watkins and Biggs 2001, 4). And as Louie (2005) argues, “in the last century, interpretations of Confucianism, particularly that of Confucian education, have undergone transformations that have at times rendered any commonly accepted interpretation meaningless” (7). Louie (2005) argues that Confucian values are extolled and appropriated for political or economic agendas such as when Asia prospers economically and “Asian values” or “Confucian education” are then eulogized as the keys to successful teaching and learning. More recently, the establishment by the Chinese government of “Confucian Institutes” in many countries around the world to teach Chinese language and culture, and the promotion of Confucian values such as “the building of a harmonious society through an individual’s self-refinement in manners and taste” (Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in Australia 2007) have been seen by some as a “propaganda vehicle for the Chinese Communist party” (Lane 2007).

Based on his experience in teaching students in China, and discussions with students, Slethaug (2007) argues that "Confucianism as a philosophical system is increasingly remote from what actually goes on in Asian countries or what students see as reality" (53). Despite the resurgence in interest in Confucianism in China in recent years, at least in part due to concerns about the increasing materialism and *lack* of Confucian "values" among China's youth (Yu 2008), according to Chin (2007), "We give him [Confucius] credit for all that has gone right and wrong in China because we do not really know him" (2).

Similarly, the supposed influence of the "moral" character imbued within Confucian models of teaching (Hu 2002) can also be called into question in the light of contemporary realities in China such as widespread incidences of corruption, a tendency towards advancement through personal connections (*guanxi*) rather than personal merit or ability, and the valuing by many of personal material and economic gains over moral development and virtue. Many influential scholars are now reinterpreting Confucian education as a path to wealth and democracy, but such a view "would have been considered outrageous heresy by any traditional Confucian" (Louie 2005, 21).

Continuing to focus on the influences of Confucianism also ignores the multiple other religious and philosophical ideologies to be found throughout China and the Asian region and the fact that the philosophical tenets of Confucian are often combined with other religious belief systems and practices. In China, for example, there are significant populations of Buddhists, Daoists, Christians, and Muslims, as well as the fifty-five officially recognized minority cultures.

Impacts on students

Negative (or positive) stereotyping of students can have harmful effects on individuals (Hellmundt and Ryan 2003; Kumaravadivelu 2003; Ryan 2002) and "in reducing individuals to inadequately understood group characteristics, approach racial stereotyping" (Clark and Gieve 2006, 69). Louie (2005) argues that, due to the inherent imbalance of teacher-student power relationships, deficit views have potentially powerful effects on students:

The deficit view of international students is not effective pedagogically because it assumes not only that that some cultures are in "deficit", but that cultural baggage is carried only by students, not teachers. In reality, being the more powerful partner in the teacher-student relationship, the cultural baggage carried by the teachers has a more dominant effect than that carried by the students. (Louie 2005, 23)

These descriptions are not only usually inaccurate, they can also be offensive to those whom they purport to describe, and are often actively resisted by them (Kenway and Bullen 2003; Phan 2004; Ryan 2002). Vietnamese teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) interviewed by Phan Le Ha (2004) also rejected these stereotypes as inaccurate and offensive: "Importantly, their awareness of such views has indicated that the notion of 'us' and 'them' has been so obvious and powerful in ELT [English language teaching] practice that it is hard to eliminate" (Phan 2004, 56).

My own Chinese students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) are often in fact critical of some aspects of Western academic approaches such as essay writing that use what they consider to be superficial techniques to selectively extract excerpts from texts to assist in the construction of an argument. As one Masters student commented, a requirement of any level of postgraduate study in China requires a critical self-reflection, which is not necessarily found in or required of their Western counterparts at this level.

Lumping international students (and teachers) together as a "fixed, reified, homogenous and homogenised group" (Clark and Gieve 2006, 63) produces "essentialising accounts of identity" (Kenway and Bullen 2003) and obscures and conflates important differences on the basis of religion, class, gender, and socio-economic background. These one-dimensional accounts, according to Kenway and Bullen (2003), result in the "collectivization" of international students (in this case of women international students) and "collude in the reproduction of discourses of 'othering' and, thus, in the establishment and perpetuation of power differentials" (9). Deficit views prevail despite the fact that international students have often previously achieved considerable academic success and professional status within their home country (Ryan 2002) and are often more highly qualified than local students (Bullen and Kenway 2003). These messages not only have powerful impacts on individual international students, but they can also put pressure on them to conform to the "norms and protocols of the host society" (Li, Baker and Marshall 2002, 18).

Many international students I have interviewed or worked with over the past ten years have described their loss of identity and self-esteem when they study in a foreign learning environment, especially when this involves another language and when they feel that they have to comply with the norms of the new learning environment (Ryan 2000, 2002, 2005). This has also been reported in other Australian studies (Hellmundt 2001; Kenway and Bullen 2003; Ryan and Viete 2009; Viete and Peeler 2005), and the sense of isolation and loss of identity upon becoming a member of a visible minority in a foreign mainstream has also been well documented elsewhere (Ellsworth 1997; hooks 1994; Rich, 1986; Vogt 2002). These accounts remind us of the consequences

for individuals when their learning needs are not well understood or when they feel isolated or marginalized.

It is worth remembering, however, that stereotyping is a pervasive phenomenon, not restricted to people in the West (Kumaravadivelu 2003). During my own time as an "outsider," while I was studying as an international student at universities in China, I not only experienced racial stereotyping myself, but often witnessed more damaging overt discrimination and occasionally even violence towards black African students.

Impacts on teachers

Not only students need to adapt to their new learning environments, but teachers also "must address issues such as cultural imperialism and the stereotypical attitudes relating to Asian students and their learning approaches" (Li, Baker, and Marshall 2002, 18). However, negative reactions by staff are somewhat understandable in the context of rapidly deteriorating professional conditions and increased work pressures for many teachers and lecturers, in part due to the changing nature of the student cohort in universities and schools (both in Australia and Hong Kong), and teachers often report their frustration at their lack of training in teaching students from culturally different backgrounds (Ryan 2002; Turner and Robson 2008). Ninnes and Hellstén (2005) call this a "moment of exhaustion" (4) as the radical changes to teachers' work can mean that academics' and teachers' reactions are sometimes negative and even hostile. These reactions are often aimed at those who most obviously display the physical manifestation of these changes. Clark and Gieve (2003) argue that blaming students can make it easier for teachers to "explain away" their difficulties as being caused by something that is beyond their control.

In our attempt to deal with the complexity of our task [as TESOL teachers], we fall for simple, sometimes simplistic, solutions. We may be stereotyping our learners partly because it helps us reduce an unmanageable reality to a manageable label. (Kumaravadivelu 2003, 716)

Teachers working with students from unfamiliar cultural (or social) backgrounds need to learn how to make connections between students' previous experiences and expectations of learning and help students to make links across different cultural and social practices and expectations. Where the teacher is working with large numbers of students from culturally different backgrounds, and especially where a teacher is working in a host country where the culture is significantly different from their home country, teachers need to be sensitive to different cultural knowledge and perspectives. They also need to try to understand

that the ways students react may be different from what they have come to expect. Teachers need to act as a bridge for their students to assist them in adapting to, and learning about, new ways of thinking and doing, so that both teachers and learners can become effective intercultural operators and communicators. Teachers cannot possibly learn about the cultural backgrounds of all of their students, but they can develop what Louie (2005) calls meta-cultural sensitivity. Such an approach

involves understanding both host and home culture, how these cultures can be both beneficial and harmful. To do so involves “stepping back” from both cultures and to understand them as systems. That is, to take a meta approach to all cultures . . . With that skill, all cultures can be appraised and utilised, without having to think that bits and pieces should be valued or condemned. Many students come from rapidly changing cultures and those who succeed in life learn to manage the cultural changes within their own cultures skillfully. (Louie 2005, 23)

This bridging of cultural divides is a daily negotiation process that occurs in the “humble spaces” (both physical and mental) of the classroom (Slethaug 2007, 64) in the direct contact between teachers and students in more globalized contexts. This is the “gift” that teaching in cross-cultural contexts can bring for both students and teachers alike. People from outside a culture can often see things more clearly than those embedded within that culture and can assist us to better understand, and then change, our views and practices. I did not fully understand my own “Australianess” until I spent two years studying in China (interestingly, and surprisingly, this also occurred while I was an international student in the United Kingdom). This experience not only changed my views of the world, but also of myself and what I had until then considered to be the natural and universal way of things. Intercultural experiences help you to become an “anthropologist” of your own culture and to see it anew; forcing you to learn about the “self” through the “other.” We learn more about ourselves as well as others, as we bring our “mixture of affiliated identities” (Slethaug 2007, 187) to these learning contexts.

This mixture of affiliated identities can work to the advantage of those who have been raised with multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and cross-cultural perspectives and can easily be seen as a metaphor for the generative constructing and blending of different affiliated identities in the cross-cultural classroom. (Slethaug 2007, 187)

It is important also to remember that stereotypes of Chinese scholarship and learning can also have negative impacts on teachers. In my current collaborative work between Chinese, Canadian, and Australian academics and school teachers on curriculum reform and teacher professional development in China, the

Chinese academics and teachers expressed their dismay at being characterized in these deficit ways (Mitchell, Ryan, Kang, and Erikson 2007). They rejected characterizations of Chinese teaching as teacher-directed, textbook-dominated, and lacking in creativity and innovation. Instead, their teaching practices are aimed at experimenting with high levels of student-teacher interaction and innovation, and they are constantly engaged in researching, publishing, disseminating, reflecting, and seeking feedback on their teaching beliefs and practice (see Beijing Normal University and Beijing Zhongguansun Number 4 School 2006 and 2007).

Changing contexts

These stereotypes also ignore the dynamic and changing nature of cultures as starkly demonstrated by the rapid and profound physical, social, and cultural transformations that are currently occurring in China. Chinese "cultures of learning" (Watkins and Biggs 2001) are changing so radically that stereotyped descriptions of teaching and learning practices by Chinese students and teachers are increasingly out of date (Hu 2003, 2005; Jin and Cortazzi 2006; Ryan and Louie 2005; Shi 2006). Chan and Rao (2009) thus speak of the need to "transcend" dichotomies and binary thinking. China changes physically each year beyond recognition, so much so that even the superficial physical transformations have many of their own citizens feeling "dazed and lost in the new landscape" (Louie 2005, 21). In addition, Chinese researchers are beginning to speak for themselves about contemporary education contexts and learner diversity in China (Fan, Wong, Cai, and Li 2004; Hu 2003, 2005; Shi 2006; Zhu and Kang 2002).

China's national education curriculum reform over the past five to ten years (Fan, Wong, Cai, and Li 2004; Guan and Meng 2007; Kang 2007; Ma and Tang 2002; Ma, Yin, Tang, and Liu 2009; Mitchell, Ryan, Kang, and Erikson 2007; Zhu 2005; Zhu and Kang 2002) has signaled China's intention to radically change pedagogy and curriculum at all levels of education. These reforms were launched with the release of the Guidelines on Chinese Basic Education Curriculum Reform (*Zhongguo jichu jiaoyu kecheng gaige gangyao*) published by the Ministry of Education (MOE) in 2001. This has entailed a move from the "two basics" — "shuang ji" (knowledge and skill) — to educational reform and the growth of new and innovative teaching and learning approaches..

These changes can be characterized as a concern to move from teacher-directed to student-centered education, and to "quality-oriented education" (Kang 2007; Liu 2006; Mitchell, Ryan, Kang, and Erikson 2007; Zhu 2005; Zhu and Kang 2002). Contemporary examples of such approaches were showcased at an international conference on curriculum reform attended by six hundred teachers and university academics from eight provinces across China

in 2007 (the *Learning and Developing Community First Annual Conference*, held in Dongsheng, Inner Mongolia in July 2007). These approaches embody a concern to move towards “more attention to the real and individual needs of students, teacher-student interaction in a range of engaging and diverse learning activities, more open and positive, interactive learning environments, and more equitable teacher-student relationships” (Kang 2007; Mitchell, Ryan, Kang, and Erikson 2007; Ryan 2007). At many schools in China, especially in large cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, but also in more remote areas such as Inner Mongolia (Mitchell, Ryan, Kang, and Erikson 2007), and in Gansu Province (Hannum and Park 2007; Robinson 2008; Sargent and Hannum 2008) this work is well advanced.

In China, there is a robust debate about the challenges and dilemmas surrounding the integration of Chinese and Western notions of learning and scholarship (especially in the area of communicative language teaching). In the “Preface” to a recent publication by the Hong Kong-based pro-Confucianist Yew Chung Education Foundation, *The Analects: A Modern Translation and Contemporary Interpretation*, Professor Yip Kwok-wah (2006), although advocating learning from the Confucian *Analects* to “provide a new impetus for China’s rejuvenation” (ix), nevertheless also acknowledges that there is a need to “brutally attack and negate the dross of Confucianism” (xv). These types of debates are assisting Chinese educationalists from a range of perspectives to try to rejuvenate China’s educational system by critically examining its current and traditional academics beliefs and practices while attempting to learn from the best of Western ideas. Western countries need to do the same. Like China, Western educators need to recognize that the essence of scholarship and learning involves the “brutal” interrogation of conventional intellectual wisdoms and the critical falsifying of the known. Much can be learned from other conventional and emerging traditions of scholarship and learning, but this needs to be based on an informed debate about contemporary Western and Confucian education realities and complexities.

Implications for teachers in cross-cultural contexts

Teachers working in cross-cultural contexts need to understand the role of culture in influencing and mediating teaching and learning in both historical and contemporary contexts. The most influential contemporary theory of learning in Western educational contexts is constructivist theory, which is the belief that we progressively and actively build our knowledge based on what we already know. It gives prominence to the role of prior experiences and expectations in determining what is taught and what is learned. Through our first-hand or vicarious experiences,

we develop ever more complex and sophisticated understandings of everyday and abstract concepts. Our understanding of the concept "football," for example, will vary according to our previous physical, social, and cultural experiences of this phenomenon. So these may differ vastly according to whether we have lived in Europe, the United States, China, or Australia (where this concept will refer to completely different codes of sport) or whether we have previously mainly played or watched this sport. This simple example illustrates how our social and cultural experiences (and accordingly, our expectations) exert strong influences on how and what we learn and how and what we teach. Teachers need to bear this in mind in cross-cultural classrooms and be mindful of the cultural basis of their knowledge and actions, and the possible gaps in knowledge or differences in expectations that may exist for their students.

Education, by its very nature, draws upon historical, cultural knowledge and understandings. Teachers need to be aware (1) of the basis of the assumptions that they make about knowledge, academic "values," and teacher-student interactions, (2) of the "cultural baggage" we all carry in these areas, and (3) of our need to both gather and impart cultural knowledge and understandings. Although working in cross-cultural contexts involves both challenges and rewards, it offers a transformative opportunity for inter- and intra-cultural learning. That is, it helps us to see anew the nature of our own historical and cultural assumptions and understandings, as well as those of others. This means that we need to recognize and appreciate the diversity and complexity within and between not only other cultures, but also our own. "Interflows" of students and teachers need not be seen as a "problem" but an opportunity for mutual learning. This can only be achieved, however, through genuine dialogue between educational systems based upon a mutual respect for and recognition of contemporary Chinese and Anglophone realities, knowledge, and perspectives.

In order for educators to work more collaboratively and effectively in globalized environments and take advantage of opportunities to broaden and regenerate intellectual understandings and traditions, it is important to reject simplistic and homogenizing rhetoric. Instead of confining ourselves to how cultures are different from one another, if educators look more to identifying similarities and commonalities and what can be learnt from one another, intercultural experiences and cultural flows of ideas and knowledge can help us to understand the things that unite rather than divide us. This is what Ivy Wang and Weibin Zhu (Chapters 8 and 9 of this volume) describe as the significant value of their cross-cultural and transnational teaching in Guangzhou. The real benefits of increased cultural flows between Anglophone and Chinese educational contexts will not be achieved while existing and entrenched binary and outmoded views of "Western" and "Chinese" notions of scholarship and learning continue to prevail.

Although negative Western views of Chinese students are still dominant, the more recent “surplus” theories are equally problematic and may perpetuate stereotyped and misconceived views about Chinese students and the unrealistic “glorification” of internationalization of education.

Literature in the fields of comparative and international education, educational development and applied linguistics often focuses on differences *between* cultures. This is not to say that there are not differences between cultures; there are. But there is often more diversity to be found *within* cultures than *between* them. Individuals who do fit the stereotypes of either Chinese or Western students can be found, and there is some merit in using properly constructed Weberian “ideal types” when they are used critically in determining whether certain defined clusters of values and attributes do or do not have explanatory power. Li (2009) argues that it is important to describe ideals “because they exist in people’s minds and guide people’s behavior” (48) but broadly applying often partial, inaccurate, or outdated stereotypes across whole cultural systems and to all individuals within them can lead to bad teaching practices and lost learning opportunities in the international classroom, leaving students feeling “untaught and distraught” (Sanderman-Gay 1999, 46).

Stereotypes about the function of teachers or about students from different kinds of cultures can sometimes jeopardize the best intentions for a classroom. This concern can exist equally whether internationalizing education at home or abroad. (Slethaug 2007, 61)

Intercultural experiences, whether through working with students in another culture or through contact at home with students from other cultures, help us to broaden our worldviews. They help us to identify issues of concern common across regions and cultures. This stance needs to be based on respectful and informed dialogue and sharing of ideas and knowledge, on what Hayhoe and Pan (2001) call a “true dialogue among ready listeners” as means to counter “clash of civilizations” rhetoric (21). It needs to focus less on comparing and contrasting educational and cultural systems, and more with ways to effectively work together as educators. According to Dr Kang Changyun of Beijing Normal University, good teaching and learning are “the common treasures of humanity.”

— II —

The Chinese Learner in
International Schools in Hong Kong

Fit for Purpose?

Why Chinese Families Choose International Schools in Hong Kong

Chris Forse

In Hong Kong, as in many other major cities throughout Asia, international schools have become the schools of choice for expatriates working there, so-called overseas families who have spent time abroad, and, increasingly, local families as well. Hong Kong has one of the densest concentrations of international schools in the world, which include “genuine” international schools as well as the unique English Schools Foundation (ESF) system that was created in 1967 by the British colonial government to serve the needs of its families. The ESF schools were supported by the government, and, unlike other international schools, they became financially integrated into the public school system, so that their students pay less than half the rate of international schools, even while they have an English-language medium of education with (mostly) native speakers. Together, the international schools and the ESF system illustrate many of the issues that face international education across the globe.

Although the ESF schools began with the majority of the students being from British civil service and business families, increasingly the majority are Chinese, occupying something over 50 percent of the spaces, a common phenomenon in international schools as Gordon Slethaug, Eric Jabal, and Martin Schmidt note (Chapters 1, 4, and 5 of this book). Of the Chinese families that take up the school spaces, approximately 10 percent are ethnically Chinese and “purely” local, carrying only Special Administrative Region (SAR) travel documents and never having lived abroad. Another 30 percent of the total enrollment consists of overseas Chinese who went abroad for study, work, or foreign passports, leading up to the handover of rule from the British to the Chinese in 1997. Still another 10 percent are Eurasian, normally with one Chinese parent and with either local or overseas backgrounds.

These Chinese learners want an international, English-medium education, but, unlike the previous generation of learners in the Hong Kong international schools, they are increasingly interested in studying Chinese and also may wish to take advantage of some of the special learning support that has become a feature of international education. They are also competing for spaces that traditionally have been offered only to expatriates, draining students away from the local school system and simultaneously putting pressure on the local and international schools. This has led to frustration among prospective applicants as well as heated debates among local government administrators. International schools thus enter the arena of local policies, politics, and finances even as they try to globalize and free themselves from those constraints. In this chapter, I wish to take up the issues surrounding these new Chinese learners as they enter the ESF and international schools.

Representative case studies

In August 2007 I received a phone call, in my capacity as head of Parent and Student Services at the ESF in Hong Kong, from a Mrs Chan. She was calling to inform me that her son James had been offered a place at Bradbury School, one of the ESF's primary schools. She thanked me for having helped James secure the place. (In truth I had done little more than advise her about how to apply.) She said that, after two years of unhappiness in a local primary school, James now awoke every morning with a positive attitude to attending school. His self-esteem was recovering, and he was comfortable and challenged in a new style of learning in the medium of English.

James was a new kind of student, unlike the traditional international students in Hong Kong. The ESF was established in 1967 to provide a liberal style of education, in the medium of English, for those who could benefit from it, though at that time, as Slethaug notes in his chapter, these were assumed to be expatriate, English native speakers, who would be taught by their own kind. Mrs Chan was ethnically Chinese; she met the People's Republic of China's (PRC) and SAR's racial criteria — she had a correct name and “shape of eye.” By nationality she was Australian and spoke with a mild Australian accent. She could not read or write Chinese characters, though she could converse in Cantonese, the language of her parents who were from Hong Kong. On arriving in Hong Kong as one of the new generation of Chinese returnees/“expatriates,” she decided to have James educated in the English Medium of Instruction sector (EMI) of the local schools, so that he could acquire a sense of what it is to be “Chinese,” to learn the local language (Cantonese) in the written and spoken form and its cousin Putonghua (the language of mainland China), while maintaining and enhancing the language

of the home, which was English. Mrs Chan had been told that James's promotion to St Joseph's College, the school's secondary section with EMI, was unlikely because his proficiency in *Chinese* was poor. This left the parents with a difficult set of choices: find another EMI school in the local sector (as most EMI schools are prestigious "Band One" schools,¹ this could not be assured); apply to the Chinese Medium of Instruction sector — CMI (which would have meant entering a school system that he was the least equipped to deal with); pay high fees for an English-language medium of instruction in the international schools; or go to the ESF, which, as part of the government-aided sector, falls somewhere between the local and international in costs. Unfortunately, the chances of gaining admission to international schools were limited because most quality institutions, like the American-oriented Hong Kong International School, were full and had long waiting lists (in part because of demand from families like the Chans). ESF relegated native speakers of Cantonese to a low category of priority, because, as part of the government-aided sector, they were not expected to offer places to any child who could access the purely local system. *Access*, however, is not the same as *success* in applying.²

There is, I realize, a danger in basing this discussion on such case studies. There is a possibility that the parents may not have revealed the full truth about the local schools in question or about their children's academic progress and responsibility. However, such instances are common among applicants and are only the tip of an iceberg. Regrettably, ESF does not have a database of similar cases of parents who speak English with Canadian, American, Australian, or English accents, and who feel that unless they pay significant school fees, the Hong Kong educational system cannot fit their needs.

Problems with Hong Kong's funding for Chinese learners

By writing this chapter, I hope to raise awareness in the local and international community that a lack of diversity in an education system's pedagogy and language of instruction will result in significant private and social costs, especially as the world "flattens" through globalization (Friedman 2007) and as old ideas of nationality are reshaped. Paradigms need to be challenged through an awareness of possibilities in transnational pedagogy — paradigms over what constitutes residency, an expatriate, language of instruction, appropriate classroom practices and procedures, and so on. This chapter also serves to illustrate the changing nature of the "Chinese learner" in increasingly globalized and internationalized educational contexts as discussed elsewhere in this volume. My purpose in this assessment is not to demonize local education systems in Hong Kong or elsewhere. I applaud recent reforms by the Education and Manpower Bureau

(EMB), now the Education Bureau (EDB), in diversifying the choices available in Hong Kong. The Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) and the Private Independent Schools (PIS) both contribute to addressing problems with placing non-standard students. I accept evidence that standards of English, as taught in schools, through such initiatives as the Native English Teacher (NET) scheme, are improving. And I find it hard to challenge the idea that students should be educated in their mother tongue rather than English. These contributions, however, do not address why Chinese families (some, but not all, hold passports of other countries) are increasingly drawn to educating their Chinese-learner children in international schools, the ESF system, and EMI Private Independent Schools.

Regrettably, key local educational policy makers in Hong Kong during the past few years have failed to acknowledge the inconsistencies in their own stated positions of admitting international and local students. For instance, it was the position of the EMB that *anyone* in Hong Kong could access the local system, even though this assertion was implicitly contradicted by their statement that ESF should only give priority to those who could not access the local system. They claimed, axiomatically, that anyone of Chinese ethnicity (certainly anyone who spoke Cantonese) would be able to access the local system, but this was not the case for international students who had Chinese background but limited knowledge of the Chinese language. At the same time, during a program of lobbying political, media, business representatives, and education opinion makers, the Education Commission maintained that (1) there were just three sectors in Hong Kong: the local, the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS), and the international, and (2) the ESF must either join the DSS scheme or become a purely independent international school. Contrary to that opinion, ESF representatives maintained that there were four systems (including the ESF which was set up by ordinance and received a subsidy from the government equal to about 25 percent of its income).³ The reality of the Hong Kong government's position was that many Hong Kong people were left with an unenviable choice: to have their children educated in inexpensive local schools that may not fit their purposes or in very expensive "international" ones that, at some US\$20,000 annually, are too costly for all but the well-off. This translates into a hypothesis that, if you are English-speaking, you must be rich, and, while this may be true in the international banking community, it is not true of the expatriate civil servants, store clerks, teachers, restaurant workers, etc.

Such paradigms carried forward by the government from thirty years ago need to be discarded. Although the Hong Kong government has put much effort and resources into the reform of curriculum in Hong Kong schools to bring them in line with more innovative and "internationalized" methods of pedagogy and curriculum design (Chan 2009; Law, Yuen, Chan, Yuen, Pan, Lai, and Lee, 2009; Marton et al. 2009), its enrollment policies still reflect an outdated view of the

composition and learning needs of the diverse range of children in the Hong Kong schooling system. In the 1970s all schools in Hong Kong were, at least ostensibly, English medium, and this affected the overall standard of English in the city. Hong Kong was an English-speaking city, much like Singapore is today, and the “top” schools were turning out fluent English speakers. During that time, international and ESF schools served a mainly native English-speaking (expatriate) or non-Chinese-speaking clientele. Local Chinese-speaking people were debarred from entering ESF schools unless they could demonstrate to the director of education that the purely local system could not cater to their needs. The “ten percent” rule (ESF schools could not admit local students unless there was 10 percent or more spare capacity in their classes) further reinforced the “one colony–two systems” that was the education service at that time. Expensive international schools might be the preference for the growing local middle class, but such schools were small in number, and, since local schools were English medium, there was not so much pressure on the ESF or international schools.

Although the situation changed significantly in the decade before and after the handover to China in 1997, the government probably has no accurate figures to support the assertion that standards of English in Hong Kong are in decline; however, anecdotal evidence (e.g., asking the opinions of long-term employers or comparing English proficiency cross-generationally) would certainly show this. These falling standards of English in Hong Kong, however, were less likely the result of the teaching of English than of demographics and the focus on Chinese language and culture in the years leading up to the handover. English was no longer generally spoken as mass migration from the mainland accelerated. English standards among local teachers, as revealed by benchmark tests, also support the hypothesis that decline in English standards became self-perpetuating in the last two decades of the twentieth century.

This decline became self-perpetuating because the less English was spoken and the less the incentive to use it, the more the numbers who acquired the language fell. The Joint Declaration between Britain and China in December 1984 and the Basic Law of 1990 brought a political and social outcome — many civil service and business positions were localized, and expatriates returned to their home country. Added to this was an outflow of middle-class, educated Chinese families to North America, Australia, and the UK to seek “bolt-hole” foreign passports. Moreover, by creating a temporary dip in Western enrollments, the SARS epidemic in 2003 created additional capacity for local and returning Chinese students.

Now, the government no longer insists on the ESF “ten percent rule.” The Education Bureau understands that with the ESF’s current clientele — between 40 and 50 percent ethnically Chinese learners — it would be pointless to impose

such a restraint. With reductions in their subvention of the schools, the government also concedes that holding vacant places for potential incoming expatriates is untenable. However, the problem does not end there, for as the 2008–09 school year began, it was apparent that high-quality international and ESF schools were full, leading to a further heightening of concern in the business community about shortages of international school places. Though the Hong Kong government does not acknowledge a shortage of international-school spaces (see Jabal, Chapter 4 this volume; Heron and Clem 2005), expatriates were clamoring to get into the ESF and disappointed when they could not. The question begged, then, is whether the schools are full of “expatriates,” “local” Chinese learners, or a mixture of the two — and this is the question that vexes international schools in many countries for this is a rapidly changing cultural landscape.

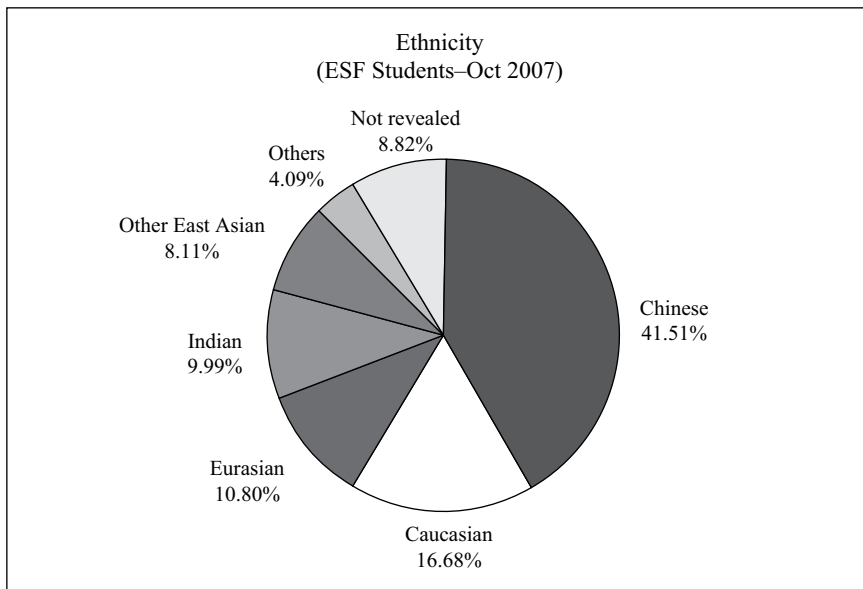
The new reality of local Chinese learners

The reality, of course, is that the old paradigm that neatly divided the population into ethnically Chinese “local” learners and “foreigners” no longer holds either in Hong Kong or in mainland China. Quite apart from what Slethaug (2007) defines as a global trend towards “post-modern” definitions of nationality, ethnicity, and identity whereby citizens of one country opt to be nationals of another (or hold passports of several), Hong Kong has experienced since the late 1990s a major influx of returning families, who had left before 1997 out of concern about the political transition from the UK to China and had lived abroad to acquire a foreign passport before returning with that insurance policy. Similarly, China experienced an outflow of bright young people who went abroad after the 1960s for a better education, career opportunities, and political climate, and now, like “sea turtles” (Wang 2005), are coming home. Often these returnees are below forty years of age with children who experienced kindergarten or schooling in an English-speaking country with liberal pedagogies. As a result, between 1991 and 2001 the number of Chinese learners in Hong Kong over the age of five who used English as “the usual language” rose from 114,084 to 203,598. Given that that this decade was one of mixed performance economically — and of the 1997 handover — it seems fair to surmise that the bulk of those in this category were ethnically Chinese English speakers. What are their educational needs and aspirations? What type of Hong Kong school is best “fit for purpose” for these Chinese learners?

Central to their needs is access to English-medium education (Tong 2005). Typically from Hong Kong-Chinese families who resided in cities like Toronto, Vancouver, or Sydney, most of these children were born into an English-speaking environment, used English in school lessons, but spoke Cantonese at home and perhaps on the playground. Most were bilingual, but few were biliterate; most

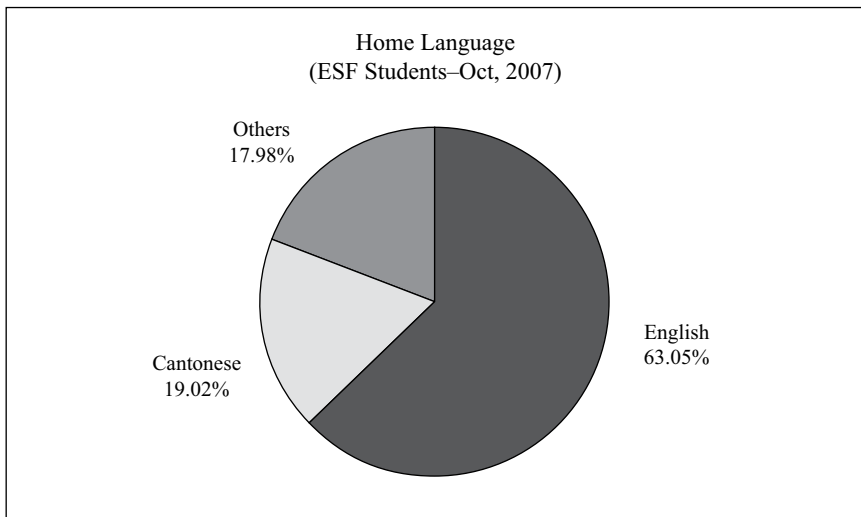
had low functionality in both written English and Chinese. Over the past decade, thousands of these Chinese learners enrolled in Hong Kong's international and ESF schools.

Data currently held by ESF schools of 12,648 students shows that, whereas over 41 percent (or 45 percent of respondents) of the school population is ethnically Chinese, fewer than 20 percent of children speak Cantonese as their first language at home:



In addition to that 41 percent of local and overseas Chinese learners are another 10 percent who are Eurasian, most of whom are the children of one Chinese parent. In ESF schools, Eurasian children with one English-speaking parent are invariably first-language English in their standards of written and spoken English. Though numbers may be small and research sketchy, it is the case that some Eurasian children who are sent to local primary schools to uphold the language of the Chinese parent, and then transferring to an ESF school for secondary education, often experience difficulty in writing English (and sometimes fail the ESF admission test at age ten). Their situation is, then, quite similar to that of the Chinese learners in which both parents are Chinese and in which the children do not have full fluency in English.

In an ESF survey of 6,000 parents in September 2004, the only statement that elicited a majority “strongly agree” response was that parents chose ESF schools



because “English medium teaching by native English speakers will help my child’s language development.” As Miller argues (Chapter 7 in this volume), the notion and valuing of a native speaker is highly contested, but for these parents it is quite simple: they want speakers from the UK, Australia, Canada, or the US who have English as their birth language. Others with a majority “agree” (usually with about 20–25 percent “strongly agree”) involved good examination results, teaching styles, preparation for university education (nearly 90 percent of ESF graduates attend universities outside Hong Kong), and affordable school fees. While about 50 percent of the respondents were ethnically Chinese, it would not be unreasonable to surmise that English language appeared so prominently in the “strongly agree” category because the parents responding see their children’s educational and career futures as lying within English-medium institutions. Similarly, the style of education and intended overseas universities destination both suggest that a more international style of education is the preference for many Chinese parents of foreign nationality.

The new “local,” middle-class, Kowloon and New Territories Chinese learner

Over the past three decades, Hong Kong has seen the rise in schools of a strong local middle-class Chinese learner, whose families tend to be more nuclear, smaller, and more affluent than the extended families of old. Across Hong Kong are new housing estates that meet their needs, in areas like Ma On Shan, Tsing

Yi, Tseung Kwan O, and Tung Chung. Many of these localities are in the New Territories and north and west Kowloon, from which few applicants to ESF and international schools were received until the last decade. That has changed. ESF had as many applicants for primary Year One in 2006 from the economically modest Tsing Yi Island as from the traditionally affluent Peak. Twenty years ago there were probably no applicants from the former and an overspill of expatriate children in the latter. With 70 percent of ESF students as British expatriates in the 1970s, the schools were situated in or near the expatriate enclaves. Nowadays students travel to these schools from all corners of the territory. This situation mirrors that of China in general where a new middle class comes from many places and wants to share in international education.

Changing socio-economic factors are, then, adding to the demand for a diverse range of educational opportunities in Hong Kong. In pockets across the New Territories are residential areas where the median family income lies between HK\$20,000 to HK\$40,000 a month (US\$2,500 to \$5,000) with a profile in which over 30 percent of the population aged twenty and above attained post-secondary education and with a household size at or below the Hong Kong average of three. These areas are the new neighborhoods for ESF and international schools. Mei Foo Sun Chuen in north Kowloon sends fifty-seven children to ESF schools. The median family income there is HK\$22,000 a month (a single secondary education can eat up one-third of that amount), though it is probable that potential ESF and international school parents are in the upper part of the range in these localities. Hong Kong's birthrate in 2009 is, according to Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) data, 7.37 per thousand of the population and lies 223rd out of 223 in the world, by state. Only 12.2 percent of the population is under fourteen years. With one-child families increasingly the norm, parents invest significantly more in the education of their children than was the case a generation ago when families were larger and incomes smaller. The portfolio of educational opportunities available to parents (in Hong Kong and abroad) includes a range of options based on quality and cost.

It is not the case that the most prestigious schools in Hong Kong are the most expensive for these new middle-class learners, though they still may prefer the ESF. For many parents a place in a "Band One" local or DSS school (the highest category of schools that are placed into what until 2004 were five "bands" — now three — although "banding" now refers to secondary schools students rather than schools) is the zenith to which they aspire, though many of these schools are highly selective by ability, and applicants must satisfy rigorous admissions criteria before they secure a place and progress from primary to secondary to Sixth Form (now known in the new 3-3-4 curriculum as Secondary 6). Many such schools, as cited above, are effectively off-limits to those who do not meet certain

standards of literacy in Chinese. ESF schools provide diversification in the local educational portfolio: they are relatively affordable in comparison to quality international schools, with an English-medium education taught by (mainly) English native speakers. As such these schools are especially attractive to middle-class Chinese families who either fail to gain admission to, or do not see the appropriateness of, local EMI schools and for whom non-subsidized international schools are unaffordable. To gain admission to an ESF school, they must meet the priority criteria and pass an English admissions test. That only 10 percent of the ESF population can be classified as entirely local suggests that few overcome these barriers of entry.

The option of Chinese for the Chinese learner

As international schools worldwide cater to a more diverse and non-national audience, they commonly have to alter requirements and procedures in favor of internationalization at the expense of localization (Slethaug, Chapter 1 in this volume). By contrast, in Hong Kong and in mainland China, the international school population is increasingly drawn from the local Chinese community though often with international experiences. Although most Chinese families choose the ESF and international schools because of their English-language curricula, more and more they want the Chinese language taught as well. Consequently, one of the most controversial current issues for local, returning, and even expatriate families is the teaching and learning of Chinese. Until the past two decades, international and ESF schools provided few, if any, opportunities to study Chinese, whether Cantonese or Putonghua. Chinese is now available as a core or elective part of the curriculum of all ESF and international schools in Hong Kong, consuming between 10 and 20 percent of curriculum time for secondary schools, though only 6 percent in some ESF primary schools. It is considered imperative for the future competitiveness of international and ESF schools that high-quality Chinese be part of the curriculum, and, as of September 2007, there was little evidence that the provision of Chinese is a major determinant of local parents' choosing or exiting ESF schools. Increasingly, it is likely that a complete absence of Putonghua from an international or ESF curriculum would seriously affect enrollments downward.

In Hong Kong's international schools, Chinese is taught in Putonghua, mostly in simplified characters adopted in mainland China after the 1949 revolution, though, in some schools, traditional Chinese characters are taught. Putonghua is not the *lingua franca* of Hong Kong, which is Cantonese, but Hong Kong aspires to be trilingual and biliterate, meaning that in local schools Putonghua will likely become the medium for spoken Chinese lessons (but probably not in

other subjects) and that traditional Chinese characters used in Hong Kong and Taiwanese people will be its literary form. This hybrid is not the preferred model in all international or ESF schools; some schools (e.g., the Chinese International School, the Canadian International School, and the American Hong Kong International School) teach Putonghua in traditional script while others use the simplified format. Effectively, then, international schools are teaching Chinese as a foreign, second, or additive language to its diverse clientele of foreigners, returnees, and local people, though local people will find the linguistic and written challenges less than those with no background in Cantonese. The complexity of the demands for Chinese makes its provision potentially expensive and difficult to service, involving learning at different levels with differentiated methodologies, taught by teachers conversant with modern pedagogies in language teaching (and who are themselves bilingual).

Of course, the ESF system is not the only EMI school that has undertaken the responsibility of teaching Chinese. The Chinese International School was set up as the first international school teaching in both Putonghua and English, mainly to a local Cantonese clientele but with some international students. The new Independent Schools Foundation Academy is also filling a niche market with an interesting Putonghua and English curriculum, as does the international wing of the Kiangsu-Chekiang International School. ESF's two private independent schools aspire to provide a 20-percent Chinese curriculum time with some novel structures to enhance language acquisition and literacy. In no international school is the local Cantonese language taught as a substantive part of the curriculum.

Effectively, then, local Chinese people choosing ESF and international schools are forsaking Cantonese as a medium of instruction for an experience in Putonghua, which is probably taught at a lower level than they would experience in the local sector. The ESF parent survey in 2004 indicated that it is provision of high-quality English that determines their educational choice. Chinese is often left to the families to augment through a mixture of home usage and tutoring (as is the case for the hundreds of Korean, Japanese, and other East Asian families attempting to uphold their language). The readiness of Chinese families to accept diminution in the learning of Chinese in spoken and written form for the benefit of learning in English taught by native speakers is a measure of the importance attached to the latter, but is also indicative that the possibilities for Chinese families to pursue bilingualism through the school system in Hong Kong are limited.

Chinese parents face difficult choices with regard to the language issue. Genuine bilingualism — to the point where students can aspire to the International Baccalaureate Bilingual Diploma at age eighteen — could be achieved realistically only in a Band One local school where the Chinese language is Cantonese. In

these schools children are capable enough of assimilating two languages to a high level. If children are taught in English (which may be a second language) with a foreign language offering of Putonghua, the possibilities of achieving that level of bilingualism are reduced significantly. It is estimated that it is roughly three times more difficult to achieve bilingualism in Chinese and English (or any other Western language) than it in two Western alphabetic languages (Unger 1991).

For most Chinese families in Hong Kong, the choice is an “either/or” one: do they seek to pursue an education in Chinese (Cantonese) with some English and Putonghua second-language provision, or in English with some Putonghua second-language provision (while leaving Cantonese as the language of usage in the home)? While there are Band Three EMI schools, in which Cantonese is likely to be used in a significant range of classes, these tend not to be the schools of choice for English-speaking Chinese families whose aspirations lie in either a highly selective Band One or DSS English-medium school system, and international schools.

Special education and the Chinese learner

With the introduction of Chinese into international schools and the ESF system, hard choices had to be made about courses and activities that needed to be eliminated to stay within a certain time frame and budget (those eliminated were frequently in the arts, especially music and art), but another contender also came to the forefront — special education. The drive for bilingualism and biliteracy was often combined with the need for special assistance for children with learning difficulties.

Perhaps the parents with the most unenviable choices are those whose children have learning difficulties and who experience the greatest problem in acquiring or learning two languages. Among no other category of children is it more important to have mother-tongue teaching in order to facilitate learning and literacy, and for English-speaking Chinese families the choices are narrow. While the ESF system has six learning support classes for children with moderate learning difficulties and one school for sixty students with severe or multiple learning difficulties, this is not replicated in other international schools; neither are facilities available in many of the city’s local EMI schools for children with moderate to severe learning difficulties. Many parents in this category see places in ESF special needs classes as almost a necessity. Places are, however, scarce: learning support classes have long waiting lists, as does the special school in the secondary phase.

Some Chinese-speaking families would rather send their disadvantaged children to EMI special schools because they believe the quality of provision is

superior to CMI schools. It seems that some Chinese or bilingual parents choose to speak to their children in English in order to strengthen the claim for a place in an English-medium special support class.

Conclusion

The fear of a hemorrhaging of students from local schools, already threatened by the low Hong Kong birthrate in the current decade has made the question of parental choice (or necessity) for Chinese parents, with regard to the international and ESF sectors, a politically sensitive one. The current perception is that there is a shortage of international school places in Hong Kong, which is threatening its international competitiveness and inflow of foreign direct investment and intellectual capital. The chief executive's policy address in October 2007 made allusions to this threat with regard to Hong Kong's aspirations to become a regional educational hub.

There would not be a shortage of places in international schools in Hong Kong, however, if the places were filled entirely with international students. The city is well endowed with schools claiming to be international, with more than adequate capacity to offer school places to its small international community. That is not to say every applicant could gain admission. Expatriate families arriving in the fall of 2007 and 2008 at the height of the global economic boom experienced intense anxieties about available places in quality international establishments because these schools are currently sought after by thousands of local and returning Chinese families. To claim international status and to teach in English with native English-speaking teachers makes a school a marketable commodity in Hong Kong. Building more international schools is to invite more local middle-class parents to fill them with their offspring and to further deplete the local system's schools which they (probably unfairly) see as not fit for purpose.

In conclusion, I contend that learners coming from Chinese-speaking middle-class families are attracted to international and other native English-speaker taught schools in Hong Kong because:

- An increasing number are nationals of other countries, who have themselves experienced English-medium and liberal pedagogies in other country's kindergartens and schools and wish to sustain this experience for their children in Hong Kong.
- A growing number of Chinese learners from local middle-class families aspire to have an international style of education, with preferred university destinations overseas, and see international schools as preparation for this.

- A growing number of Chinese learners believe that a liberal education in English-speaking international schools will best equip them for the type of careers to which they aspire.
- The general level of English in the local community and local schools is not adequate to guarantee full English literacy.
- The local English-medium sector is now (necessarily) so small that opportunities for Chinese learners to gain places in this preferred and affordable sector are limited.
- The local middle-class families have reached a level of affluence where quality education in a wider range of schools is a commodity now within their means, given the prevalence of one-child families (which is itself a result of growing affluence) and increasing income levels.
- These families are willing to forgo Chinese-medium education or relegate teaching Chinese to a foreign or additional language or enhance it through tuition, for the benefits of an English-medium, liberal education, but they do want their children to have access to the Chinese language.
- These families see non-local schools as best meeting the Chinese learner's individual and sometimes special educational needs.

I further contend that the building of additional international capacity will not keep up with the demand from local people and that those responsible for education need to look at a variety of alternative strategies to keep local schooling a strong option. Whether in Hong Kong, China, or the rest of the world, it would be unfair to make international schools the only academically respectable option. It would be equally unfair to view them as the *bête noire*, whipping boy, or financial target of politicians hoping to save money through lower school subventions. At the moment, the drag on local schools caused by a rush to international schools is mainly true of Hong Kong, but, with the rising economy in China and the easing of ethnic admission requirements to international schools, it could become a more universal issue as well.

Being, Becoming, and Belonging: Exploring Hong Kong-Chinese Students’ Experiences of the Social Realities of International Schooling

Eric Jabal

This chapter considers the lived schooling realities of ten Hong Kong-Chinese international school students. It uses data from a mixed-method PhD study undertaken to understand better student engagement within the international schools in Hong Kong.

This research agenda arises from my professional experiences in France and Hong Kong as an international school teacher-administrator and from scholarly understanding developed as a graduate student in the UK and Canada. The specific research interest stems from my concern about the ways in which international schools seem to “look after the interests of some more privileged social groups better than [they] look after the interests of some other sociocultural groups” (Corson 1998). Though all schools ought to respond to the voices of the diverse range of people (Corson 1998; Hargreaves 1996), I believe that private schools, in particular, many of which are part of the international education arena, have an even greater duty and opportunity to achieve the twin aims of inclusivity and excellence. Despite the reach and influence of international schools (Blaney 1991; Hayden and Levy 2007; Hayden and Thompson 1998), long legacy (Leach 1969; Sylvester 2002, 2003, 2005), and complex social contexts of schooling, “international schools have received little attention from the research community in Hong Kong” (Bray 2003, viii), or elsewhere as Slethaug asserts (Chapter 1 in this volume), and little is known about those who attend them.

International schooling in Hong Kong

The Hong Kong government defines international schools as follows:

a non-local curriculum and whose students do not sit for the local examinations (e.g. Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination). They are operated with curricula designed for the needs of a particular cultural, racial or linguistic group or for students wishing to pursue their studies overseas. (Hong Kong Education Department 1995, 4)

The international schools system forms “an important social infrastructure to maintain Hong Kong’s status as an international business centre and a vibrant cosmopolitan city” (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government 2004). Though international schools come in many shapes and sizes (Brown, Course, Kwok, and Yung 2006; Forestier 2005; South China Morning Post 2004), their three main initiators are government organizations and national communities, religious bodies, and private groups (Yamato and Course 2002).

The first international school, Sir Ellis Kadoorie Primary School, opened in 1890 and catered mainly to the Indian community that supported the British administration of Hong Kong. Kowloon Junior and King George V School followed in 1902 and predominantly served British expatriates (Yamato and Course 2002, 5–6). Fifty-six international schools have been added since, in addition to twenty in the English Schools Foundation (ESF), which is closely aligned with international schools, but receives part of its funding from the Hong Kong government (see point 5 below; also see Forse, Chapter 3 in this volume). As a result, in 2005–06, government figures indicate that Hong Kong’s international and ESF schools jointly provided 35,000 places; this constitutes about 6 percent of its compulsory school system (Education and Manpower Bureau 2006). The ten different non-local curricula offered include American, Australian, British, Canadian, French, German-Swiss, Japanese, Korean, and Singaporean (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government 2004), many using the International Baccalaureate program.

Taking a systems-level perspective, Bray and Yamato (2003, 58–59) usefully classify Hong Kong’s international schools arena into six types:

- (1) One school, one educational system (i.e., school foreign-national pupils and/or offer English-medium, non-local curriculum);
- (2) One school, two educational systems (i.e., official affiliation with foreign educational system — school foreign-national pupils and offer two curricular streams; e.g., German-Swiss International School offers German International Abitur and English IGCSE, GCSE, AS, and A-level qualifications).
- (3) Government-sponsored, part of foreign educational system (e.g., Singapore International School);

- (4) Global focus (i.e., United World College Li Po Chun);
- (5) English Schools Foundation (ESF; 20 schools in one educational system: three kindergartens, nine primary, five secondary, one special educational needs, and two K-12 Private Independent Schools); and
- (6) Self-affiliation with foreign educational system (e.g., Hong Kong International School)

Their typology highlights the differential status of international schools in Hong Kong, as well as their diversity in fees, reputation, curriculum, students' post-secondary destinations, and populations served. Their typology also points to how international schools are not, *ipso facto*, all Western schools (Chan 2004).

Moreover, in contrast to neighboring Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore (Lowe, 1999), the Hong Kong government permits "local" residents to attend the territory's international schools (Forestier 2005; Yamato 2003) as outlined by Chris Forse in the previous chapter. Although those who cannot speak Chinese have few other options in Hong Kong, the international schools sector has become a destination of choice for local middle-to-upper-class Chinese families who:

- seek an English-medium schooling experience (Kwok 1998; Tong 2005); look for more readily access to Anglophone education systems overseas (see Chapter 1 in this volume);
- believe that the global currency of international qualifications (e.g., International Baccalaureate) makes its graduates more marketable than those schooled in the local curriculum (Lowe 2000); or
- are concerned with the direction of public education reforms (Bruce 2004; Dowson, Bodycott, Walker, and Coniam 2003; Lee 2001).

While the Hong Kong government disputes the view that demand for international school places outstrips supply (Heron and Clem 2005), the supply-and-demand pressure premise was borne out in a recent study of twelve international schools by the American Chamber of Commerce. The findings concluded that "real" and "long" waiting lists exist and that the "composition of international schools is now overwhelmingly ethnically Chinese" (American Chamber of Commerce 2007, 5). The report also affirmed that

international schools are firmly woven into Hong Kong's cosmopolitan lifestyle and are an important and fundamental part of the fabric of primary and secondary education options for Hong Kong people, both foreign and domestic. They are no longer "foreign" appendages to the mainstream education system but part of the broad selection of educational choices in Hong Kong. (American Chamber of Commerce 2007, 5)

International school students in Hong Kong

The predominant enrollment of local Hong Kong-Chinese children has turned international schools into largely localized schools (in terms of families served) that offer non-local curricula, which create both challenges and opportunities for students and schools (see also Chapters 3 and 5 in this volume). A move to the international school system for these students entails acquiring, employing, and connecting different local and international cultural kinds of knowledge found within a constellation of social worlds (e.g., family, peer group, school). Their “betwixtness,” as characterized by Deveney (2005), who was writing about international schooling in Thailand, may position these Hong Kong-Chinese students within a “fourth culture — one that is not their home system, not a foreign system in a foreign land and not an international school abroad, but an international school in their home country which does not represent their native culture and beliefs” (161). Although these students are not crossing national borders, their move from the local to the international school system can present adaptive complexities that may test their sense of self (e.g., self-esteem, ethnic identity), social location, and engagement with/in the international school.

By contrast, international schooling in Hong Kong for the expatriate student means reconciling potentially divergent values, beliefs, expectations, behaviors, and norms of home and host-country contexts. Their predilections, which are explored in the literature under various rubrics — e.g., “transcultural” (Willis, Enloe, and Minoura 1994), “third culture kid” (Pollock and Van Reken 1999; Useem 1993; Useem and Downie 1976; Willis 1985), “internationally mobile adolescent” (Gerner, Perry, Moselle, and Archbold 1992), and “global nomad” (McCain 1992) — reveal the psycho-social-cultural challenges (and opportunities) they may face when spending significant time overseas in the formative years in a place other than their country of citizenship.

Both the domestic Hong Kong-Chinese and foreign-national international school student thus negotiate transitions between and among “multiple worlds” (Cooper and Jackson 1998; Phelan, Davidson, and Yu 1993), each of which comprises “cultural knowledge and behavior found within the boundaries of students’ particular families, peer groups, and schools . . . values and beliefs, expectations, actions, and emotional responses familiar to insiders” (Phelan, Davidson, and Yu 1998, 7). Although the concept’s holistic, macro-micro approach to the conditions that shape students’ lived realities makes it especially useful to understanding the proclivities of both, the focus of the following section is limited to what can be learned from a sample of ten Hong Kong-Chinese students about the conditions that shaped their experiences of the social realities at two international schools and perceptions of the patterns of relationships among students, in particular.

Methods

The original research on which this chapter is based used quantitative and qualitative data collected in two phases.

In Phase I, a broad online survey was administered to 1,270 students at nine international schools to examine the relationship between the students' socio-personal characteristics and their experiences of international schooling. A main finding to emerge was three empirically distinct clusters of students on the attitudinal characteristics of internationalism, experience of international schools, and self-competence. Table 4.1 reports measures of central tendency and spread for the three student clusters. The Cronbach's alphas for each clustering variable are also described, which range from 0.78 to 0.81 and indicate good internal reliabilities.

Table 4.1 Phase I student sub-group ratings: View of internationalism, experience of international school, and self-competence ($N = 544$)

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Number of items	Reliability α
View of internationalism (VIE) ^a	544	3.52	0.84	4	0.78
Cluster 1	195	2.72	0.66		
Cluster 2: Equatorial	195	3.95	0.53		
Cluster 3	154	3.99	0.59		
Experience of international school (EIS) ^b	544	3.39	0.68	8	0.81
Cluster 1	195	2.92	0.56		
Cluster 2: Equatorial	195	3.46	0.58		
Cluster 3	154	3.88	0.53		
Self-competence(SC) ^b	544	3.39	0.74	4	0.78
Cluster 1	195	3.05	0.68		
Cluster 2: Equatorial	195	3.09	0.47		
Cluster 3	154	4.19	0.44		
Aggregated cluster attributes	544	3.43	0.53	16	
Cluster 1	195	2.90	0.32		
Cluster 2: Equatorial	195	3.50	0.23		
Cluster 3	154	4.02	0.31		

Notes: a. Rating scale: 1 = unimportant to being international; 5 = very important to being international

b. Rating scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree

In Phase II, thirty-four senior-student and thirty teacher-leader interviews, as well as in and out-of-classroom observations, were conducted over thirty-five days to better understand the contextual forces, factors, and structures that supported and constrained students' engagement at two large, English-medium international schools in Hong Kong that I shall call: "Windsor Secondary High" (Type 5 — ESF), an 11-to-18 secondary school; and "Waratah High" (Type 6 — self-affiliation with a foreign educational system), a K-12 school. Each offers its own non-local curriculum and enrolls in excess of a thousand students — of which eighty are in the senior secondary at Waratah High, and nearly four hundred students comprise the senior school at Windsor Secondary High. To preserve confidentiality, fictitious names are used to refer to the schools and participants. What follows will be restricted to the lessons learned from the Cluster 2 students, labeled Equatorial because of their middling response patterns on the three cluster variables (Table 4.1), about their experiences of schooling and perceptions of the patterns of relationships among students.

The Equatorials represent 35 percent of the Phase II study sample and, as with Phase I ($N = 195$), feature the largest proportion of Hong Kong-Chinese international school students. In particular, the discussion will be confined to what the ten (of twelve) Equatorial interviewees, who self-identified as Hong Kong-Chinese international school students, had to say about how matters of cultural diversity shaped their lived schooling realities at Waratah High ($N = 4$) and Windsor Secondary High ($N = 6$). This sub-group included seven females and three males. Most were born in Hong Kong, where the majority had resided for thirteen or more years; only one had done so for less than seven years. Although the majority consisted of Canadian and British citizens, few considered Canada home — and the majority called Hong Kong home. Cantonese was a first language for half of these Equatorials, which the majority mainly used with their parents.

Results and discussion

The Equatorials identified an array of contextual factors, individual and institutional, that supported and constrained their engagement with/in the international school. In this first section, the focus will be on how the ten Hong Kong-Chinese Equatorials talked about diversity and inclusivity as factors that enhanced their experiences of the social realities of schooling at Windsor and Waratah High.

Windsor Secondary High serves a diverse population by nationality: about one-quarter of the students are British, one-fifth Canadian, one-seventh Chinese/Hong Kong, and one-tenth other Asian and Australasian nationality (Education and Manpower Bureau 2006). Although the majority of its students are of Chinese

(mainly Hong Kong) race/ethnicity, Windsor Secondary High is designed, like the other nineteen ESF schools, for first-language English children who do not speak Cantonese and/or read and write Chinese. An ESF survey conducted in 2005 found that 70 percent of its 12,000 students have parents who are permanent residents of Hong Kong. Windsor Secondary High includes a significant number of Anglo-Indian students, and those from Anglo-Saxon backgrounds are a visible minority group. Most of its graduates pursue higher education at leading universities in the UK, North America, and Australia, though an increasing number are opting to do so at one of Hong Kong's English-medium universities, too.

When describing Windsor Secondary High, Jessica states that "everyone has a different background. We come from all over the world." A key difference to what she knew previously in Canada is that the school "is more tight-knit. We don't have any of the racial segregation. Everyone is just really friendly and everything. It's great." Her classmate Amy feels that, despite the "different nationalities in the school, . . . we all work together well." Echoing them, Ryanne highlights how cultural diversity and inclusivity favorably shaped her perception and experiences of the school's social context.

[T]here are a lot of people from different backgrounds, different cultures, religions. It's nice to see everyone getting along well with each other and no one being racist. Because in Vancouver, I came across a lot of people who were quite racist. I guess it's one of the best points about this school. Everyone just accepts each other.

Even though Windsor Secondary High's "student body is very diverse," according to Aaron, he finds "the different friendship groups that exist don't really separate us." Anne accounts for this because of

what they teach in lessons. For example, in psychology I get to understand other people from a different perspective without judging them. So you treat each other equally in the school. I don't think students here really judge others by their skin colour. Maybe the school has helped us not to be biased and to look at things from different perspectives. I think that's what being at an international school has done for me.

The opportunity to learn about/from others in a culturally diverse and inclusive environment partly explains why Anne considers it

beneficial to have had this international school experience. In Canada, I didn't get to interact with different students from around the world who had different backgrounds. I really didn't know much about different people and the world beyond [Canadian city] before coming to this school.

Frankie echoes her sentiments (“The school has a large number of people from different places, of different races, who have different ideas”), adding that

being in a school like this, you really are taking in different points of view and understanding different people . . . I certainly know more about the world now because of this school, where I am getting a taste of different cultures and different ideas. So I guess if you dropped me in a foreign country, I would get on fine because I’ve learnt how to be tolerant and adaptable.

Even with a large senior student body of nearly four hundred, Ryanne finds that a “comfortable atmosphere” characterizes her experience of it.

There are different friendship groups — I wouldn’t really say cliques, but friendship groups. Yet everyone pretty much gets along with each other. Our head boy is going to have a grad trip for everyone who wants to sign up. So it’s a whole Year 13 thing where we can all just hang out together and stuff, which makes it pretty fun. We’re all going to go as friends, as a whole group.

The four Waratah High students in this Equatorial sub-group highlight similar factors when describing their experiences of the social realities of international schooling and perceptions of the patterns of relationships among students. Waratah High takes its students from all over Hong Kong, though the vast majority carries passports from one Western country (Education and Manpower Bureau 2006) — and this is where its curriculum comes from, too. The school’s mission and aims declare that it is designed to serve the needs of expatriates from this particular country, as well as those who wish to leverage its nationally-based program for (re-)entry into the “country of origin’s” educational system. Although Hong Kong-Chinese children visibly predominate, Anglo-Saxon families are a small but vocal part of the school community. Significantly, Waratah High opened on that country’s national day. In documentation prepared for an accreditation visit, Waratah High described itself as “a source of pride for the [country’s] community.” Not surprisingly, the school materials (including student uniform), rituals, and practices reflect the dominant country’s traditions, values, and ethos. The majority of Waratah High’s graduates pursue higher education in that country, though a small but increasing number are choosing to do so in the UK, Canada, and also Hong Kong.

The four Waratah High Equatorials, all of whom had spent time as students in the local school system, make the same distinction as their Windsor Secondary High counterparts when characterizing the local and international schools’ social contexts: “In local schools, we only have one race: Chinese. But here we’ve got different ones. This might help me understand the experiences of different people

— how to welcome and get along with those who are different to me” (Rie). Leon adds that

[p]eople are more open-minded here. There are foreigners in the school. The culture of the school is different. You get a different feeling here. You have a stronger school spirit . . . stronger than what you’d find in the local schools. The environment is also better.

In the process, Leon brings up two other constructive forces to emerge: the positive influence on students’ engagement of the “school spirit” and international school “environment,” which he goes on to specify in terms of co-curriculum opportunities and the physical facilities themselves. However, his use of “foreigners” to describe the Caucasian-Western student minority challenges whether diversity and inclusivity genuinely cohabitate at Waratah High, if indeed he views this group as outsiders.

By attending Waratah High, Josephine finds that she has been

exposed to lots of people from different cultures. It makes me feel like I know a little more about different cultures . . . whereas in a local school, it’s dominated by one main culture. It’s an eye-opener when you get to know different types of customs rather than being ignorant about them, which can lead to all these other problems . . . By having a wider view and being more accepting of other cultures, I am not so ignorant. I understand other people’s customs, their laws, and don’t just impose my own cultures and values on them. Because there are bound to be differences between people and we need to work on something in common. I think that’s very important — and it’s something I’ve learnt here.

Josephine’s remark brings together the twin factors of diversity and inclusivity as formative and favorable forces on her international school experiences at Waratah High. She expresses a degree of intercultural awareness that transcends *Fei nga yuk lui, kei sum bit yi* (i.e., Cantonese romanization for a Chinese saying that means “the hearts of those who are not of my race must be different”; the pinyin for this saying is *Feiwozulei qixinbiyi*) and moves towards the key outcome of a multicultural education, that is, despite the ethnic and cultural differences in an increasingly diverse and connected world, we share a common humanity (Banks 1993).

Crystal’s reflections on her life and international school experiences, in particular, capture the prevailing view expressed above by her Waratah High peers.

Compared to local school students, I think I have more world knowledge. Sometimes when I’m doing volunteer work, I come across local students. Once they hear that I’m an international school student, that I know different

people from different places, speak English, have lived in Canada, and traveled across the world, they think it's great . . . Many of them [locally-schooled students] don't have that type of knowledge. So I think we're [international school students] much better off.

In short, these Hong Kong-Chinese Equatorials revealed how diversity and inclusivity seemed to be valued and practiced at Waratah High and Windsor Secondary High. They learned from, and got to, understand more about other students who might have been different from them (mostly along the lines of race/ethnicity, nationality, and place of origin), which favorably shaped their experiences of the social realities of international schooling and perceptions of the patterns of relationships among students.

However, contrapuntal evidence also suggests that diversity and inclusivity were perhaps neither coped with nor practiced at Waratah High and Windsor Secondary High. In contrast to the picture painted above, the comments below point to how the patterns of relationships among students were segregated along cultural lines. They raise questions about the nature, scope, and effect of majority and minority cultures within the international school, and of how mainstream and sub-cultures within the student body get constituted along the lines of social categorical identities — mainly linguistic, race/ethnic, and nationality, but also interest group and academic subjects — to undermine students' lived international schooling realities.

Frankie, for example, who has been at Windsor High for his entire secondary schooling, feels “not really sure where I fit in . . . I've never really had a close-knit community of friends at this school that I could rely upon.” Even though observational data did not find him asocial, “quiet, and shy” (qualities that Amy and Rie felt characterized those who did not fit in) Frankie's remark speaks to a self-perceived mismatch between him and the world of the school. In the process of sharing his perceptions and experiences of the social context, (“Some of my friends really don't like it here . . . for example, one girl is just not really outgoing. She's always getting picked on and really wants to leave”), Frankie presents a divided Windsor Secondary High student body.

Strangely enough, although it is an international school, people tend to stick with the same race. In our senior school, for example, in my year especially, we have two types of segregation. The first form is by race. You have the Indians, you have the Chinese, and you have the Caucasians. The second form is by way of thought. You have people who you just keep hearing about — people who make trouble or make themselves known. They tend to sit together.

His view is consistent with what his classmates Amy and Aaron describe:

I don't exactly know how student friendship groups form. (Pause) Well, to be quite honest, the Caucasian groups have their own friendship groups because, *naturally*, they're Caucasian. *So therefore people tend to stick with their own kind.* (emphasis added)

The kind of normalization evoked seems inconsistent with what Bray and Yamato (2003, 63) suggest is a defining characteristic of international schools — i.e., “by their nature, [they] welcome diversity and are able to cope with it.” Unless, of course, semantic emphasis is placed on “cope with” cultural diversity (through segregation) rather than “welcome” (through the integration of diversity).

The race-based student groupings that Frankie identifies also appear to predominate at Waratah High. As Rie puts it, “It just seems that we never get one group in our Year 12 class . . . Even though we know that we shouldn't do that, that we shouldn't be racist, we just have different groups.” Josephine, a classmate, adds gender as another social identity that contributes to the segregation of the senior student body: “My year group first separates by gender and then culture — Asian or Western. Even though some people cross, not many do. So I basically see four groups: two boys' groups, two cultures; and two girls' groups, two cultures.” Rie develops her cultural and gender-based sub-groupings by describing how

in my group of friends, the girls don't really go to the pub. They don't like it. They think it's noisy. They think it's bad behaviour. It's not good for them. But with the Westerners, a lot of people go to parties on the weekend. So I think they're more outgoing and talkative.

Continuing, Rie makes clear that

I belong to the Chinese group, but I always hang out with the Western group as well because I like to have fun . . . They're more fun than the Chinese group. I think some of the Westerners like me. But with others, it seems like they pressure me to join their group. Every week they ask me, “Are you coming out tonight?” Maybe some of them don't really know me, and they may not like me.

She also reveals how in “my first year . . . I didn't really like it here as people seemed a bit immature — so much gossip, backstabbing.” The “principal even had to stand up at an assembly to denounce the cyber-bullying that was taking place on Xanga [a popular on-line social networking site for youth in Hong Kong].” Her perception and experiences of the student body dynamics raise questions about the extent to which diversity and inclusivity were in fact promoted and practiced at Waratah High. At the same time, Rie does present herself as one of the few partially successful Equatorial border-crossers: “I get along with the

Chinese students and some of the Westerners.” Being forced to negotiate these less inclusive aspects of her international school’s social context has perhaps supported her interpersonal and intercultural growth.

In a similar way, Leon takes a pragmatic approach to Waratah High’s social reality.

I actually feel that this place is a shadow of society. It’s a small society. So if I can cope with this school life then I believe I can get into society more easily in the future . . . Pin-pointing, discrimination, friendships are all part of my school life here. I don’t know what will happen, but I believe that this is similar to what I will face in society in the future.

His international-school-as-society microcosm casts it as a proven ground to learn how to “cope” and move “into society more easily in the future.” He emphasizes both the less positive elements of the school’s social context and culture (e.g., “pin-pointing, discrimination”) and recognizes how long-term good may come from being able to handle such a “school life.” At the same time, Leon contributes to our understanding of how specific markers of cultural identity (i.e., nationality, race/ethnicity, and first language) saliently shaped the patterns of relationships among students.

I don’t really hang out with the foreigner’s group, but I reckon that they are the friendliest in the school. I can say what I want to say to them. They are more open-minded. In the Chinese group, people tend to be a bit complicated. You don’t always know what they think of you. They won’t say to you the things that they have in mind. But I can tell you that this problem is much more serious in the local school. So it’s already much better here. I reckon that this is a school where I can find friendship. *But I have to be careful about which group I get into.* (emphasis added)

Leon adds to Rie’s observations in at least two ways. First, his reference once more to the “foreigner’s group” frames this non-local (and largely Western) minority as outsiders — how ironic, given Leon’s Hong Kong-Chinese race/ethnic and Cantonese linguistic heritage and the fact that international schools are designed to serve non-local students. His view that the Waratah High student body is visibly segregated along heritage-based lines is shared by the majority of the Equatorials.

Second, although Leon’s opinion of the “foreigner’s group” (i.e., “the friendliest in the school”) largely accords with Rie’s, he goes on to contrast their “open-minded[ness]” to the “Chinese group, [where] people tend to be a bit complicated. You don’t always know what they think of you. They won’t say to you the things that they have in mind.” As a Hong Kong-Chinese student, who had

previously attended a Chinese-medium government school and has lived most of his life in Hong Kong, Leon is aptly positioned to discern these complex intra- and cross-cultural dynamics. As can be seen in his last utterance, in particular, such patterns importantly shaped his lived schooling realities.

In addition to describing how student self-segregation along race/ethnic lines characterized their experiences of the social context of international schooling, these Equatorials added language as another salient marker of social identity. Rie, for example, indicated that there were three distinct student sub-groups at Waratah High who clustered linguistically and racially/ethnically: a “Chinese good-English group,” a “Chinese not-so-good-English group,” and “the Westerner group.” Language also seemed to be an important divider for Frankie and Amy at Windsor Secondary High.

I can tell you the English rule isn’t working very well in the senior school. You’ll have the Chinese people speaking Chinese, the Indian people speaking Indian, and then you’ll have the people who can only speak English hanging around in the middle being clueless. (Frankie)

I think the different groups originated from the year groups ahead us. The four main groups are the “Indian” group, the “White” group, the “International” group (which is where I hang out), and then the “Chinese” group — where everyone speaks Chinese. If you went to the Chinese area of the senior school, even if you’re not supposed to speak Chinese they would still be talking in Cantonese. (Amy)

Yet, as Crystal notes, and as my observations of student interactions in corridors and social spaces showed, it was not just the Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong-Chinese majority who perhaps used language to exclude at Waratah High:

[They] don’t seem to communicate too much with the Chinese students. They seem to be in their own little group. From my perspective, they seem like they’re really enjoying their time at this school. They’re able to bring the [country] characteristics into this school.

Crystal employs a cultural moniker to describe a group of middle-years girls, who she believed used English and their Western heritage to insulate themselves. Despite their being a numerical minority, she feels that they seemed to be “really enjoying their time at this school” and contributing formatively to its ethos. Crystal highlights not only how their specific linguistic-heritage helped define and affirm their categorical social group identity, but also how it harmonized with Waratah High’s institutional identity. In doing so, she casts them as the “in-group.” Crystal contrasts them to

[m]ost of the students in the upper grades are Chinese, especially in our graduating class. I think there are only seven [country-nationality], as in White Westerners. So our class is quite Hong Kong. We speak Chinese. We go out and do 'Hongky' activities. How people think, their actions and stuff, are not really [country-nationality].

Although Crystal considers herself part of the local, Hong Kong-Chinese student majority, she does not self-identify as a "Hongky." Indeed, her global aspirations, intercultural perspective, and fluent bilingualism seem to position her as one of a handful of successful border-crossing Equatorials. Even so, unlike Crystal's classmate Rie, interview and observational data found that she, like Josephine and Leon, mostly socialized with local, Hong Kong-Chinese peers.

Aaron is similar to Crystal in this regard (recall his description of the regime of race/ethnic normalization at Windsor Secondary High). He also has "a few friendship groups. But in the group I stick to the most, we're all local students." Even so, he voices border-crossing tendencies that show how heritage, interests (Ryan 1999), and subject choices converge to influence his choice of friends.

But that [his Hong Kong-Chinese race/ethnicity] doesn't really stop me from being friends with them. (Pause) I've got quite a few Caucasian friends. Probably interests, I guess — interests really set your friendship groups. For example, I've got a friendship group and we're all fans of football. And probably classes now, because as you move into the senior school you have more classes of fewer subjects. So you really bond well with the people in your classes and probably less well with those who don't go to any of your classes. I have a friend who goes to every single class I go, so we're pretty strongly bonded together. What else? Music type. Some people prefer local Hong Kong music. They have their own friendship groups, and others listen to more international stuff.

In contrast, Rie (Waratah High) and Amy (Windsor Secondary High) — "I'm part of the 'International' group. Even though we're mostly Chinese and English, we talk English to each other and all of us have the same interests . . . We like to go out and play pool, go to the arcade, watch movies, stuff like that" — arguably typify stronger versions of the Equatorial border-crosser. Both seem aware of, and comfortable with, negotiating, peer group differences (mainly with respect to race/ethnicity, language, nationality, and place of origin) and the ability to choose friends because of shared interests rather than linguistic-heritage commonalities. As a result, they appear to have less difficulty border-crossing between the social contexts of family, peers, and school.

In short, contrapuntal evidence suggests that several identities adversely intersected to shape patterns of relationship among students — most visibly, in

how Waratah High's and Windsor Secondary High's social spaces were segregated along race/ethnic, linguistic, and nationality/place lines.

This social cartography challenged their experiences of the social realities of schooling to produce visible (e.g., Chinese vs. Caucasian) and audible (e.g., Cantonese vs. English) cultural divides in the student body. At the same time, a more nuanced *within*-Equatorial divide emerges to underscore empirically Ryan's discomfort (Chapter 2, this book) with the notion of a single kind of Chinese learner. Recall Rie's and Amy's successful border-crossing and "blending of different affiliated identities in the cross-cultural" (Slethaug 2007, 187) contexts of Waratah High and Waratah Secondary High, respectively, versus Crystal's, Josephine's, or Leon's accounts. Even so, these contrapuntal findings suggest that the rhetoric international schools espouse — i.e., valuing diversity, practicing inclusivity — may not match some Equatorial students' lived realities.

Conclusion

In sum, this chapter has considered what ten Hong Kong-Chinese students had to say about their experiences of the social realities of schooling and perceptions of the patterns of relationships among students at two international schools.

On the one hand, their remarks showed how student body diversity at Waratah High and Windsor Secondary High, mainly along the lines of race/ethnicity, language, and nationality/place of origin, helped enhance their intercultural understanding. The majority emphasized the positive influence of this on their experiences of the international school's social realities, contrasting their growth in terms of multicultural awareness and sensitivity to what they had not experienced previously in either the local school system or previous schooling in other countries. On the other hand, contrapuntal evidence from these Hong Kong-Chinese Equatorials indicated that patterns of relationships among students were segregated along cultural lines, and that diversity and inclusivity were perhaps neither coped with nor practiced successfully at Waratah High and Windsor Secondary High. This view is consistent with what Duncan notes, a senior teacher-administrator at Windsor Secondary High.

Probably the hardest issue the school has is getting the students to mix. Walking around, you don't really get a strong impression that mixing is *naturally occurring* . . . Certainly in the junior years, *you could walk into most classes and they would be visibly sitting in cultural groups*. (emphasis added)

Duncan's view is shared by a number of his colleagues and Waratah High counterparts, and largely coheres with the perceptions and experiences of these

Hong Kong-Chinese students (which do not accord with James's case study presented by Forse in the previous chapter). Moreover, as is evident in the data across the three student clusters reported in the larger study (Jabal in progress), what is condoned in patterns of interactions among students may end up reflecting how parents themselves interrelate and engage with the international school. And as Serena puts it, a senior colleague of Duncan's and one of the few teacher-administrators at either school who is not Caucasian-Western,

We have a big population of local Hong Kong-Chinese families . . . which needs to feel valued, respected, and accepted. You can't call yourself an international school if you don't have the support and involvement of those who make up the majority of the school's community. (Serena)

Consequently, if international school educators wish to support all border-crossing students — domestic and foreign-national alike — and contend with their “multiple worlds” of experience, then they will have to more actively promote inclusive practices that confront such potentially divisive race/ethnic-language-nationality matters and take into account better the different “cultural baggage” (Louie 2005) carried by learners and teachers alike. Although these selected findings only begin to illuminate the complex issues faced by Chinese learners who opt to become international school student in Hong Kong, ideally they will stimulate interest in further research to better support and achieve the holistic development of every international school student.

Educating Chinese Learners for Social Conscience in Hong Kong: An International School Perspective

Martin Schmidt

The reason I chose this worldview of separateness may be because of my ten years of education in local school. When I discussed this matter with my friends in my old school, they all agreed with my thoughts. In a local school, everyone is in their small glass marble, caring only about their tests and exam grades. We do not walk out of our bubbles and connect to the world. This is how life is: everyone is separated.

(14-year-old transfer student from a local school to Hong Kong
International School [HKIS])

[The human being] experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest — a kind of optical delusion of our consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.

Einstein (Eves 2003, 60)

As Asia looks to maintain its competitive economic edge and become the world's financial engine, educational reforms in the region have sought to adapt Western learning values of inquiry and creativity to the needs of Asian learners to put together the best of China and the West. Hong Kong, too, has recently embarked on major educational reforms. There has been much scholarly interest in the Chinese learner and how best to bring together Western educational values and practices with a society firmly rooted in Chinese culture, and many educators believe that a new curriculum design uniting these values can grow from some four major philosophical approaches.

A philosophical framework for curriculum design

Writing with the Hong Kong educational system in mind, Morris (1995) identifies four different quadrants or models of education: academic rationalist, social and economic efficiency, child-centered, and social reconstruction (Figure 5.1). These approaches embody alternative ways of envisioning, constructing, and implementing curriculum.

The goal of the “social and economic efficiency” model is to develop students’ academic skills so that society can maintain a competitive work force in the new global economy. The goal of the “academic rationalist” model is to achieve mastery in a field of study, which an exam-based system such as Hong Kong’s has used historically to judge educational achievement. The “child-centered” approach focuses on developing the talents, passions, and natural curiosity of students to grow into mature adults with continuous self-understanding and a growing sense of purpose. The “social reconstruction” approach confronts social issues and asks students to become informed citizens about these issues in order to improve society.

The social and economic efficiency model is easy to detect in the language and rationale of Hong Kong’s educational reforms, which have an unabashedly economic motivation (The Hong Kong Institute of Education 2005, 2). Frequent use of the term “knowledge economy” suggests that educational changes are driven by economic considerations (Kennedy, Lo, and Fairbrother 2004, 538). Researchers assert that this educational paradigm shift follows from Hong Kong’s economic transformation from an industrial society to a knowledge-based society (Fok 2001, 12; Kennedy 2005, 1, 152). If, before the 1997 handover, the predominant image of education was the academic rationalist approach (Kennedy 2005, 101), which prepared the best and brightest to administer Hong Kong’s industrial society, recent educational reforms bring to mind the social and economic efficiency model (Lee and Dimmock 1998, 8), hoping to create a highly skilled workforce serving the needs of the new knowledge-based society.

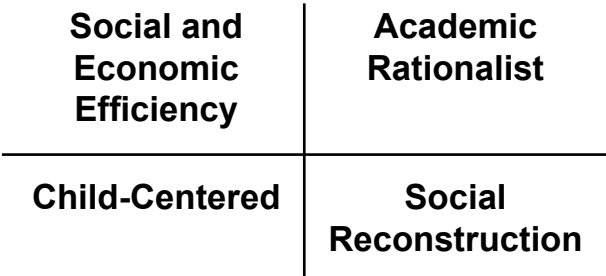


Figure 5.1 Philosophical approaches to curriculum design (adapted from Morris 1995, 9)

This aim of skill development is explicitly noted as one of the core goals of Liberal Studies (Curriculum Development Council and Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority 2006, 5). The implementation of the liberal studies curriculum by teachers, then, may move in the direction of a skills-based, social and economic efficiency model of curriculum design in keeping with economic goals. While this serves the needs of a knowledge-based society, it can be questioned whether these reforms meet the genuine needs of students. Reforms are more likely to succeed if teachers and students see them as meeting the needs of Hong Kong students rather than as economic tools of the government and the business community.

Greater inspiration can be found in the other two philosophical approaches to curriculum design. Both the child-centered and the social reconstructivist categories are located within the broader process model of curriculum theory, which stresses that a curriculum is always contextualized for a particular group of students within a given classroom (Smith 1996, 2000). In contextualized, process-driven curricula, teachers are more concerned about meeting the needs of students than meeting pre-set teaching objectives, and the child-centered model emphasizes the psychological development of students as they interact with class materials that help them reflect upon themselves and the human condition. Social reconstruction, by contrast, starts with crucial social problems, investigates their causes, and asks students what role individuals and communities should play in ameliorating these problems. These aims appeal more to students and teachers than the academic rationalist and the social and economic efficiency models.

Linking the child-centered and social reconstructivist approaches

An effective way of developing social conscience within students is to link the child-centered and social reconstructivist approaches. Bell and Schniedwind (1987) argue that integrating these two approaches can reinforce the purposes of each as students develop an understanding of themselves and grow in their social awareness. In the context of international education, Pasternak (1998) proposes a dynamic, highly contextualized model in which the “journey outward” and the “journey inward” are linked (268–9). The “journey outward” emphasizes global and multicultural education, while the “journey inward” cultivates personal development and reflection. In the context of gifted education, Cooper (2004) poses this balance in another way by stating that ethical action (social reconstructivist approach) needs to be the ultimate outcome of education, which can only emerge from a personalized formation of a coherent worldview (child-centered approach).

Hong Kong's educational reforms

Hong Kong's educational reforms bear the earmarks of all four of Morris's quadrants and have been described by Kennedy (2005) as the "new progressivism" (12), embodying strategies of child-centered curricula, lifelong learning, and creativity to guide Hong Kong towards greater economic competitiveness. While supportive of new progressivism, critics of these reforms have called on the educational system to highlight the genuine needs of learners, not subsume these to economic interests.

In the context of these models, Hong Kong's emphasis upon economic development, and ongoing dialogue about its educational reforms, this chapter makes the case that the singular pursuit of economic self-interest and overemphasis on exam-driven achievement and academic skills, result in a deficit of social conscience for Chinese learners in Hong Kong. This chapter seeks to build on Morrison's position (2003) that what is most needed in Hong Kong educational reforms is a "reassertion of humanity into a previously technicist curriculum" (298). Based on my experience teaching humanities to predominantly Chinese students at Hong Kong International School (HKIS), I offer suggestions for how teachers can more effectively foster "caring virtues" or a social conscience within the curriculum. First, I argue that despite the widely-held belief that all education is a moral endeavor and that Chinese pedagogy specifically embodies it (Li 2009) — arguably a variation of a Confucian ethic, Hong Kong's strong focus on exam results has resulted in a de-valuing of socio-political involvement. Second, I explore the challenges that remain today in the social conscience classroom, which in my experience manifests itself in a low sense of student self-efficacy regarding social change. In this section I also raise the question as to whether social conscience education (as opposed to moral-based) is a Western concept that conflicts with Chinese learners' worldview constructs. Third, in light of Hong Kong's educational reforms, I propose a theoretical framework that can assist teachers who want to improve values-based and social conscience education. Fourth, this chapter concludes with specific examples from my research and teaching at HKIS showing that engaging Chinese learners in classroom conversations about society will help them become better human beings who care for society. These frameworks and examples can help teachers in Hong Kong schools to respond to educational reforms, including the introduction of liberal studies as an exam-based subject in 2009.

Educating a whole person comes close to the notion of "social conscience" that can be defined as self-understanding leading to social awareness and prompting intentional action to improve society. While similar to a combination of moral education and citizenship education, this term has the advantage of an affinity with

the Chinese value of self-cultivation (Li 2009, 49–50). In interviews investigating student perspectives of “social conscience,” students at HKIS frequently use the term “care” to describe how they put “social conscience” into practice. In the simplest terms, then, social conscience education fosters care within students for themselves, their fellow students, for others in society, and for social issues.

Hong Kong’s devaluing of participation: Past and present

In order to understand the present challenges facing social-conscience teachers of Chinese learners in Hong Kong, it is important to understand the socio-cultural background of Hong Kong’s education system recently and under British rule, including the ways in which the traditional examination system undermined social commitment.

One of the major findings in research on the Chinese learner is that education is fundamentally a moral endeavor, which extends to the community. In their concluding chapter of *Teaching the Chinese Learner* (2001), Biggs and Watkins state that the Chinese perception of teaching emphasizes a

holistic view . . . in which teaching refers not only to educating the whole person, affective and moral as well as cognitive, but also to teaching a person their role in society, with collectivist obligations to behave within that role in socially acceptable ways. This is the “moral” dimension so important in Chinese teaching. (281–282)

This moral dimension, social conscience, or care corresponds to the central Confucian tenet that the starting point of education is self-cultivation (Kennedy 2005, 141; Lee 2001, 207; Luk 2005, 87). Confucian writings exhort individuals to grow intellectually and morally throughout their entire life, which will benefit all, beginning with family, extend to the community, and eventually include the world (Luk 2001, 77). This Confucian self is not the autonomous, individualistic self often associated with the West, but an “embedded self” (Luk 2005, 67), whose development naturally extends into the social arena. This balance of self and society is summarized in a Hong Kong Curriculum Development Council statement: “In the Chinese tradition, even though collectivism has been a dominant social value, self has been seen as the starting point of civic values . . .” (Curriculum Development Council 1996, 15).

Although many educators query the basis of Confucianism as a factor in Chinese learning (Ryan in Chapter 2 in this volume), the emphasis on the greater social organism, including the view that the self is embedded in a web of relationships, remains strong in many Chinese cultures. Nevertheless, despite Chinese cultural values underscoring the importance of the collective, the unique

characteristics of Hong Kong have created an environment in which moral and civic education emphasizes personal attitudes, behaviors, and responsibilities over social or political consciousness or involvement. Historically, most Hong Kong citizens and their families came from China as political refugees or economic refugees, and issues of social conscience were less important than survival.

In addition, the British-run government created an educated Chinese elite in Hong Kong to assist in governing its colony efficiently, and critical thinking about social and political issues was discouraged. Following the social unrest and bombings in Hong Kong during the radical stages of China's Cultural Revolution, laws were put in place making political activities in schools illegal. These laws put into writing what was already the unwritten rule of British rule: that political opinion and participation should be left to the experts. These laws were not repealed until 1990, so people in Hong Kong lived in a de-politicized atmosphere before the handover (Fairbrother 2005, 294; King 1975; Lee 2004, 62).

Despite a more politically-engaged atmosphere in the last thirty years, the legacy of British rule and an attenuated Confucian ethic have meant that social-conscience education in Hong Kong has often been reduced to personal ethics. Extending personal conscience into society, especially participating politically on behalf of others for the common good, is noticeably weak within Hong Kong teachers (Grossman 2004, 235). Hong Kong primary school teachers put political participation and making difficult decisions for the good of society in the lowest quartile of choices about future citizen characteristics (Grossman 2004, 227). Among civic, religious, and educational leaders who expressed the belief that the most important reasons for values education was the personal development of the spiritual, autonomous, reflective and responsible self, statements involving society were decidedly in the second tier of choices (Lee 2001, 210–211). A lack of social engagement by teachers and leaders in the community contributes significantly to this problem.

Student surveys also reflect this same theme of lackluster social and political participation. While Hong Kong Chinese learners have an above-average civic knowledge in comparison to students in twenty-four countries, their self-reported civic participation was significantly lower than average (Lee 2004, 71). This lukewarm attitude towards community issues is seen in the lack of political discussion in schools and the negative attitudes towards political participation out of school (Lee 2004, 77). Grossman (2004, 235) concludes that Hong Kong people have a very strong sense of the personal dimension of citizenship, but the social dimension of citizenship needs far greater emphasis.

Despite a strong moral orientation of education within Confucian heritage cultures, Hong Kong's education system has historically discouraged active community participation for students. As the British sought to maintain social

stability in the post-World War II era, the colonial government developed an educational banding system in which the most academically able students were placed in the highest of five bands and the least academically able in the lowest. Students as well as schools competed with each other to gain academic success as measured by external examinations. Hong Kong developed a qualification system which encouraged aspiring Chinese students to pass exams to gain economic security and social status (Morris, Kan, and Morris 2000, 248).

In this “academic rationalist” approach (Kennedy 2005, 101; Morris and Chan 1997, 249), abstract, discrete knowledge is highly valued and is transferred from one generation to the next (Morris 1995, 9). This approach insulates students from knowledge about debatable current issues and discourages development of social conscience. Critical thinking, solving practical social problems, questioning authority, and developing creativity are neither encouraged nor assessed. Instead, central government planners decide what is the most important knowledge that is necessary in forming the next generation of leaders to guide society.

In short, two long-standing characteristics of Hong Kong society — economic dynamism and political passivity — are at least partially attributable to an intentional, if unacknowledged, political design (Ghai 2001; Tse 1998). British political rule with the assistance of Chinese business elites emphasized social harmony in order to promote economic development, an arrangement that benefited the elites handsomely (King 1975, 429). The education system was a principal part of this arrangement, preparing Hong Kong students to fit into the existing social system. Today many observers are asking for a reconsideration of this academic rationalist philosophy and the all-encompassing importance of exam results for Chinese learners in Hong Kong (Biggs and Watkins 2001, 294; Fok 2001, 14; Kennedy 2005, 152; Pong and Chow 2002).

Challenges in the social-conscience classroom

The consequences of Hong Kong’s socio-cultural background upon students can still be felt in teaching Chinese learners in Hong Kong. This section proposes that Chinese learners in Hong Kong lack self-efficacy with regard to social issues, which results in a reluctance to act on their beliefs.

While no research exists on the self-efficacy of Hong Kong students in terms of social and political participation, there are some indications that they lack self-efficacy in more general terms. According to Dembo and Eaton (1997), Asian-American students have a lower academic self-efficacy than Caucasian-American students, and according to Schwarzer (1998), Chinese learners in Hong Kong have one of the lowest levels of general perceived self-efficacy in the world. Although the research base of Hong Kong students’ low self-efficacy is not firmly

established, I would like to raise the possibility from my teaching experience that Chinese learners in Hong Kong have a low self-efficacy towards social and political issues.

In classes that emphasize social conscience at HKIS, Chinese learners frequently express their personal need to know whether they can truly make a positive impact on the world. In psychological terms, considerations of “making a difference” are an exploration of self-efficacy, which Bandura (1997) defines as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (3).

My experience with Chinese students suggests that they see themselves as less able to implement social change than their Western counterparts. On a recent service trip in rural China to provide English practice and leadership training to a hundred girls that HKIS is supporting with scholarships, I directly raised this question of self-efficacy with my students, all of whom were Chinese. Did they feel they could make a difference in society? I was particularly struck by the response of one of the boys, who had been instrumental in developing a highly successful scholarship program for these bright, but very poor female students in rural China. This boy, whose leadership was the most important reason for the program’s success, including raising over US\$45,000 for the girls, quietly stated in response to my question about self-efficacy, “We [Chinese students] find it much harder to assert ourselves compared to Western students.” Other students echoed this sentiment, suggesting that assertiveness and initiating social change are perceived by Chinese learners as a Western concept.

I was able to pursue this comment six months later in an interview with five Hong Kong Chinese students at HKIS, four of whom had participated in the same scholarship trip the previous summer. All are highly accomplished students, two of whom have been admitted to Yale University. In the context of discussing the scholarship trip, one female student said that giving hope to mainland Chinese girls of breaking out of the cycle of poverty was a Western concept. She explained, “I always thought that the Chinese worldview is cyclical . . . like one dynasty replaces another and it’s always like using the same political model, but the Western world is kind of like you are moving forward.” Later in the discussion, in response to my question whether Chinese culture and/or the Hong Kong environment encourages or discourages them from exercising social conscience, another female student explained further:

They [mainland Chinese students] don’t have the capacity to make a difference or they cannot revolt. Before like a Western country, like, there’s like the Scientific Revolution. There’s like the French Revolution and lot of these things and China — the Cultural Revolution . . . So, I think

[Chinese] people are kind of like afraid of people revolting and afraid of being innovative and changing.

In these Hong Kong students' thinking, changing society from a Chinese perspective was associated with political revolt that inevitably led to greater oppression of the peasants or to greater chaos in society. Later, this young woman added, "Another thing that I think is that like Chinese people have a lower self-esteem of themselves and they're less confident than Westerners . . . They don't have that much imagination about what they can do." In this student's thinking, Chinese students have a lower self-efficacy about positive social change than Westerners do. She and the other students seemed to associate this lower self-efficacy with deeper cultural beliefs within the Chinese worldview.

Improving society, by contrast, was associated with Western thinking. One student commented that service to society is a Western concept. Other students explained that the Chinese values with which they had been raised emphasized self-reliance, not depending on a community network for support. One female student elaborated:

My parents always teach me to look out for myself and protect myself and stuff . . . I just get the feeling that . . . people in Hong Kong are a lot more concerned with themselves. I don't know, I'm not sure, but I think Western cultures are somewhat more empathetic.

These Chinese students also expressed broad agreement that their parents were supportive of their service activities because it helped their self-development, not because it would lead to genuine social change.

These conversations raise the challenging question as to whether Chinese learners have confidence that their cultural beliefs can serve as a sturdy epistemological foundation upon which to build social action. These students' ambivalent responses suggest that in Hong Kong Chinese learners' thinking a contradiction exists between education for active citizenship and certain philosophical, historical, and cultural constructs implicit in their upbringing. This contradiction within Chinese learners' perceptions deserves further study.

A theoretical model for social-conscience education in liberal studies

In the last decade, Hong Kong has embarked on major education reforms that liberalize the teaching of humanities. With a new pedagogical model, these reforms positioned on liberal studies might represent a way of teaching the social-conscience goals of greater self-understanding and social awareness.

In September 2009, teachers and students in local Hong Kong schools began the study of liberal studies as a core subject. This paradigm-shifting reform is an opportunity for Hong Kong society to re-think the most fundamental approaches to education as the government introduces the new 3+3+4 system (three years of junior secondary, three years of senior secondary and four years of tertiary education). This reform is intended to move education away from an elitist system to one that is broad-based (The Hong Kong Institute of Education 2005, 1). Social conscience education, which was defined earlier as self-understanding and social awareness that prompt intentional action to improve society, is implicit within the goals of these new educational initiatives in Hong Kong, though whether it will be explicitly pursued remains to be seen.

The most significant change of this new system is the adoption of liberal studies as a core, exam-based subject in senior secondary. Using an interdisciplinary method, this subject is to focus on personal development through the study of contemporary local and global issues. The first aim of this curriculum is “to enhance students’ understanding of themselves, their society, their nation, the human world and the physical environment” and to “enhance social awareness through the study of a wide range of issues” (Curriculum Development Council 2006, 5, 1). Self-understanding and social awareness lie at the center of this new curriculum.

The Education and Manpower Bureau and the Hong Kong government are to be commended for this bold move (Lok 2005, 221), but the great challenge, of course, is implementation. The curriculum itself is hard to define (Chan 2005, 3), a challenge for educators to apprehend conceptually, and complicated to implement successfully, but the stakes are high in transforming education.

My experience in HKIS’s humanities classroom as well as the reading of education literature has resulted in a pedagogical model that may be useful for teachers who aim to enhance students’ social conscience in their classrooms. In comparison to the four philosophical approaches of curriculum design above, this model moves closer to teachers’ actual pedagogical strategies in the classroom. This three-tiered, inverse pyramid model appears in Figure 5.2.

At the top of the inverted pyramid are critical contemporary issues. In the middle of the pyramid are sociological and psychological perspectives that underlie human thoughts and actions, providing new insights into the top tier of contemporary issues. At the bottom of the pyramid are existential questions of human nature, purpose, and identity. Moving from top to bottom, the model moves from the concrete, external, and time-bound to the abstract, internal, and perennial. This model indicates that meaning-making resulting from the three-tiered dialogue is complex, multifaceted, and simultaneously timely and timeless. The goal of this model — as students link their deep personal questions to

contemporary events in their social world — is to develop a critically conscious dialogue among the three tiers in search of coherence. The three tiers, it is hoped, provide more specific direction to teachers about how to link the child-centered and the social reconstructivist models in their teaching.

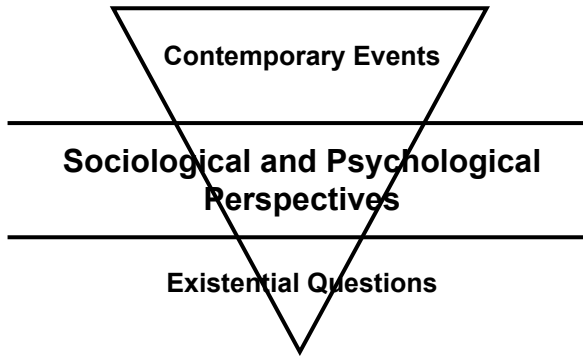


Figure 5.2 Pedagogical model for social conscience education

Top tier: Contemporary events

The top tier represents major global issues such as hunger, inequality, and war that, as Purpel (2004, 111) argues, reveal the moral failures of humankind. The relevance of these issues to student lives and student interest is highly regarded in this pedagogical model (Banks 2006, 208; Driscoll 1986, 1; Elliott 2007, 281). Davies (2005, 21; 2006, 14) found that students exhibit more willingness to discuss certain controversial issues (e.g., current wars and conflicts) and confront distressing realities of global citizenship than teachers are to teach them. Studying contemporary issues from the standpoint of helping students consider how to improve society in the future assures students that their study has purpose beyond the classroom.

Middle tier: Sociological and psychological perspectives

The middle tier explores sociological and psychological perspectives relevant to the contemporary events of the top tier. Sociological experiments and explanations propose perspectives on why society functions and malfunctions as it does. Psychology, too, can provide insight into the human condition that students can relate to personally. A study of contemporary events, for example, can easily lead

to questions about why the darkness of the human condition remains so visibly on display in newspapers and on television. Noddings (2006) holds that sociological and psychological lenses help facilitate self-understanding. Haste (2004, 415) asserts that citizenship is a complex interaction between psychological and contextual forces, such as historical and socio-cultural settings. Sociological and psychological forms of inquiry bring contemporary events in the top tier closer to the thoughts and actions of students.

Bottom tier: Existential questions

At the bottom point of the inverted pyramid are the most fundamental questions of human existence which, Nino (2000, 46) has found, are part of teenagers' developmental process. Mustakova-Possardt (2004) suggests four existential questions that should be put at the center of curriculum exploration: "1. Who am I? 2. Who or what do I see as sources of authentic authority? 3. What do I feel in relationship to? 4. What is the meaning of my life?" (10). These types of questions need to be presented in an open manner, inviting students to participate in their own search for answers (Purpel, 2004, 127). Teachers, then, should highlight the significance and nature of these perennial questions that underlie contemporary issues and their sociological and psychological perspectives. By engaging student interest in relevant, contemporary events and revealing the sociological, psychological, and existential complexities underlying these events, the teacher creates a dialogue of ideas among the tiers. Haste (2004, 420), for example, believes that focusing on the moral dimension of political events engages children's motivations and serves to sharpen personal identity. According to Suzanne Miller (2003), the socio-cultural nature of the dialogical classroom encourages students to create a learning community of relatedness. Such cognitive and affective reflection allows students to reflect on shifts in their thinking or recognize a deepening of their commitments. In so doing, a dialogical classroom environment with others that they come to trust over time assists students in the task of forming a coherent philosophy of life.

This pedagogical model illustrates how the child-centered and social reconstructivist approaches can be integrated in classrooms to facilitate student questioning of their most basic assumptions about themselves and the world. Critical reflection of this nature simultaneously contributes to the enhancement of students' self-understanding and growth in their social awareness.

Teaching social conscience to Chinese learners at HKIS in Hong Kong

Following Lee and Leung's advice (2006, 83) that values and citizenship researchers in Hong Kong should avail themselves of the experiences of the city's international school educators, the following sections of this chapter show how the two theoretical frameworks presented have guided service-learning classes at HKIS to meet the needs of Chinese learners.

Social conscience education has become a focus of my teaching of Chinese learners in the humanities department at HKIS, a large American-style international school of 2,600 students founded in 1966 on the south side of Hong Kong Island. Although school-wide statistics about the ethnicity of students are not available, in surveys with Grade 9 students, I found that 28 percent of these students are Caucasians. The remaining 72 percent of students are of Asian or mixed Asian-Caucasian descent, and nearly 80 percent of these students are of Chinese ethnicity. More than 85 percent of Chinese students speak at least some Chinese at home with Cantonese speakers (indicating Hong Kong origins), outnumbering Mandarin speakers nearly two to one. Approximately 25 percent of the students of Chinese ethnicity attended local Hong Kong schools at some point in their childhood or adolescence. This mixture of ethnic groups, as Forse and Jabal find (Chapters 3 and 4 in this volume), is increasingly typical of other international schools in Hong Kong and, as Slethaug remarks (Chapter 1 in this volume), is typical of international schools worldwide with reference to the mixture of locals and expatriates. With regard to teachers' ethnicity, the vast majority of teachers are Caucasians, mostly North Americans. Of the twenty-six members of the humanities department, for example, all are Caucasians, with the exception of two teachers of mixed Caucasian-Chinese ethnicity and one Korean teacher. Only one of these three speaks Chinese (Cantonese). Thus, the high number of Chinese students who are still in touch with the Chinese language and culture within an American-style setting suggests that HKIS is a promising arena within which to study how Chinese learners engage in Western values and pedagogy.

The development of interdisciplinary courses in the humanities department has encouraged experimentation with a variety of approaches. In the 1980s, Grade 11 teachers began to integrate English and social studies curriculum in an American studies course. In 1997, the HKIS high school administration decided to combine the English department with the social studies department and the religion department to form a humanities department under one roof. Since then, core Grade 9 and Grade 10 interdisciplinary courses have also been introduced.

In this spirit of experimentation, since 2000, I have included community service in the curriculum of two interdisciplinary humanities courses,

encouraging students to see the connection between the child-centered and social reconstructivist approaches to learning. Through “service-learning” pedagogy and activities, which have been designed to help students understand social values in humanities materials and apply the concepts concretely in a community setting, students address the question of self-efficacy by linking academic study with community service (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, and Yee 2000, 59; Eyler and Giles 1999, 38–39, 161). A recent study on gifted students by a HKIS colleague in one of the service-learning courses found that all six students expressed a sense of personal empowerment to act (Wiebusch 2006). While their own experiences in service were most important, these students also indicated that studying living examples of people acting on behalf of society was a key factor in their growth. In describing their personal growth, students spoke of optimism, motivation, and inspiration to act as advocates for social change. In this course, the linking of the child-centered and social reconstructivist approaches in a service-learning course had a positive influence on students’ self-efficacy.

In one of the courses called “Service, Society, and the Sacred” taught to senior students (c. 17 years old), the topics change from year to year, depending on world events and the interests of students. In 2007 the major units of study were Peak Oil (e.g., the end of cheap oil for the global economy), the Rwandan and Darfur Genocides, and the effects of corporations upon society. In addition, students individually or in groups could focus on their own contribution to the world. They could choose to explore topics related to “Inner Work” (self-exploration, meditation, yoga), “Outer Work” (initiating service projects in the community), or the “Great Work” (making sense of their religious or spiritual beliefs in the context of serving the common good). The highlight of the course for many students was a trip to southern China to spend three days at an orphanage taking care of babies and young children. While taking care of children is an intensely personal experience (child-centered), the students understand that these abandoned children, mostly girls, are victims of China’s one-child policy (social reconstructivist). Three years earlier, I had taught many of the same students in a Grade 9 course which had also taken a similar orphanage trip to China. Most of the students in the group had chosen to return to have the same experience a second time. All but one student (who will be noted) were Chinese learners and have lived in Hong Kong for most of their childhood and adolescence.

In a hotel conference room the night before we went to the orphanage, I asked the students why they had chosen to return. The students spoke candidly about the importance of that first trip. For them it involved fostering friendships in the group as well as developing a sense of social conscience. They spoke of their deep attachment three years ago to “my kid,” the operative phrase used when they referred to the child they took care of that weekend. A senior boy who was a new

student that year and spoke of a “miraculous force that brought us all together” said that the December trip was the actual onset of his high school involvement, allowing him to bond with his new classmates, friendships that he still enjoys. He hoped that the experience this weekend would bring appropriate closure to his four years at HKIS. Another senior girl revealed that her ninth-grade experience was her first direct confrontation with the suffering of others, remembering it not as a time of sadness, but a reminder of her own transformation of caring. Just as the Grade 9 field trip had been her initiation into high school, she hoped that this trip would help her transition to college where she plans to major in one of the helping professions. A sensitive, introspective girl said that her ninth-grade experience had been the first spark to help her find hope and not be overwhelmed by the injustices of the world. Holding a baby, she said, is “hoping to hope.” She had told me in a recent conversation that the previous experience had revealed that for her enduring satisfaction could only be found outside the achievement-oriented world of school life.

The students also spoke of fears in returning to the orphanage. Some remembered that in choosing some children over others, they had neglected those with special needs. Another girl remembered that she initially came only because she felt obligated to go and took care of the children out of a sense of duty, not for the joy of serving others. One female Caucasian student remarked that her first experience had been such a “mountaintop experience” — beginning her journey with community service in high school that led to a service award last year — that she feared that she had blown the whole experience out of proportion and risked her treasured memories by returning a second time. In the sharing that night, I was reminded again of the lasting power of that first orphanage experience — one that had brought great personal rewards, even as it had created new questions for them to confront.

The rich discussion revealed one overarching theme. The deep experience three years ago had left a strong memory of their ninth grade selves. In their minds was etched a psychological self-portrait as they were entering high school. As one student put it about her return, “I’ve come to revisit myself.” They were all returning now as seniors seeking to answer one question: Have I become a better human being in my high school years? In the course of this weekend and through discussions, it became clear that the students had matured and grown. Those in Grade 9 who had not initially known why they had come found purpose and joy this time. Those who had bypassed special needs children three years ago now challenged themselves to accept these children — and in so doing found genuine affection. The young woman who feared that the mountaintop experience had been exaggerated reconnected to her desire for service. The students realized that the question about their humanity could be answered in the affirmative.

The trip to this orphanage in China illustrates a number of salient points. First, the experiential learning about a social issue was directly connected to their own desires to understand themselves. Those who had come three years earlier wanted to find if they had become better human beings in the intervening three years; yet, because their thoughts and actions connected to a larger social issue, the trip also represented their own self-efficacy in making a difference. Second, the emotional connection between students and the babies at the orphanage powerfully brought together the child-centered and social reconstructivist approaches, demonstrating to the students that global issues that they so often see in the news are intensely personal for those directly affected. Third, the connection between themselves and a social issue can be seen from the vantage point of the second framework introduced (Figure 5.2) in which the study of contemporary social issues and the underlying sociological and psychological factors are viewed through the lens of their own personal existential questions. The self-society dynamic of these two frameworks provides an explanation for the popularity of these trips.

A fourth point needs to be made concerning the importance which cultural identity of these Chinese learners undoubtedly plays in the depth of their responses to the trip. At the most obvious level, my Chinese students speak to the nurses and the children in their care in Cantonese and Mandarin; that gives them a highly engaging experience. On a deeper level, however, they analyze the decisions of the Chinese government in complex terms. While their study in an American-based international school has imbued them with the ability to think from a Western perspective about human rights and the value of the individual, their understanding of Chinese history, culture, and language helps them to understand the challenging historical backdrop against which the one-child policy was enacted. As Chinese students straddling a Western educational orientation and a Chinese familial and cultural heritage, they realize that the issues being played out in the orphanage are intimately related to the forces within their own developing identity formation. Such service-learning trips work on multiple and complex levels for Chinese students studying in international schools.

Social-conscience education research: Reflections on care and conversation

From my perspective as a HKIS teacher, the linking of the child-centered approach and the social reconstructivist approach as well as the proposed social-conscience pedagogical model has provided students and teachers in the humanities classroom with rewarding educational experiences. Currently, I am in the process of interviewing HKIS students to understand how they have become more socially conscious through their coursework and other learning experiences.

Interviews with a number of teachers in the humanities department have also contributed to this research. Based on the research thus far, two reasons have emerged as to why students find the two frameworks useful in helping them grow in self-understanding and social awareness.

First, students see their own lives and the world in terms of care. Speaking in a conversation about doing service in the community, one native Hong Kong student said,

There are certain things that are subjective in the world but there are some things that I think are absolute. People are supposed to care for others. I think it's instinct. It's part of a human being . . . Service is something that is true to all human beings. You cannot not be a part of it.

Later in the conversation, he continued,

Chinese culture always cares for the whole community . . . All of the [traditional Chinese] authors write about caring for other people, caring for the people without houses — how you sacrifice your own life to give houses to everyone in the world.

One of my Caucasian colleagues also expressed this centrality of care that he believes needs to pervade a classroom in order to teach literature effectively. In response to whether a course was satisfying to teach, he responded,

Yes, very much so. It's been difficult because I feel that I can't ever hold back. I can't ever wing it with these works because they really demand so much care and so much depth . . . That's what makes it even more hard [*sic*] to see students that are kind of perfunctorily going through the motions with it. You really want them to care in the same way. Part of the joy of teaching this course is that it has been mostly that they do care.

While these comments emerged in the context of academic study in the humanities classroom, it is apparent that these classrooms are inclusive of students' and teachers' emotional expressions. A mixed Amerasian boy summarized a focus-group discussion in this way:

I think what I've found that we agree on is the emotional impact of what we're exposed to in class is important. Emotional impact comes from the fact that these are real people and that we can relate and empathize with them. We care about the class because of group bonding within the class and because of the fact that we're bonded by the material.

In this observation, care for people being studied outside the classroom and care for those in the classroom have merged. It appears that the common response of disorientation and discomfort of studying about those who are suffering has the

potential to unify those inside the classroom with a collective sense of purpose as students together confront the question how to respond to the distress of others.

The second theme that has arisen has been the importance of conversation. When students learn about something that they care about, oftentimes their first act upon that newfound understanding is talking to others, especially their peers. The Amerasian boy above commented, "As for talking outside of class, if we do care emotionally about it, it will happen on its own accord. We'll discuss it with others." Another Chinese learner explained why discussing issues with friends is vital to students' growth:

I think the reason why it's important for us to talk with friends [is] because friends are people that we trust, so teachers are in a way still superior to us and they can give us information but then we can only trust our friends for us to form our opinions. I think it's highly unusual that a teacher is able to discuss something with a student just because of an age difference and a maturity difference. So not only are friends on the same intellectual level, they are also people you can trust so you can exchange ideas and it's easier to bring all those ideas to form your own opinion.

While students frequently speak about the role of teachers in providing exposure to issues in the classroom, conversations with classmates and friends seem to be a more important test of the validity of their beliefs. As another Hong Kong boy observed, "We need to have more information so we can have more meaningful discussions about these topics . . . I think it's important just to know about something and talk about it and educate other people about it." In response to the question whether social awareness must include action, a female Indian student stated, "So I think peers talking among peers about these things really has an impact." A mixed Chinese-Caucasian young woman who acted in a play about Guantanamo Bay commented,

In all my classes I had teachers and peers ask me about it and there were so many questions that were sparked off from acting in it. It was cool because it gave me opportunities to actually share what was happening . . . It was really cool to see the effects of what you were doing actually impacting people.

Students oftentimes want to share what they care about with others and try to open others' eyes in the same way that they have felt enlightened by their new knowledge. Formal classroom dialogue and informal conversations with friends appear to be crucial to the formulation of student values.

The repeated theme of the importance of peer discussion to help students determine what they themselves actually think and believe affirms Noddings's (2002) claim: "Dialogue is the most fundamental component of

the care model . . . As modes of dialogue are internalized, moral agents learn to talk to themselves as they talk to others. Such dialogue is an invitation to ever-deepening self-understanding . . . ” (16–17). Noddings’ comment suggests that the two themes that have emerged — care and conversation — are frequently found together and should be intentional goals of an education for social conscience.

Care has emerged as a major theme in the students’ and teachers’ comments about how to teach towards the goals of self-understanding and social awareness. The interviews suggest that the two theoretical frameworks open students and teachers to engage in topics they care about, to consider sociological, psychological, and existential questions, and to develop classroom relationships of care and conversation. These are the kinds of classrooms that benefit all learners.

Conclusion

Hong Kong has a historic opportunity in the liberal studies reform to leave behind a colonial model of education that primarily served the economic purposes of the governing elite. To do so, however, means giving the highest priority to the genuine needs of Chinese students in Hong Kong. In my experience teaching at HKIS, Chinese learners as well as students from other cultural backgrounds have repeatedly responded enthusiastically to social conscience education that explores the interrelationships of identity, meaning, and values in the context of urgent contemporary issues. Many students are eager to connect their academic study to life in the local and global communities, which the pedagogy of service learning links together. The theoretical perspectives explored here have been helpful frameworks in understanding how and why students come to care about the material they study in class, care about their fellow classmates, and care about their society. These ideas are meant to stimulate further conversation about how students and teachers together can best cultivate the humane virtues of a social conscience curriculum: caring for themselves and caring for their society.

Finally, I would like to return to the new HKIS student from a local school, a 14-year-old girl, writing a semester essay in one of my classes. Whereas her local school experience, she claimed, shaped her belief that “everyone is separated,” she finished her essay about her worldview with these reflections:

It is always easier, simpler, or even more efficient to say that interconnectedness is an illusion; that we are free to only be responsible to ourselves. The illusion of Separateness [*sic*] is a way to avoid the cruel reality, to avoid walking out of the bubble to face the real problem. Everybody plays a role in the elaborate domino set up of the world. When you zoom in, you can only see yourself, your own life, with nothing

attached. However, when you look at the big picture, when you know more about the world, you will see that if you fall, the whole will also eventually collapse and fall. In this class, I have learned a lot more about the big picture. Now, I do not only see the small domino, but the whole. Thus, I see that everything is interconnected, and this thought will stay with me forever.

This Chinese learner seeks to understand herself in the context of the whole. The frameworks proposed in this chapter encourage an integral approach to education — seeing the parts in connection to the whole. The definition of social conscience as self-understanding and social awareness accommodates a synergy of the traditional Chinese emphasis on self-cultivation with study of the most relevant contemporary issues of our day. Teaching for social conscience, therefore, offers a strategy by which Hong Kong's bold education reforms can "reassert humanity into a previously technicist system" (Morrison 2003, 298). This integrated, self-society dynamic offers a meaningful approach to meet the needs of Chinese and non-Chinese learners in the twenty-first century.

— III —

Teachers and Chinese Learners in
Transnational Higher Education Settings

A Danish Perspective on Teaching Chinese Students in Europe

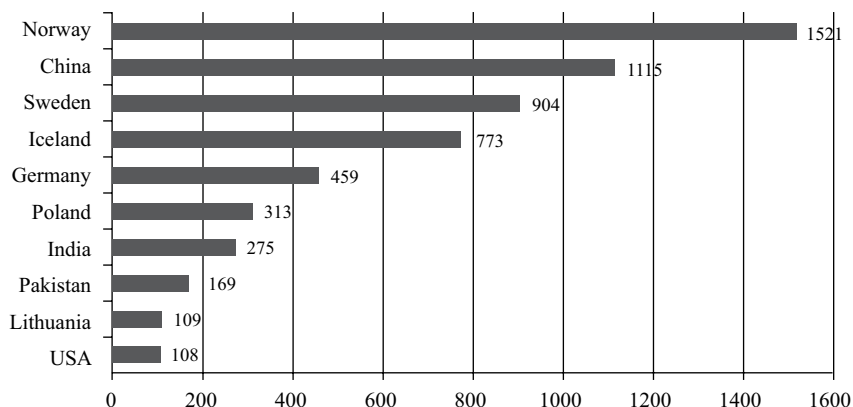
Jane Vinther

Until a few years ago, Chinese students were almost unheard of at universities in Scandinavia. Now they are the fastest-growing group of foreign students. At the University of Southern Denmark, the Chinese students now constitute the second largest foreign student population, outnumbered only by students from the other Scandinavian countries, and make up a larger group than do students from all the member states of the European Union put together, despite long-established exchange programs with these countries.

On a national basis, the figures for 2006–07 are that 14,470 international students came to Denmark;¹ of the exchange students 81 percent came from another European country. The configuration of figures is slightly different when only the full-degree international students are considered in that 34 percent of full-degree students come from non-European countries. Figure 6.1 (p. 112) shows a more detailed distribution of countries,² revealing that Chinese students constitute the second largest group of all foreign students in full-degree programs in Denmark (see Appendix 6.1 [p. 127] for the 2005 table, which contains a listing of all countries, not just the top ten).

For the past five years Chinese students have come in increasing numbers to enrol in economics, sciences, and engineering programs.³ In these programs they feature quite prominently, and their presence as a group is noticeable. The enrolment of Chinese students in the humanities is a more recent phenomenon, and their numbers are still relatively small due to the language barrier.⁴ For this particular reason, the English programs are the ones which are attracting applicants.

The situation, from a humanities point of view, raises several interesting points about how to approach the challenges in a way that will allow us to draw



Kilde: Universitets-og Bygningsstyrelsens særkørsel på Danmarks Statistiks data.

Figure 6.1 Incoming students in full-degree programs distributed according to country of origin; top-ten list

on our knowledge of teaching and learning strategies while adapting to the new types of students and their cultural backgrounds. Is it to be expected that there will be a difference between the Chinese contingency and exchange students from other European countries, that is, southern European students in particular? What are the potential pitfalls, and in what way can we facilitate a positive outcome for all involved?

Clearly, one of the pitfalls is the stereotypical construct of the “Chinese student” with positive as well as negative assumptions, or, according to Lustig and Koester (1996), “positive valence inaccuracy” and “negative valence inaccuracy,” (308) and according to Ryan “deficit” and “surplus” views (Chapter 2 in this volume). Both are faulty and detrimental to a fruitful perception of individuals, and both stand in the way of an accurate assessment of the student and his or her abilities, strengths, and weaknesses. Another danger is the assumption that the level of linguistic proficiency equals that of the intellectual capacity of an international student. As Janette Ryan (2005b) points out, “Lacking language facility can make international students feel as though they have lost their personality and their sense of self as without language it becomes impossible to express any sophistication of thought” (149). Applied linguistics research has shown that speakers often have an L1 ego and an L2 ego.⁵ The L2 ego development may result in the feeling of threat to one’s identity leading to language learning anxiety as well as existential anxiety (Young 1991; Zhao 2007).

Kunda and Sherman-Williams (1993) illustrate a negative consequence of ethnic stereotypes:

Consider, for example, the unambiguous act of failing a test. Ethnic stereotypes may lead perceivers to attribute such failure to laziness if the actor is Asian . . . Thus stereotypes will affect judgements of the targets' ability even if subjects base their judgements only on the act, because the stereotypes will determine the meaning of the act. (97)

This quote illustrates some essential characteristics of what stereotypes have as inbuilt expressions. First of all, it illustrates the effect of stereotypes in that events which would be "unambiguous acts" take on additional or skewed interpretations. The act itself is not understood or interpreted on its own premises; instead, it becomes an expression of the preconceived ideas of the external viewer or interpreter whose lenses add a secondary meaning with ramifications that reflect on the agent.

This particular quote was chosen for a secondary reason, namely to illustrate how stereotypes are situated in the time and the culture of the observer. No one in Denmark, for instance, would subscribe to the idea that Asians are lazy. On the contrary, Asians in general and the Chinese in particular are regarded as hard-working, intelligent, and adaptable. The view expressed in Kunda and Sherman-Williams's 1993 quote above appears to be anterior to the leap forward of the Asian Tiger economies, and I think it is safe to say that most people now would share the view that laziness is not a predominant trait in Asians. It may be that one stereotypical perception has replaced another, albeit in this case a positive and more up-to-date one. We should remember, though, that generalizations are a necessary part of interpersonal relations and as such useful.⁶ Awareness and the ability to transcend those generalizations make it possible to relate engagingly with the individual.

Previously published research on the issue of the "Chinese learner" appears to fall into two categories of views. One category presents a view that accepts the Chinese learner as a construct, and this view simultaneously subscribes to a belief that the students adhere to Confucian philosophy. The other category presents a view that builds on the socio-cultural interpretation of behavior, which may originate in a Confucian heritage (Clark and Gieve 2006), but it stresses the adaptability and change to new environments and new expectations, be they motivated by the change of direction in China itself or the student's study abroad.

The issue of the reality of the existence of "the Chinese Learner" necessarily leads to the contemplation of "otherness," the issue of the large culture versus the small culture. When Chinese students come to Scandinavia, they come to be the small segment in a large segment, even when the Danish culture has all the characteristics of a small culture in a European and world perspective. Very little literature has been published in Scandinavia about modern-day Chinese culture,

and the little that has been published has been investigated and contextualized with a business perspective in view (see, for instance, Worm 1997). One prominent exception to this is the work of Stig Thøgersen of Aarhus University (1995, 2000, 2005), whose research places the educational and societal development of present-day China in a historical perspective which allows us to see Confucianism in relation to present and past educational policies. Worm (1997) distinguishes between Confucianism, which he sees as political and “first and foremost the philosophy of those in power, but through its ideas of the family it has influenced every Chinese” (40). Worm further refers to Tu Wei-Ming (1984) as a basis for the view that “the Confucianism referred to today has incorporated some Western practices, such as competition, autonomy, and certain individual rights. Thus, it is a synthesis of Western practices and classical Confucian values such as conscientiousness, personal development, and discipline” (1997, 38–39). These attitudes and their co-existence with the prevailing expectations at the receiving universities need to be understood in the context of the educational environment, which makes it necessary to scrutinize the Scandinavian heritage in order to understand the mechanism at work in the learning and socialization processes.

The Scandinavian educational environment

The heritage of the receiving culture

From the outside, Scandinavia no doubt appears as one unit. In fact, some may not realize that there are three countries: Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Admittedly, they share a common Viking past, and the Danish kings have ruled all three countries at intermittent periods in history. The southern part of today’s Sweden was under Danish sovereignty until the sixteenth century, and the same was the case with Norway until 1815. This common history has paved the way for similar attitudes to fundamental existential, political, and cultural issues.

Modern-day stances in Scandinavia on human rights, democracy, and education have been heavily influenced, if not formed, by three great Danes who were almost contemporary with each other: Søren Kierkegaard (1813–55), Hans Christian Andersen (1805–75), and Nikolaj Grundtvig (1783–1872). These three thinkers and writers have contributed to the development in Scandinavia from absolute monarchy to rule by the people, building on the rights of the individual and the importance of the individual in the relationship with others who make up a community. All three thinkers stress the beauty of creation in the individual, but also the uniqueness of the individual’s contribution to the common life resulting in a process in which the development of society becomes more fruitful through the enrichment and empowering of the individual. Educated readers generally

know of Hans Christian Andersen and Kirkegaard, but Grundtvig is known by few outside Scandinavia. All three endeavored to “educate” Scandinavians, and they helped change and form our worldview. Only Grundtvig, however, involved himself directly and concretely in education. Today, a European Union education program involving lifelong learning and adult education bears his name in recognition of his great achievements. His name also attracts students with a particular interest in democratic development, didactics, and pedagogy⁷ at the University of Pedagogy in Copenhagen.⁸

Grundtvig’s “education for life” ideal

Our democratic constitution hails from 1849, and Grundtvig was directly involved in its drafting and the preliminary committee work.⁹ His work and writings pervade Danish society, and it is difficult to say in which area he has been most influential. His interest in education was deeply interwoven with his ideas concerning the importance of the individual in maintaining and sustaining democratic ideals. His achievements as an educator and educational innovator should therefore be seen in relation to democracy and the autonomy and empowerment of the individual in society for the greater good.

Grundtvig’s discourse was expressed in the concept of “the living word” (*det levende ord*). This discourse was the foundation of everything and in everything: democracy/politics, education, religion, and the self. The idea of realization of the self is the cornerstone of society. To build a better society with reciprocal exchange between individual and group, education is of essence. Grundtvig’s philosophy of true education, in contrast to the utilitarian concept of education, was that it would take place through the living word. This was seen as education for life rather than education for exams. In this respect Scandinavian education has been different from the Germanic tradition with its focus on the so-called grammar or Latin schools devoted to rote learning and formal content. Not that the “Latin” schools did not exist; you only have to read Hans Christian Andersen’s sufferings at one such institution to realize that, but for Grundtvig, the education for the broad majority of people would not have changed fundamentally. First and foremost, “true education” now became attainable in the “Folk High Schools”¹⁰ established on Grundtvig’s initiative and philosophy. Education and the lack thereof was most seriously felt outside the cities, and the folk high schools with their offer of boarding as well as education for life with a focus on self-development, development of ideas, and common philosophical and democratic values changed Danish cultural and educational life, and, consequently, attitudes to institutional authoritativeness in a direction which lasts until this day.

“The living word” and the democratization of education

Grundtvig’s ideas permeated all aspects of society but education in particular. His ideas of the value of, and contribution by, the individual in a developing democratic context, whether in politics or education, has influenced pedagogic practices to such a degree that it no longer needs to be expressed in Denmark; it has become part of the “tacit” knowledge of the Danes. It builds on the autonomy of the learner and encompasses a belief that, in the interaction between autonomous learners and the teachers, learning is more fruitful and essentially of higher value to everyone involved. This has implications for the role of the teacher, who is not seen as a possessor of encyclopedic knowledge to impart to receptive students. Moreover, students are not seen as passive receivers in the learning process but active participants and contributors whose knowledge of their own needs is sought and valued by educators. It is in this relationship and interaction between learner and teacher and between the learners themselves that learning happens and new realizations arise for all parties involved. This is perceived as a process which brings everyone towards greater understanding and knowledge. This process is primarily orally based in that presentations, discussions, and asking questions form the core platform of education.

Inspired by the Anglo-Saxon tradition and considered a distinguished scholar in the field of Anglo-Saxon literature, “Grundtvig was . . . a pioneer in Anglo-Saxon, one of the founding fathers, in fact, of Anglo-Saxon scholarship” (Bradley 2000, 147).¹¹ In his studies of Beowulf and the Cædmon manuscript,¹² he drew support for his views on the importance of the “living word” (Bradley 2000, 157) and found that Scandinavia and Great Britain shared a common tradition that set them apart from the south of Europe. This view of the two cultures of the North found expression in his poetry, his ideas about democracy, and the trust in “the people.” This is the environment which the incoming students from Europe and Asia meet when studying in Scandinavia.¹³

The incoming Chinese students

As might be expected from Grundtvig’s ideas, individuals are expected to make their own way in culture. In the university context, faculty members and students ordinarily do not become involved with any arrangements for incoming Chinese learners. The international office at the university will deal with such practical concerns as accommodation, legal matters, and medical issues, and they are always friendly and helpful, but other things are done on an individual basis and most often on request by the students themselves. The expectation is that students are active in choosing for themselves rather than having things thrust upon them.

Given this educational context, it is clear that incoming students from outside Scandinavia will need an introduction to the expectations we have of them. This is not institutionalized, however, but left to the individual professor, probably due to the modest numbers of Chinese students (and other exchange students),¹⁴ but in part also due to the traditional freedom of professors to choose their own material and method of instruction. As a result of the few numbers and a “hands-off” policy, biased or uniform views on “Chinese learners” do not abound, and they stand a better chance of being viewed as individuals rather than as a group.

When Scandinavian educators wish to seek concrete information and theories on these new learners, they often look to the UK. Conferences, such as the 2004 conference at the University of Portsmouth — “Responding to the Needs of the Chinese Learner” — have helped instructors realize that “the Chinese learner” may be a convenient way of referring to a construct more complex and diverse than anticipated.

The social and cultural heritage of the Chinese students

In parallel with the influence of Danish cultural heritage on the educational environment, we in the West generally think of Confucian philosophy as influencing Chinese culture and education. Scollon and Scollon (2001) maintain that Confucian-based kinship relationships are present in teaching materials and public schoolbooks in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea (143): “This emphasis on kinship relations, which is still characteristic of East Asians to some extent, even in contemporary and ‘westernized’ Asian centres such as Hong Kong, is sharply contrasted with the western emphasis on individualism and egalitarianism” (144). Liang Shuming,¹⁵ who is often referred to as “the last Confucian” (Alitto 1986), saw the Chinese Confucian-based moral philosophy as superior to Western culture but realized that Western technology was necessary for development in China. His work and ideas concerning educational development of rural China through the Shandong Rural Reconstruction Institute and the Zouping Project were inspired by Grundtvig’s ideas of educating the rural populations while maintaining the Confucian-based structure of teacher-student relationships even in local societal structures.¹⁶

Others agree that this ideology of hierarchical kinship relations transfers to the classroom in teacher and student relationships. Jin and Cortazzi (2006) see the relationship between teacher and students as hierarchical, but also point out the reciprocity of the situation: “In the central relation between teacher and student, the teacher is often regarded as the authoritative parent to whom respect and obedience are due, but this classic image of the relationship of filiality overlooks

the reciprocity of caring, concern and cherishing which also characterises it in Chinese tradition" (12). It seems that there is a tacit understanding or "contract" between teacher and student. In terms of this understanding, the students are respectful, work hard, and comply with study requirements. In return, the teacher ensures that the students pass their exams through the teacher's instruction, which will provide the necessary basis to gain the required knowledge. This "contract" and its hierarchical construction differ sharply from the egalitarian notions fostered by Grundtvig and now so embedded in Danish education.

Differences and similarities between southern European exchange students and Chinese students

Both the southern European and the Chinese students come from educational milieus which, to some degree, subscribe to the "contract" described above. At the University of Southern Denmark, we experience these attitudes and expectations not only when southern European students come to Scandinavia, but also when Danish students go to universities in the southern parts of Europe. In Spain, for example, the educational environment and the roles of teacher and student are comparable to those of the Chinese in that the universities, at least at the undergraduate level, expect a certain amount of rote learning and reproduction of the teachers' lectures. The element of critique and critical assessment is encouraged only within limits, and it often appears within the range of views corresponding to those acceptable to the instructor. Moreover, teachers and students alike seem unconvinced that students can contribute anything of value to class, and both accept the student's learning role as memorizing and reproducing material along the lines laid out by the lecturer. Consequently, the teachers' considerations of individual needs and learning styles are less prominent. This is a general summary of the narratives from exchange students who come to Denmark, and of the corresponding narrative from Danish students who have been to southern European universities.

There are differences between the two groups in question, and it seems that some of them could be related to different perceptions and constructions of the "self." Scollon and Scollon (2001) discuss the conception of the self as found in Hsu (1985), who argues that the Chinese concept of person (*ren* or *jen*) differs from the Western biological definition in that relationships "with one's parents and children are considered inseparable aspects of the self" (145). Scollon and Scollon to some extent challenge this view, and they find that intimate relationships play a role in the construction of the self in all societies and that the difference is "not whether a society is individualistic or collectivistic in itself, but what that

society upholds as its ideal even when we all recognize that we must all have some independence as well as some place in society” (2001, 146).

Yet, it is arguably in the perception of the self that the basic difference between Chinese and European learners of all sorts is to be found. Salili (1996, 91), for instance, states that Chinese discover the self in social networks, whereas, despite their differing educational traditions, the Italian or Spanish student will embody the same perception of the self as the Scandinavians, and outside the classroom the differences between them and the Scandinavians appear less pronounced because of the same worldview, general outlook on things, similar living conditions, and wider cultural affinities. So, theoretically, adaptation is easier for southern Europeans, but often these students do not realize the differences that do exist, with the consequence that southern Europeans often find it hard to adapt successfully.

The Chinese students, however, realize that they are different — everything in their surroundings tells them that they are, and in my experience they work hard to gain an insight into their new environment; some even take Danish lessons paid for out of their own pockets. They follow the tradition among Scandinavian students of getting a part-time job. It is relatively easy to get menial jobs in which language is not a barrier. They earn enough to afford traveling in other European countries, and they do so extensively. This has a positive effect. They get about, are not isolated in their own cultural circle, and get to know our society and other Danes and Scandinavians because they can form relationships outside the university. Most Danes speak English at a functional level, and communication in English is possible even with modestly educated groups of people. It all contributes to better mutual understanding.

Chinese students who are enrolled in humanities programs in Scandinavia are primarily graduate students, who come for an MA degree, which means they are in a two-year program that concludes with a thesis. The requirement for enrollment in a humanities program is a minimum IELTS score of 7,¹⁷ though for the social sciences a TOEFL test will suffice. The IELTS should ensure a proficiency level which will allow them to participate in activities that require English proficiency for comprehension and production alike.

The pedagogical challenge

Educators faced with culturally and ethnically diverse groups of learners, in particular those who have to consider the issue of “small cultures” embedded in the “large culture,” are looking at didactic complexities they may not be equipped to deal with. Students in such a learning environment, in particular the minority

groups but in reality all students to some extent, are faced with similar challenges. The approach adhered to by the participating individuals will determine the outcome and success of the encounter. The situation at present indicates, however, that the expectations harbored by students will not always correspond to the demands of the teachers.

The educator's perspective

In Scandinavian classrooms didactics and pedagogical strategies draw heavily on the Grundtvigian heritage of sharing and social equality. A verse from one of Grundtvig's poems says, "then we have gone far when only a few have too much and even fewer too little" (quoted in Hansen 2000, 194), which happens to be a valid expression of his legacy in the field of educational ethics. Present-day education in Scandinavia builds on this tacit knowledge. Pedagogically, this manifests itself in the omnipresent expectation that the teacher's job is to ensure that everyone contributes and that everyone benefits from the instruction and classroom activities. The state policy governing the university is that the faculty members bear this in mind to ensure that instruction is differentiated and to some degree tailored to individual needs.

In his field work, Hofstede classified societies as to whether they were high-context or low-context, a concept developed by Hall and Hall who referred to "a culture's nonverbal messages" (1990, xiv). Hofstede found that the level of tacit knowledge varied from culture to culture in that the low-context cultures were more likely than high-context cultures to make cultural knowledge explicit and transparent. Scandinavia is generally considered low-context, in contrast to Asian or Arab countries that are high-context. Every culture, though, has in it, as does every communication situation, more tacit content than declared content. It would be a mistake to expect everything to be made explicit in the meeting and interaction between educator and student. I have placed much emphasis on the fundamentals of Grundtvig's legacy; when prodded, most Danes, and educators especially, would respond with comments which would acknowledge this influence. Yet, most would be hard pressed to be more explicit. The idea of equality, in the sense that each individual is as important as the next and can contribute something valuable, which, when combined in a collaborative learning situation, will contribute to making the outcome richer for everyone, is so ingrained that it is taken for granted that everyone subscribes to it, even foreigners. It is assumed that, once foreigners become acquainted with the Scandinavian model, they will take to it instinctively without further ado. In the same vein, little is done to explain it since it is so obvious and self-explanatory. Methods of instruction and didactic considerations build on the tacit assumption

that everyone will want to be active. It is recognized that individuals have different learning styles and that, therefore, variety in approaches is required, but the overall assumption is active participation. I also want to point out that Grundtvig may not be so unique in today's pedagogical universe as he once was. Other great philosophers and educators have developed similar theories of learner autonomy and participation, and this has become generally accepted in theories of language acquisition, for instance.

The student's perspective

Students who decide to go to another country to get a degree, for starters, have proved to be active and capable of taking initiatives. Following from this positive opening, expectations and demands follow. These students have a right to expect something in return. Passing exams would be the result they expect, but where exactly on the list of priorities is it to be found? Or put differently, is this the absolute priority for all foreign students or an assumed side-product of the adventure that they also expect to have?

Here it is necessary to distinguish European from Chinese students. The Chinese students primarily enroll in graduate programs; this means that they are already experienced students who have concrete expectations and a focused approach. They typically stay for at least two years. The European exchange students often come for one semester, and they are a mixture of undergraduate and graduate students. Given the limited period they intend to stay in Scandinavia, their experiencing another culture is often just as important as passing exams. Furthermore, they more or less expect instruction to follow the pattern they know from their home university, and prior to their arrival few have thought that the pedagogical approach might differ from that in their home country. They do not expect the receiving culture to differ from their own to such a degree that acculturation is necessary.

Bissonauth-Bedford and Coverdale-Jones (2002) conducted a qualitative study of differences between European and Chinese students, and their expectations for the classroom situation. It turned out that their findings for the Chinese students, to some degree, were in line with the traditional views in that, when asked about the differences between China and Britain, they voiced the opinion that British teachers taught "too little" (6) and that the students were left to do too much themselves. The Chinese students also expressed the view that students should be respectful and do their homework. The European students, on the contrary, citing a German student, found that a good teacher would give directions for further reading which the students could study themselves, and they commented that there was less home work than in Germany (6). The European

students said students should be alert and take notes in class as an expression of respect close to the Chinese attitude. In short, respectfulness is not an exclusive Chinese trait. A tentative conclusion would be that the Chinese students and the southern European students expect there to be a power-distance component in the teacher-student relationship. The main difference seems to be in the degree of independence and participation that students expect in the learning process.

The reality of the classroom

In terms of Hofstede's cultural dichotomies, the Scandinavian countries vary from the southern European countries and the Asian countries with respect to uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and femininity/masculinity. With regard to Hofstede's individualistic/collectivist dichotomy and high-context/low-context dichotomy developed by Hall and Hall (1990), the Scandinavian and the southern European societies share the features of being individualistic and low-context cultures in contrast to the high-context and collectivist Asian cultures. The implications of these differences find expression in the interactional relations in the classroom.

Student-teacher roles and relations

Scandinavian teachers do not expect to be met with respect due to their position but due to their knowledge and ability to communicate this to the students in a pedagogically relevant situation. The low power-distance in society at large is visible in the classroom. There are advantages in this situation from a learning point of view, but it makes demands not just on the teacher but also on the students. In line with Grundtvig's ideals, students need to be active in their own learning. Teachers need to be well-prepared, aware of the needs of the students, and actively involve the students in the learning process with the prospect of encouraging learner autonomy. Students are expected to contribute with comments, questions, interpretations of the topic, and an interest in their own learning as well as that of their fellow students. They are not expected, however, to address their teacher by Mr, Mrs, Professor, and their last name. Teachers are addressed by their first name. The student-teacher relation is not just a student-teacher relation, but an interpersonal relationship. The teacher is expected to use his/her own self in the instructional situation and to be present not only as a teacher but also as a person. In this respect, there is no difference between teacher and student. Hence, the respect for contributions made by students derives from the respect of one individual meeting another individual, and the acknowledgement that the validity of a viewpoint does not derive from its source but from its inherent truth.

Hailing from hierarchical systems, Chinese students and southern European students alike find this difficult to deal with initially. It requires an ability to strike a delicate balance and a feeling for the continuous shift that takes place during a lecture from the professional to the individual and back. Scandinavian students have been through this socialization process from the first grade, but foreign students tend to be somewhat puzzled by the situation. The European students rarely stay long enough to find it necessary to decode the situation. In my experience, the Chinese students quickly try to adjust to the situation, not without frustration, but they realize that it is essential to their academic success to be able to understand what is expected of them. They further have the benefit of small class sizes since most attend graduate courses which, as a rule, are electives, meaning that they have the benefit of a more intimate atmosphere in which it is easier to get to know teachers and fellow students.

Activities in the classroom

The classroom is the crossroads of cultural encounters. Enhancement of cultural knowledge and understanding result from the positive instances, but it is not an effortless achievement. I am afraid that what is currently going on in Scandinavia is what Louie (2005) calls “gathering cultural knowledge in a piecemeal fashion” (17). The situation in the Scandinavian classroom is that incoming foreign students still constitute a small minority and that teachers still aim to satisfy the majority in constructing curriculum, planning, and classroom didactics. This can be characterized as an inclusive pedagogical approach. The concern is that, if students are not schooled in the skills required for understanding this strategy, they may resist it, feel left out, or simply feel frightened; in other words, excluded rather than included. Teachers need to be more explicit in demands made on students with regard to general purpose as well as specific sub-goals. In Scandinavian universities, traditional lectures interchange with seminars, student presentations, and group work, but in all cases the lecturers do not expect activities to be entirely teacher-centered or teacher-controlled. The legacy of the Grundtvigian emphasis on “the living word” and the interaction in a democratic relationship can be detected in the major role of the inspirational oral lecture which encourages interruptions, queries, debate, and discussion of the topic in question. The lecturer will expect this and will be disappointed if the classroom is silent and receptive without the sense of curiosity that requires learners to ponder, deliberate, and engage in order to make the word come alive. Not only the students but also the lecturer is considered to be in a learning activity in a process of “growing.” The classroom with its lecturer and learners is considered a living organism with everyone engaged in a collaborative effort to move towards

greater understanding. For students from countries with large power distance and strong uncertainty avoidance, such situations must be difficult. The teachers put themselves “on the line” and expect the same from their students. Courage is required to reveal one’s uncertainty, or even lack of understanding, to the person who may be the one to decide whether you pass or fail, but this is precisely what is required. In the interactional dynamic exchange, the teacher sees this as a first step towards a new understanding, and the teacher’s self-understanding is that of a facilitator or consultant rather than a disseminator of ready-made solutions.¹⁸ Initially, the southern European students resemble the Chinese students in being unfamiliar with tradition. When the students are to work in groups, or when they are asked to discuss a given issue, many fall silent and retreat from the activity. The Chinese students, due to their prolonged stay in Scandinavia, try to find a way to discover the “code.” It happens that they choose a “spokesperson,” who will then approach the teacher after class with clarifying questions which are communicated to fellow students.¹⁹ An additional aspect, which needs to be voiced is that many of the difficulties that Chinese students face may not be due to the difficulty in deciphering the cultural code, but are rooted in linguistic inadequacies despite their having passed the required test. Some Scandinavians find it difficult to understand the Chinese pronunciation of English and vice versa. However, the teachers are not primarily interested in exposing students; they are interested in seeing them progress, not against a benchmark of passing exams, but against the benchmark of personal growth, development, participation, devotion, hard work, and success at a personal level. Passing exams is necessary, but not the essence or meaning of academic endeavor, and, consequently, the teachers often try to encourage students to go to the limits of their ability with the understanding that it is necessary to make mistakes to get there — an approach which requires confidence and trust on the part of the learners. The “participation-based” model of language learning developed by Jin and Cortazzi (2006, 16) seems to be a very good answer to some of these issues.

Supervising thesis writing

The Scandinavian cultures are consensus cultures dominated by what Hofstede calls feminine values, entailing a social inclusiveness which leaves few behind; at least, remembering Grundtvig’s words, this is the proclaimed intention. It also means that direct confrontation is rare. Issues are discussed and debated until a little give and take results in a palatable compromise. In an educational environment, the processes are basically the same. The situation in which this is clearest is in the thesis-writing stage, when the supervisor meets the student on a one-to-one basis. There are few Chinese students who have reached this

stage in the humanities at my university, but those few have been successful in deciphering the cultural code, at least at a cognitive level. They realize there are differences in the two cultures, and they can verbalize some of them. They are alert to differences that may be slightly opaque, and they can voice anxieties about them and ask for guidance. These students are highly capable and are not lacking in critical thinking and other required academic skills. Yet, thesis writing is difficult for them because in many ways it is a task which assumes knowledge that is culturally embedded. Equally, it is a difficult situation for the supervisors, as it may be the first time they have had to be explicit about the required standards.

The thesis is meant to demonstrate the degree to which the student has acquired academic skills, virtues, and abilities, and hence should be a demonstration of independent, autonomous, critical behavior combined with library skills and research skills. The first struggle is the thesis statement. The difference between the deductive and the inductive traditions may require some initial processing time. Even when the students have been given general oral guidelines, referred to more detailed written expositions on the topic, and, on top of that, read several other theses for modeling purposes, it is still difficult for them to be concise. In addition, misunderstandings may arise about the role of the supervisors and the interpretation of their comments. The role of the supervisor in these sessions is to discuss issues and to point to weaknesses and strengths in order to get the student to deliberate on the best angle from which to approach a given issue, the best methodology, etc., but not least make the student aware of the fact that there are several options with advantages and disadvantages and that it is up to the student to decide how to solve them. Chinese students may misinterpret this as criticism and rejection. As a consequence, students sometimes turn up, not with a revised outline, but with a completely new project. It is time-saving in the end to spend more time than usual on the preliminaries and to be more aware and explicit to avoid this waste of everyone's time. The writing of the thesis itself, once this initial hurdle was overcome, has not posed serious problems, which is not to say that it has been without its difficulties. But, as one student told me, "I'd rather read the same three articles ten times and become completely familiar with them than having to find so many different sources."²⁰ This was not caused by lack of library skills, but an instinctive reaction to the situation.

Linguistically, there may be a few problems, of which the most disturbing to the reader is the difficulty even highly proficient students appear to have with transitions and applying appropriate connectors such as conjuncts and disjuncts. Generally speaking, however, the written proficiency level is good.

The way forward

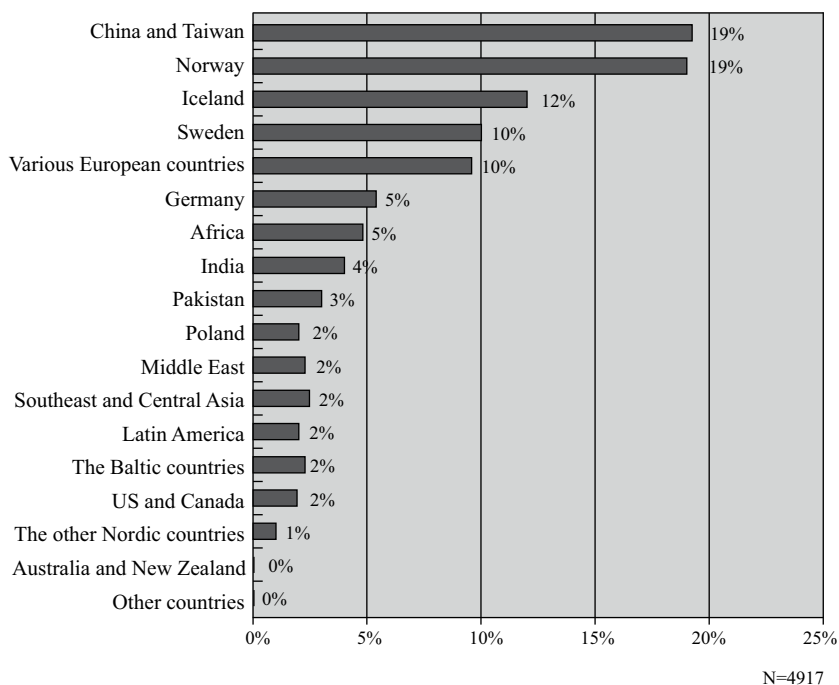
All people build on the heritage of their forefathers, some of which have disappeared without trace or been left in oblivion, while others have been highly influential and have left written sources which can be taken out and studied, such as Confucius and Grundtvig. This is to say that some beliefs and practices in a culture can be traced to a source — rightly or wrongly, while others cannot. Whatever the case, the use of the past is not a static thing, and even the Confucian and the Grundtvigean legacies are interpreted and adjusted to today's reality. People's cultural behavior, with or without a name of origin attached to it, is fluid and adjustable, but it is in contrast to those of other peoples and other cultures that one may want to seek out roots to give a name to the phenomenon in order to observe and discuss it, and thus facilitate understanding. The process of awareness-raising, to borrow a term from applied linguistics, seems to be the way forward.

The current situation is characterized by an acknowledgement that the tacit cultural-context knowledge needs to be made more visible or declarative. This applies to the incoming as well as the receiving cultures. The professors themselves need to become aware of their own indirect demands and expectations of the students in order to be able to include the incoming students in the deliberations over their instructional methods. The globalization of education is a fact, and the number of students traveling across cultures will increase, as Slethaug remarks (Chapter 1 of this book). The objective is to facilitate this and make it rewarding to both the students and the receiving countries. We can all learn from this. Those of us who are set in our ways will come alive to new experiences; intercultural understanding will benefit; the world will become a more interesting place. Let us not forget that dynamic development does not arise from uniformity.

I would like to give the last word to a Chinese student of mine:

Come to the benefit of learning in a foreign university, it's a great chance to get students mixed to some extent, so normally international students are more open-minded than those who have no foreign study experience. At least to me, I feel that this is really beneficial to be more analytically and critically thinking. This open-mindedness can also mean that there should be no limit to the potential dimension of everyone, from the perspective of both research and daily life. So the open-mindedness actually makes bigger the horizon of every international student. Many Chinese friends share this point of view with me, according to our informal conversation. (personal communication)

Appendix 6.1: Country of origin for incoming students to full-degree programs in Denmark, 2005



Kilde: Særkørsel fra Danmarks Statistik. I landefordelingen indgår ph.d. uddannelaer.

CIRIUS: Mobilitetsstatistik–videregående uddannelser 2004/05

Chinese Pre-service Teachers in Australia: Language, Identity, and Practice

Jennifer Miller

This chapter presents one manifestation of the fluid cultural and geographical borders that now impact on education and that are central to the concerns of this book. It looks at an increasingly diversified teaching force in Australia, and specifically the case of two Chinese pre-service teachers. The language and culture difficulties they experienced during their practicum are of interest, but it is also important to consider the longer impacts once students have graduated and are working as professionals in an education milieu where their first language is neither the dominant language nor the language of instruction. The chapter opens up questions of identity and inclusion for Chinese heritage students in the increasingly diverse classrooms of Western universities and education systems.

Globalized education and teaching

A recent study of one cohort of thirty-five pre-service teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) at an Australian university found that: (1) thirteen of these students (35 percent) did not speak English as a first language, (2) twenty-four (64 percent) had parents for whom English was not the first language, and (3) sixteen (43 percent) were born outside of Australia, in fourteen different countries (Brown and Miller 2006). This class represents a snapshot of many increasingly diverse classrooms in Australian universities, with huge growth in international enrolments from India, China, and Korea between 2006 and 2007. Of the 107,071 international mainland Chinese students enrolled in various courses in Australia in 2007, around 39 percent were in higher education. Chinese students also represent almost 25 percent of the 177,760 international enrollments in Australian universities (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations,

AEI Statistics, 2008). It should also be noted that in addition to international students from mainland China, Chinese background students may also come from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and Malaysia. Chinese heritage culture (CHC) students also include immigrant students with permanent residency.

Chinese and other international students come to Australia through a range of university-entry pathways, including university preparatory courses, schools, and English language courses. Student recruitment is also linked to a favorable policy of migration or permanent residency under the general skilled migration category, whereby successful students can apply for residency (Healy 2008). In fact, the figures above do not capture the large numbers of Chinese who have migrated to Australia in the past ten years and may now be considered “local students.” In the 2006 Australian Census, 669,890 Australian residents identified themselves as having Chinese ancestry, and in 2005–06 China was the third major source of permanent migrants to Australia behind the United Kingdom and New Zealand. In the five years to 2006, the number of skilled migrants coming to Australia from China more than tripled, from 3,800 to 12,500 people.

At the same time, increasing numbers of Chinese international students and migrants enter pre-service teacher education courses at Australian universities. In 2008 there were seventy-nine international Chinese students in the Monash Faculty of Education, including eleven in pre-service education courses, along with additional (unidentified) numbers of local Chinese students.

This chapter presents case studies of two Chinese pre-service teachers, with a focus on issues of identity, English language competence, and pedagogy. I will first present an overview of theory and research on the key themes of identity, language use, and pedagogical practice. Next, I will look at related issues for Chinese pre-service teachers in particular, including debates about native and non-native speakers and social inclusion. Third, I will present two case studies: Laura, a Chinese international student who had been in Australia for two years; and Andrea, a Chinese local student who married an Australian and moved to Australia ten years previously. Finally, I will draw comparisons and contrasts between the two cases in relation to the core themes of the chapter.

Language and identity

In recent research, identity has been described and defined in various ways. These include:

- “How a person understands his or her relationship to the world” (Norton 2000, 5);

- “A constant ongoing negotiation of how we relate to the world” (Pennycook 2001, 149);
- “Relational, constructed and altered by how I see others and how they see me in our shared experiences and negotiated interactions” (Johnson 2003, 788);
- “Being recognized as a certain ‘kind of person’ . . . connected not to internal states but to performances in society” (Gee 2000–01, 99).

The common thread in these descriptions is that identity is relational, negotiated, discursively constructed, and socially enacted.

The research literature on identity uses a diversity of terminology, including social identity, ethnic identity, cultural identity, linguistic identity, socio-cultural identity, subjectivity, the self, and “voice.” In the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), for over a decade, language use and identity have increasingly been viewed in relation to the socio-cultural contexts of learning and learners, along with social and institutional power. In this time there has been a significant shift from traditional cognitivist second-language acquisition (SLA) perspectives on language learning and use to a more nuanced critical and socio-cultural framing, which places identity, discourse, social interaction, power, agency, and lived experience in central focus. The internationalization of education and the globalization of English mean that any consideration of Chinese teacher identity must also take account of issues such as the role of discourse in self-representation, the salience of socio-cultural contexts, cultural diversity and ethnicity, the native/non-native binary, and beliefs about “standard” language.

If one accepts the overarching conceptualization that identity is relational, interactional, and constructed in social contexts, then identity cannot be viewed as an “*entity*,” but rather needs to be seen in relation to discursive, social, cultural, and institutional elements. In regard to pre-service teacher education, we can say that language teaching cannot be separated from social language use in classrooms, and the centrality of situated meanings within repertoires of social practices, involving specific social and institutional contexts and memberships. What does this mean for Chinese students in pre-service education? Duff and Uchida (1996) stress some of the key elements to understanding issues of language, culture, and social context. They write,

Language teachers and students in any setting naturally represent a wide array of social and cultural roles and identities: as teachers or students, as gendered and cultured individuals, as expatriates or nationals, as native speakers or nonnative speakers, as content-area or TESL/English language specialists, as individuals with political convictions, and as members of families, organizations, and society at large. (451)

This statement highlights the multidimensional nature of identity and also the inappropriateness of stereotyping or essentializing Chinese (or any other) students. However, the alternatives laid out by Duff and Ushida may not be equally valued in mainstream Western education contexts. As mentioned above, social interactions, language use, and identities must be seen in relation to ideological and institutional processes. The critical role of discourse in these processes (and in constructing identity) has been continuously highlighted by many researchers in the field of TESOL (Gee 1996, 2004; Goldstein 2003; Hawkins 2004; Miller 2003; Norton and Toohey 2004).

The power of the hearer

Gee (1996, 2004) makes the point that in teachers' communication with their students, the "what," the "how," the "who," the "who to," and the "what's happening" will all come into play. Identity in these terms is "enacted" or achieved, but it is also ascribed by the hearer, who has the power to accept and legitimate or to deny both the message and the identity of the speaker. It is important to keep these two aspects in mind, namely that identity is a way of doing things, but is inflected by what is legitimated by others in any social context. All teachers have their "ways of being" in language classrooms, yet most would attest to the power of their students to grant or refuse a "hearing." In exploring teacher identity, issues of context, agency, and power therefore cannot be ignored, and increasingly a critical edge using sociological theory has been added to socio-cultural research. One theoretical resource deployed is the work on social capital by Pierre Bourdieu.

Increasingly in globalized economies, second language learners are often socially disadvantaged and disempowered by cultural, discursive, institutional, and social structures. Bourdieu's (1977, 1991) notion of *habitus*, with its powerful focus on social context or field, provides insight into the challenges faced by students who must study in a second language and compete with native speakers as they do so. In summary, the *habitus*:

- is a set of dispositions acquired through speaking in different contexts;
- is generative and transposable to other social fields;
- helps determine the value that linguistic products receive in social fields;
- enables social interactions and participation in culturally valued practices;
- is realized through legitimation by the hearer; and
- is related to power and other forms of symbolic capital.

Central to Bourdieu's conception of linguistic practice is the notion that it must be analyzed and understood within its socio-cultural context, taking into account the social and cultural conditions of its production and reception. In essence, Bourdieu argues that linguistic relations = social relations = power relations, occurring within particular contexts or social fields, with symmetries and asymmetries of status and symbolic capital inherent in every interaction. This means that accents, intelligibility, and written and spoken language proficiency all become salient to understanding the experience of Chinese pre-service teachers.

As users of English as an additional language, Chinese students have to cope with the ways they are heard or represented by others. Their experiences may vary widely depending on their personal resources such as language proficiency, social capital, personal biography, interactional skills, knowledge, and attitudes (Miller, in press). In his introduction to Bourdieu's *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991), Thompson reminds us that in Bourdieu's terms,

differences in terms of accent, grammar and vocabulary — the very differences overlooked by formal linguistics — are indices of the social positions of speakers and reflections of the quantities of linguistic capital (and other capital) which they possess. (18)

These differences are indices to the listener about the speaker. Lippi-Green (1997) observes that accent, for example, often functions as “the last back door to discrimination” (73). In an English-speaking country, the manner of speaking is integral to the legitimizing process. Bourdieu (1993) states, “One of the political effects of the dominant language is this: ‘He says it so well it must be true’” (66). Clearly, the reverse may also be applied to those subjected to the dominant discourse and the hearer may therefore tacitly accept or deny the authority of the speaker to speak. That is, if you have the “wrong accent,” non-standard pronunciation or faulty syntax, you may also lack credibility, and the affirmatory role of the believing listener.

The teaching practice in context

In addition to facing second-language challenges, for non-native speaking students in Australian universities, the negotiation of their professional identities as beginning teachers may be influenced by contextual factors outside of themselves and their pre-service education courses. Slethaug (2007, 7) stresses that international students are usually asked to adapt to local curricula, new systems, and unfamiliar pedagogies and expectations. These include workplace conditions (Flores, 2001), curriculum policy, bilingual language policy (Varghese, 2006); cultural differences (Johnson, 2003); racism (Jabal, Chapter 4 in this volume); the

social demographics of the school and students, institutional practices, teaching resources, access to professional development, and many other things. The kinds of practical teacher knowledge valued in schools are also context-specific.

Clandinin and Connelly (2004) argue that practical teacher knowledge “is learned in context, and is expressed in practice” (579). Another mainstream research term is *personal practical knowledge*, used by Golombek (1998) in her study of two ESL teachers. Personal practical knowledge, which allowed them to make sense of their work, was multidimensional in terms of each teacher’s knowledge of self, content, pedagogy and context. Many Chinese pre-service teachers have no personal experience of Australian school contexts, and therefore limited “implicit knowing” about content or pedagogy. Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, and Johnson (2005) stress that in classrooms, contexts can sometimes become *texts*, and that teacher identity is both an individual and a social matter. It concerns self-image, but practice is “a social process taking place in institutional settings such as teacher education programs and schools” (39). To better understand the contexts of practice, Vargese et al. (2005) identify four critical issues for future teacher identity study, namely marginalization, the position of non-native teachers, teacher-student relations, and the professional status of language teaching. The first three of these frequently impact on Chinese pre-service teachers in their practicum placement in schools, as was the case in this study.

Identity and the non-native teacher

The majority of Chinese students studying in education courses in Australia are doing so in order to become English-language teachers, and so issues of language, identity, and classroom and cultural practice are especially important for them. They are part of a large and growing body of language teachers for whom English is not the first language.

The vast majority of English-language teachers around the world are now “non-native” users of English. Matsuda and Matsuda (2001) and Graddol (2006) estimate that the numbers of people learning English will peak at two billion in the coming decade. It is no accident that the contestation of concepts such as “native speaker” and “standard language” has occurred at a time of unprecedented mass global movements of people and the internationalization of English. The traditional binary of native speaker versus non-native speaker and assumptions about native speaker competence have been contested for some years (Davies 2003; Higgins 2003; Leung, Harris, and Rampton 1997; Lippi-Green 1997; McKay 2003), yet institutions are remarkably resistant to what is perceived as a change in standards of English-language use. In language testing, scales measuring second-language

proficiency frequently reserve the highest levels for those who are near-native or native-like in their production and understanding of the language. As Forse, Jabal, and Schmidt all note (Chapters 3–5 of this volume), many decisions to take up programs and enroll in schools and universities are based upon being taught by native speakers of English, who are from the “right” places. Higgins (2003) writes that “the act of labeling speakers as belonging to the categories native speaker (NS) and nonnative speaker (NNS) implicitly underlies much of what TESOL professionals do” (615). In the TESOL workplace, non-native speakers often face discrimination based on accent and credibility problems (Maum 2002), while in most Western universities, Chinese international students usually have to demonstrate high levels of performance on IELTS or TOEFL tests, particularly for pre-service teacher education courses (an overall IELTS score of 7 in my university). However, due to the multiple pathways of entry to such courses (e.g., via high school or citizenship), some students circumvent these language requirements. If they have English-language difficulties, issues usually arise later, particularly during the practicum.

In 1998, a professional organization for non-native English speakers in TESOL was formed and called Non-Native English Speakers Interest Section (NNEST; <http://nnest.moussu.net/>). The acronym NNEST is also used to represent non-native English-speaking teachers. However, Maum (2002) identifies a division between those who support this “label” and highlight the differences of these teachers as strengths, and those who oppose it, believing that such a term reinforces the dichotomy between native and non-native and may reify discriminatory practices. McKay (2003) also critiques the separation of TESOL teacher identities in this way, arguing that “such an approach is not productive in examining the benefits of bilingualism and biculturalism in the teaching of EIL” (9). The problem with understanding identity is that terms such as “bilingualism” and “biculturalism” seem to indicate that some people have *two*, rather than multiple, continually evolving, and contingent identities negotiated through interaction and context — the so-called affiliated identities (Slethaug 2007, 177–181).

In regard to Chinese students, Ryan (Chapter 2, this volume) warns against outmoded, stereotypical, and “inherent” characterizations of the students, illustrating clearly the unhelpful and misleading binaries that can arise in comparing Chinese and Western styles of learning. The case studies presented below also throw light on the complex, multidimensional linguistic and identity issues which arise for the two Chinese pre-service teachers involved. Moerman (1993) stresses that ethnicity is not like Sartre’s chilling metaphor of the family as a skin into which persons are sewn — but that it is a complex and fluid network of processes, in which elements of culture are inflected by momentary contingencies

in social contexts and interaction. He states that while ethnic labels are used to claim that a group of people are alike among themselves and different from others, for most people, ethnicity is “a cloak among others in their wardrobes, not a full time job” (87). Similarly Hall (1996), in his work on “new ethnicities,” suggests that identities are about the process of “becoming rather than being: not ‘who we are’ or ‘where we came from’, so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves”(4).

Two case studies

The cases of the two Chinese pre-service teachers presented here use data from two separate studies, one on a culturally and linguistically diverse cohort of twenty-three ESL teachers (Brown and Miller 2006; Miller 2007) and one from a more recent study of five non-native English-speaking pre-service teacher graduates. The first study used a survey of student backgrounds, practicum observation, and email reflections on the practicum, while the second study used emailed reflections and two audio-recorded focus groups with the five participants. For the purposes of this chapter, I have re-analyzed the data with two questions in mind, namely:

1. How do Chinese learners engage with pre-service teacher education in Australia, and particularly the practicum?
2. What is the role of English in the development of a professional teacher identity for these learners?

For each of the two students, I will focus on three issues: English-language competence and teaching; teacher identity as a sense of belonging; and pedagogy and behavior management in the Australian school context.

Both Julia and Andrea (pseudonyms) were diploma of education students who were completing their final practicums, and near the end of their one-year course at the time of the studies. In Australia, all pre-service teachers require two teaching subject areas. There were some clear differences between them. Julia was a 24-year-old international student who had been in Australia for only two years. She spoke Mandarin and highly fluent and accurate English, although she lacked confidence in her abilities in English. Her teaching subject areas were Chinese and ESL. Andrea was a local student in her thirties with two children. She had come to Australia ten years previously and married an Anglo-Australian. She had studied English since Year 5 in China, and spoke it quite fluently and with some confidence, but also with multiple grammatical errors, referring to it at one point as “my Chinglish.” Her teaching areas were Chinese and science, and she had obtained a teaching qualification in China.

Case study 1: Andrea

English-language competence and teaching

Andrea seemed a confident user of English, who laughed readily and was very vocal in the focus groups. At no point did she refer to native or non-native speakers as such, but her awareness of some language difficulties (related to accent and writing) and their consequences in teaching was evident in both her written reflection and in the focus group. I have not altered any language structures in the data. She wrote, for example,

I am very good at reading but always hated my accent in English and the funny things is even I got problem to teach Chinese this practicum because my Cantonese accent — that make me think — is it really the accent or just the way we teach make the kids too aware of the teacher's accent? When I can give the students' fun activity like Science Quest in year 9 science classes or Food in Chinese culture in year 11 Chinese class, no one noticed anymore accent — we all are too engaged in the teaching and learning and all forget that mini discomfortable. (Andrea, written reflection, June 18, 2006)

Andrea here uses her Chinese accent in English and Cantonese accent in Chinese classes to counterbalance her perceived engagement of students when activities were fun or interesting. That is, she felt the “problem” of accent depended on “the way we teach.” Later she said, “I’ve been in Australia ten years, so I probably do have everywhere, got accents but, umm, I try to not too concern by this problem, or if this is a problem.” I will return to the problem of her written English below. When Jean, another student in the focus group, commented that he found the Australian accent a particular problem in university tutorials, Andrea made an interesting response:

Jean: When there is a tutorial, I find it very hard to follow the Australian accent and especially when there is some interruption from someone to say something about the situation in his school and the other one in the other corner of the room says something — it's very hard!

Andrea: Just ignore it! Just pretend it not happens — it's not important anyway!

The other students all laughed at Andrea's *laissez-faire* attitude, perhaps recognizing that her cavalier tactic was somewhat typical of the Australian “she'll be right mate” approach to life. Unlike others in the group, she had lived in Australia

for some time (ten years), and while she did not have a standard accent herself, indicated that she personally preferred more standard accents. Note the following exchange from the focus group:

Andrea: A lot of words, just a few vowels and few things we need to correct when we have other language influence. Because I don't want to listen to people speaking in accent, honestly. I want to listen to standard English. I want to have a precious experience when you are talking to people or listening, you want to have a nice sound. People with accent — it is awful! I understand kids don't like it or other people don't like it either.

Jenny (researcher): Accent can be very attractive!

Andrea: I know, but just in terms of you learn something it should be correct. I want to work on that.

At times Andrea minimized the salience of her accent and non-standard version of English, though recognizing that it could be a problem, particularly for senior students doing high-stakes assessments, as will be seen below. This tension is clear in her statement below from the focus group, when I asked if it were acceptable for teachers to make English-language mistakes when teaching.

What is English anyway? British English, American English, Australian English. Before I come to Australia I never heard what is fair dinkum, what is fair dinkum mean, never heard about it, never learnt about it and the first year I come to Australia, I come to my parent in-laws, I don't know what the heck they're talking about and I think I learnt ten or twenty years English and I don't know a word they're saying. So what is English anyway? . . . But I do think it's very very matter when it come to writing assessment, so I feel so much as my, I learnt this course, so I think I'm very confident or very comfortable with myself when I'm speaking but when writing, I [laughter] always correct by my tute [tutor], so my, my grammar or something, uh, is not very good or there's another way of saying it. I also feel a huge struggle, so in terms of that I think I need to put a effort for, because our kids, they need to do the assessment, they, they, they have to take the exam . . . We will, might affect them when they come to their exam if we give them the bad role model of not notice the correct way of English. I don't care about my "Chinglish" but for the sake of the children, my student, I need to pay attention to it.

Andrea raises several issues in this excerpt. First, she challenges the legitimacy of one standard English among the numerous varieties of standard English. Second, after years of studying English, she acknowledges she did not understand people on arrival due to Australian slang and other issues. And finally,

she notes the gap between her spoken and written English competence and the serious implications for her students, who require standardized language forms in their instruction. She also notes that her university tutor corrects her grammar. As a listener, and teacher educator, I tried hard to resist my own instinctive judgments about her English. I was not concerned with her as a Chinese student *per se* and found her funny, personable, and engaging in the focus group, yet for a Chinese student who wished to be a teacher in English medium schools, I felt both she and her students would struggle because of the “Chinglish.”

Pedagogy and behavior management in the Australian school context

It is not possible to look at pedagogy and behavior management in isolation from language use, a point which was not lost on Andrea. Her weak Year 9 science class posed a particular challenge. In her written reflection, she wrote,

The weak class is so noisy that I don't want to talk over them, so I end up not explain or can't explain. At the end they complain I am not explain enough — which I am conscious too. So language ability do place an important part in our teaching and learning — I feel sorry for all the parties — for the teacher who struggle to deliver her messages, also for the students who struggle to understand that teacher. As a learner all my life, I will prefer a teacher who can speak pleasure English or Chinese too. I am very confident at my intelligent and knowledge but has doubt at the abilities to communicate effetely to the students. (Andrea, written reflection, June 18, 2006)

The problem here is not that she did not explain things to students, but that she was unable to, so she felt some tension between belief in her intelligence and knowledge of content, and her lack of assurance in communicating effectively. In the focus group, she stressed that she knew how to teach as a result of her training in China, yet the contexts and contrasts between student behavior in China and Australia were a shock:

Before even when I teach sixty kids in the one classroom, I can manage them because they obeyed but here twenty-five I needed yell at them, which is really upset me. So because there, there is totally different perspective in the classroom. Here the student got more freedom of what they want to do and what they can do, . . . that is a quite a difficult thing for me to come to understand and come to accept it and come to try to sort it out. With one year nine class I have, it's the nine G, uh the famous G [laughter], the five kid, the five boys walking around in the classroom while I'm teaching. That's, I never seen in my life, in my long life already, so it's just really shocking and I complain but that's something I need to overcome, that's the only problem I have.

In her view, Chinese school students did not have freedom and rights in classrooms, as they did in Australia. It is difficult to gauge if her management of the “famous 9G” was also related to her use of English, to experience, to cultural factors, or a combination of these.

Teacher identity: A sense of belonging

Andrea had lived in Australia for over ten years. She was a mature woman who realized that it could be hard to fit into a school, but had an assertive strategy to overcome this.

In my second teaching round [the practicum] right, umm, we, all the student teachers been assigned in one room. So if you don't actively involve with other staff, then basically your not exist. So for doing that I go to the staffroom, I have lunch there and I have lunch with my supervisor, I have lunch with other staff. So I took, took a active role to get into the staff um, you know, uh conversation and stuff like that, but um maybe it's because um I got um thick skin, so [Andrea laughter — group laughter] I, I just don't care [Andrea — laughter] So, I whatever they say, I say too, you know, sometimes just bluffing, you just need to do it.

Here is a pre-service teacher who literally went beyond her assigned “place,” the room for practicum students, to join in the lunchroom discourse with the school staff. This initiative was required for her to be recognized as a colleague, and even for her to be seen to exist. Furthermore, she was prepared to fake it — to join in, laugh along, even when unsure of the meanings. This can be risky, and I said so. Here is the exchange.

Jenny: I mean, I think Andrea, you say you have thick skin, I don't know about that, but you take risks, and taking risks with a new group is, um, it takes courage.

Andrea: And also I, I understand that you are the new person there and you come and go, but they stay together. So we need to do something first otherwise you can't get in.

This is a remarkable insight into becoming a social insider in a teaching context. She had also said of the teachers, “they know each other but they don't know you.” The need to “get in” and to be known led her to leave the safer location and membership of the pre-service teacher room and launch herself into the mainstream.

Andrea provides an example of a Chinese pre-service teacher, qualified in China and comfortable with her content knowledge, intelligence, and overall

pedagogical skills, confident and often assertive in spoken interactions, and willing to cross complex social and professional boundaries to be seen as part of a teaching community. She took a liberal, relativistic view of English, arguing that standard English was a moving target and that she had other ways to connect with students, in spite of her Chinglish. At the same time, she was forthright in admitting her limitations in some areas of language competence, for example, in giving detailed explanations of science phenomena or procedures, in written expression, and in supporting older learners at advanced levels. We turn now to another Chinese student teacher, Julia.

Case study 2: Julia

Julia was another Chinese pre-service teacher, who unlike Andrea, had only been in Australia for two years as a student. I found her use of spoken and written English very fluent and accurate, although she characterized herself as a “language learner” and lacked confidence in her ability to use English proficiently and to teach. However, in one discussion in our course about the hegemony of native-speaker teachers in English as a Second Language (ESL), she questioned the notion of privileging native speakers and restated her “dream” of working as an ESL teacher, rather than English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher, teaching in non-English-speaking countries:

There’s the issue of how we define “native speakers.” Some people may think only Anglo-Saxons are native English speakers. But whatever others think, still won’t give up my dream to be an English teacher as a non-native English speaker in an English-speaking country.

In this comment Julia challenges the ethnocentric notion of inner-circle ownership of English and positions herself as someone with the skills and right to work as an ESL teacher. That she sees this as a view in opposition to the views of others is clear — “some people may think” becomes “whatever others think,” a more definite statement of her own right to a view. Despite the confidence of this earlier comment, the teaching practicum presented Julia with a series of challenges, and she emailed me over 2,500 words of analysis and at times *angst* regarding her experiences in the practicum. In what follows, I present data using the same themes as for Andrea, namely English language competence and teaching; teacher identity as a sense of belonging; and pedagogy and behavior management, although these were inextricably bound together in several of Julia’s emails.

English-language competence and teaching

There are two interrelated aspects to this theme regarding Julia, namely her own judgments about competence and her ability as filtered back by her supervisor. First, although I found Julia's emails articulate and insightful, she struggled in the teaching context with her own sense of competence. She reflected back on her own learning of English in China, which she saw as decontextualized.

It's a drawback for me because I used to learn English words without context, within inappropriate context, or with limited context, therefore when now it's my turn to explain words to my students such as "toting the latest models of mobile phones," "cyber bullying," or even as simple as "telecommunications," I feel it hard. Sometimes, I had to refer back to my Chinese understanding to make myself more sure about the English word, in Australia.

Yet her problem here is that these words are deeply embedded in a new globalized youth culture which is constantly in flux, and a challenge for many to define clearly. Note her preciseness in the opening statement on context; for me, it is evidence of her language competence, and of her tendency to judge herself harshly.

The second aspect of this theme concerns Julia's supervising teacher (as reported in Julia's emails), who had asked Julia to try to improve several areas of her teaching, and first, "be assertive and directly address students who are distracted or switched off." Julia wrote in her email,

For the first one, I have an obstacle at heart, feeling not fully accepted; not knowing what is the most appropriate words or "good English" to deal with behavioral students, fear of being ignored thus not making myself heard by others.

This is a concise but immensely complex statement. Her sense of inadequacy here is not just language-related, knowing the appropriate words, or "good English," but there is an identity component (being heard and legitimated) and a strong affective component, as she regards this demand as "an obstacle at heart." It is worth recalling Bourdieu's notion of the *habitus*, that set of dispositions which help determine the value of one's "linguistic products" within a social field, and which are realized through legitimation by the hearer and related to power. Julia's statement implies that there is an English of "control" for misbehaving students which she has not mastered and she is rightly afraid of what many teachers fear, namely being ignored and silenced by their students. At one time she summed up the problem as follows:

Sometimes, I just feel myself hard to be in the context, of the text, of the classroom, since stuff that I need to be in the situation are beyond me. I'm learning, not only ESL teaching but the language as well.

Again, this is an insightful comment, her notion of being in the context and the text reminiscent of Gee's (1996) notion of discourses as "ways of being in the world" (7). As a Chinese pre-service teacher, Julia also felt that she was learning both pedagogy and English, which created another layer of anxiety for her. However, she was always analytical and articulate about these problems as she sought to come to terms with the practicum and its challenges.

A second recommendation from Julia's supervisor was that she should "make chances of facilitating interesting discussions thus keep the momentum of the lesson, don't let it drag." Julia again related the difficulty of this via a reference to language and specifically to the skills she ascribes to native English-speaking teachers. Here is her comment:

For the 2nd, keeping admiring native-speaking teachers who can improvise wise and interesting comments on the spot, which relates to the students and the society and thus contributes to the lively atmosphere of the lesson.

Here Julia views her relative inexperience and lack of security as a beginning teacher in relation to a native/non-native divide, almost doubting her right to an ESL teacher identity. There are two problems with her analysis. First, almost all pre-service teachers have difficulty producing spontaneous relevant comments to enliven the classroom — this is not a problem limited to non-native speakers. Second, in my experience of over twenty years in school classrooms, I have not found "wise and interesting comments" to be the norm among Anglo-Australian or native English-speaking teachers. Nevertheless, her feeling that she does not have the social or cultural capital to deploy in the classroom is clearly genuine. The issue of knowledge of Australian society also emerged in her discussion of pedagogy, as seen in the next section. As with other CHC students, these broader cultural issues for Julia cannot be seen in juxtaposition with English language issues, which add another layer of potential (or perceived) difficulty for them.

Pedagogy and behavior management

Julia understood that knowledge of the students and their world was important to design good lessons.

I started to teach today, one Yr 9 ESL group and one Yr 8 mixed group of Low literacy mainstream kids and ESL kids. I did the mobile phone topic

with the Yr 9, and that was ok. The topic relates to their own experience, and I did a thorough preparation of the article, so can just handle their various question.

But with the Yr 8, I chose a one-page article “Teens turn to dietary boosters” from last week’s *Herald Sun*. Originally, I assumed it would be interesting for them since it talks about body image, how teens start to use dietary supplements to look better. But once I start to teach, I feel it might not be the case. They are not aware of these, and I am not sure how to make them aware or involved in it.

She had assumed mobile phones and body image were of interest to adolescents but was right in the first instance only, it seems. Again, the problem may not relate to her Chineseness at all, but to the struggle faced by all beginning teachers to interest students in text-based material.

In the section above I drew attention to two recommendations from Julia’s supervisor, both of which related to language, behavior, and pedagogy. A third recommendation was that “the structure of the lesson is most important, always introduce at the beginning and wrap up at the end.” This would be a viable and useful suggestion from any well-meaning supervisor. Julia’s response is as follows:

Surely I understand the significance of structure (a concise beginning and a strong ending almost weigh half of the lesson). But each time, when the bell goes, I just can’t clear and raise my voice, summarize what happens today, what to be expected tomorrow, ask them to quietly sit down and wait, and dismiss them when the bell goes, as if I were the boss. But I am not, that’s what I feel, and that’s why it’s so hard for me to assert myself. If you are, you are. If you are not, even if you pretend to be, you are not. Perhaps I am too sensitive and self-preoccupied.

I find myself moving on very slowly, and some day feeling a bit right on the track, then suddenly another day another bad lesson, I am down at my lowest ebb again.

As with her assumption that all native speakers have a reservoir of “wise and interesting comments,” her comment on lesson structure and identity bears closer analysis. Her perspective on lesson endings is very insightful, highlighting that one cannot pretend to be “the boss” if one is not. This was in response to an email from me, in which I suggested part of the game was acting *as if you were* confident and competent, that looking and sounding the part might be enough to start with. Yet, the reality is far more complex. This is an identity issue to do with accrued cultural and symbolic capital, which cannot be easily faked before a class full of adolescents, watching and listening for the slightest slip-up.

Julia had recognized that one needs “good English” for students with behavioral problems. But while language competence should not be underestimated in teaching, this was not in fact a major problem for Julia, as seen by the fluency and sophistication of her emails.

Teacher identity: A sense of belonging

Just as Julia felt that she was not the “boss” and could not fake it, as she grappled with language, pedagogy, and her sense of identity, she drew links between them. In two separate emails she wrote,

I believe lot of the things going on has to do with my psychological state, my obsession with English competence, my eagerness to be accepted by students (which actually depends on how I perform).

Sometimes, I walk past other student-teachers’ classroom, native-speaker, usually finding the atmosphere much lighter and relationship btw T-S much better. I start to wonder if it’s just because of me or because of my language.

The first comment features a range of mental and emotional language — “psychological state,” “obsession,” and “eagerness.” She also takes full personal responsibility for students’ reactions to her, suggesting that her performance determines whether or not she is accepted. In the second excerpt she compares herself and her teaching to native English-speaking pre-service teachers on practicum, where she perceives the atmosphere “lighter” and relationships “better.” Her final question is fundamentally one of identity. Can she belong in this school if her sense of English proficiency does not allow her to feel entitled to teach? By contrast, she found a positive aspect to her non-nativeness in regard to ESL students, linking it to her own struggle to master new terminology, the “drawback” referred to below.

So, it’s a drawback. But as all coins have two sides — in another perspective, it helps me to look at the problem from ESL students’ position. What I have experienced may be what they did and are experiencing now. How can we help them most to grasp vocabulary by providing a variety of real-life contexts one word can be used, and same with text.

The realization that “all coins have two sides” was helpful to her, and led her to empathize with students who were also struggling with language. She used the same insight in thinking about her identity as a Chinese teacher (she taught both Chinese and ESL), continuing,

It also helps me because I am teaching Chinese, sometimes I may not be aware of how to explain elements in my own language, but now only when I sense the pain of learning and teaching by myself, I start to notice.

In an ideal world the practicum would not entail any pain, yet Julia's struggle to come to terms with the demands of teaching represent a powerful metacognitive and metalinguistic engagement with being a Chinese teacher in an Australian classroom, as well as a search for personal and social mastery. As seen in the data, she often ascribed her difficulties to her Chineseness, rather than to her being a novice teacher. Her impressive level of English language competence was mitigated in her own perception against the "native" standards she imagined. She saw her English as a barrier to effective behavior management, and to her sense of belonging and legitimacy. In her terms, she was still learning both language and teaching. On the positive side, she recognized her capacity to empathize with students as language learners, and her reflexivity was a great strength for a beginning teacher.

Conclusion

The case studies of these two Chinese pre-service teachers offer some parallels but many contrasts. I began these studies by asking two questions:

How do Chinese learners engage with pre-service teaching and the practicum in Australian schools?

What is the role of English in the development of a professional teacher identity for these learners?

For each of the two students, I looked at the themes of pedagogy and behavior management in the Australian school context, English-language competence, and teacher identity as a sense of belonging. Both these pre-service teachers taught Chinese, while as a second teaching area Andrea taught science and Julia ESL. Andrea was a trained teacher in China, whereas Julia was a true beginner. This in itself is significant, as Andrea claimed she was confident of her subject knowledge, pedagogy, and teaching skills as a result of prior experience. Julia was full of doubt as to her teaching ability, and as an ESL teacher was focused on metacognitive, metalinguistic, and "meta-pedagogical" issues in her teaching. She often tied this to her sensitivity about her English. Andrea acknowledged that she spoke Chinglish, that she hated her accent, and that learners needed a comprehensible teacher voice in the classroom. As a learner, she preferred it herself. Yet, she counterbalanced the importance of accent with "the way we teach," suggesting that students forgot her Chinglish when they were fully

engaged in a science experiment or other activity. Even though she admitted that her English limited her capacity to explain things well in science, language was not really a priority for her.

A major contrast between these Chinese students was their orientation to the importance of English, and the importance they attached to it in their teaching. “What’s English anyway,” queried Andrea. Her attitude to not understanding things was basically to ignore them, yet she was aware of the gap between her spoken confidence and her written competence, and its impact on her students’ test results. She stated that she needed to “pay attention to it” for the sake of her students, but did not overtly address the problems. Julia, on the other hand, was acutely aware of the subtleties of text and context, of the links between identity, language, and pedagogy and the nuances of cultural meanings. A major finding of this small study is that English language proficiency, in these cases at least, did not seem related to the teachers’ own perceptions of their classroom competence, and certainly confidence. Julia, whose English was demonstrably much better, had far less confidence than Andrea.

A second difference is a spin-off of the issue of confidence. Andrea by her own account was assertive and proactive in integrating with the teaching staff at her school, joining in, laughing along, even if she was “sometimes just bluffing.” This was a strong representation of her agency. Compare this with Julia’s more tentative stance, and conviction that you cannot pretend to be in control if you are not. She constructed her own teaching identity as a learner and a novice. She was concerned about being accepted and heard, but was unsure of how to do this, finding it “hard to *be* in the context” (my emphasis).

The issue of appropriate levels of English language ability for teaching is a complex and sensitive area. One study of a culturally and linguistically diverse group of pre-service teachers found that, although an overwhelming majority dismiss the claim that “only native speakers of English should teach ESL,” there was an implicit positioning of native speaker as the “ideal” in language teaching (Brown and Miller 2006). As a science teacher, Andrea did not subscribe to this view, although she implied her English needed to be better. And as a ten-year resident of Australia, she was considered a local student and was not subject to a language test on entering the course, although some would question her language competence for teaching, which is such a demanding context. Julia felt that she needed a strong command of English to teach. Most would argue that any teacher needs to be competent in the language of instruction, but what this means precisely and the ways in which language skills and knowledge are reflected in pedagogical understandings have received little attention by training institutions, professional associations or teacher registration panels.

There are increasing numbers of Chinese students in Australian pre-service teacher education. As teacher educators, we need to actively acknowledge and value the diversity of our student teachers and to extend this value to school communities. But we also need to support non-native English-speaking teachers in the linguistic and pedagogical skills needed to work successfully in Australian schools. We need to question the notion of the native speaker as ideal, but retain the core value that advanced language skills are vital for teaching. The case studies of the two Chinese teachers here showed a subtle interweaving of language, identity and pedagogical work. In a globalized world, these understandings are crucial for all pre-service teachers, for their supervisors, and for the broader education community.

Realizing “Cross-cultural Exchange”: A Dialogue between the USA and China

Ivy Wang

Each year, publicly and privately financed organizations fund thousands of Americans to travel to distant countries to teach English. These organizations range from the Fulbright Committee, which administers hundreds of teaching fellowships a year, to university-affiliated programs that select only a small handful of their own alumni annually. For these ESL teachers, their classroom mandate does not end at language instruction. The loftier and less tangible goal of their work is frequently that of effecting “cross-cultural exchange” between the USA and the country to which they have traveled. More than a simple education in American customs and society, the term implies a reciprocal experience, in which both teacher and students contribute and learn by representing the views and behaviors of their own places of origin.

The relationship between second-language learning and culture has long been an object of study and debate for educators. In recent decades the idea of culture itself has come under scrutiny. Scholars in the fields of anthropology and cultural studies have launched critiques of the “culture concept” — the idea that groups of people each possess their own unified and distinct cultures — arguing that it is no longer a useful way to conceive of and explain difference among people. These critiques have in turn forced a re-evaluation of how language instructors should teach culture to students. At the same time, the rapid internationalization of education worldwide and the globalization of media have blurred geographic and social borders, further complicating the task of the ESL teacher-cum-cultural ambassador. Drawing from recently published research, my own experiences as a teaching fellow at a Chinese university, as well as the official reports of other young instructors supported by the Yale-China Association teaching fellowships, I will show how English teachers working in China in the past few years have

sought to realize meaningful cultural exchange. In this new environment of blurred geographic boundaries and multifaceted individual identities, teaching culture need not take the form of top-down instruction. Rather, the interactive cross-cultural classroom can be a place in which students and teachers representing different backgrounds and affiliations challenge existing ideas and, together, build new ones.

Debating “culture”

In his book *Innocents Abroad* (2006), the historian Jonathan Zimmerman relates the drastic shift in perspective that American teachers working in foreign countries experienced in the mid-twentieth century. Whereas earlier Americans had assumed the justness and superiority of their nation’s values, teachers who went abroad after World War II began to point to such notions as “cultural imperialism.” They openly doubted and frequently flatly rejected the idea that American practices should be adopted by other countries. Zimmerman traces this sea change to the spread of the “culture concept” throughout the early twentieth century. First identified by anthropologists, the culture concept posited that rather than describing the distinction between “civilization” and “savagery,” culture could be understood as the “complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”¹ Thus, every society had its own culture, and no culture could claim to be superior to another. Originally conceived of in 1871, the culture concept gained traction throughout the early twentieth century, and by the 1950s had become one of the forces that “helped to shape and define mid-century America,” including the young teachers who went abroad to represent it (Zimmerman 2006, 5).

Today, concepts originating from academia continue to affect the thinking of teachers working abroad. In his essay “TESOL and Culture,” Atkinson (1999) maps the critique which scholars in the field of anthropology and cultural studies have leveled against the culture concept. The “received view” of cultures, he describes, is one that

sees them in their most typical form of geographically (and quite often nationally) distinct entities, as relatively unchanging and homogenous, and as all-encompassing systems of rules or norms that substantially determine personal behavior. (626)

According to Zimmerman, this idea that “each people possessed a single culture, not more than one . . . [which] imprinted itself on each individual, in more or less the same way” (2006, 11) dominated the thinking of American teachers

working abroad in the twentieth century, convincing them that other cultures were essentially different and internally consistent.

The rise of postmodernism in recent decades has moved scholars to critique this received view. Explaining these critiques, Atkinson (1999) writes that "cultures are anything but homogenous, all-encompassing entities" (627). Likewise, Zimmerman (2006) writes that "most scholars in the humanities and social sciences no longer speak of culture as a unified, organic object with independent, causal power" (7). Instead, culture consists of the "webs of significance" that human beings "spin around themselves" — a set of ideas and symbols that people collectively create (Zimmerman 2006, 7). Indeed, for some, culture has become "a problematic concept that should perhaps be avoided or superseded by other, more useful, ideas" (Atkinson 1999, 629). In place of culture, anthropologists and, increasingly, those who study education have employed terminology such as identity and affiliation to describe the huge range of relationships between individuals and social groups (Atkinson 1999, 629; Slethaug 2007, 15, 175–189).

These critiques of the culture concept have underscored the pitfalls that attend the teaching of culture. In a recent article on education in Native American reservations, Mary Hermes (2005) writes that, "once institutionalized, the omnipresent power of culture is distorted and diminished into small bits of information" (49–50). Her comment exposes the fact that much teaching fails to capture the complex realities that people now widely recognize as being inherent in culture. Every general statement about customs or values is permeated with countless exceptions and uncaptured meanings. For instance, Guillermo Latorre (1985) points out the tendency in Spanish language education for educators to concentrate on customs such as the bullfight, "siestas, fiestas, toreros, señoritas, and caballeros." This focus on cultural differences that distinguish Hispanic countries from America has led educators to overlook the commonalities that both areas share, and smacks of "cultural tourism" rather than authentic learning. He elaborates, "instead of breaking down stereotypes, [it] generously contribute[s] to the perpetuation of cultural misunderstanding, making foreign mores appear more exotic than they really are" (Latorre 1985, 671–672). The attempt to characterize the culture of a group of people risks essentializing it. Worst of all, Hermes tells us, it "necessarily detracts from the ability to constantly co-create culture in the context of purposeful social activity" (Hermes 1985, 50). She quotes a member of the Ojibwe tribe saying, "I cannot teach you culture. Culture is something you have to live" (Hermes 1985, 44). And yet conveying the myriad and shifting identities and experiences contained within "culture" is precisely the task with which ESL teachers have been charged.

Blurred national boundaries

Adding to the complexities and caveats that must be taken into account when speaking of culture, the massive changes that have swept Chinese education in recent years have multiplied the range and diversity of experiences within the country. If culture were not homogeneous to begin with, globalization and migration have given even greater variation to the students and teachers who encounter one another in the cross-cultural classroom.

Not long ago, foreign teachers working in China could safely assume that they constituted their students' first, and oftentimes only, contact with someone from outside of China. In 1986, a professor from Winthrop College teaching in China observed:

My students knew almost nothing about the world beyond China. At the southern tip of Hainan, China's southernmost island, there is a large rock with the ancient Chinese characters "End of the World" carved in it. This line encapsulates the traditional Chinese world view still prevalent when my students received their education. (Wilson, in George 1995, 76)

The idea of such provincial Chinese college students today seems largely a thing of the past. In a concerted effort to internationalize higher education, Chinese universities have been opening their doors to let the world in. In his book on international education, Slethaug (2007) lists twenty-eight universities in China that have developed American studies programs (29–30). As Yi'An Wu (2001), a scholar of English education in China tells us, in an effort to ensure that the nation will have enough competent English speakers to fill the ranks of its global workforce, more and more major metropolises have integrated English language instruction into the curriculum as early as primary school (Wu, 192). Drawing from news reports and government statistics, Slethaug (2007) writes that in 2005 over 140,000 overseas students studied in China, and 119,000 Chinese went abroad for study. Highlighting the rapid growth in the "flow of educators and students across national borders," he tells us that between 2003 and 2004 China saw an increase of 42.63 percent in the number of overseas students studying in the mainland (Slethaug, 4; also see Slethaug, Chapter 2, this volume).

These changes on the macro level are clearly evident in my own classroom at Sun Yat-sen University, a major university in southeast China that has taken an active role in the internationalization of Chinese education. The ethnicities represented by my students in the last year have included Japanese, Vietnamese, Thai, and Turkmen, not to mention the members of the Chinese diaspora who hailed from places as varied as South America and South Africa, as well as the ethnic minorities who grew up within China. As Miller remarks (Chapter 7 in this

volume), the definition of who is a native speaker or allowed to teach English is rapidly changing. Against this new landscape of intercultural exchange, Atkinson (1999) describes the advent of the "disconcertingly hybrid native" people who are "multilingual, interculturally savvy, and often well traveled" and go utterly against the traditional notion of what a "native" ought to represent (632). In my own corner of the Chinese educational system, the "disconcertingly hybrid native" has become an increasingly common sight and encounters with foreign cultures through personal interactions, travel, and the media have sprouted new ideas and associations, as well as misperceptions or misunderstandings. These hybrid natives, as well as their ethnically and geographically diverse classmates, compose a new variable with which teachers of cultures must reckon.

Meanwhile, teachers themselves have undergone comparable changes in terms of diversity. In the beginning of its over one hundred years of history, Yale-China's teaching fellows were uniformly Caucasian. However, today the roster of teachers is as diverse as the students they instruct. In 2007, our fellows included people of Brazilian, South African, and Japanese nationality, as well as numerous Asian Americans. As the child of Taiwanese immigrants to the USA, I am just as likely to find my students probing me for insight into the political situation in Taiwan as the film industry in America. Thus, though Yale-China's stated mission is to encourage peaceful relations between the USA and China, it is more and more often the case that the national labels of "Chinese" and "American" no longer suffice to describe the identities and affiliations of teachers or students. The very term "cross-cultural," most often associated with interactions between two distinct cultures, has become an increasingly unwieldy way of describing the types of encounters that occur in the classrooms of ESL teachers working in China.

Reconceptualizing the classroom

Against a backdrop of new discourse and new teaching realities, how, then, are ESL teachers working abroad to fulfill their mandate of "cross-cultural exchange"? Instead of the traditional notion of the international classroom as a space in which teachers bestow cultural knowledge upon students, today it is more constructive to conceive of it as a place in which teachers and students come together to communicate and challenge their existing ideas, and from these interactions begin to build new perspectives and meanings.

Much recent writing on cross-cultural second-language classrooms has focused on how instructors and students view themselves and one another as individuals within social groups. Some writers have stressed the importance of seeing students not as constituents of a uniform culture, but rather as individuals

with complex ties of identity to their larger social context. Attempting to steer clear of the crude generalizations that can arise from overly affiliating people with larger social groups, Ruth Spack recommends that “teachers and researchers need to view students as individuals, not as members of a cultural group” (Spack, in Atkinson 1999, 642). But this, Atkinson warns, can lead instructors into the trap of reducing students to “acultural types,” cut off from their social and cultural surroundings. Instead, Atkinson writes that instructors should approach their students as “individuals-in-context,” taking into account their “social group membership,” the various geographic, familial, age and interested-related ties that each person lays claim to (Atkinson 1999, 642–645).

Slethaug goes a step further by drawing attention to the role that descent and consent play in determining identity and affiliation. He argues that “adjusting to the demands of teaching abroad, learning how to respect students, and receiving respect from them in turn . . . goes beyond the relationship of the individual to the group and beyond multiculturalism.” It also relies upon “what Werner Sollers in *Beyond Ethnicity* defines as descent and consent in culture — that is, cultural codes, beliefs, rites and rituals that are inherited through blood or ideology (descent) in interaction with those that are chosen, contracted, or self-realized (consent)” (Slethaug 2007, 175–176). Students and teachers alike are thus not just determined by the ethnic, cultural, or national identities that have been passed down to them, but also by the affiliations that they choose for themselves.

In light of these considerations, the classroom becomes a vital space not just for coming into contact with the culture, identities, and affiliations of other people, but of understanding, analyzing, and building upon them. “The classroom,” Slethaug writes, “is critical as the site where many first become aware of who they are, how their affiliations are constituted, and how these affiliations are performed.” If students and teachers are able to approach each other respectfully and openly, and if both sides can “partly suspend disbelief in (or deconstruct) their own culture and traditional training,” interactions can open the potential for “stable identities [to be] transformed to new and flexible affiliated identities by an encounter with, and regard for, new practices and beliefs” (Slethaug 2007, 179–180). The classroom, then, can act as a place in which students and teachers can work together to break down old cultural meanings and find ways to express new ones.

People studying foreign language education have criticized teachers for being slow to respond to the change in discourse regarding culture. Certainly, “identity” and “affinity” have yet to replace the word “culture” in the language that most Yale-China teaching fellows use when describing their classroom experiences. And yet, in the official reports of other Yale-China fellows, I am struck by how much their misgivings towards a monolithic view of culture — their own or others — mirror

the criticisms raised in other areas of academia. For instance, a Yale-China fellow teaching English at a prestigious high school in Changsha, Hunan Province, described one of her principal goals in designing classes as being to “introduce knowledge about my American cultural background and experience.” The “my” qualifier here is significant, for it connotes an awareness that her representation of American culture, while holding the potential to be more generally illuminating, was still premised upon her own individual experience of living in America. Fellows frequently cite the danger of making sweeping statements about the USA or China as well. One fellow who taught at Guangzhou wrote, “as with most phenomena in China, generalizations about how Chinese students ‘think’ or ‘do intellectual work’ are partially inaccurate at best and dangerous at worst.” For many, the breakdown of assumptions about their own cultural backgrounds is one of the key parts of life abroad.

Indeed, the goal of deconstructing existing “culture and traditional training” is one that currently informs the teaching of many ESL teachers in China. A fellow working at the Chinese University of Hong Kong wrote that many of her students come to class with pre-existing and frequently simplistic ideas about the USA. Because of this, one of the aims of her class is to break down or build upon these pre-existing notions by “giving the students an understanding of the variety of opinions held by Americans on any given topic.” Almost across the board, teachers who act also as cultural ambassadors see a major part of their duty as being to give a picture of multiplicity and even conflict within a culture. Another fellow teaching at Sun Yat-sen University observed that “many of my students are handicapped by very deep-set stereotypes” about race or culture. “One of my goals,” he wrote, “is to bring them out of their shells a little bit, in order to confront” these ideas. There is thus considerable agreement between scholars and teachers that the cross-cultural classroom reaches its full potential as a space for dismantling cultural assumptions.

Creating an effective cross-cultural environment

Ensuring an environment in which students and teachers can feel comfortable and confident to think critically about culture together, though, poses a challenge to teachers working abroad. Patricia McLean and Laurie Ransom (2005), in their study, “Building Intercultural Competencies” (Carroll and Ryan 2005), devote significant space to suggestions for how best to create such an environment. They stress that instructors must become familiar with the expectations and assumptions about the learning that they and their students bring into the classroom: “Best practice in teaching in a diverse classroom means taking the time to explore what skills and experiences our international cohort brings, and what expectations they

have of teachers.” ESL instructors should “learn about the cultural encoding of others . . . includ[ing] the way we think, teach and learn” (McLean and Ransom 2005, 45–46). For instance, they draw attention to the fact that Western academics frequently undervalue the ability of Chinese learners to recognize patterns, a skill bred out of the necessity of learning thousands of written characters composed out of two hundred radicals and thousands of stems (McLean and Ransom 2005, 47–48).

So far, this is an aspect of the cross-cultural classroom which I and other Yale-China fellows have left unexplored. The neglect of Chinese educational practices in the ESL classroom grows, in part, out of a perception that Chinese methods for language instruction, which involve a large amount of memorization and few chances for hands-on practice, are ineffective for breeding linguistic fluency. This perception is reinforced by the fact that many of our students, despite a decade of instruction in English, still lack the confidence to speak out in complete sentences. But John Biggs (1996), in his essay, “Western Misperceptions of the Confucian-Heritage Learning Culture,” argues that “what some Western observers are seeing is not what they think it is” (50). Biggs points out that Confucian-heritage learners often show a preference for and mastery of higher-level conceptual strategies across multiple subject areas. What Western observers interpret as uncreative rote-learning may actually stem from the fact that Chinese educators and students “believe in skill development first, which typically involves repetitive, as opposed to rote learning, after which there is something to be creative with” (Biggs 1996, 50). Ryan (Chapter 2 in this volume) takes a similar stance when she maintains that educators need to rid the classroom of both deficit and surplus stereotypes of Chinese learners.

Chinese educational practices, then, hold the potential for enriching learning and cultivating creativity in ESL classrooms. Slethaug (2007) proposes team-teaching as a way to cultivate cooperation between disciplines (95–96), and Zhu Weibin concretely demonstrates how this can be enacted in the Chinese university when Westerners and Chinese cooperate as a team in the classroom. Team-teaching with colleagues from different countries could also provide an opportunity to explore ways of integrating different instructional methods. While I have yet to attempt cross-cultural team teaching, I have frequently provided students with opportunities to lead class. In some cases, they are responsible for reviewing material that has been covered in class already, but at other times they are allowed to come up with their own content. Other fellows also cite their students’ input as a major factor in how they perform their curricula and attempt to integrate opportunities for student-led learning into the semester. If cultural exchange is to happen at the instructional level, ESL teachers must consider new ways to involve their colleagues and students in the curriculum-building process.

Even if such collaborative possibilities are further explored, the teaching methods of ESL teachers working in foreign classrooms will continue to function in and of themselves as a cross-cultural encounter. As such, they must be approached with a particular degree of consideration. McLean and Ransom (2005) and Slethaug (2007) caution teachers about assuming that their students come to the classroom with the same set of experiences and the same kinds of education as students in their home countries. They encourage teachers in cross-cultural settings to make their own goals and practices as explicit as possible, for doing so not only gives students a firmer grasp of what is expected of them, but also functions as a means of understanding the instructor's culture (McLean and Ransom 2005, 46–47). They advise, "be explicit about how and why we follow particular processes, not because one method is better than another, but to establish a framework and to provide a language for interpreting the academic culture we expect our students to work within" (McLean and Ransom 2005, 50). This approach can be used to set up expectations for an entire course, or as guidance for a particular in-class activity such as discussion or group work.

The risk of assuming a shared set of expectations came to light for me while teaching at Sun Yat-sen University. One of the most recurrent problems I have faced is that of plagiarism. In most American universities, a single instance of plagiarism is grounds for serious punitive action. If the plagiarism is particularly egregious, the student can even risk expulsion. Original production is, for me, an integral part of higher education. And yet in the first assignment I gave to my students, nearly half of them turned in pieces of writing with components that had been taken from the Internet. When confronted, many of them told me that they thought what they had done did not constitute plagiarism since they had changed the wording or sentence order of the passages they had used. I have since made an extended discussion of the meaning and repercussions of plagiarism a part of my introduction to the course, and instances of student copying have fallen dramatically. Each semester, I also spend a significant number of the first few classes underscoring and explaining the importance of student participation and an English-only environment.

In her survey of the experiences of professors teaching abroad, Pamela George (1995) relates that "by far the most common frustration for most American professors teaching across cultures is the limited amount of student participation in class" (147). This "wall of silence," as she calls it, stands in stark contrast to the participatory environment that American universities cultivate in the classroom. Both George and McLean and Ransom suggest similar methods for eliciting greater student participation. McLean and Ransom (2005) write that teachers should try to "incrementalize tasks so that students can develop a foundation on which to continually build skills" (51). George (1995) refers to

incrementalization as “priming the pump.” When leading discussion, the teacher can initialize the discussion with simple, straightforward questions that lead into more complex and analytically demanding ones. It can also mean planning for pair-work or small group discussions before sharing with the whole class (George, 149).

Yale-China fellows have almost unanimously utilized these tactics to cultivate a more open and lively atmosphere for discussion. For many, it has meant adjusting to a more structured style of teaching. I have learned that, even if everyone in a class has carefully read an assigned article for homework, simply launching into a discussion over the author’s main points will usually elicit little response. Instead, I typically divide students into groups of two or three and provide them with a list of questions of varying difficulty to discuss. I then ask them to share answers with the class, usually choosing the first few respondents myself until an atmosphere has been created in which students feel comfortable responding to one another without my mediation. Incrementalizing is particularly vital when students represent a wide range of mastery over English. If an internationalized education and globalized media have trained ranks of confident cosmopolitans, there are still a greater number of students who have not benefited from these social changes. Giving students the option of taking small steps towards speaking out helps negotiate this gap between the top and bottom of the class.

Another step that instructors can consider is assigning informal journal entries in which students are free to contemplate issues raised in class. One fellow reflected that doing so not only helped give his students greater freedom to reflect, it also gave him an opportunity to get to know them better: “I had one student who quite plainly wrote in her journal about the complexities and dangers of ascribing behavioral tendencies to cultural factors, given that the latter is a rather amorphous phenomenon. Others wrote about the weaknesses of economics, the very field that all of my students study, as an analytical tool.” Moreover, though students occasionally complained about the extra homework, in the end-of-semester evaluations, “many wrote that they appreciated the chance to produce a lengthy piece in English every week, and felt that their ability to write more fluently in English had greatly improved.” If both teacher and students have the time and energy to devote to it, the added privacy and freedom of journal writing can open up opportunities for more in-depth dialogue.

By making expectations and educational values explicit while giving students agency in determining teaching methods and curriculum, and by additionally incrementalizing class activities, instructors can create an environment conducive to discussion and critical thinking. The question of content, though, remains a contested area of teaching culture. Reservations about the explicit teaching of culture have led observers like Hermes (2005) and Latorre (1985) to recommend

that foreign-language teachers focus on teaching culture through language. Latorre writes that “whatever language is being taught, [foreign-language] teachers are best advised to concentrate on the *true differential*, the language” (1985, 672). Hermes similarly proposes that “language has the potential to bridge the artificial gap between academic and cultural curriculum” (2005, 53). Whereas explicit lessons on culture have the effect of oversimplifying the diverse and often ineffable, language-learning enables students. It gives them the tools needed for future interactions directly with the culture in question. Moreover, language itself can be thought of as a vital component of culture — one that students can take an active part in.

These claims are true of all aspects of language, but they bear a particular relevance on the teaching of slang and idiom. Commonly thought of as untranslatable, slang and idiom push students to understand the environment from which they arise. Units on American slang have proven to be among my most successful. Students are immediately engaged, and they remember and utilize the words long after the unit has finished. By employing slang, students make active use of culture, rather than passively learning about it. The same can be said about the teaching of communicative skills, such as phrases commonly used in discussion. Learning how to disagree politely with someone, how to express one’s own ideas clearly and respectfully, and how to elicit ideas from others gives students an understanding of the behaviors that are expected from social interactions in foreign settings. At the same time, it opens the potential for future cross-cultural interactions.

But how can this spirit of active participation in meaning-making extend further, to cover more areas of culture? Latorre (1985) recommends a return to the teaching of “Culture” — that is, the literature and art considered the highest achievements of the culture in question. Writers such as Borges or Neruda, he argues, “have conveyed the deepest aspects of the Latin American view of life to the whole world” (673). Latorre’s claim brings attention to the fact that direct engagement with real cultural artifacts can often elicit deeper insights into other societies. I would argue, however, that there is no need for ESL teachers to limit themselves to “high culture,” such as novels or poetry. Rather, by presenting students with a wide variety of primary sources, ranging from American music and film to newspaper articles and sports, teachers give students a chance to take part in the same dialogue that people living in America engage in with one another. If planned effectively, a debate over the pros and cons of affirmative action can cut deeper when students read the same editorials that Americans read than when they are given a handout written by the teacher explaining both sides of the debate. In these situations, students can formulate their own ideas and opinions, rather than become receptacles for pre-existing ones.

Finally, despite the criticisms that have been leveled at current modes of teaching culture which center around textbook or teacher-prepared materials, I would argue that this practice, while inevitably necessitating a simplification of the culture they seek to illuminate, can still be effectively used in the cross-cultural classroom.² George (1995), Slethaug (2007), and McLean and Ransom (2005) all cite the effectiveness of lectures in quickly providing overviews of new concepts for students. Handouts summarizing aspects of a culture can serve a similar function to lectures by acting as an introduction and a jumping-off point for further discussion. One of my favorite lessons to teach is one explaining key differences between the Democratic and Republican parties in the USA. While much information had to be jettisoned for the sake of clarity, it elicited provocative conversations and comparisons in class. More importantly, armed with this introductory information, students with an interest could and did pursue further discussion with me, in which we were free to explore issues not covered in class. It is my hope that in the future when they read about politics in the USA or spend time with Americans, they can add further nuance to the framework that was given in class. Culture units, then, when taken as part of a larger engagement with other countries, need not be limiting. Instead, they can act as the first steps in a lifelong process of interaction with the world.

It would be naïve and, ultimately, disingenuous to claim that the classroom can ever be a space for entirely equal and open cross-cultural exchange. As long as teachers maintain a degree of authority in curriculum and lesson planning and in grading (as well they should), students in some degree will feel obliged to mold their ideas, behaviors, and performance to teachers' expectations. And, certainly, the teaching of culture, particularly when trumpeted as a way to "broaden students' horizons," can be a fraught concept. One fellow expressed this well, asking "Isn't the desire to change and improve somebody's worldview the ultimate in arrogance?" But, in my experience, by structuring lessons so that students can feel comfortable expressing and challenging ideas — their own and others' — teachers need not be the sole source of instruction. Reflecting on his classroom experiences, this same fellow remarked, "I think one of the main things that I have gained is a hyper-awareness of the misleading nature of assumptions we all unconsciously make regarding daily interactions and larger political and social phenomena." As this comment demonstrates, though the term "cross-cultural exchange" belies the complex interactions that occur in the ESL classroom, such interactions can still have a deep effect on both students and instructors.

Learning for All: Cross-cultural, Interdisciplinary Team Teaching between China and the USA

Zhu Weibin

While many chapters in this volume regard “Chinese learners” as young people, both Miller (Chapter 7 in this volume) and I make the case that there are older learners as well. The “Transnationalism and America” project funded by the Lingnan Foundation¹ and taking place at Sun Yat-sen University (SYSU) in Guangzhou indicates that Chinese professors, graduate students, and undergraduates can all learn from interdisciplinary inquiry and team-teaching methodologies. Exciting and challenging as it may be, team teaching by professors from different cultures and speaking different languages is not an easy task for any of the participants.

As its name implies, team teaching is an activity in which several instructors work together in fulfilling teaching tasks (Slethaug 2007, 88–89). In interdisciplinary team teaching, instructors from different disciplines form teaching groups and deliver lectures to students. Cross-cultural work adds another complication as faculty members from different countries (using their native languages as the medium of instruction) teach in the same classroom and try to learn from each other. At SYSU, team teaching took various forms: (1) co-lectures by instructors with student participation; (2) interactions between instructors and students in the classroom and discussions of diverse topics among instructors in and out of the classroom; and (3) presentations of theories of knowledge inside the classroom, with application of that learning to the social service sector outside the classroom. Though such teaching methods are uncommon and have just been implemented in China, there is great interest in their possibilities for staff and students.

In September 2004, the “Transnationalism and America” project began in SYSU. The project continued for three academic years until the summer of 2007, and was administered for the most part by the history department (under my

supervision) and supported by the International Office of SYSU. Although there were both American and Chinese scholars involved, the education principles and teaching methods were purely American because one important aim of the project was to introduce interdisciplinary team teaching to SYSU, which has been one of the universities designated by the central government to look into new modes of pedagogy.

According to the plan, the “Transnationalism and America” project offered three to five courses each academic year on a first-come-first-served basis to all interested undergraduates. The elective courses focused on American culture and history in this age of globalization. Professors from different disciplines were invited to participate in classroom teaching. Native Chinese teachers came mainly from the School of Humanities at SYSU, including Dr Li Aili, Dr Pan Yining, Dr Wen Qiang, and myself of the Department of History. Professor Wong, Dr Karsten Krüger, and Dr Michael Fitzhenry from the Department of Anthropology were also involved, and there was at least one graduate student helper for each course. Overseas teachers came mainly from universities in Hong Kong, Macau, the United States, and Europe. The core foreign teachers were Dr Staci Ford, Dr Gina Marchetti, and Professor Gordon Slethaug, who were all from the United States and were teaching at the University of Hong Kong (HKU). They specialized in American history and culture and had gained abundant experience in interdisciplinary course designs and team teaching from the American Studies program at HKU.

During the three-year program, the Chinese and American team set up the following courses — some of them were offered more than once in the Humanities and Medical Faculties — on both the Guangzhou and Zhuhai campuses:

- Asia on American Screens
- In/Visible Histories: Making Documentaries for Social Service
- Asian American Culture
- The American City
- Urban History and Culture of New York City
- American Myths, American Movies
- American Culture and Globalization
- The Road in American Culture
- America Today
- The History of the World in the Twentieth Century

These courses were jointly taught by local and foreign specialists, working to realize the values of interdisciplinary team teaching for native teachers and students. I was the program coordinator at SYSU and also taught some of the courses, and have some observations about the Chinese learner in relation to

interdisciplinary team teaching that involve faculty members from different countries, languages, and cultures.

In the following section, I will introduce the pedagogy adopted for the project, compare it with the traditional teaching methodology implemented in Chinese universities, and evaluate various aspects of the two teaching modes.

Characteristics of the “Transnationalism and America” teaching model

From my perspective, the “Transnationalism and America” project emphasizes four aspects of teaching that are especially important for the Chinese learner. In brief, they are:

- cooperation among instructors from different disciplinary backgrounds;
- interaction between teachers and students from different nations in the cross-cultural classroom;
- combination of classroom knowledge and community service; and
- establishment of online advisement that links SYSU students with faculty members across the planet.

These perspectives suggest that students learn a variety of skills and techniques in addition to basic academic knowledge.

Cooperation among instructors with different disciplinary backgrounds

Interdisciplinary teaching involves teachers from various disciplines. Since the project was about the culture and history of the United States, it was therefore important that the course would involve teachers from the disciplines of American history, anthropology, literature, film, and art. Each course had three core lecturers from these disciplines and up to ten others were involved in special projects and panels. In the course “Asia on American Screens,” for example, there were four main lecturers: Dr Gina Marchetti (an American film expert), Dr Staci Ford (a feminist social historian), Professor Gordon Slethaug (a specialist in American culture and globalization), and Dr Karsten Krüger (a visual anthropologist). The objective was to teach graduates and undergraduates about documentary films and how to make them specifically for social services in China. Many experts, both domestic and overseas, were invited to give lectures, take part in panels, and contribute to classroom discussions.

There was good cooperation and division of labor during the course, though one person normally provided the leadership role. For example, in “American Culture and Globalization,” Professor Gordon Slethaug was responsible for

designing the course syllabus and delivered most of the lectures. Other team members helped with the contents and made arrangements for lectures and teaching responsibilities; they also lectured when they were able to. The main speaker gave the lecture while others elaborated with analyses, complementing, discussing, or arguing from their professional perspectives. In addition to the usual core of three faculty members, guest lecturers were invited to present on a particular topic or participate in panel discussions with the other teachers. From different angles, they gave their views on the topic, took part in cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural debates, and helped the students focus on interdisciplinary learning, thus fulfilling a new teaching target.

Interaction of teachers and students from different nations in a cross-cultural classroom

The “Transnationalism and America” project paid significant attention to the cross-cultural characteristics of teaching activities, and built a multinational dialogue of teachers and students. With the exception of a few exchange students, most of the students were from China, so they welcomed the opportunity to attend lectures in English (though there were some reservations afterwards) and to meet teachers from the United States and elsewhere. Teachers from Hong Kong, Macau, the United States, Canada, Australia, Germany, India, and Denmark, among other countries, shared the same teaching space and study processes with teachers and students of SYSU, and as a result, everyone learned from various encounters.

For instance, the core speakers of the course “In/Visible Histories” — Dr Gina Marchetti, Dr Staci Ford, and Professor Gordon Slethaug are from the United States; Dr Karsten Krüger (SYSU) is from Germany; Dr Michael Fitzhenry (SYSU) is from Australia; and Professor Wong (SYSU) is from China. The course also invited scholars from other places, including Dr Rolf Husmann from Germany; Dr Joy Fuqua, a Fulbright scholar from New Orleans; Dr Tan See-Kam of the University of Macau; Dr Peter Cunich (Australia) of HKU; and Dr Priscilla Roberts (UK) of HKU (the latter two were also members of the Centre for American Studies at HKU).

The “American Culture and Globalization” course also invited overseas scholars to participate, which helped to enhance the multinational characteristics of the other courses. For example, Dr Jane Vinther from Denmark lectured on intercultural communications; Dr Geeta Chanda (India) of Yale University lectured on gender in contemporary film; Ms Simone Stock, a film producer from Los Angeles, lectured on the globalization of the film industry; and Professor Kam Louie, an Australian and dean of arts at HKU, lectured on Chinese identities. The course also included presentations and panel discussions by students from

the University of Macau, HKU, and Hong Kong International School. These visiting students attended the lectures, participated in classroom discussions, and shared their work and interests with students from SYSU, who were mainly junior and senior students from humanities and social sciences (there was also a great number of students who came from business, law, science, and engineering).

Instructors and students from cultural and academic backgrounds helped to build a cross-cultural classroom in both purpose and atmosphere. Their exchanges and interactions brought new directions to teaching and learning as the cultural collisions deepened understanding, facilitated communication, and led to new knowledge. In the multinational classroom, the working languages varied, depending on the speaker: English, Mandarin, and even Cantonese were used, and reading materials in both Chinese and English were assigned. The establishment of such a multilinguistic environment helped the students gain new learning experience.

Combination of classroom knowledge and community service

One main aim of the “Transnationalism and America” project was to provide an interface between classroom learning and the community, emphasizing the social responsibility of students in serving that community. Although this was not the aim of all courses, it was the dominant principle in the first course, “In/Visible Histories,” which linked classroom teaching and documentary-making with community service for the elderly. As Martin Schmidt points out (Chapter 5, this book), academic courses linked to community service are not common in China either in schools or at universities,² so this in itself was precedent-setting. It was also one of the goals of the Lingnan Foundation who funded the project.

Dr Gina Marchetti, the main lecturer of the course, thought that more attention should be paid to women, minorities, laborers, and the disabled, who have often been neglected by traditional history. When she taught at Ithaca College in the US, her students successfully investigated a community to the south of Ithaca which had been neglected in previous historical and social accounts of the town. She and her students then made a short film, *PASSIN’ IT ON*, which gave a meaningful sense of identity to these marginalized people.

Given this experience, Dr Marchetti thought that the “In/Visible Histories” course could make use of the students’ highly diverse disciplinary backgrounds (film studies, American literature and history, and visual anthropology, among others) to carry out a similar plan at SYSU and its community environs. Courses at SYSU had yet to offer hands-on experience in creating films, and there was certainly no course that gave students the opportunity to participate in service projects as part of their coursework. These new possibilities were later built

into the course rationale. In addition to reading the usual classroom materials and preparing for weekly assignments, students had to take a final examination that consisted of a test on the readings and lectures and preparation for a final project, i.e., making a documentary as a public service. In this way, classroom achievement and community service worked together, and it encouraged students to engage in community service work.

To prepare for the final project, the students had to work in groups throughout the term. They had to explore possible topics for the documentary, stay in touch with community service organizations, and do their research in the community. The groups then met, presented their proposals to the class, made judgments about the historical value and contributions of their proposals, and finally selected one topic that could benefit from a public relations documentary. In this case, an assessment of a home for the aged was chosen. It was decided that the film would explain the historical background of the home, document the current living arrangements, and establish its numerous social benefits.

After the research group had decided on the topic, they drafted a working plan, including a research schedule, visiting arrangements, budget for filming and editing, division of responsibilities, and a completion deadline for the project. The group members then took up different responsibilities: some students collected and sorted out research materials with a view to selecting relevant historical materials and interesting pictures; some arranged to interview elderly members at the facility; some prepared questions for the interviews; some took charge of the shooting; and some were responsible for editing the film. Those who were to conduct interviews had to attend practice sessions.

The group mutually decided on the responsibilities according to the participants' disciplinary affiliations. Students from the department of history did background and historical research and collected data; students from social anthropology were responsible for contacting community workers, arranging interviews, and collecting visual data; students from foreign language departments wrote the script; and students from visual anthropology and fine arts were responsible for the shooting and post-production editing of visuals and commentary. During the process, the students made comprehensive use of history, anthropology, language, the impact of visuals, and movie production knowledge, and used research methods and techniques of humanity disciplines. When doing field work in the community, the students mastered other skills such as setting a target, evaluating a demand, and composing text for a particular purpose, audience, and benefit to the community. During the course, students worked in groups both inside and outside the classroom, and made use of techniques that also worked well in the business college of SYSU (see Ivy Wang, Chapter 7

this volume). Classroom knowledge, group dynamics, and social service were combined perfectly as a result.

The student involvement in this course demonstrates the creativity of the learners and reveals how well they were able to use their knowledge for common goals. This was an unusual and demanding assignment for them, which was quite different from that of other courses. However, during the course their training and individual abilities proved equal to the task.

It is also fair to say that this was a new learning experience for everyone: the lecturers who advised the students and assessed the results; the students who worked hard in groups and brought the materials together for the course and the production of the film; the graduate student who helped to negotiate various tasks for the project; and the elderly in the institution who began to think that this was, indeed, a special project and that the project helped them better understand the young students from the university.

Establishment of an online process for advisement

Since students and instructors were from different departments and schools, both within and outside Guangzhou, they did not meet in a central office. However, new communication technology helped significantly. The syllabus given to students at the beginning of the semester had included email addresses of the teachers who participated in the course, as well as email addresses of the “cyber-advisors” from participating universities across the globe. If students wanted to discuss course-related problems with their advisors, they could contact them by email. For example, the network list included Dr Marchetti’s name for the course “In/Visible Histories,” as well as her colleagues from Ithaca College, film-makers in the United States and Hong Kong, and even community representatives. The students could discuss research methods of history, film-making problems, and community service issues by email. This technological advance enlarged the scope of classroom considerably; as a result, more teachers were involved in discussion with students and a multinational network was established for the course.

Achievements and problems of the “Transnationalism and America” project

At the end of the three-year course, the project achieved some significant results, even though a few issues remained unresolved:

(1) It actualized the collaboration of lecturers from different disciplines. Local and overseas experts from various disciplines who participated in the

courses worked closely with each other; they divided the work and completed the teaching mission efficiently. In his courses Professor Slethaug always invited overseas experts to teach with local teachers, making the students feel that they were in an international classroom. The participants had also cooperated fully and played suitable roles in class.

(2) The idea of a multinational classroom was fulfilled with the active participation of numerous scholars from the United States, Germany, Hong Kong, Macau, and others. They lectured individually, participated in panel discussions, gave comments at the end of a lecture, and took the discussions beyond the classroom into the halls and cafeteria. In the classroom, students were no longer strangers to the latest Western classroom teaching environment; they heartily used their imagination and knowledge and expanded their thinking space. Outside the classroom, students continued to consult their advisors online about course-related questions.

(3) The idea of service learning spread significantly as a result of this project. This program paid attention to service ideals and exclusively designed courses to combine liberal arts learning with community service. The students were able to gain experience and gratification from the service culture and developed their social conscience. They had also learned how to work independently and with a team. For example, in combining the production of a documentary with a service goal, "In/visible Histories" emphasized "pre-production" in which students had to develop detailed plans for the project and worked with their fellow team members to achieve the academic and service results. The students had to look for data, think independently, exert their creative abilities, and actively plan everything in advance. They also had to work cooperatively with the group for the success of the project.

This pedagogy is lacking in mainland China, although Chinese educators have tried to combine professional knowledge with social service. Students take for granted that their instructor will be arranging a course for them. They are therefore less able to act independently and may seem at a loss in the beginning of the new courses. Fortunately, students participating in the project could overcome the difficulties and finish the course design. Throughout the whole process, the students developed active learning and research skills as well as the ability to think independently.

(4) The program broadened the students' international and cross-cultural perspectives and helped them understand interdisciplinary learning. All of these helped develop their study interests to some extent. The courses mainly focused on cultural and social problems from the perspective of history, anthropology, comparative literature, sociology, and even media communication. For example, in the "American City" course, Professor Slethaug discussed representative cities

from the point of view of architecture, popular culture, films, music, and art. Since the courses used interdisciplinary theories and methods to address teaching and academic questions, students were attracted by their design and appearance.

(5) It has to be admitted that there were two key problems during the implementation of the project. The first one was English, being the medium of instruction. There was also the large amount of reading required of the students. Although the Chinese language was not excluded in class, the working language was English because most of the foreigners did not speak Chinese. The design of the courses had also been based on American models. Almost all of the lectures, reading materials, and video materials were in English. Therefore, academic competence in English was the biggest challenge for students, making it necessary that some students drop a course. In the beginning, the courses were open mainly to students from the Humanities School and Foreign Language School, but, after several weeks, some students from the Humanities School dropped out because they could not understand the lecturer's English well enough. Afterwards, the courses were opened to the whole university, and the group — usually 150 students per class — was mainly self-selecting in their abilities to cope with, or test their knowledge of, English. Even so, some students dropped the courses because of the language obstacle.

The amount of outside-class reading materials also made the courses hard for the students. Generally speaking, students had to read many pages of English materials and had to prepare for teachers' questions in class because discussion was an important component of the pedagogy. Some students complained that they spent a lot of their time on excessive reading materials and were unwilling to spend so much time and energy on a course that did not meet the requirements of their major.

The second problem was that the match of foreign experts and native scholars was not wholly compatible. Local teachers were more accustomed to deliver systematic knowledge to students and pursued a syllogistic style which aimed to raise, analyze, and resolve questions. This kind of teaching helps students grasp the main ideas of lectures; with little time spent on question-raising and discussion, however, the class atmosphere is depressing. In contrast, the foreign lecturers usually selected more interesting narratives or dramatic scenarios to motivate the students, raise questions, and organize discussion. This kind of teaching is active and participatory but lacks conclusions. Moreover, when foreign lecturers were teaching, local teachers became more passive, and they sometimes had difficulty collaborating with the foreign lecturers. Similarly, when local teachers gave lectures in Chinese, foreign teachers had difficulty contributing to the lectures because they could not understand the language, so team teaching could not always work well because of different teaching conventions and language barriers.

The contribution of “Transnationalism and America” toward history teaching in Chinese universities

Despite the language issues and certain aspects of pedagogy, the interdisciplinary, cross-cultural team-teaching method brought an important revelation to history teaching. To put it briefly, history courses offered by Sun Yat-sen University can now move ahead with interdisciplinary and cross-cultural team teaching. As a *research* method, highly effective interdisciplinary work has existed for many years in China, but, as a *teaching* method, it has not been applied widely due to the different characteristics of research and teaching. Researchers using interdisciplinary approach do not need to think about inherent cultural, linguistic, and pedagogical barriers, but teachers who make use of different disciplinary and professional methods have to consider the effects on one another and on the Chinese student learner. In this respect, the effects of a single teacher giving lectures can differ greatly from those of team teaching.

The basic mode of traditional history teaching in China is that of the “single ventriloquist” or single person’s monologue (Gao 2005, 124); that is, there is only one teacher in a class each time. Moreover, after the instructor finishes the lecture, there is little time left to answer questions, so the lecture is tedious and lacks engagement and vitality. As time passes, students become tired of attending lectures. Even if they do attend classes, they have no interest in the lecture or the materials, which make them “dead books” and fall short of becoming creative, talented people. Therefore, the reform of teaching methods seems urgent.

In recent years, new teaching methods, including team teaching, have been introduced. These methods have improved teaching to some extent. I think that interdisciplinary team teaching used in history teaching has a huge methodological advantage because history itself has multi-disciplinary characteristics and because team teaching thoroughly overthrows the “single ventriloquist” classroom, and that can enhance students’ interest in class.

Although teachers come from different professional fields in history, generally speaking, they do share specialties and interests that can contribute to interdisciplinary team teaching. For example, in a course on “World History,” the medieval period could be taught jointly by someone in Western medieval history and someone in Chinese ancient history. This method would give a remarkable spin to the material. Academics in modern world history could invite experts from, for instance, international relations, diplomacy, religion, and war to join. The collaborating teachers could develop the course outline together, ensuring compatible teaching contents and reading material. What roles they play respectively in each lesson could be worked out in advance by an explicit division of labor. Who gives lectures, who observes, who leads discussion, and who

advises students regarding assignments should have full coordination in advance. Therefore, in each lecture, all students would be offered descriptions, analyses, and discussions about the same problem by teachers from different disciplines, which would thus deepen their understanding.

I think, then, that we can take the following lessons from the teaching project of “Transnationalism and America”:

(1) With respect to content, the “Transnationalism” courses cover popular and hot issues in Western countries, such as problems with religious culture, women and gender, and local and national minorities, while Chinese courses usually focus on political, economic, and military issues. Cultural, popular, and everyday life are all neglected in our lectures. It is time that we revised the contents and paid less attention to traditional contents.

(2) With respect to methodology, we should implement interdisciplinary team teaching. More teachers from other relevant disciplines could join in our courses and adopt team teaching. Foreign teachers emphasize practice and the development of the student’s character, imagination, creative power, and team work. They encourage students to design and finish study tasks by themselves; likewise, we can also encourage our students to exert their own initiatives. Foreign teachers use a lot of visual materials. They organize discussion groups for students, and help them with their group presentations and oral defenses. They also help them study more independently and undertake different tasks. I believe we could also encourage interaction between teachers and students and use more audio-visual materials in class.

(3) The project also broadened the horizons of the professors by providing collections of books and articles for students to read in English. We should increase bilingual teaching gradually so that students would become competent in both English and Chinese. We could perhaps use English and Chinese half and half in class at first and provide students with more reading materials in English. Sun Yat-sen University encourages bilingual teaching, and “Transnationalism and America” has already shown benefits.

The “Chinese learner” is thus changing rapidly, as Ryan argues in Chapter 2. Those of us who teach have to expand our visions and practices to consider what is best about teaching methodologies in Chinese culture and the Western world. Students in China are now able to grow quickly as world citizens through their exposure to interdisciplinary inquiry, team teaching, cross-cultural experiences, and the presence of Chinese and English languages in the classroom.

Notes

CHAPTER 3

- 1 Hong Kong local schools are organized into various bands. Band One comprises those students who have passed their examinations at the highest level and are the most likely to be qualified to proceed to university education. Each successive band below has slightly lower requirements, and almost no one in the bottom bands goes on to higher education.
- 2 Actually, James's case and others like it prompted me to ask the ESF's Executive Committee to change our admissions policy for 2007–08, so that children would not be *excluded* because of their ability in a language other than English (Cantonese in this case)—or included because of their *inability* in Cantonese. They should only be *included* if one parent were a native English speaker even if Cantonese were a second language. This I applied retrospectively in James's case which gave him a priority for admission but not a guaranteed place.
- 3 DSS schools charge fees that diminish entitlement to government subvention on a sliding scale relative to fees. ESF and most international school fee levels are beyond the range that would entitle them to subvention if they joined the DSS scheme. ESF schools are currently in a separate category within the local system, subvented for historic reasons; the percentage of subvention to total expenditure is now 23 percent (as opposed to 30 percent in 1999).

CHAPTER 6

- 1 The figure comprises all programs (short-cycle, medium-cycle, long-cycle Bachelors, long-cycle Masters. Retrievable from www.ciriusonline.dk/statistik. “*Mobilitetsstatistik for de videregående uddannelser 2006/2007*.” CIRIUS, August 2008 and English summary: “Student mobility in higher education 2006/07.”
- 2 Retrievable from: <http://www.ciriusonline.dk/Default.aspx?id=68> “*Mobilitetsstatistik for de videregående uddannelser 2006/2007*.” CIRIUS, August 2008. 38.
- 3 The most popular types of education among Chinese students are IT/civil engineering, IT maintenance, building engineering, marketing economy, and multimedia design (CIRIUS report on “*Danske studerende i udlandet og udenlandske studerende i Danmark 2004/05*,” April 2006. [“Danish students abroad and foreign students in Denmark 2004/05.”] Retrievable from www.ciriusonline.dk.

- 4 Many universities have science programs taught in English, but humanities courses have traditionally been taught in Danish as they are often culturally embedded. However, even here the number of courses taught in English is increasing.
- 5 Language is a cultural marker and, by becoming the speaker of a second language, one also takes on some of the identity markers of that culture. At times, depending on the motivation of the learner, this is felt to be a positive personal development with increased opportunities and freedoms for the self. In other situations, it can be a cause of resentment if a loss of identity is perceived in that the L2 will not allow for the expression of one's academic level of knowledge and ability, or indeed emotions.
- 6 Lustig and Koester (1996) are quite explicit about this: "The process underlying stereotyping is absolutely essential for human beings to function. Some categorization is necessary and normal. Indeed, there is survival value in the ability to make accurate generalizations about others" (309).
- 7 See, for instance, an interview with students enrolled in the Erasmus Mundus European program (<http://www.ciriusonline.dk/Default.aspx?ID=6135&M=News&PID=11110&NewsID=2215&Printerfriendly=3>)
- 8 The University of Pedagogy has recently been incorporated into Aarhus University.
- 9 Grundtvig was also an influential bishop, hymn writer, and theologian who fundamentally changed church life. For an exposition on Grundtvig's influence on theology, see Allchin et al. (2000) and Hefner (2000).
- 10 These were not "high schools" in the American sense, but "*Bildung*" in the German sense, following grade school—and they still are. Reddy (1993) says of Grundtvig and his influence in comparison to Kirkegaard and Hans Christian Andersen that "N. F. S. Grundtvig influenced the Danish way of life more than any one else" (118).
- 11 Bradley (2000) states that, when Grundtvig began his studies of Beowulf, hardly anyone in the world knew how to read it adequately.
- 12 Oxford Bodleian Library MS Junius 11 (see Bradley 2000, 150).
- 13 Grundtvig's ideas and philosophy have been adopted and transplanted to several countries in the world, e.g., the USA, Israel, Japan, and the Philippines (see Zøllner and Andersen 1995). Thøgersen (2005) provides an extensive study of Grundtvig's influence on Liang Shuming.
- 14 At the University of Southern Denmark the number of foreign students totalled 516 persons in 2007 comprising all faculties.
- 15 Liang Shuming (1893–1988), philosopher and reformist, managed to influence development in China while at the same time withdrawing from the fray of political upheaval.
- 16 According to Thøgersen (2005), Liang confessed to having been influenced by Gandhi and Grundtvig with respect to nation-building. Liang commented (1931b, 299; quoted in Thøgersen 2005, 277–278), "Social conditions are extremely stable, there are no fights between workers and capitalists, and the countries riches are evenly distributed. How has this been achieved? Not by defeating other nations, but by promoting education. Denmark is an agricultural country, and their agriculture has been developed through cooperation. This civilization is the result of an old educator, Grundtvig. He established a folk high school in a village so that young people between eighteen and thirty years of age could receive education . . . In the

present era several countries imitate this kind of mass education. Grundtvig raised the level of the common people of Denmark, he made the citizens achieve *lixing* and in this way why the country started to flourish again.” See also Liang (1931a). Alitto discusses *li-hsing* and Liang’s interpretation of the construct, and he quotes Liang’s thoughts regarding the moral importance of *li-hsing* (*lixing*), “the normative sense that directs moral action . . . the sense of right and wrong which makes man human” (Liang 1949; quoted in Alitto 1986, 184).

- 17 Carroll (2005, 37) challenges the IELTS as a reliable expression of a person’s language proficiency as the scores are averages over the skills of reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English.
- 18 See, for instance, Zhong and Shen (2002).
- 19 Ohata’s study (2005) of learning anxiety found that the major source of anxiety was fear of negative evaluation or losing face in front of others (14).
- 20 This may be a reflection of the “deep learning”/“surface learning” dichotomy described by Biggs (1996), and Marton, Dall’Alba, and Kun (1996).

CHAPTER 8

- 1 Krober and Kluckhohn, quoted in Richards (1976, 20).
- 2 Ingeborg Henderson’s essay (1980), “Cultural Strategies in Elementary College Language Courses,” clearly delineates some of these approaches.

CHAPTER 9

- 1 Currently located in New York City and with an operating center at Yale University, the Lingnan Foundation began in 1883 to support the newly founded Canton Christian College, which eventually became Lingnan University and then merged with Sun Yat-sen University (SYSU). Now a nonsectarian charity, the Lingnan Foundation promotes the development of liberal arts and ongoing activities of SYSU, as well as understanding and accord between China and the United States. It funded the project “Transnationalism and America” to help implement cross-cultural interdisciplinary team teaching.
- 2 At least one other course has been offered in a similar way in the Department of History at SYSU, i.e., “The Practice of Oral History: On the Traditional Rural Society of China.” Still, there are many differences in teaching methods between this one and those in the Lingnan program.

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