TRANSFORMATIVE INTERNATIONALIZATION THROUGH KINDNESS: THE EXPERIENCES OF CHINESE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AND THEIR INSTRUCTORS AT A U.S. HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

By

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ABSTRACT

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In this dissertation, I set out to explore and analyze the experiences of six international students from mainland China (henceforth student-participants), who are currently undergraduate students at a midwestern university in the United States (henceforth Grand Lake University or GLU), alongside the experiences of their four instructors (henceforth instructor-participants). In addition, I aim to investigate interculturality in the teaching-learning context. Participants include four instructors of three different courses (an English as a second language class, business management class, and a college writing class) and six Chinese undergraduate students attending these classes. As a multiple case study (Stake, 1995, 2006), this project comprises two collective case studies, a student-participants collective case study and an instructor-participants collective case study. The theoretical lenses are those of interculturality in education (Dervin, 2016b). I present a literature review where I identify the experiences of Chinese undergraduate students in the U.S. and these of their instructors thematically. I depict both enriching and challenging experiences that crop up during learning and teaching in the U.S. For my data in both collective case studies, I conducted semi-structured interviews as a main data source. I also observed classes for both case studies but conducted participant observations and collected artifacts for instructor-participants collective case study only. Additional data sources were a researcher's journal, field notes journals and email correspondence with both groups of participants throughout the process. I then applied holistic coding (Saldaña, 2016) to derive

codes and patterns from collected data and transformed them into themes in the findings section of this dissertation. I conducted transcript checks with all participants by sending them interview transcripts and asking for their feedback. Also, in my analysis, I emphasized the experiences of the participants (students and instructors alike) and how they construct intercultural learning and teaching. I discuss the findings from both collective case studies within the motif of transformative internationalization being possible through *kindness* (Abelmann & Kang, 2014; Loreman, 2011). I show that in order to reach transformative rather than symbolic internationalized learning environment, all voices must be heard. The four instructor-participants demonstrated open-minded approaches towards Chinese undergraduate students and positive perceptions of them, making the multiple cultures of learning they brought to their classrooms an asset rather than a barrier in a variety of ways and to different extents. The instructor-participants demonstrated not only culturally responsive pedagogies but also pedagogies that were interculturally rich and encouraging. Culturally, to the student-participants, *kindness* seemed to be a crucial factor. Wherever any instances of *kindness* were offered to them, either directly or indirectly, the student-participants thrived in their communication with instructor-participants and peers, in their social life, and in their evolving ideas about GLU. I also found that student-participants prepared thoroughly for their sojourns and depicted multiple types of motivation to study in the U.S. (including familial pressure and better career opportunities afterwards). I examined their language experiences at GLU alongside their sociocultural endeavors, which turned out to be challenging but educational and enriching. Based on these findings I also suggest directions for future research.

To all academic mamas, who might have been once told
that by becoming mothers they ruined their careers.
We are enough.

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Now that all is said and done, I’m off to my next adventure!

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

BC	Business Management Class
CWC	College Writing Class
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESL ACL	ESL American Culture Class
ESL RESL	ESL Reading Class
GLU	Grand Lake University
IE	International Education
IRB	Institutional Review Board
LMS	Learning Management System
PRC	The People's Republic of China
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
U.S.	The United States of America

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

U.S. universities that welcome international students often face challenges with understanding these students' backgrounds, the cultural differences they embody, their prior and present educational practices and language endeavors (Yan & Berliner, 2016). Due to internationalization, which has seen high numbers of *Chinese undergraduate students* (i.e., mainland Chinese who identify as Chinese) attending U.S. higher institutions (Institute of International Education, 2019), the situation calls for analysis that could tease out the potential contribution of these students to U.S. cultures of learning and the efforts of their *instructors* (i.e., educators responsible for teaching a given course at U.S. institutions of higher education) to educate them. As a result, both groups could broaden their knowledge and experiences and thus enrich pedagogical processes.

While internationalization is inevitable, transformative internationalization is what U.S. colleges and universities might want to strive for (Abelmann & Kang, 2014). In this project, I define *transformative internationalization* as a process that involves symbiotic changes in both students and instructors. As the data revealed, the most effective pathway to transformative internationalization was through practicing pedagogy of *kindness*. As such, *kindness* is understood as a quality of a human characterized by generosity, consideration, friendliness and empathy. My approach to making U.S. higher education truly transformed through *kindness* also brings light to an important aspect of *interculturality* (defined as mutual appreciation, curiosity and respect when dealing with others), namely the reciprocity of it. In transformative internationalization both parties involved (that is, the Chinese undergraduate students and their

instructors) benefit from kind mutual treatment, which as a result, makes their experiences more enjoyable and transformative.

Chinese undergraduate students and U.S. instructors offer each other unique assets that could enrich cultural diversity on one hand and liberal education on the other. While Chinese undergraduate students contribute to the U.S. *cultures of learning* (Cortazzi & Jin, 2013; Jin & Cortazzi, 1993; Jin & Cortazzi, 2017) by, for instance, bringing fresh perspectives during classroom discussions, their instructors also bring specialist knowledges to the table. In this study, I understand cultures of learning as socially transmitted expectations, beliefs and values about what good learning is, what makes an instructor and a student effective and what their roles are; about learning and teaching styles, approaches and methods; about classroom activities and the use of textbooks. How can understanding both groups (i.e., Chinese undergraduate students and their instructors) enlighten intercultural teaching and learning? Domestic students and instructors in the U.S. can also benefit from the mixed cultural experiences that they might not be able to gain in all home student classes. However, details of how this student population contributes to these cultures of learning and the particular efforts of the instructors are not well-known. These contributions seem important because they have the potential to improve (1) second language learning, (2) learning outcomes, (3) international education, and (4) understanding of interculturality. It is fruitful to not only investigate the experiences of Chinese undergraduate students but also those of their instructors. That is not only because these are intertwined but also exist within the spirit of mutual understanding and conviviality, which fits my focus on interculturality in this project.

Statement of Intent

In this dissertation, I set out to critically explore the *experiences*, that is, knowledges, feelings, and understandings of six Chinese undergraduate students (student-participants) and those of four of their instructors (instructor-participants) in three different learning contexts at a midwestern university (henceforth known as Grand Lake University or GLU). Through this project, I aim to add to the existing literature on Chinese undergraduate students' learning experiences in the United States. At the same time, I focus on understanding the efforts and experiences of these student-participants' instructors in classes that have mixed student populations. I hope that findings will shed light on intercultural learning and teaching by increasing awareness of what occurs when Chinese undergraduate students and their instructors enter the teaching-learning space at GLU. Consequently, this could assist universities in becoming more productive, staying open, and welcoming towards Chinese undergraduate students. In addition, given the abundant literature about Chinese learners, I intend to understand these six students' learning processes in the U.S. Lastly, by conducting this study, I hope to produce valuable knowledge about instructors' approaches to teaching Chinese undergraduate students in the U.S. as well as the role of language and cultures in teaching-learning endeavors. As a result, the findings from this study, when revealed to its participants, could also positively impact not only Chinese undergraduate students' decisions to complete their degrees abroad but also their success rate once in the U.S.

Approach

Scholars have realized the critical need and the significance of pedagogy and conceptualization of teaching and learning when it comes to international students (Dervin, 2016b). In this study, I draw on *interculturality* in education, defined as mutual appreciation,

curiosity and respect when dealing with others, as the theoretical lens that informs on this study. I chose this approach due to its bilateral (i.e., mutual, reciprocal) nature. Additionally, the scope of my study as well as my own interests as a researcher demand an interdisciplinary perspective to fully uncover the *cases* studied. I define the case as the four instructor-participants and the six student-participants. In the light of the above, this project is situated at the intersection of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), International Education (IE) and Interculturality. Inevitably, it also attends to issues of *othering*, which have been highlighted in the literature (e.g., Dervin, 2016b; Holliday, Kullman, & Hyde, 2017). Here *othering* points to "stereotypes and representations about *The Other* when meeting her/him and talking about her/him" (Dervin, 2016b, p. 43). Processes of *othering* have formed the crux of much empirical and theoretical research in the humanities and social sciences in the past few decades. Thus, I examine stereotypes of both societies (that is Chinese and U.S. societies) that emerge in the learning and teaching processes whether advertently or inadvertently.

For this study as such, I carried out a multiple case study comprising two collective case studies (instructor-participants collective case study and student-participants collective case study). Case studies seek out both what is common and what is particular about the case (Stake, 1995, 2006). Thus, I delved into the observations and *descriptions* (i.e., explanations of experiences) of the learning experiences of six students from mainland China (aka student-participants) at a midwestern university along with the teaching experiences of four of their instructors (aka instructor-participants). The courses that brought together these students and their instructors are different (see details in Chapter 3), yet they create a threefold context for this project. Working with these two groups within the three contexts, namely the ESL context (ESL), the business management context (BC) and the college writing context (CWC), enabled

me to draw similarities and particularities between learning and teaching cultures and to explore the role of language in the various teaching-learning contexts.

In this multiple case study, I collected data through semi-structured interviews, observations (including participant observations), artifacts, email correspondence, researcher's journal and field notes journals (see details on each collective case study in Chapter 3). In terms of data analysis, I followed the conventions of holistic coding (Saldaña, 2016), which is best applied "when the researcher has a general idea of what to investigate in the data" (p. 166). In this manner, I explored participants' experiences in depth in order to particularize them. This, in turn, provided new insights into experiences of the student-participants and their instructor-participants. As both participants attempted to cross cultural boundaries, I also looked into the multiple pedagogies that the instructor-participants utilized in their teaching to best include Chinese undergraduate students as well as learning strategies of these students.

The chosen research approach fits this study's purpose because (1) the four overarching research questions can be better answered, understood and explained through observing and describing rather than measuring; (2) the research questions are general, open-ended and broad; and (3) the purpose of this study is not to seek generalizations to other people or contexts but rather to derive subjective understandings from the participants' own perspectives of their experiences.

Impetus for the Study

The initial impetus for this study emanated from my own experiences while teaching in China prior to my doctoral studies. I spent six years teaching in China's 5th largest city, Hangzhou (population almost 10 million) and most of my students were high school students who were preparing to further their education in the U.S. Multiple conversations with students

who felt anxious and uninformed of what their futures might hold sparked my interest in knowing how they perform academically "on the other side." What happens to those students when they reach their "dreamland" and how do they navigate the intricacies of a different culture, a different educational system, live in a different language and cope with the demands of transitions into adulthood? While I have been in touch with most of my former students from China who seem to be doing extremely well abroad (both academically and culturally), I also had feedback from others that voiced the critical challenges they faced, among which were instances of feeling misplaced, misunderstood, inadequate, stereotyped or *othered*, broadly speaking. These students attributed their experiences to the fact that they come from China and do not use English as their native language, which made integration into the U.S. cultures difficult for them. This added to my desire to fully understand the complexities of studying in a foreign country. It also prompted me to conceptualize instructor-participants and student-participants' individual experiences. Finally, as a PhD student in Grand Lake University with experience of US models of instruction, and a graduate student instructor myself, I was curious to explore the experiences of US instructors teaching students from mainland China. Subsequently, I set out to analyze and conceptualize student-participants and instructor-participants' experiences at Grand Lake University.

Based on my teaching experiences in China and in the U.S., and feedback from colleagues, lengthy conversations with instructors interacting with students from China, and on my reading a number of scholarly publications (e.g., Cortazzi & Jin, 2013; Yan & Berliner, 2016), my initial observations suggested a need to understand pedagogical approaches to Chinese undergraduate students in the U.S. as well as scrutinize more deeply the nature of preparation in students pre-sojourn phase. More so, my conversations on and off campus with a

number of Grand Lake University instructors who have experienced teaching these students suggest mutual misunderstandings in interculturality between these two groups. I thought this would constitute a good topic of study. All of the above encouraged me to examine interculturality and to apply a critical lens to elucidate potential sources of misunderstandings with the goal to create a more productive and bilateral approach to it.

In addition, various meetings with instructors in the U.S. and efforts to explore the topic through literature reviews (e.g., Abelmann and Kang, 2014; Luan, 2012; Tolosa, Biebricher, East, & Howard, 2018) and research projects led me to believe that the experiences of Chinese undergraduate students and those of their instructors might not have been isolated (e.g., Huang, 2012; Tange & Jensen, 2012; Wang, 2012). Being an instructor myself, I was curious about the experiences of instructors that teach Chinese undergraduate students in the U.S. How do instructors in the U.S. deal with the similarities and differences Chinese undergraduate students display in comparison to U.S. students? Maneuvering through different approaches to learning and new pedagogies to students from China (Tange & Jensen, 2012) has been a source of frustration for many instructors and yet a welcomed innovation for others. Yan and Berliner (2016) claim that Chinese undergraduate students perceive U.S. and China's educational systems as opposites. In China, study goals are likely to be met via relationships (*guanxi*, in Chinese), while in the U.S. one needs to partake in competition to withstand the predominantly merit-based U.S. system (Yan & Berliner, 2016). Even though much work has been conducted in establishing the problems of teaching Chinese undergraduate students (e.g., Chen, 2000; Abelmann & Kang, 2014), the experiences in teaching and learning practices both of students and instructors still have to be probed, described, and analyzed. By conducting this research, I hope firstly, to contribute to this lacuna, secondly, to theorize on intercultural learning and teaching, and thirdly,

to suggest effective practices for students and instructors in navigating their experiences as stakeholders.

Notwithstanding, we cannot show interest in the experiences of Chinese undergraduate students without looking at the experiences of their instructors. These two are indissolubly connected. Filling this gap in research literature can help both academic faculty and administrators at U.S. institutions of higher education to gain a deeper understanding of the growing population of Chinese undergraduate students in their schools. In like manner, examining both sides of the educational experiences will further improve on services to aid Chinese undergraduate students in becoming more effective in studying in the U.S. Finally, it will assist their instructors in understanding the thinking behind some of these students' classroom behaviors, which might lead to adjusted pedagogies, inclusive approaches, and enriching mutual exchanges.

To conclude, as a qualitative researcher who is preparing for the job market in the U.S. academia, I see myself working with Chinese international students (or other international students) and their instructors in the future. Through conducting this project, I hope to better understand Chinese undergraduate students' and their instructors' experiences of working together. That would refine my corpus and knowledge of intercultural experiences alongside effective methods in communicating the successes, needs and struggles of these two populations.

Rationale for the Study

The leading rationales for this project are firstly the academic and social experiences of a still-rising high number of students from China who seek U.S. degrees (Institute of International Education, 2019). To date, Chinese undergraduate students have topped the number of international students in the United States. According to the Institute of International Education

(2019) Open Doors report, 148,880 undergraduate students from China (a 0.2%-increase compared to previous years) pursued college and university education in the U.S. during the 2018/2019 academic year alone. These students represent the majority of international students on U.S. campuses (Institute of International Education, 2019), including Grand Lake University. Such a large population deserves special attention in terms of how they could influence change, especially in a form of transformative internationalization.

Scholars have long assumed that internationalization happens through processes of diffusion (Abelmann & Kang, 2014). But this is not always the case as meaningful transformation aka transformative internationalization (i.e., for both Chinese undergraduate students and their instructors) might end up looking more like coexistence than friendly mutual relationships (Abelmann & Kang, 2014). That the teaching-learning processes between Chinese undergraduate students and their instructors are still to be adequately scrutinized and accounted for provides significant grounds to explore their experiences.

With regard to cultures of learning, there seems to be a noticeable difference between teaching and learning methods in the U.S. and in China (Cortazzi & Jin, 1997; Cortazzi & Jin, 2013; Ryan, 2010). For example, as depicted in Table 1.1, U.S. academic institutions seem to value individualism, student-centered, deep learning while Chinese academia focuses on rote, instructor-centered, collectivist learning. This dichotomy has created challenges for U.S. higher education institutions as well as for Chinese undergraduate students who are facing not only cultural but also academic trials in the new learning environment. For instance, while instructors in the U.S. tend to be explicit in their verbal communication, Chinese undergraduate students might perceive it as too straight-forward given the fact that they are coming from cultures of contextualized communication.

Table 1.1.
U.S. vs. Chinese academic values. (Based on Cortazzi & Jin, 1997; Cortazzi & Jin, 2013; Ryan, 2010).

U.S. academic values	Chinese academic values
• Individual orientation,	• Collective consciousness,
• Horizontal relations,	• Hierarchical relations,
• Verbal explicitness,	• Contextualized communication,
• Seeking alternatives,	• Single solution,
• Creativity, originality,	• Mastery, transmission,
• Discussion, argument, challenge (adversarial stance),	• Agreement, harmony, face (harmonious stance),
• Critical evaluation,	• Assumed acceptance ('follow the master'),
• 'deep' learners,	• 'surface'/rote learners,
• Independent learners,	• Dependence on the instructor,
• Student-centered learning,	• Instructor-centered learning,
• Constructing new knowledge.	• Respect for historical texts and the instructor.

My initial research raises a question about how instruction in U.S. educational programs approaches students from mainland China. According to Mak and Barker (2006), because Chinese undergraduate students come from another culture, which for a long time was not exposed to other countries, they bring significant diversity to cultures of learning in the United States. Mak and Barker (2006) cite differences such as difficulties in actively participating in class discussions, given that it is not customary in Chinese classrooms (Mak & Barker, 2006). How do instructors interpret this? And how does this count in terms of class participation? How does it impact instructors' evaluation of Chinese undergraduate students' performance? Research by Gu (2016) also suggests that international students whose home cultures are notably different

from the U.S. cultures often experience dilemmas when trying to adapt to campus life, and that Chinese undergraduate students suffer from more stress and anxiety than other ethnicities. I would like to explore why it might be so. Yan and Berliner (2016) classify China as a non-European, developing country, and Eastern country, which makes students from China prone to socio-cultural challenges that students from all three of these backgrounds also face. According to Yan and Berliner (2016), "Chinese students should expect to experience much more socio-cultural anxiety than students from other countries do" (p. 144). The researchers, however, do not mention specific examples of such anxiety. Going further, Yan and Berliner (2016) found that instructors are concerned with not knowing how to approach Chinese undergraduate students in their classes, how to make sure they understand what is expected of them, or how to simply engage them more. By the same token, Paldy (2015) states that some of the faculty familiarize themselves with international students' educational and cultural backgrounds, while others continue to question these students' placement in their courses, especially if their spoken English seems poorer than their English proficiency test scores might indicate. Yet, if instructors are required to incorporate interculturality in their methodologies, then they need to be provided with necessary knowledge and skills to do so (Sercu, 2006). This could lead to adjustment of views, particularly when teaching a second language and recognition of potential stereotypes that students might hold towards a given language. Sercu (2006) suggests that frequent and critical reflection on one's sources of information about a foreign culture might facilitate practicing of skills that are useful in intercultural situations. While Chinese students might not be a category on their own, and this research is not a comparative study of the experiences of international students, I still believe that the experiences of Chinese undergraduate students are worth studying given their increasingly significant populations, the high value that the Chinese middle class

attach to Western/U.S. education and their significant financial contribution in terms of tuition to U.S. institutions of learning.

However, the claim that Chinese undergraduate students bring diversity to the U.S. education might as well be slightly premature or simply a potentiality given that large numbers of Chinese undergraduate students facilitate segregation (de Wit, 2015) and that they might perceive their experiences in the U.S. through the lenses of consumers who pay for education (Abelmann & Kang, 2014). Of recent, many U.S. institutions of higher education have turned towards the critical financial capital that Chinese undergraduate students bring to their institutions in terms of tuition, which has contributed significantly to the U.S. economy (Abelmann & Kang, 2014). In fact, in 2018, international students contributed $44.7 billion to the U.S. economy, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce (Institute of International Education, 2019). Importantly, according to new data released on May 30, 2019 by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, college enrollment for domestic students in the U.S. has decreased for the eighth consecutive year (National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, 2019). This has led to extensive marketing strategies on the part of elite public and private U.S. universities with the aim of attracting Chinese undergraduate students to study in the U.S. (Abelmann & Kang, 2014). What is more, Abelmann and Kang (2014) also suggest that Chinese undergraduate students' demand matches U.S. colleges and universities financial needs, simultaneously creating a fair market exchange. The researchers explain a fair exchange as an exchange between the U.S. institutions' education and the Chinese undergraduate students, who might be better suited for liberal education than their U.S. counterparts due to their hard work and assiduity (Abelmann & Kang, 2014, p. 387). Such exchange has a potential to contribute to the internationalization of the U.S. institutions, as well as to the reflection on common

pedagogical practices towards international students in the U.S., which I find to be worthy of study. Thus, another rationale of this research is to ascertain what teaching or learning adaptations might be beneficial to provide interculturally responsive experiences for Chinese undergraduate students, and equally so for their instructors at GLU. I am also interested in examining the extent to which Chinese undergraduate students adapt to U.S. academic cultures and potential ways in which instructors could adapt their teaching methods to bridge cultural challenges.

Furthermore, *cultural representations* and *culturism* (that is "using culture as an explanation for everything that a representative of another country does, thinks, etc. while ignoring the fact that other reasons might apply" [Dervin, 2016b, p. 113]), are believed to affect learning and teaching of international students. I refer to a definition of cultural representations from Holliday et al., (2017, p. 140): "a fuzzy subset of the set of mental and public representations inhabiting a given social group." Also, Baumbaugh (2015) claims that stereotypes can influence successful intercultural processes, i.e., categorizing individuals into groups enables stereotypical behaviors which in turn affect communication between two given groups. For example, in order to foster the construction of interculturally competent students and instructors alike, stereotypes surrounding both groups need to be unpacked to help them firstly to understand and then be able to effectively navigate through various social situations. This, in turn, requires that students and instructors develop a set of skills such as language, personal views of how similar or different the two cultures are, and to become motivated to successfully implement the desired cultural behaviors. I am interested in such skills that instructor-participants and student-participants might adopt or gain during their shared courses.

Lately, researchers have investigated intercultural competence or interculturality in education (Dervin, 2010, 2016a, 2016b). Some see attempts at imposing U.S. patterns of learning on Chinese undergraduate students as a potential threat to these students' developing identities (Cortazzi & Jin, 2013) as well as their instructors' professional identities. Therefore, I also planned to explore instructor-participants' perceptions of their own interculturality. Do they incorporate cultural elements in their classes? If so, what are the reasons behind such perceptions and decisions? Is there *cultural synergy* (Yuan & Xie, 2013) in the way it is done? According to Yuan and Xie (2013), cultural synergy can be interpreted as systematic interaction of people from different cultures with a common purpose to understand each other without losing their own cultural features. In this study, I focus on instances of reciprocal learning and teaching, both successful and unsuccessful, as they have the potential to inform a deeper understanding of both Chinese undergraduate students and their instructors.

All of the above rationales for this study underline the importance of the experiences of both instructors and Chinese undergraduate students in their courses. They also open a dialogue to encourage inclusive pedagogies that might benefit other international students' learning. More so, this study also calls for revisiting interculturality. It underlines the significance of intercultural teaching and learning as indeed bilateral.

Definition of Terms

There are a number of terms in this study that I define in this section, in Table 1.2. It is important to provide definitions to key terms in order to operationalize my usage of them in this multiple case study. I define these key terms in an alphabetical order, in the following way:

Table 1.2.
Definitions of the main terms used in this project.

No.	Term	Definition
1.	Case	The four instructor-participants and six student-participants in particular classes at Grand Lake University.
2.	Chinese undergraduate students	Students who come from mainland China, a geographical area under the direct jurisdiction of the People's Republic of China (PRC). They have a native command of Mandarin Chinese and self-identify as Chinese. Also referred to as student-participants.
3.	cultural mixing (mélange)	I follow a definition from Dervin (2016b) as a situation "whereby a culture is influenced and transformed by another culture" (p. 115).
4.	cultural representations	The established ideas about a given social group that might take a form of embellished assumptions about specific groups or people (a definition based on that in Holiday et al., 2017, p. 140: "a fuzzy subset of the set of mental and public representations inhabiting a given social group").
5.	cultural synergy	Bringing two cultures together (here those of China and the United States) to form an environment based on combined concepts and skills in a way that encourages mutual growth and reciprocal learning through reflection (a definition based on that in Yuan & Xie, 2013: a systematic interaction of people from different cultures with a common purpose to understand each other without losing their own cultural features).
6.	cultures of learning	Socially transmitted expectations, beliefs and values about what good learning is, what makes an effective instructor and an effective student and what their roles are; about learning and teaching styles, approaches and methods; about classroom activities and the use of textbooks (a definition based on Cortazzi & Jin, 2013; Jin & Cortazzi, 1993; and Jin & Cortazzi, 2017).
7.	culturism	Using culture as an explanation of everything a person from one culture does, thinks, etc. without

Table 1.2. (cont'd)

No.	Term	Definition
		considering other factors that might influence whom a person is. This phenomenon comes to being when culture becomes greater than people themselves (a definition based on that in Dervin, 2016b, p. 113: "using culture as an explanation for everything that a representative of another country does, thinks, etc. while ignoring the fact that other reasons might apply").
8.	description	An explanation or a recollection of an experience, often in a form of a narrative.
9.	experiences	The feelings, knowledge or understanding one has of personal engagement with a situation, event, or phenomenon.
10.	instructors	Educators responsible for teaching a given course at U.S. institutions of higher education.
11.	instructor-participants	The employed educators at Grand Lake University who agreed to participate in this study and who were responsible for teaching a given course in the timeframe I conducted this study. All four of them identify as American.
12.	interculturality	The approach to others that is characterized by mutual responsiveness, appreciation and curiosity, its main goal being bilateral (i.e., mutual) communication.
13.	kindness	A quality of a human characterized by generosity, consideration, friendliness and empathy.
14.	othering	The stereotypes and faulty representations when meeting others (based on a definition in Dervin, 2016b, p. 43: "stereotypes and representations about the other when meeting her/him and talking about her/him").
15.	transformative internationalization	A process that involves symbiotic changes in both student and instructor-participants within learning contexts.

Structure of the Dissertation

Following the Introduction, the second chapter (Chapter 2) presents a critical review of existing literature on the teaching experiences instructors in the U.S report when working with Chinese undergraduate students. This chapter also scrutinizes gaps that exist in current cultural and empirical studies of Chinese undergraduate students' endeavors and those of their instructors in the U.S. Following library research, I divide the literature review into broad thematic sectors, i.e., transformative internationalization, the experiences of instructors, followed by research on pedagogy of *kindness* and the experiences of Chinese undergraduate students in the United States. Then, I present the conceptual framework guiding this study, namely interculturality. I discuss this framework with critical perspectives, while focusing on those elements that are most relevant to this study's context. Lastly, I state the four guiding research questions. Following the discussion of the literature background and conceptual framework, I present, in Chapter 3, the methods of data collection, materials, a description of this study context and data analysis. I also further introduce this study's participants. I discuss my own positionality as a researcher and elaborate on my approach to data analysis. The third chapter ends with my estimation of the study particularization.

Then, Chapters 4 and 5 delineate the findings of this multiple case study in reference to the guiding research questions. In Chapter 4, I focus on the experiences of the four instructor-participants (instructor-participants collective case study); whereas in Chapter 5, I narrate the experiences of the six student-participants (student-participants collective case study). I discuss findings from both collective case studies extensively in Chapter 6, based on the themes that emerged during data coding and analysis processes.

Lastly, in the concluding chapter (Chapter 7), I briefly summarize this research study results as well as the limitations of the study. I also provide arguments for pedagogical implications of the results and directions for future research. I close the project with References and Appendices, in which I present the materials used in the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of six Chinese undergraduate students (student-participants) and four of their instructors (instructor-participants) at Grand Lake University (henceforth GLU). In this chapter, I provide a review of the related literature as well as a critical look at conceptual underpinnings guiding my data analysis. I divide this chapter into seven sections. In section one, I describe my strategy for searching literature, that is how I conducted the literature search alongside the databases I searched. In section two, I explore issues pertaining to transformative internationalization of higher education. In section three, I classify the experiences into instructors' perceptions of Chinese undergraduate students, the presence or absence of cultural mixing in classes with Chinese undergraduate students in terms of attendance, instructors' pedagogies, and their interculturality. After that, in section four, I present what the literature says about the pedagogy of *kindness* as a pathway to transformative internationalization. I discuss this phenomenon in relation to teaching and learning as it affects the rising numbers of Chinese undergraduate students on the United States campuses and the increasing professional demands on their U.S. instructors. Next, in section five, I synthesize existing research that scrutinizes the experiences of Chinese undergraduate students in the United States. I organize these experiences according to themes that emerged from my reviewing the literature and coding data sets for this project. Specifically, I delineate students-participants' preparedness for the new study contexts as well as their motivation to further their education in the U.S. I also present language experiences these students undergo at U.S. schools, together with their feelings about studying in the U.S. Last but not least, I discuss the role of these students' social life in their experiences in the U.S. Then, in section six, I discuss what literature

has to say about Chinese undergraduate students in three different learning contexts in the U.S., namely the ESL context, the college writing context, and the business management context. After that, (section seven) I introduce key concepts of the conceptual framework I applied to this study, to wit: Dervin's interculturality (Dervin, 2010, 2016b). Here, I also provide the rationale behind my applying this particular framework by elaborating on how it fits into my research agenda. Finally, I state research questions that guide me through this project.

Literature Search Strategy

Following the advice from Galvan and Galvan (2017), I present a clear view of the strategy I used to search existing research literature on the topic under investigation in the step by step process. Between September 2018 and January 2020, I systematically searched for studies relevant to this project. I started with reports of general experiences of Chinese undergraduate students in the United States and then extended that category onto the instructors. I used three methods to search for additional studies. First, I entered 16 keywords and key phrases into databases available to me through the GLU's library and Internet search engines. The keywords were (Chinese students* or Chinese undergraduate students* or students from China) and (U.S. instructors* or U.S. teachers* or U.S. professors*) and (experiences in the U.S.* or study experiences in the United States* or life experiences in the U.S.* or college life in the U.S.*) and (teaching experiences* or working with Chinese students* or teaching students from China*) and (intercultural learning*) and (intercultural teaching*) and (interculturality*). Second, I examined the bibliographies of prior studies investigating corresponding topics (Liu & Fang, 2017; Sercu, 2006; Uzum, 2013; and Yazdanpanah, 2017), which also served as bases for developing questions for interviews with student and instructor-participants (that is for both collective case studies). Third, I contacted experts in the field to request information about any

other studies that I might not have located. Specifically, Professor Robert Stake whose approach to multiple case studies I apply onto this study, was of immense help suggesting relevant readings. I then conducted the study and upon having organized its findings, I was able to create this literature review in its current form.

Transformative Internationalization

While American universities frequently extend efforts to create intercultural understandings with their culturally rich and diverse students, how these efforts reflect forms and patterns of transformative internationalization is still to be amply scrutinized. For the purpose of this project, I specify that the process of internationalization can only be transformative if it involves symbiotic changes in students and instructors. Bartell (2003) takes it a step further and explains transformative internationalization as a result of synergistic changes in all aspects of the university, including its curricula, pedagogies and research agendas. However, the scope of this multiple case study can only provide insights into the experiences of four instructor-participants and six student-participants in their respective courses. In fact, transformative internationalization serves as a larger binding theme in the instructor-participants collective case study. It does not, thus, offer any insights into the administrative or structural sides of higher education to contexts outside of Grand Lake University.

Furthermore, engaging not only in internationalization but in transformative internationalization appears to matter in this study's context. For example, Mott-Smith (2013) claims that in order to understand Chinese undergraduate students' behaviors, it is crucial for instructors to understand not only the global context within which international students exist but also their unique cultures of learning. Thus, gaining insights into Chinese undergraduate students' educational needs and practices has the potential to make instructors better facilitators

of discussions, for instance (Mott-Smith, 2013). As I analyze and interpret experiences of both groups, that is Chinese undergraduate students and their instructors in the U.S. learning context, I take a comprehensive look at their reports. De facto, according to Wihlborg and Robson (2018), both research and teaching are to be conducted in "a more holistic, cross-disciplinary and transversal approach." It seems interesting and necessary to explore the four instructor-participants' insights into the abovementioned phenomena.

Interestingly, current research also points out that contrary to a common belief and everyone's expectations, Chinese undergraduate students oftentimes return home after their sojourns abroad unchanged, and with reinforced stereotypes for that matter (Jackson, 2018). According to Jackson (2018), these students do not indicate interests in utilizing their gained L2 proficiency to engage in intercultural dialogues upon return. Jackson (2018) attributes this occurrence to a lack of guided, critical reflection, on both students and instructors' sides, which he sees as having the potential to extend students' learning and optimize instructors' teaching experiences. Jin and Cortazzi (2017) develop this finding further, by stating that for such an outcome to take place, a long-term commitment to knowledge sharing and practicing cultures of learning would have to be made. Following the notion that Chinese undergraduate students - as do all international students - bring newer dimensions to the stock of sociocultural experiences as well as intellectual resources of a given institution, potential benefits of this stock to local communities, instructors and non-Chinese students seem immeasurable. Jin and Cortazzi (2017) find it crucial as such that institutions of higher education should take into account cultures of learning. They underline that teaching that is enquiry-focused on interculturality has become a part of higher education in multiple contexts already. In their analyses, Jin and Cortazzi (2017) hardly focus on the learning resources that instructors equally bring, or on the reciprocal nature

of the relationship, and how detailed knowledge of this relationship within the context of Chinese undergraduate students' stays abroad could inform the acquisition of effective and lifelong learning.

The key focus of research considering transformative internationalization of higher education appears to remain on reciprocity of changes in students and instructors alike. One way to start this process of mutually influenced changes, according to Madge, Raghuram, and Noxolo (2015), is to think beyond international students as a category. Grouping students into a larger category contributes to the concept of *othering*, which is not welcome where intercultural dialogue takes place. Instead, it might be a promising idea to ask foreign students what they might prefer to be referred to as. This kind of approach not only creates a safe space for interculturally responsive interactions or exchanges, it also highlights the fact that the responsibility for international students' experiences at universities abroad is shared between the students and their instructors (Madge et el., 2015). In sum, through this way, pedagogies are no longer limited by classroom walls, and instead function as intentional tools for transformative educational experiences.

Lastly, understanding internationalization not only as an increase in numbers of international students on U.S. campuses (Chung, Chen, Jung, & Li, 2018) but rather as a changing experience is crucial to any educational transformations. Meeting the needs of both Chinese undergraduate students and their instructors in the U.S. seems like an indispensable element to achieving interculturally responsive education. Lamberton and Ashton-Hay (2015) claim that bringing more international students whose first language is not English pressurizes the teaching staff to adapt to these students' diverse and often difficult to grasp learning styles, needs and backgrounds. The researchers suggest classes in Chinese culture and language as one

way to encourage instructors to enhance their intercultural competencies (Lamberton & Ashton-Hay, 2015). However, while these scholars argue that such processes encourage instructors to extend their efforts towards understanding students from China, others might argue that this would place enormous pressure on already-burdened instructors, which would hardly be beneficial. More so, students from mainland China might not be the only students in the classes these lecturers teach.

Instructors' Experiences with Chinese Undergraduate Students at U.S. Institutions

In the reviewed literature, we do not hear the voices, efforts, or challenges of instructors as often as we do those of Chinese undergraduate students. According to Abelmann and Kang (2014), both research and media focus largely on U.S. university administrators and Chinese undergraduate students, with secondary interest in what Chinese parents have to say. Interestingly, Wang (2012) notes that international students have the potential to help their instructors to recognize their own cultural background and values, which in turn may increase appreciation of different cultures around the world. Though Wang (2012) draws this interesting conclusion, he does not show how this could be done. My project seeks to fill in these gaps in the literature through an even exploration of both sides of this bilateral intercultural relationship.

In the next sections of this chapter, I discuss research literature pertaining to instructors' experiences with Chinese undergraduate students in the United States. I structure these sections according to the instructors' perceptions of Chinese undergraduate students, their implementation of cultures in contextually different courses, and their pedagogical approaches to the Chinese undergraduate students. Lastly, I present research findings on the interculturality of the instructors working with Chinese undergraduate students.

Perceptions

Any change starts at the level of human perception. We carry preconceived ideas, influenced by the multiple contexts we operate in that shape our opinions. Not surprisingly, instructors who have had experiences teaching Chinese undergraduate students in the United States also present certain emotions towards these students. For instance, a study by Frenzel et al. (2016) revealed that students' behaviors are linked with their instructors' affect, burnout, job satisfaction, and instructor self-efficacy. Where instructors felt prepared and confident in teaching, students exuded similar kinds of behaviors (Frenzel et al., 2016). Interestingly, Frenzel et al. (2016) underline that instructor anxiety seems to affect instructors' well-being more than the quality of their teaching. Thus, contextualization of instructors' emotional experiences is necessary as it allows for better understanding of their students, too.

Moreover, instructors are often told that if an international student has passed a required language requirement, they are strong writers in English as well as have the ability to thrive in new academic settings (Abelmann & Kang, 2014). Consequently, they might perceive their students as independent learners with critical thinking skills (Abelmann & Kang, 2014). This also leads to what instructors think motivates Chinese undergraduate students to come and study in the U.S. colleges and universities. Lately, instructors have expressed some understanding of the familial pressures Chinese undergraduate students undergo as the main impetus to study in the U.S. as well as to do well in their courses (Montgomery, 2017). Students are expected to succeed in the name of "group success" (Montgomery, 2017, p. 968) and to bring honor to their families by performing exceptionally well abroad. According to Montgomery (2017), instructors seem to be aware of these family expectations and resultative pressure that surrounds Chinese undergraduate students in the United States. Still, what it takes for a Chinese undergraduate

student to obtain a required test score in terms of their actual language proficiency and in terms of their performance in other courses is often unknown until a student attends a given instructor's class.

In addition, cultural and academic adjustment or its lack thereof seems to be one of the main changes instructors notice in their interactions with Chinese undergraduate students. All international students, not just the Chinese, need to make changes in response to living in a new country. For instance, Yan and Berliner (2009) identified four factors impeding Chinese undergraduate students' communication with their instructors in the U.S.: (1) language insufficiency, (2) the lack of initiative and autonomy, (3) verbal passiveness, and (4) indirect mode of communication (p. 945). According to Yan and Berliner (2009), switching between languages on a daily basis as well as struggling with the self-directed learning style in the United States (as opposed to the instructor-guided learning in China) clearly pose significant challenges to Chinese undergraduate students and their instructors. Also, these students need to work very hard to overcome their discomfort to conduct conversations with their instructors in the U.S. as well as to initiate such conversations in the first place. Following Yan and Berliner (2009), U.S. instructors attribute these cultural and academic challenges to the educational disparities between China and the U.S.

Furthermore, Biggs (1994) created the concept of "the paradox of the Chinese learner", which states that despite "Westerners' views" of Chinese undergraduate students as learning mechanically in exam-oriented school environments, these students actually surpass their Western peers, who are by contrast educated in student-centered autonomous environments. While Biggs (1994) and Du (2015) caution against the stereotyping of Chinese undergraduate students, they equally produce stereotypes of U.S. students and their cultures of learning.

According to Dervin (2010), one way this could be avoided is if U.S. institutions implemented simple corrections to existing misconceptions, avoid essentialism, and tried not to perceive Chinese undergraduate students as a homogenous group that behaves differently from Western students. Shi (2006) notes that Western scholars tend towards either seeing Chinese students in their classrooms as passive, quiet and submissive or as open-minded, inquisitive and active thinkers (see Table 1.2 in Introduction), and never as representatives of both types of characteristics (listed in Table 1.2). Going further, Shi (2006) underlines that such a dichotomy might reinforce practices of *othering* and treating Chinese undergraduate students as not only different but deficient in comparison to their U.S. peers. She concludes by seeing today's Chinese undergraduate students in the United States as representing features of both, i.e., the traditional and the new (Shi, 2006). In sum, the above scholars encourage multiplicity when engaging with Chinese undergraduate students which implies taking cognizance of their national, regional, economic, class, cultural and familial backgrounds.

Overall, when dealing with understanding students from other cultures, instructors in the United States can rely on interculturality as a tool to help them to navigate their perceptions of Chinese undergraduate students (Ferri, 2018). An intercultural approach has the potential to allow instructors to join conversations on *othering*, and in the process, their long-standing views of Chinese undergraduate students, wherever applicable, might change. This is valid not just in the case of U.S. instructors and Chinese undergraduate students, but also international students studying in a second language and international educators or instructors. Instead of focusing on differences, Ferri (2018) encourages instructors to draw on diversities of cultures of learning as assets that Chinese undergraduate (or foreign) students contribute to their classrooms.

Cultures

When two or more cultures meet in the same space, in this case a classroom, according to Dervin (2016b), cultural mixing (or mélange) is bound to take place. Dervin (2016b), who sees cultural mixing as an indispensable element of interculturality in education, defines this phenomenon as a situation "whereby a culture is influenced and transformed by another culture" (p. 115). Researchers are encouraged to look at exceptions, instabilities and processes rather than structures when working with multiple cultures (Dervin, 2016b). Unsurprisingly, instructors at U.S. schools face cultural mixings on a daily basis, due to having substantial numbers of Chinese undergraduate students, as well as those from other countries, present on their campuses, but also having to instruct these students in their classrooms.

To begin with, working with students from China requires not only culturally responsive but even more so interculturally responsive classroom environments. Interculturally responsive pedagogy encourages the notion that students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are able to succeed academically just as much as their U.S. peers (Farinde-Wu, Glover, & Williams, 2017). For some instructors, the lack of knowledge about Chinese undergraduate students' backgrounds or limited exposure to these students' backgrounds might create a barrier to implement fundamentally sound interculturally responsive practices. On the contrary, other instructors are able to use strategies that encourage inclusiveness of students from other cultures, such as multicultural content delivery, student-first learning or establishing familial-style classroom culture (Farinde-Wu et al., 2017). For instance, Chinese undergraduate students might be reluctant to participate in group work or group discussions due to the fact that their society is governed by different rules of effective group participation (Mak & Barker, 2006). In addition, instructors are also bound by university policies, regulations, and procedures

when it comes to the ways they conduct their classrooms, too. For example, the manual for the ESL instructors at GLU states that instructors of a given skill, in this study's case: reading, operate under the Reading Curriculum. The same document names student success as the premise on which teaching activities are to be based. Another document, available to the public through the GLU's website, lists the responsibilities of all instructors teaching undergraduate students. Providing high quality teaching is one of them. In sum, understanding not only how students' cultural and educational backgrounds affect their behaviors in U.S. classrooms but also the institutional regulations instructors need to follow seems key to conducting classrooms in interculturally responsive ways.

What is more, if cultures are to mix in a classroom, the way instructors handle their classroom management including ways to maintain discipline, as well as the disposition of students, matters if it is to allow for such a mélange. According to Dicke, Elling, Schmeck, and Leutner (2015), general educational research shows that utilizing classroom management strategies has a positive influence on student behavior and their discipline. If that is true and bearing in mind the cultures of learning Chinese students come from, these students would benefit from having a clear structure in a classroom. For instructors, having an established management approach also decreases their reality shock (especially for new instructors or those just starting to work with students from China) and their workload, and fosters their retention (Dicke et al., 2015). Instructors gain opportunities to successfully implement diverse cultural elements in their teaching practices where structure is clearly laid out, as Chinese undergraduate students have been taught to follow structured teaching.

Further, hybridized approaches to Chinese undergraduate students' experiences in the U.S. offer a lending hand to their instructors as well. Understanding that not only the students but

also the instructors are placed in between two educational worlds might decrease cultural clashes, too. Bhabha (1996) coined hybridity and defined it as an in-between space, where constant negotiations of meaning and identity take pace, a third space. One way to see hybridity emerge is to allow for the engagement of both the Chinese undergraduate students and their instructors in the United States in situations where new views challenge the essentialist views, i.e., those of students and instructors identities remaining static and fixed (Schmidt, Berynets, Wu, & Scott, 2018), for instance where conflicts arise and are resolved. Such third space is open to new experiences for both instructors and students and encourages crossing cultural boundaries in a classroom and outside.

Lastly, when discussing cultural mélange, we need to look at how cultures of learning actually mix. The idea of cultures of learning itself suggests that learning is cultural (Cortazzi & Jin, 2013). Basically, members of dissimilar cultural communities are likely to have different perspectives, expectations, and values in regard to how learning or teaching are done. Understanding of cultural commonalities and differences in teaching leads to the development of successful techniques of mediating between cultures of learning. Yet, as Cortazzi and Jin (2013) rightfully state, "cultures are complex, dynamic, changing, with (obviously) shared common values but (less obviously) internal diversity of recognized differences" (p. 2). Hence, allowing Chinese undergraduate students to explore the unknown elements of U.S. cultures of learning, as well as instructors to familiarize themselves with the Chinese cultures of learning, creates a welcoming and safe environment for cultural mélange.

Pedagogies

According to Abelmann and Kang (2014), many U.S. college and university instructors report the need to adapt to Chinese undergraduate students instead of having to transform them into democratic citizens. Some instructors claim to have substantially changed their teaching practices only to accommodate Chinese undergraduate students in their classes (Abelmann & Kang, 2014), which might in turn carry consequences for domestic students (such as feeling neglected, etc.). Tange and Jensen (2012) state that instructors might find accepting and acknowledging alternative pedagogical approaches, especially when explaining complex theories, helpful to guide international students through the learning process. Most importantly, both constructive and challenging learning experiences might lead to embarrassment, frustration, disappointment, and consequently disruptive behavior (Tange & Jensen, 2012). Yet, the question remains: Is it equitable to ask instructors to change their teaching approaches to this particular student population?

Furthermore, as Erichsen and Bolliger (2011) notice, students construct their knowledge when they are positioned in active roles in a classroom and when they perceive their learning environment as safe. For instructors to assist international students in succeeding in their courses, Huang (2012) suggests that it is vital to provide facts that are culturally sensitive, with multiple cues (such as time and space) to engage students in classroom activities. One productive strategy to engage Chinese undergraduate students is to brief them and provide them with pre-reading material (Evans & Morrison, 2011). The researchers see this as potentially reducing stress and anxiety in the classroom. In fact, having an open pedagogy of care and *kindness* (discussed in detail in the later section of this chapter) might increase instances of Chinese undergraduate students speaking or participating in classes.

Most published sources of information about instructors' approaches to Chinese undergraduate students seem to depict the challenges that teaching this group of students entails (e.g., Paldy, 2015). For instance, instructional problems stemming from large numbers of international students in smaller classes where instructors face multiple challenges such as students not being able to comprehend the assignment, not used to open-ended classroom discussions or simply being accustomed to regurgitating facts for the sake of higher exam scores (Paldy, 2015). Thus, through this project, I intend to also explore the successful outcomes of working with Chinese undergraduate students that their instructor-participants at Grand Lake University reported.

There is a prevalent belief that Chinese undergraduate students, as does the Chinese education system, place an exorbitant importance on tests (Yan & Berliner, 2016). Some instructors in the United States, however, seem to understand Chinese undergraduate students' pressure to score high, especially on high-stakes exams. Thus, contextualization remains the best approach to teaching Chinese undergraduate students, as contexts influence instructors' decisions as to what they choose to prioritize in their pedagogies (Clark-Gareca & Gui, 2019). Additionally, with testing oftentimes comes the occurrence of cheating or plagiarism. Chinese undergraduate students are frequently perceived as cheating or plagiarizing, especially where creative thinking is required. However, James, Miller, and Wyckoff (2019) explain these students' behaviors by reminding us that the Chinese believe that there is a single correct answer to every question. Frankly, it is the instructor who represents the ultimate fountain of knowledge, hence is seen as the one representing that one correct answer. Thus, when Chinese undergraduate students are faced with open responses to questions either on tests or assignments, they are likely to turn to plagiarism to form their hypotheses (Bikowski & Gui, 2018; James et al., 2019). For

example, GLU's website clearly states plagiarism policy and is a part of students' code of honor. While all undergraduate students are required not only to read it but also to adhere to it in their academic endeavors, individual instructors can choose whether to elaborate on it in their syllabi or not. Some of the instructors' frustrations could be resolved by providing them with training and workshops focused on understanding different cultures of learning that Chinese undergraduate students come from.

While U.S. colleges are known for developing learners' autonomy, Chinese schools do not see autonomy as an essential element for a well-rounded education. This creates a challenging classroom situation for Western or U.S. instructors who might not be aware of the reality. In this light, Lin and Reinders (2019) see a variation in U.S. instructors' beliefs about their roles and professional knowledge about how to promote learners' autonomy. While there are instructors who understand learner autonomy as teaching students learning strategies, "research evidence suggests that explicit instruction in strategy […] does not show that this process is necessarily effective in enabling learners to develop the capacity for autonomous learning" (Lin & Reinders, 2019, p. 85). Lin and Reinders (2019) also pose another dilemma resulting from the culture of enabling students to take their learning in their own hands. They find that allowing students to take their learning in their own hands creates a situation where an instructor is no longer in control of the process. That makes some instructors nervous and less confident. The problem arises where Chinese undergraduate students are given autonomy in every learning process in the U.S. Even if their instructors utilize the same teaching techniques with Chinese undergraduate students as they do with domestic undergraduate students, it quickly becomes clear that students from China need extra guidance and extensive accommodations. The abovementioned dilemmas show gaps in Lin and Reinders's (2019) participants' "understanding

of how learner autonomy can be promoted" (p. 85). Whether instructors in the U.S. are aware firstly, and secondly, ready to provide such accommodations to the Chinese undergraduate students in their classes is a dilemma that needs to be explored.

Another issue seems to be Chinese undergraduate students' usage of Chinese in class where English is presumed or required. Instructors also differ in terms of how much native language they allow in their classes. While some do not mind at all when Chinese undergraduate students use Chinese to discuss whatever topic is being taught, others might see it as rude and would advocate for English-only policies on campus. Translanguaging pedagogy (i.e., providing input in one language and allowing for output in another for the sake of comprehending the material under study [Wang & Curdt-Christiansen, 2019]) is not widespread yet. As Wang and Curdt-Christiansen (2019) remind us, it is the "deficiency" in English that might ironically lead to compromises where instructors allow the use of both English and Chinese in their classes, thereby contributing to the implementation of translanguaging techniques in classrooms. Also, by taking away students' important processing tools (that is their first language), instructors might be in fact restricting their linguistic resources (Holdway & Hitchcock, 2018). However, one idea that might help to expand the net of translanguaging in U.S. education seems to be creating new educational policies (maybe even on a classroom level first) through a collaborative process that would give students agency in negotiating their linguistic repertoires (Garcia, Flores, & Chu, 2011). In general, by allowing students to rely on their mother tongues, instructors not only accelerate disciplinary learning but also ensure their Chinese undergraduate students' comprehension of even the hardest of topics.

Finally, students' success and learning satisfaction, Chinese undergraduate students' alike, need to remain as instructors' main focus (van der Zanden, Denessen, Cillessen, & Meijer,

2018). In fact, instructors' teaching is often assessed based on how the students perform either on a final exam or throughout the duration of the entire course or how high or low they rate the courses they take. As such, van der Zander et al. (2018) found that students' social integration and acceptance at university are the main predictors of international students' success. These researchers' study also offered a valuable conclusion that "success in one domain can contribute to success in another" (p. 74), but this assumption might not be generalized upon all students, as their experiences are highly individual (van der Zanden et al., 2018). This is important for instructors' pedagogical approaches in the instances where they might want to modify these with regard to the students' personal needs.

Interculturality

Utilizing interculturality (defined here as the approach to others that is characterized by mutual responsiveness, appreciation and curiosity, its main goal being bilateral, i.e., mutual, communication) appears more visible in language classrooms than it is in other contexts (Tolosa et al., 2018). Instructors often redefine culture as "not only the facts but the thinking behind the cultural practices" (Tolosa et al., 2018, p. 233). By pointing out cultural commonalities and differences to students, instructors create space for reflective practice for him or herself, too. According to Tolosa et al. (2018), critical examination of one's own beliefs and practices leads to adjustment in one's teaching approaches and results in deeper understanding of one's professional identities (i.e., those of an instructor). "A possible way forward to the challenge of developing the intercultural is to include an intercultural dimension in pre-service and in-service language teacher education programmes" (Tolosa et al., 2018, p. 234). Thus, if educational programs capitalized on the awareness of both difference and sameness, instructors could use this awareness as a starting point to blend cultures with content.

By the same token, teaching students from multiple parts of the world, and bringing an array of cultural and linguistic backgrounds to a classroom, requires an intercultural approach. It is often done by differing expectations based on context students are coming from and keeping an open mind towards learning from those students (Bovill, Jordan, & Watters, 2015). Instructors who practice modelling pedagogies seem to understand what it takes to create intercultural classrooms. "Key to successful transnational teaching partnerships is reciprocity" (Bovill et al., 2015, p. 19). Reciprocity also happens to be an indispensable element of interculturality. Instructors work under institutionally established student learning goals, too. GLU's website outlines five such goals: (1) analytical thinking, (2) cultural understanding as a path to cultural diversity, (3) effective citizenship that solves societal problems in ethical ways, (4) effective communication, and (5) integrated reasoning. Still, Bovill et al. (2015) caution against using culture to excuse resistance towards change. Instructors who include interculturality in their pedagogies seem to be open to transforming their teaching approaches. This is even more crucial when teaching Chinese undergraduate students, since they come with very different cultural and educational experiences from those in the United States. Learning from these students has the potential to not only create opportunities for interculturality but also to transform these students' experiences, classrooms, and instructors alike.

One of the challenges in working with students from China seems to be the ability to elicit their classroom participation. One explanation might be an issue of applying the U.S. classroom practices onto students who are new to such practices and who come from contradicting cultures of learning. Chen and Yang (2017) report two types of instructors. (1) Those who do not recognize the cultures of their learners. (2) Those who do recognize their learners' cultures but do not apply them in their teaching. Yet, understanding Chinese

undergraduate students' cultures of learning does not come naturally to some instructors (Chen & Yang, 2017). The researchers provide three steps to developing one's interculturality, namely knowing one's students and stimulating them to learn beyond the scope of the lesson and the scope of their cultures and participating in professional development opportunities. Thus, raising instructors' awareness (however possible) might be a promising idea to make interculturality a normality.

Ultimately, even though scholars have revealed what instructors need to know to develop interculturally responsive classrooms, instructors often struggle to create meaningful learning experiences for their students (Smolcic & Arends, 2017). This is a complex challenge that might also discourage some instructors from making conscious attempts at interculturally transforming their pedagogies. Smolcic and Arends (2017) claim instructors cannot build cultural awareness without meaningful interactions with *The Other*, awareness of the dynamism and intricacies of cultural identities, and empathy. Creating opportunities to build relationships with their Chinese undergraduate students through teaching cultural concepts and modelling guided cultural analyses seems like an initial step to building interculturally rich classrooms.

Kindness

Kindness, empathy, humanity, or affect, etc. need to exist at the core of all pedagogies and learning experiences (Loreman, 2011). However, within contexts of learning and teaching or education more broadly, the reality is uneven. According to Loreman (2011), education that is not guided by *kindness* complicates and constrains the learning process. Why are these abovementioned elements important to pedagogy? *Kindness* is hard to define in precise terms though it appears to be a curative in any human relationship (Loreman, 2011). In this project, I define *kindness* as a quality of being human characterized by generosity, consideration,

friendliness and empathy. Since teaching is a human relationship, *kindness* needs to stand at its roots if one wants to conduct an effective pedagogical process. For instance, according to Loreman (2011), an instructor that allows a struggling student extra time to complete an assignment reflects such an instructor's belief that it is important to be kind to students. It is crucial to note, however, that *kindness* can only take place in an environment where *kindness* already exists (Loreman, 2011) or where it is considered as a critical value in the education of young people. That is to say, ideologies of *kindness* and developing personal *kindness* need to precede any acts of *kindness* in a classroom (Loreman, 2011). Thus, creating *kindness* in a classroom depends on whether this value is entrenched in a particular educational worldview or not and whether an instructor's resulting acts of personal *kindness* transfer into their teaching realm. *Kindness,* however, is instrumental to achieving harmony which is an embracing notion in traditional Chinese worldview.

Gao (1998) claims that to achieve successful communication, Chinese cultures place foremost importance on harmony (*he,* in Chinese). "The Chinese term *he* (和) stands for harmony, peace, unity, *kindness,* and amiableness" (Gao, 1998, p. 169). Thus, one of the elements under the umbrella of harmony is indeed *kindness*. It can be achieved if one maintains appropriate relationships by accepting established hierarchies in a society (Gao, 1998). Also, back in Confucius' times, the Chinese had already perceived education as the means to cultivate moral virtues (Hui, 2005). The five moral virtues were benevolence, righteousness, propriety, intelligence, and honesty (Hui, 2005, p. 21). Later on, one of Confucius's followers, Xun Zi, "wrote about *ji shan cheng de,* accumulating *kindness* so that *kindness* can be added to become a moral virtue" (Gao, 1998, p. 21). What Hui (2005) also mentions in terms of harmony between people from different strata of a given society, such as students and their instructors, is that "the

existence of the individual is for the purpose of living harmoniously with <others> in a family or in society" (p. 19). This could be one reason why the Chinese aspire to live in harmony with family members, neighbors, and figures of authority, including instructors. According to Gao (1998), any act of communication needs to take *kindness* into account or else the natural balance of peaceful societal relations is likely to get disturbed. *Kindness* in this sense is seen as instrumental to harmony. Given Chinese students' cultures of learning, that might be one explanation as to why Chinese undergraduate students tend to respect their instructors.

Furthermore, *kindness* in a classroom has also been problematized as a shift from "thinking of" to "thinking with" (Magnet, Mason, & Trevenen, 2014). The "thinking with" approach does not exclude criticism where it is constructive, thus proving useful for classroom environments. While helpful in community building, it might not be confused with leniency (Magnet et al., 2014). "Here, kindness is understood as a pedagogical strategy to rearrange our engagements with texts and each other […]" (Magnet et al., 2014, p. 11). This idea links with Dervin's (2016b) essential element of interculturality, namely failure. For instance, this strategy to "think with" the students can be applied by teaching whole books instead of chosen excerpts. "It refuses easy or reductional readings […]. It also honors the complete project of the book, paying attention to the way that different chapters riff or expand on the book's main argument" (Magnet et al., 2014, p. 10). In this example, *kindness* serves as a pedagogical strategy to rearrange the ways students engage with texts as well as with each other (Magnet et al., 2014). Using *kindness* to actively connect with the students, for instance, by getting to know them and about their backgrounds, engages their sense of personhood. This is particularly significant to students from other countries, for whom building connections with domestic peers and

instructors might prove difficult without culturally diverse ways of understanding, showing, and recognizing *kindness*.

Lastly, we might want to consider practicing *kindness* on ourselves. According to Birkett (2013), the ability to view one's life experiences as a part of a larger human experience and to express such *kindness* towards oneself is believed to have been similarly instilled in Chinese undergraduate students as in their American counterparts. This seems surprising given that Chinese cultures are known for representing higher levels of stress for students (Birkett, 2013), therefore do not strike one as especially self-caring or kind to oneself. Still, Chinese undergraduate students who choose to further their education in the United States, experience varied expectations of self-care. Understanding such cultural expectations could go a long way to enhance intercultural learning.

Chinese Undergraduate Students' Experiences in the United States

The Chinese international student population in the U.S. has been growing at different paces ever since the 1950s. In the academic year 2018/2019 there were 148,880 undergraduate students from China enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities (Institute of International Education, 2019), comprising the largest ethnic group of international undergraduate students (33.7%). Interestingly, international education takes on a form of "cultural capital" for Chinese undergraduate students (Chung et al., 2018), as a tool that helps them to maintain a certain social status. Coming back to China with credentials from the U.S. often positions Chinese undergraduate students at an advantage when seeking employment (Yan & Berliner, 2016). According to Chung et al. (2018), this is because most Chinese perceive U.S. education as a world-class cosmopolitan education that nurtures such students with rich international

experiences and thus enables them with wide global influence. The question is whether this approach to studying in the United States is a good goal to strive for.

In terms of choices of majors, following previous generations, Chinese undergraduate students have been known to choose the natural sciences, engineering, computer programing, biochemistry and other science-oriented subjects as their majors in the U.S. (Yan & Berliner, 2016). However, they have recently begun to enroll in business, management, education, and communication, too. Since 2010, business and management have reached a peak as the most popular academic areas for this group of students in the U.S. (Yan & Berliner, 2016). Enquiries with Grand Lake University's International Center statistician revealed that the case of Chinese undergraduate students at GLU is not much different from the main trends when choosing majors in the U.S., that is their first choice is indeed business followed by economics.

Preparedness and Motivations

Notably, preparedness for change (see Baumbaugh, 2015) affects Chinese undergraduate students as it does with other international students in terms of their experiences within U.S. academic cultures. It is apparent that when studying in a foreign country there are several aspects that have the power to influence their experiences in the new milieu that students might prepare for. These aspects often include but are by no means limited to new responsibilities, unfamiliar environment, different language for daily usage, and diverse cultural norms (Mustaffa & Ilias, 2013). It is also worth mentioning that each university in the U.S. has its own organization, workload, expectations, and faculty-student relations to which Chinese undergraduate students would have to adapt in order to succeed, too. Baumbaugh (2015) claims that the more prepared the students come to a new institution, the smoother the adaptation process. According to Machart (2016), other factors frequently mentioned as crucial in understanding the new

surroundings are individual motivation, maturity, readiness for the experience and flexibility of one's personality.

To get thoroughly prepared for studies in the United States, Chinese undergraduate students often broadly utilize services of educational agencies. This, consequently, changes the idea of studying abroad as a reserve for the elite into one accessible to masses (Altbach, 2015), as more and more students, not necessarily wealthy, are gaining access to such agencies. With the omnipresent information about schools in the U.S., Chinese undergraduate students find it challenging to discover reliable information about what earning a degree in a different country might actually entail. Oftentimes agents capitalize on these students' confusion and provide information based on a given school's ranking and general reputation which they obtained from those Chinese undergraduate students who had graduated from U.S. schools and returned to China. The biggest training schools in China have been adding educational agencies as a part of their services to somewhat oblivious Chinese undergraduate students willing to study in a different country (Zhang & Hagedorn, 2011). Zhang and Hagedorn (2011) claim that students who decide against using agents in their pre-sojourn preparations do so because of relatives who studied abroad and who provided them with first-hand information.

Interestingly, as Falcone (2017) states, Chinese undergraduate students from rural areas are less likely to get admitted to top Chinese colleges and universities than their peers from the cities. This, in turn, creates an opportunity for educational agents to recruit students from rural areas in China. The agents' main responsibility is then to "assist students achieve their desired outcome" (Falcone, 2017, p. 252). These facts lead one to believe that Chinese undergraduate students who want to complete their degrees abroad often have no choice but to use educational

agencies services. That is, if they want to remain competitive in a large pool of peers who aspire to study in the United States.

Likewise, multiple publications have addressed Chinese undergraduate students' motivation to study in the United States (e.g., Butler, 2015; Brzezinski, 1994; Chao, Hegarty, Angelidis, & Lu, 2017; Wang, 1992). In the past, the main impetus to study in the U.S. seemed to have been strongly related to the switch resulting from a political situation in China in 1949. When China opened its doors to the rest of the world, more positive images of the West started appearing to prospective international students. Appealing images from the West, depicting its technological and social advancement, juxtaposed the demanding conditions of living in China (Brzezinski, 1994). Wang (1992) calls it a "push-oriented" trend, in which Chinese undergraduate students are lured by the opportunities in the U.S. and a lack of them in China. What is more, Brzezinski (1994) delineates additional reasons that drive Chinese undergraduate students towards U.S. education, some of them being the prestige gained by earning a diploma from a U.S. institution; the personal appeal of values in the U.S. as often portrayed in the media; and the societal respect that seems to be attached to foreign education in China. Studying in a different country gives Chinese undergraduate students the chance to obtain international education and to be ready for a global marketplace.

Today, Chinese undergraduate students seem motivated to study in the United States mostly by opportunities to broaden their cultural and educational horizons as well as their parents' encouragements. Chao at al. (2017) list Chinese undergraduate students' top three motivations to complete their degrees abroad as: the hopes to gain new perspectives on their own country, the inability to attend a good school in China due to low scores from the National College Entry Examination (in Chinese, *gaokao*), and finally a belief that it is easier to get

admitted to a foreign school than it is to a Chinese one. Better educational system and better life conditions are no longer listed as priorities, which indicates a shift in Chinese undergraduate students' motivations to study in a different country, compared with previous decades. Also, parents' encouragement or familial pressure seems to be a strong contributor to Chinese undergraduate students' choices of colleges and universities abroad. In some cases, parents' push towards learning English for years might inhibit their children's interests in other languages and cultures, as it is likely to cause tensions and raise pressure levels that Chinese undergraduate students often do not know how to release (Butler, 2015).

Interestingly, whether or not Chinese undergraduate students decide to return to China once their programs in the U.S. are over remains a fluctuating tendency. It also links to these students' motivations to study in a different country in the first place. Some students come to the United States with a clearly set goal of returning to China upon graduation. However, this goal often changes as a result of these students' experiences at a U.S. school. Cheung and Xu (2015) named a few factors that contribute to Chinese undergraduate students' post-graduation plans. For example, students might be worried that career advancement in China depends highly on connections (in Chinese, *guanxi*) rather than merit. Also, students might dislike the fact that many working environments in China are conducive to politics rather than innovation and professional development (Cheung & Xu, 2015). As Li (2004) rightly stated, the key to attracting outstanding personnel lies in wholesome environments rather than in high salaries. In reality, none of the literature reviewed for this study mentions Chinese undergraduate students being worried about their future income if they return to China. All in all, decisions on going back or building a new life in the U.S. are based on several factors that Chinese undergraduate students ponder over before taking a leap.

Language

Even though Chinese undergraduate students who decide to study in the U.S. spend considerable time and effort to learn English, they are still entering a new space where using their second language seems pivotal to their experiences. This combines with the fact that English language classrooms do not prepare Chinese undergraduate students adequately for their studies abroad (Rawlings & Sue, 2013), some students find it difficult to understand their instructors and classmates' accents (Chen, 2000), which might lead to a lack of interest in interacting with the locals. Accents, however, might not be the only limiting factor. Other factors such as vocabulary, idiomatic expression, speech rate, or the speed with which native speakers speak, could be added. More so, Wang, Ahn, Kim, and Lin-Siegler (2017) raise further concerns that Chinese undergraduate students have regarding communication with the native speakers of English as stemming from these students' lack of faith in their language skills as well as their cultural knowledge. In such situations, interacting with co-nationals might also make Chinese undergraduate students further isolated from U.S. cultures, consequently impacting their English proficiency in negative ways (Yan & Berliner, 2016). Thus, even sufficient language skills do not assure for successful communication with speakers of languages other than Chinese, as sociocultural and emotional factors in interactions with U.S. peers and instructors might also play a role.

Furthermore, Cheng and Erben (2012) claim that Chinese undergraduate students might suffer from language anxiety that may not be appropriately addressed by the hosting institutions. Class sizes of 60 or more are common in China, causing most teaching efforts to be placed on writing, grammar, and reading, leaving speaking out. Many Chinese undergraduate students learn by rote and have very limited opportunities to speak in class. This causes struggles for

these students in the U.S. as well as their instructors, who are at the receiving end of their learning efforts, where communication is a valuable element not only of second language acquisition but also of successful transitions to the new educational environment. A large number of Chinese undergraduate students appear worried about potential grammatical mistakes and whether or not their expressions would be deemed culturally acceptable (Cheng & Erben, 2012). Cheng and Erben (2012) also claim that Chinese undergraduate students feel anxious to be understood by U.S. citizens and as a result avoid using English as much as possible. In certain social situations, Chinese undergraduate students tend to bring a friend for translation purposes rather than risk being misunderstood. Equally, they tend to avoid direct communication with their instructors and only speak with U.S. citizens in short conversations where the possibility of errors is limited. Gu (2016) also mentions other language challenges such as difficulties in understanding slang and humor, which indicate that low English proficiency significantly affects Chinese undergraduate students' effective adaptability to the U.S. cultures. According to Swagler and Ellis (2003), the lack of contextual knowledge and cultural background, limited chances to practice English both back home and in the U.S., and inadequate language training seem to be the most prominent factors that constrain Chinese undergraduate students' smooth transitions into the U.S. educational realm while also creating pedagogical dilemmas for their instructors.

Next, the risk of cultural representations and of culturism are recognized as potential factors when working with international students. For this study's purpose, I define culturism as using culture as an explanation of everything a person from one culture does, thinks, etc. without considering other factors that might influence who a person is. Thus, it seems important to explore whether Chinese undergraduate students or their instructors actually experience or use any culturist language as well as the particularities of such language. Whether instructors

recognize culturism in their own pedagogies, or Chinese undergraduate students in their classroom discourses, and alternatively, how they deal with, or approach it, also poses a valid question for this study to attempt to answer. Developing understandings of such instances would yield complex insights into the learning and teaching encounters. On the whole, Chinese undergraduate students may lack understanding and proper knowledge of the U.S. society (Gu, 2016). Due to having grown under the strict hand of a communist educational system, some Chinese undergraduate students might have developed negative characterizations of the U.S. society, too. As Baumbaugh (2015) states, prominent stereotypical views towards both China and the U.S. have a potential to affect the experiences of both groups of this study's participants.

In addition, the issue of having to exist and operate in a second language, for Chinese undergraduate students – English, has also created more chances for "cram schools" in China as well as placed more importance on exams. Lin (2020) claims that "cram schools can serve as the venues for students to build a peer community that can turn overseas studies into a fad" (p. 14). In the same line of thought, students who can afford "cram schools" hold an advantage over those who cannot get into prestigious colleges and universities abroad as they are also more familiar with various studying techniques (Lin, 2020), which they can then implement in their college projects. Yet, the stereotypes of 'exam-crazy' Asian students might still exist (Rappleye & Komatsu, 2018). When the results of international students' achievements are released, such images are quickly used to explain away the differences between them and their "Western" counterparts. It is not the essentialized view of all Chinese undergraduate students being high achievers, but rather their cultures of learning that contribute to this stereotype. The exam preparation practices in China would have to be examined further in relation to their performance abroad in order to draw solid conclusions in this matter.

Lastly, providing a positive experience for Chinese undergraduate students at U.S. institutions needs to be an important mission for instructors, administrators and institutions in general. GLU's website also lists student success as the main goal for its instructors. Writing assignments, reading academic articles and functioning in a second language can be daunting tasks that every Chinese student faces in the U.S. Still, based on motivational surveys, research has shown that in comparison to their domestic peers, Chinese undergraduate students present higher levels of motivation to succeed and that they come across as more engaged than their domestic peers (Lillyman & Bennett, 2014). Therefore, the fact that English is these students' second language should not be understood as their disadvantage. In light of these findings, Roy (2013) recommends that U.S. instructors incorporate emotional intelligence into their pedagogical strategies. Such alteration, together with instructors' willingness to accommodate Chinese undergraduate students' unique cultures of learning, can help these students to achieve success despite the fact they are studying in a language so different from their mother tongue.

Beliefs and Feelings

Chinese undergraduate students, as any student would, hold certain beliefs about what studying in the U.S. might entail. Such beliefs often relate to their language, their assimilation to new academic and living environments, and their social life (Zhang-Wu, 2018). Any potential language struggles these students face could also be minimized if only the fact that they are studying in their second language was considered. According to Heng (2017), students from China often feel like their instructors and U.S. peers do not take their backgrounds into consideration. In addition, Chinese undergraduate students do not feel included in classroom discussions and prefer that their instructors extended direct efforts to help them to participate more actively (Heng, 2017). According to Heng (2017), the greatest need Chinese undergraduate

students who come to further their education in the United States have is the need to belong. Not only does it motivate many of them to complete their degrees abroad in the first place, but it also impacts their emotional well-being during the sojourn (Duan, Ho, Siu, Li, & Zhang, 2015). Interestingly, students from China tend to choose against self-segregation, which directly contradicts stereotypes of them being anti-social and unable to assimilate (Heng, 2017). Chinese undergraduate students want to interact with their U.S. peers and instructors but often find it challenging due to what they perceive as lacking knowledge of cultural references (Will, 2016). The abovementioned beliefs likely stem from what Chinese undergraduate students might have heard from their countrymates who returned to China after graduating from a U.S. school, media coverage, or the stories they might have heard from their educational agents.

Moreover, Chinese undergraduate students tend to believe that a good instructor is kind, humorous, warm hearted, patient, friendly, helpful, etc. (Boshier, 2017). They pay attention to instructors' affective characteristics more than professionalism, for instance. Not surprisingly, in Boshier (2017, p. 219), words like "motherly" and "fatherly" were used to describe Chinese undergraduate students' favorite instructors. This is interesting in the context of Chinese undergraduate students coming to the United States, where being professional is what most instructors strive for first and foremost. That is not to say that they do not intend to be kind to their students. How Chinese undergraduate students see their instructors affects how they engage in a classroom, too. These students oftentimes gravitate towards kind instructors and if they do not consider their U.S. instructors kind, they are likely to stay reserved and keep to themselves in class (Yu & Moskal, 2018). This, in turn, adds onto their academic pressures in situations where something is not clear, and instead of asking for help they would rather keep quiet. If instructors encourage students to express themselves in kind ways, they are more confident to do so, as

opposed to when instructors are strict or unkind (Haarms, Holtzman, Xue, & Darbyshire, 2018). Consequently, the emotional ties that Chinese undergraduate students hold towards their instructors as well as their beliefs about what a good instructor is like, might make their intercultural experiences in the U.S. problematic.

Societies

Chinese undergraduate students in the U.S. have reported a number of enriching experiences when it comes to the social realm. What these students understand by "good adjustment" is the ability to fit completely into living in the United States and regular successful interactions with the locals (Lu et al., 2018). This reflects these students' yearning to truly participate in the host culture. One strategy that helps Chinese undergraduate students to reach intercultural adaptation in the U.S. is making conscious efforts to communicate with others, be it domestic or international students, faculty members, university staff or local residents (Swagler & Ellis, 2003). Yet, there seems to be more research that focuses on challenging sociocultural experiences of Chinese undergraduate students in the U.S. Cultural distance, different habits, different notions of friendship and diverse ways of handling interaction are major issues for Chinese undergraduate students in the U.S. (Spencer-Oatey, Dauber, Jing, & Lifei, 2017). For instance, Yan and Berliner (2016) see Chinese undergraduate students' dedication to scholarship as motivating them to study harder than their U.S. classmates. Yet, such devotion to become excellent oftentimes isolates them from social activities (Yan & Berliner, 2016). According to Yan and Berliner (2016), failure to fulfil high parental expectations to excel not only causes stress and anxiety but also brings disgrace to the students' family and even entire ethnic groups. The researchers state that as far as cultural backgrounds are considered, when Chinese undergraduate students enter a new environment, they are unable to grasp, predict or control

other people's behavior, since familiar cues disappear in the new surroundings. This, as a result, might make them confused of their roles, expectations, and values (Yan & Berliner, 2016). Unable to cope with multiple pressures, Chinese undergraduate students might withdraw into their frustrations privately, therefore, potentially failing to overcome the obstacles they face.

Spending time with other students from China seems to be one strategy most Chinese undergraduate students apply to their sojourns. Yet, Gu (2016) reports that most students in his study of Chinese international students' perceptions of their intercultural adaptability claimed that making friends and communicating with locals in their social circles helped them to improve intercultural skills and aided their adaptability. The most common behaviors to connect with the locals, as discussed by Gu (2016), were: attending social events (mostly organized by a given school), attending classes, having U.S. roommates, and being introduced by landlords. Therefore, those Chinese undergraduate students who put forward active efforts to confront new situations, tended to fit better into a foreign context.

On a similar note, when discussing the experiences of Chinese undergraduate students in the U.S., their use of social media and its importance in those students' endeavors cannot be omitted. Prior literature shows that Chinese undergraduate students' utilization of large social networks increases their adaptation to the U.S. (e.g., Fu & Izuma, 2018; Lee, Lee, & Jang, 2011). For instance, Lee et al. (2011) found that even though the Internet neither directly facilitates nor impedes international students' adaptation to the new educational settings, utilizing it for local social networking eventually leads to a better social adjustment. WeChat, a Chinese application similar to the U.S.' WhatsApp, seems to be the most prevalent way Chinese undergraduate students communicate (Fu & Izuma, 2018). In addition, social networks do not only play a role in connecting local students with their international counterparts in college settings but also

allow these two groups of students to establish relationships even before they enter a classroom (Forbush & Foucault-Welles, 2016). The opportunity to hide behind a nickname or alternative virtual identity does seem to ease the process of making the first step towards creating international friendships for Chinese undergraduate students.

Additionally, daily life issues may also cause significant stress to Chinese undergraduate students. For example, it is not easy for them to obtain information about facilities and services on a daily basis (Gu, 2016). They are also, just like most new college students moving to a new area, likely to have questions about security, food, housing, health care, transportation and the like. For instance, while it is very convenient to utilize public transportation in China, in the U.S. students realize the need to drive everywhere (Gu, 2016). Also, Yan and Berliner (2016) state that even though cultural interaction in the U.S. changes Chinese undergraduate students' behavior and lifestyle, it does not affect their ethnic identities or ideologies. Thus, even daily matters prove that adapting to the U.S. for Chinese undergraduate students is an individualized choice rather than a societal force. In particular, research indicates that it is easier for Chinese undergraduate students to assimilate their extrinsic cultural features such as dress, mannerism, behaviors, lifestyle, using English than their intrinsic ones, e.g., cultural heritage, religious beliefs, or ethnic values (Yan & Berliner, 2016). This might cause Chinese undergraduate students to identify with neither (Chinese cultures nor U.S. cultures), and more importantly feel not accepted by either.

What is more, despite the challenges discussed above, Chinese undergraduate students demonstrate agency in their responses to these challenges. To notice such agency, it is important to contextualize discussions surrounding Chinese undergraduate students' experiences in the U.S. For instance, Heng (2018) highlights the fact that these students differ from their U.S. peers

in a variety of ways, be it academically, socially, or culturally, does not place them at a disadvantage and does not signify their deficiency in any of those aspects. For example, it is worth considering that maybe it is hard for them to start conversations with strangers because their society values being low-key (Heng, 2018). Notwithstanding, when exploring Chinese undergraduate students' experiences abroad, we need to be reminded of the heterogeneous nature of those experiences (Heng, 2019). As every international student, the Chinese undergraduate students also contribute their diverse ways of thinking, cultural backgrounds and cultural beliefs to the picture. Thus, seeing Chinese undergraduate students as heterogeneous individuals whose "different" life and study experiences position them as agent, makes their journeys in the U.S. more colorful.

While there has been a large interest in Chinese international students on a national level in the U.S., not all universities and colleges seem to be ready to satisfy the needs of these students (Yan & Berliner, 2016). Given that Chinese undergraduate students still represent the largest portion of international students on U.S. campuses, and that they encounter a culture quite different from their own (see Table 1.2), it is worth developing a deeper understanding of how these students deal with tensions and contradictions between two apparently conflicting systems as well as how their instructors understand them. For instance, while U.S. academia values individualism, being verbally explicit and original, the Chinese academia is often described as collectivist, hierarchical relationships, and instructor-centered learning (e.g., Cortazzi & Jin, 1997; Yuan & Xie, 2013). However, as Ryan (2010) notes, if Anglophone scholars formulate their perceptions of Chinese undergraduates solely based on observing these students' struggles to adjust to unfamiliar pedagogical arenas, such scholars might potentially contribute to the stereotypical belief of the educational superiority of the U.S. The dichotomy between U.S. and

Chinese learners (Table 1.2) might de facto be false. Without the abovementioned understandings, huge populations of Chinese undergraduate students as well as their instructors in the U.S. might have to endure lots of contradictions with a corresponding failure to maximize their intellectual or sociocultural productivity. Thus, effective intercultural understandings have a significant role to play in this process in the context of Chinese undergraduate students in the U.S. higher education.

The Three Contexts

This study exists at the intersection of three contexts, namely an ESL context, a business management context, and a college writing context in a U.S. university. Therefore, it is crucial to discuss how existing literature portrays Chinese undergraduate students in these three contexts.

First of all, I am unaware of a study that looks at these three contexts simultaneously, like this project. Naturally, most research in the ESL context focuses on the Chinese undergraduate students' language struggles (e.g., Fu, Machado, & Weng, 2018; Jiang, Yang, & Zhou, 2017). Main challenges listed as findings are problems with using workable learning strategies that would help Chinese undergraduate students to fit into the U.S. system of education better, general low spoken English proficiency, or problems with pronunciation that impede these students' willingness to communicate in English (Fu et al., 2018; Jiang et al., 2017). Interestingly, scholarly literature in the college writing context also tends to discuss language-related phenomena such as language transfer from Chinese (He & Niao, 2015), plagiarism (James, Miller, & Wyckoff, 2019), and transnational practices of Chinese undergraduate students in the writing classrooms in the U.S. (Wang, 2017). There are also instances where instructors grapple with teaching Chinese undergraduate students citations as they are done in the U.S. academia (Zhang, 2018). On the contrary, business literature involving Chinese undergraduate

students in the U.S. tends to display these students' motivations to choose business as their college major (Ozgur, Li, & Rogers, 2015) or their unique ethics of conducting business (Cao, Anderson, Xu, & Caldwell, 2018). For instance, Chinese undergraduate students perceive having a degree in business as a practical and useful ticket to success, regardless of their decisions to stay in the U.S. or return to China (Ozgur et al., 2015). In other words, majoring in business seems transferable onto their potential future life in China. In terms of ethics of doing business, the contemporary Chinese demonstrate both old (that is from the past) and new (that is current) views of how ethical business is conducted. They show a strong influence from global economic development, simultaneously positioning themselves as different from their prior generations of businesspeople in China (Cao et al., 2018). This context, that is business management, does not seem to produce research concerned with Chinese undergraduate students' learning styles, their language background or how these might affect their success in a mainstream classroom.

How research literature portrays Chinese undergraduate students in these three different contexts matters. It shows a link between the ESL and the college writing contexts, with an obvious focus on language. It also separates the business context from the other two, by emphasizing Chinese undergraduate students' practical skills and not language skills. However, a question whether instructors in the business context experience challenging situations with their Chinese undergraduate students that might be stemming from these students' second language limitations remains open.

Theoretical Underpinnings

In this section, I delineate the main characteristics of this study's conceptual framework, namely the notion of interculturality (Dervin, 2010, 2016a, 2016b). I also discuss my motivations

behind utilizing it in this project. I present related research literature that uses Dervin's interculturality concept in various contexts and to a differing extent.

Interculturality as Conceptual Framework

I begin by defining the notion of interculturality (Dervin, 2010; Dervin, 2016a; Dervin, 2016b; Dervin, 2017). Dervin (2016b) argues that universal definitions lead to colonized discourses of self and others, unbalanced power relations and differential treatment. For the sake of this project, however, I define the term *interculturality* as the approach to others that is characterized by mutual responsiveness, appreciation and curiosity, its main goal being bilateral (i.e., mutual) communication (as defined in the Introduction). Interculturality emphasizes the emergent, dynamic, and negotiated nature of communication between two or more cultures.

The few times that Dervin's name appears in the U.S. research articles, it usually pertains to his advocacy to stop perceiving culture as a fixed entity and to re-define the term altogether (e.g., Byram & Wagner, 2018); to his call for a critical approach to interculturality with ethical and reflexive awareness of power that linguistic diversity brings (e.g., Tolosa et al., 2018); or to his attempts to go beyond culturism in exchanges between China and other countries (e.g., Dervin & Machart, 2017).

Overall, Dervin (2016b) urges us to consider what happens in interculturality by looking at three inextricably linked phenomena, namely culture, identity, and collectivity. First of all, "culture and the concepts to follow do not exist as such" (Dervin, 2016b, p. 9). In other words, one cannot meet culture, but only people who embody it; and therefore, only people can clash not their cultures. Secondly, identity is highly conceptual and always negotiated with others. Thus, collectivity often reinforces identity (Dervin, 2016b, p. 17). In this project, I look into the

experiences of both groups of participants, namely four instructor-participants and six student-participants, and those elements of interculturality their experiences comprise.

Dervin's (2016b) methodological toolbox for IC includes elements necessary for interculturality to take place, namely interaction, context, the recognition of power relations, simplexity, intersectionality and failure (see Table 2.1 for a summary and their explanations). In the same vein, we are encouraged to stop emphasizing facts about so called target culture, presenting cultural do's and don'ts and concentrating on cultural differences (Dervin, 2016b, p. 72). Dervin's framework, which he calls a "liquid realistic" approach to interculturality, reminds one to be aware of simplexity (the inevitable combination of the simple and the complex) of any act of interculturality. Having to constantly navigate between the simple and the complex, we adapt our discourses to specific situations and interlocutors. Yet, neither the simple nor the complex can be fully achieved (Dervin, 2016b). Therefore, we might need to accept the fact that we can only maneuver between the two. The liquid realistic approach assures interculturality stays ideological and welcomes the cycle of both success and failure. Dervin (2016b) claims that failure has benefits for future learning and self-criticality. Thus, it seems vital to celebrate failure, simultaneously making sure that everyone faces failure, not just the minority or *the Other* (Dervin, 2016b, p. 85). Most established models of interculturality recognize success only.

Table 2.1.
Elements of interculturality, based on Dervin (2016b).

Elements of interculturality	Explanation
Interaction	is always jointly constructed;
Context	we have different identities that depend on context;
Recognition of power relations	when dealing with interculturality a certain degree of pain is inescapable;
Simplexity	the inevitable combination of "the simple" and "the complex;"

Table 2.1. (cont'd)

Intersectionality	the interaction of multiple identities and experiences of exclusion;
Failure	it is normal in interculturality and we should learn from it;
Cultural mélange	cultural mixing, fusion of the West and the East.

Moreover, power relations are to be revisited by acknowledging that when dealing with interculturality a certain degree of pain seems inescapable (Dervin, 2016b, p. 83). Glocalization, which Dervin (2016b, p. 25) describes as "two sides of the same coin," makes it so that some people hold more symbolic power than others (the Center vs. Periphery) alongside the languages they speak (native speakers of English vs. native speakers of Chinese). Instead of creating interculturally correct situations, we might want to ensure testing resistance to discomfort and potential failure, and consequently learning how to be reflexive (Dervin & Byrd Clark, 2014). I argue that instructors' role might be to approach students, who come from the position of lacking the abovementioned symbolic power, through diverse lenses that help to avoid *othering*. Clearly, there are diversities among Chinese undergraduate students as well as commonalities with the 'West'.

In addition, intersectionality (understood as "examining the interconnected nature of social and 'biological' categorizations, identity markers such as language, race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion and so on" [Dervin, 2016b, p. 83]) allows us to see how these combined parts contribute to injustice, discrimination, and inequalities. At last, Dervin (2016b) sees collectivizing interculturality as a priority and assures that putting an end to individualistic perspectives will assist in treating people fairly. For the same reason, a researcher needs to

include his or her voice in the analysis of data to thoroughly examine his/her influences on the reported experiences.

Notwithstanding, Dervin's model of interculturality seems to appreciate what Pieterse (2004) calls "diverse diversities" of the self and *The Others*, namely habits and artifacts, discourse, and opinions within same geographical boundaries. People are different because of their cultural backgrounds and societies live through open-ended mixing. Last but not least, Dervin posits that even though researchers tend to defend changeability and the unstable nature of their participants, their corpus analyses often quantify and categorize these participants into national, religious, or ethnic groups (Dervin, 2010; Simpson & Dervin, 2019), simultaneously limiting the co-constructive aspects. The importance of relationships in interculturality is stressed when identities are co-constructed, given that one does not communicate with others as she/he really is, but rather as a representation of self.

Importantly, Dervin (2016b) also criticizes other models for not matching today's educational goals, such as fighting against *othering*, hegemony, hierarchies, and power differentials (p. 82). He rejects their stages, or simple progressions, believing that interculturality is composed of contradictions, instabilities, and discontinuities instead of mere harmonies, stabilities, and continuities. To sum up, Dervin (2010, 2016b) reminds one to decenter and reflectively look at oneself, seeing interculturality as open, flexible, and adaptable to one's needs.

All in all, Dervin's (2016b) notion of liquid interculturality in education, where culture is co-constructed during communication, fits this project well. That is because (1) it matches my view as a researcher that cultures, identities, knowledge and experiences are always co-constructed; (2) it goes beyond traditional view of culture as static, and instead portrays it as a

dynamic force; and (3) it emphasizes mutuality in experiences that has the potential to create cultures acceptable by and sensitive to both Chinese undergraduate students and their instructors, regardless of their perceived differences. These characteristics reflect my approach to this study's goals, mainly the understanding that for any intercultural learning and teaching to take place there needs to be a mutual conviviality as well as constant negotiations that would lead to co-construction of knowledge. In agreement with Dervin (2016b), I also see research as critical and reflexive but that is achievable only if participants and their experiences are approached from the position of similarities rather than differences.

Dervin's theory is an appropriate framework for understanding what might enable interculturally responsive education for student-participants and their instructor-participants at Grand Lake University as it resonates with this study's focus. However, by focusing on the actual experiences in the new environment (here at GLU), Dervin's notion does not seem to take either the Chinese undergraduate students' pre-sojourn stage or their instructors' existing practical knowledge of how to work with these students in interculturally responsive ways into consideration. Nonetheless, his notion shares my categorization of student-participants and their instructor-participants in this study as heterogeneous learners and instructors and their academic endeavors as culturally contextualized.

In this chapter, I delineated relevant literature pertaining to the experiences of Chinese undergraduate students and those of their instructors in the United States. I focused on those experiences that were ingrained in the idea that transformative internationalization can be achieved through *kindness*. I also presented how I conducted the literature search at the initial stages of this project. Then, I explained the theoretical underpinnings of this multiple case study, namely Dervin's interculturality (Dervin, 2010, 2016a, 2016b). Finally, I explained how

Dervin's notion fits into this study. Below, I delineate the research questions that guided me through conducting this study. This multiple case study was guided by four broad research questions:

- the instructor-participants collective case study
    1. In what ways do these four instructor-participants describe their experiences working with Chinese undergraduate students at Grand Lake University?
    2. How do their experiences relate to interculturality in teaching?
- the student-participants collective case study
    1. In what ways do these six student-participants describe their experiences at Grand Lake University?
    2. How do their experiences relate to interculturality in learning?

To recapitulate, in the following chapter (Chapter 3), I discuss the methodology applied to this project. After that, I present findings from both collective case studies. Specifically, in Chapter 4, I focus on the instructor-participants collective case study, while in Chapter 5, I do so for the student-participants collective case study. I, then, proceed to discussing findings from both collective case studies in Chapter 6. I end this project with conclusions in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

In this part of the dissertation, I delineate information relevant to all parts of the study, including the description of the context in which I conducted this study as well as the process of selecting participants and their profiles. I also present data coding and analysis steps for both collective case studies, i.e., instructor-participants and student-participants, respectively. It is important to note that the current dissertation report includes two collective case studies (one with instructor-participants and one with student-participants) that together create a multiple case study. Subsequently, I discuss my own positionality as a researcher, where I shed light on my investment in the topic, my biases, and intentions in this project. Next, I describe the sources of data and their use, followed by a detailed data analysis section of the chapter, including the transcription and coding processes and the steps I have taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. Finally, I walk the reader through the process of particularizing the findings.

The purpose of this multiple case study is to explore the experiences that six student-participants have undergone when studying at a large public university in the U.S. (here: Grand Lake University or GLU) as well as the experiences of four instructor-participants working with these students in their designated courses. In order to fulfill this purpose, I employed a broad range of research techniques and recruited students and instructors from four different university courses as participants. I applied a multiple case study approach (Stake, 2006), with two collective case studies as its main parts, to examine the abovementioned experiences and their impact on both instructor-participants and student-participants in terms of intercultural ways of teaching and learning (Dervin, 2016b). By doing so, I followed Stake's (1995, 2006) classification and description of an instrumental case study as the one seeking out both what is

common and what is particular about the *case*, which I define as the four instructor-participants and the six student-participants in their classes. Case studies have been used in SLA on a large scale as descriptive narratives of both students and instructors (van Lier, 2005). Stakian characteristics of a case study can be described by the following four adjectives (Stake, 1995). (1) A case study is *holistic*, as it allows the researcher to consider the inter-relationship between the phenomenon under investigation and its context. (2) A case study is *interpretive*, as it helps the researcher to see research as an interaction between a researcher and the researched. (3) A case study is *empirical*, as it is based on observations from the field. (4) A case study is *emphatic*, as the researcher reflects on participants' experiences in an emic way.

Importantly, a case study appears suitable for investigating participants' experiences over time (van Lier, 2005), as Stake (1995) suggests bounding the case by activity, which is suitable for my participants' circumstances and contexts. In addition, following Baskarada's (2014, p. 5) suggestion, I made sure the chosen case study method aligned with my researcher identity, namely that of an *epistemological pluralist* (Fendler, 2019). I look to particularize (Duff, 2012) and not to generalize, as my obligation is to understand this one chosen case, specifically the six student-participants and four instructor-participants at Grand Lake University. As a researcher, I believe knowledge is socially co-constructed and generated rather than discovered. Lastly, I chose a case study for its flexibility, or as Stake (1995) calls it "progressive focusing" (p. 9). Hence, I was able to tailor this project to the participants' needs and circumstances by making adjustments even after I proceeded from its design stage to its research stage.

The Role of the Researcher

Janesick (2000) and Merriam (1998) see the researcher as the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing data. Throughout the process of working with my participants (i.e., six

student-participants and four of their instructor-participants at GLU), I occupied multiple roles, from researcher to a non-participating observer, a participating observer, and an involved conversant during interviews. My aim was to develop a rapport with the participants that would last beyond the time of this study. This is because my approach to research and my researcher identity demand a relationship rather than a singular contact that ends with data collection. Merriam (1998) suggests that a researcher should establish such rapport by finding some common ground with the participants, helping them when necessary, and showing interest in their activities. Therefore, I willingly shared my passion for China and my past experiences of teaching in China with both students and instructors who spoke with me and displayed interest in learning about these experiences. I was also able to switch into Chinese when interviewing the six student-participants, whenever they would seem more comfortable sharing their experiences in Chinese with me. This was possible due to my advanced proficiency in Chinese, which I obtained through a certificate back in China, named HSK 4. I felt like my ability to translanguage from English to Chinese during interviews with the students helped me to gain their trust and establish a stronger bond.

The qualitative researcher must have an enormous tolerance for ambiguity, needs to be highly intuitive (sensitivity) and empathetic to lay a solid foundation for a relationship with his/her participants (Merriam, 1998, pp. 20-23). Therefore, I was not trying to eliminate my own subjectivity, but rather remain aware of it. According to Stake (1995), subjectivity not only creates a unique amalgamate of the researcher's personal qualities and collected data but also plays an essential role in understanding the phenomenon under investigation (p. 45). This helped me to approach the project holistically and allowed for a comprehensive picture of what interested me (i.e., the participants' experiences). To sum up, I acknowledge subjectivity in my

ways of exploring the cases. I had lived and taught in China for six years prior to my doctoral journey at GLU, hence my deep-rooted interest in the lives of Chinese undergraduate students overseas. My report of this study's findings might sound slightly favorable for the student-participants due to the reasons mentioned above. However, I am also an instructor; and therefore, sympathize with the numerous dilemmas that the instructors expressed to me through conversations in both private and academic settings. By recognizing that there is history between me and the topic of this investigation, I make an attempt to clarify my positionality as well as my identity as a researcher.

Context of the Study

I recruited four instructor-participants of three different courses at Grand Lake University (more on the participant selection in the next section) and six student-participants in their classes. The contexts were different from one another in the sense that one course was in the area of academic writing, one was focusing on teaching business and two were strictly English as a Second Language (ESL) classes focusing on reading (henceforth referred to as ESL RESL A and ESL RESL B) while the third one focused on teaching elements of American culture (henceforth ESL ACL). I chose those three contexts because I was interested in those student-participants who have not yet tested out of the university language requirement (the ESL classes), as well as those who were taking a cultural writing course (henceforth Cultural Writing Class or CWC), obligatory to all undergraduate students at GLU, due to this course's focus on crossing cultural boundaries. Additionally, I felt like I needed to explore those areas of academia that attract the biggest numbers of Chinese undergraduate students, that is why I chose GLU's business management related course (henceforth referred to as BC) as my third research site. In the span of two semesters, nine students responded to my call and I conducted a face-to-face interview

with all nine, but for this project, I chose six of them who identify as Chinese (as two did not) and were undergraduate students in order to maintain the flow of the narrative and to avoid confusion (one was a graduate student). With relevance to this project, there were almost 3000 Chinese undergraduate students at GLU in the Fall 2019. Because most of them use English as their second language, Chinese undergraduate students appear to be an interesting, yet heterogeneous, group to study.

In the Fall semester of 2019, Grand Lake University (GLU) was home to almost 4000 international undergraduates, which accounts for 12% of the entire GLU student population. It was not possible to obtain information about the native languages international students speak from the university as this datum is not collected on a regular basis. However, I was able to determine that international undergraduate students at GLU represented 140 countries in the 2018/2019 academic year. Naturally, international students' exposure to the American variety of English, their instructors' approaches to different World Englishes in class as well as the inevitable cultural exchanges would vary and can only be looked at through particularization (Duff, 2012).

Instructor-participants Case Study

For a more technical view of this case study, I have adapted a graphic organizer of a multiple case study from Stake (2006, p. 5). Presented in Figure 3.1 is my approach to the contextualization of the instructor-participants collective case study. The bolded circle represents the entire collective case study with four mini-cases, that is the four instructor-participants. It is clear that I conducted data collection at three different research sites: Activity Site 1, 2 and 3 (three different contexts, namely ESL, college writing and business management classes) for each case study.

This collective case (Figure 3.1) was bounded by activity as well as a variety of lenses through which I looked at it, e.g., cultural context, personal background and history, relevant research, and educational background (the circles surrounding the main one on Figure 3.1). I followed Stake's (2006) visual representation of this collective case study, and due to that I find it important to mention that contexts surrounding and influencing the instructor-participants collective case are placed randomly around the main circle. This collective case study looked at four mini-cases (the instructor-participants who volunteered to participate in this research project) (Figure 3.1). In this collective case study, I collected data through one primary data source, namely semi-structured interviews and two secondary data sources, namely observations and artifacts. I also utilized additional data sources, that is a field notes journal, a researcher's journal and email correspondence, which are represented by icons in Figure 3.1, respectively. I focused on studying what was similar and different about the mini-cases (Stake, 2006, p. 6) in order to understand the essence of this collective case study both as a whole and as a crucial ingredient of the multiple case study.

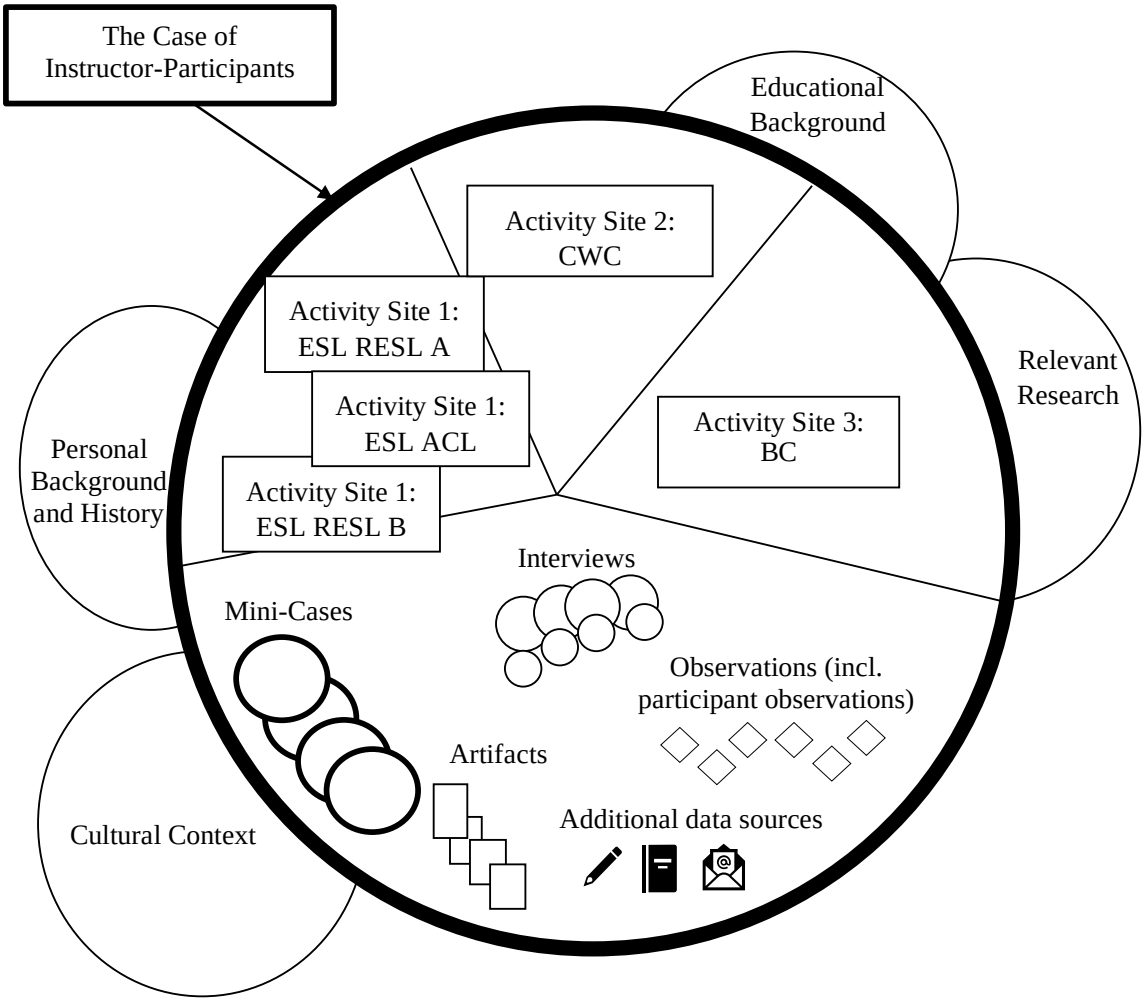

Figure 3.1. A graphic design of a collective case study for instructor-participants. The icons under Additional data sources represent a field notes journal, a researcher's journal and email correspondence, respectively. Worksheet used with permission from Stake (2006, p. 5).

Student-participants Case Study

For better visualization of this case study, I also adapted a graphic organizer of a multiple case study from Stake (2006, p. 5). Presented in Figure 3.2 is my approach to the contextualization of the student-participants collective case study. The bolded circle represents the entire collective case study with six mini-cases, that is the six student-participants. It is clear

that I conducted data collection at three different research sites: Activity Site 1, 2 and 3 (three different contexts, namely ESL, college writing and business management classes) for each case study.

Also, this collective case study (Figure 3.2), just like the instructor-participants collective case study, was bounded by activity as well as a variety of lenses through which I looked at it, e.g., cultural context, personal background and history, relevant research, and educational background (the circles surrounding the main one on Figure 3.2). I followed Stake's (2006) visual representation of this collective case study, and due to that I find it important to mention that contexts surrounding and influencing the student-participants collective case are placed randomly around the main circle. This collective case study looked at six mini-cases (the student-participants who volunteered to participate in this research project, were classified as undergraduate students and identified as Chinese) (Figure 3.2). In this collective case study, I collected data through one primary data source, namely semi-structured interviews as well as one secondary data source, namely observations. Contrary to the instructor-participants collective study, I did not collect any artifacts from the students. Yet, I utilized additional data sources, that is a field notes journal, a researcher's journal and email correspondence, which are represented by icons in Figure 3.2, respectively. Here, I also focused on studying what was similar and different about the mini-cases (Stake, 2006, p. 6) in order to understand the essence of this collective case study both as a whole and as a crucial ingredient of the multiple case study.

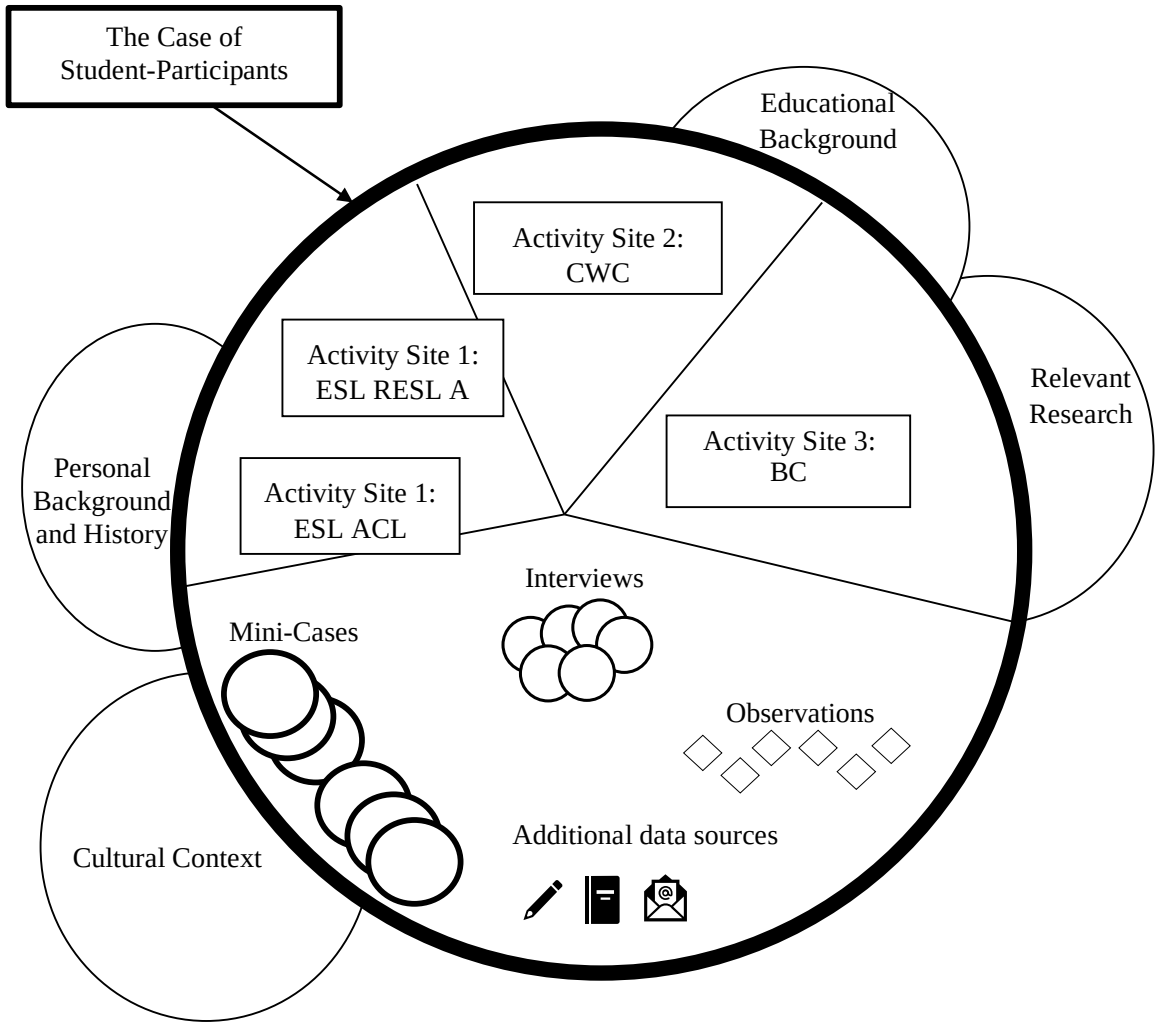

Figure 3.2. A graphic design of a collective case study for student-participants. The icons under Additional data sources represent a filed notes journal, a researcher's journal and email correspondence, respectively. Worksheet used with permission from Stake (2006, p. 5).

Participants

In the following sections, I elaborate on participant selection and their profiles separately for each collective case study, that is instructor-participants collective case study and student-participants collective case study, respectively. Perry (1998) mentions four to ten units of analysis as an optimal number for reaching a saturation point, while Merriam (1998) argues that one should primarily strive for an adequate number of participants to answer the research questions posed at the beginning of the study. Findings from a small participant selection but of

some diversity, such as in this project, yield "important shared patterns that can occur across cases and derive their significance from having emerged out of heterogeneity" (Patton, 1990, p. 172). In line with the abovementioned suggestions, I present profiles of four instructor-participants and six student-participants. Finally, while the term "sampling" is often used in research to explain the criteria for choosing this study's participants, as Yin (2014) states, no case study represents a "sample" (p. 21), in a sense of statistical generalizations.

Instructor-participants

As previously explained, after having received IRB approval, I recruited four instructor-participants in three distinct programs at GLU. I reached out to the instructor-participants through email. Drawing on Stake (1995, p. 4), I selected participants who were willing to partake in this research and from whom I believed I could learn the most, as my goal was to understand, discover and construct insights into participants' experiences. The following description depicts the pseudonyms of the programs as well as those of the participants (Table 3.1). These pseudonyms were chosen by the participants and are unique to this dissertation.

Table 3.1.
The list of instructor-participants, their gender, classes they taught and these classes areas of focus.

No.	Pseudonym	Gender	Class	Focus*
1.	Stan	Male	RESL A	Improving academic reading skills in English as a Second Language;
2.	Han	Male	RESL B	Improving academic reading skills in English as a Second Language;
			ACL	Learning the language through discovering American culture;
3.	Andrew	Male	CWC	Developing academic writing skills through cross-cultural boundaries;

Table 3.1. (cont'd)

No.	Pseudonym	Gender	Class	Focus*
4.	Peter	Male	BC	Learning about business management, ethics of doing business, supply chain, negotiation skills, etc.;

Note: Focus * is based on a summary of the class syllabi and conversations with the instructor-participants.

In terms of participant selection, I worked with those instructors who were willing to participate in my research project, having four instructor-participants as a result. Firstly, as I was interested in the experiences of those Chinese undergraduate students who have not yet tested out of the university language requirement, I approached a few instructors teaching in the English as a Second Language (ESL) context. ESL at GLU has a venue that serves language learners and welcomes a large Chinese population every year. Two instructors, henceforth Stan and Han (pseudonyms chosen by the participants), responded to my call expressing interest in this study (Table 3.1). They were both teaching the same course in the Spring semester that focused on improving students' reading skills (ESL RESL A and ESL RESL B henceforth) but different sections of it and had mostly (but not only) Chinese undergraduate students in their classes (around 80%). As an exception, Han happened to teach another course in the Summer semester that focused on learning about American cultures (henceforth ACL), while Stan taught ESL RESL A, the reading class, again in the Fall semester. I proceeded with them as my instructor-participants. Secondly, I was interested in Cultural Writing Class (CWC henceforth), one of many sections offered throughout the academic year at GLU, which is a writing course compulsory for all undergraduate students (with around 75% Chinese). I deemed this course an appropriate fit for my research questions and scope because, based on the description of the class on GLU's schedule website, it focused on crossing cultural boundaries in developing academic writing skills (Table 3.1). So, I reached out to the instructor (henceforth Andrew) with an

invitation to participate. He agreed under the condition that I would be an active observer in his class (a participant observer), not a silent one. Thirdly, a statistician from the International Center at GLU identified the Business School as the most popular choice amongst Chinese undergraduate students (there were 463 Chinese undergraduate students enrolled in their business-related programs in Fall 2018, almost twice as many as in their second choice, i.e., economics). This choice was obvious. I knew I had to be where most Chinese undergraduate students were. I met with one of the associate directors of the academic undergraduate affairs at the Business School and he provided me with a list of instructors who, according to his knowledge, might have been interested in my study. I emailed all of them and one replied with interest to participate (henceforth Peter). He was teaching a class that I can describe as having to do with learning how to conduct ethical business (henceforth referred to as BC), with approximately 25% of the student body being Chinese (Table 3.1). All instructor-participants were male U.S. citizens who spoke an American variety of English, were educated in the United States and self-identified as American. I argue that the chosen three courses exemplify a clear pattern of progressing from a developmental course (ESL RESL A, RESL B, and ESL ACL) to first-year college writing (CWC) to a content course (business management, BC).

The instructor-participants formed one collective case study (findings presented in Chapter 4). In my encounters with instructors who agreed to participate in this exploration, I was trying to make sure they knew what I was offering them in return for their shared stories. I promised to share my findings with them as soon as they arose, since they expressed interest in reflecting on their classes and making further considerations of the Chinese undergraduate students they teach. Further, I conducted a transcript check for data accuracy in the interview transcripts with each instructor-participant as well. I did not compensate instructor-participants

for their participation in any monetary way since it is not a common research practice at my institution.

Consequently, to protect the identities of the instructor-participants, in this document, I do not provide identifying information such as their real names, age, actual name of the class or any other demographic details except for their gender. Also, for anonymity, all instructor-participants chose their own pseudonyms (presented in Table 3.1) and signed consent forms (IRB deemed this study exempt). I broadly filled the participants in on the study's focus. Having chosen these three venues, as different as they might have seemed, was a strategic move. Tracy (2010) defines transferability in qualitative research as the study's power to create reliability for its readers. I wanted to make sure that different settings are represented in my data sources, which could allow for a broader transferability of findings and possibly assist in creating interdisciplinary links.

For each instructor-participant, I will provide more relevant information in Chapter 4 as a part of presenting the findings. For instance, I will describe their teaching background and any previous experiences working with international students.

Student-participants

As mentioned before, I recruited six student-participants in three distinct programs at GLU. Again, drawing on Stake (1995, p. 4), I selected student-participants who were willing to partake in this research and from whom I believed I could learn the most, as my goal was to understand, discover and gain insights into participants' experiences. The following description depicts the pseudonyms of the programs as well as those of the participants (presented in Table 3.2). These pseudonyms were chosen by the participants and are unique to this dissertation.

Table 3.2.
The list of student-participants, their gender, classes they attended and these classes areas of focus.

No.	Pseudonym	Gender	Class	Focus*
1.	Aurora	Female	RESL A	Improving academic reading skills in English as a Second Language;
2.	Billy	Male	ACL	Learning the language through discovering American culture;
3.	Jackson	Male	CWC	Developing academic writing skills through cross-cultural boundaries;
4.	Amy	Female	CWC	Developing academic writing skills through cross-cultural boundaries;
5.	Nick	Male	BC	Learning about business management, ethics of doing business, supply chain, negotiation skills, etc.;
6.	Eve	Male	BC	Learning about business management, ethics of doing business, supply chain, negotiation skills, etc.;

Note: Focus * is based on a summary of the class syllabi and conversations with the instructor-participants.

In terms of participant selection, I worked with those students who were willing to participate in my research project. Upon receiving IRB approval and after I established a good rapport with the instructor-participants through my classroom observations, and with their permission, I sent out an email invitation to participate to those students in their classes that instructor-participants indicated came from China (i.e., mainland China or Taiwan). From each class one or two Chinese undergraduate students emailed back, agreeing to give me an interview (Table 3.2). I interviewed all students who responded to my invitation (nine of them) but later on excluded data from those who were from Taiwan (that is those who did not identify as Chinese) and those who did not hold an undergraduate student status at GLU at the time, which left me with six student-participants. In other words, for student-participants the class they were taking

determined whether I reached out to them or not. To protect their identities, in this document, I do not provide identifying information such as their real names, age, actual name of the class or any other demographic details except for their gender. Also, for anonymity, all student-participants chose their own pseudonyms (presented in Table 3.2) and just like the instructor-participants signed the consent forms.

The student-participants formed one collective case study (findings presented in Chapter 5). Similarly to the instructor-participants, I was trying to make sure student-participants also knew what I was offering them in return for their shared stories. Apart from remuneration (thanks to my program's research support) for each student who devoted their time and energy to talk to me, I offered help with English for their final papers as well as advice on thriving in the U.S. university system, if they desired any. A few of them took me up on that offer at the end of the Fall semester. Lastly, I conducted a transcript check for data accuracy with each Chinese student as well.

For each participant, I will provide more relevant information in Chapter 5, as a part of presenting the findings. For instance, I will summarize their educational trajectories as well as their motivations behind coming to GLU and taking a particular course.

Data Sources

Given the fact that case studies require multiple sources of qualitative data, I followed this requirement and utilized multiple data sources in this project. Patton (1990), amongst others, states that using multiple data sources enhances the credibility of the study. I adhered to suggestions in Merriam (1998) and Stake (1995) by focusing on: (1) interviews, (2) observations, (3) participant observations, and (4) artifacts, as a whole for the multiple case study. However, for each collective case study, I only used those data sources that were contributing to my

findings and were feasible to collect (represented visually in Figures 3.3 and 3.4). Jointly, all data sources allowed me to grasp a broader and more holistic picture of what the data were displaying. Even though interviews served as my main data collection source in both collective case studies, each data source (that is interviews, observations, artifacts and additional data sources) was treated as one piece of the "puzzle", contributing to my understanding of the cases. Patton (1990, p. 10) elaborates that data from all sources must be converged in the process of data analysis, not handled separately on the abovementioned data sources as such:

1. "direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge" – obtained through interviews;
2. "detailed descriptions of people's activities, behaviors, actions" – obtained through observations;
3. "excerpts, quotes, passages" – from diverse types of documents.

In addition to the three above, I also saw the need to include "multiple roles" for myself during the process of data collection. In some cases, I was observing classes silently, while in others the instructor-participant would invite me to participate or even lead a class discussion. At last, I ceased collecting data, following a suggestion from Merriam (1998), once I had exhausted all data sources, my categories had reached saturation and regularities had been frequently emerging.

Instructor-participants Collective Case Study

In terms of data sources, the interviews served as a primary data source in the instructor-participants collective case study (Figure 3.3). Also, I utilized observations (including participant observations) and artifacts as secondary data sources. My field notes journal, researcher's journal

and email correspondence with the participants (Figure 3.3) comprised additional data sources in this collective case study.

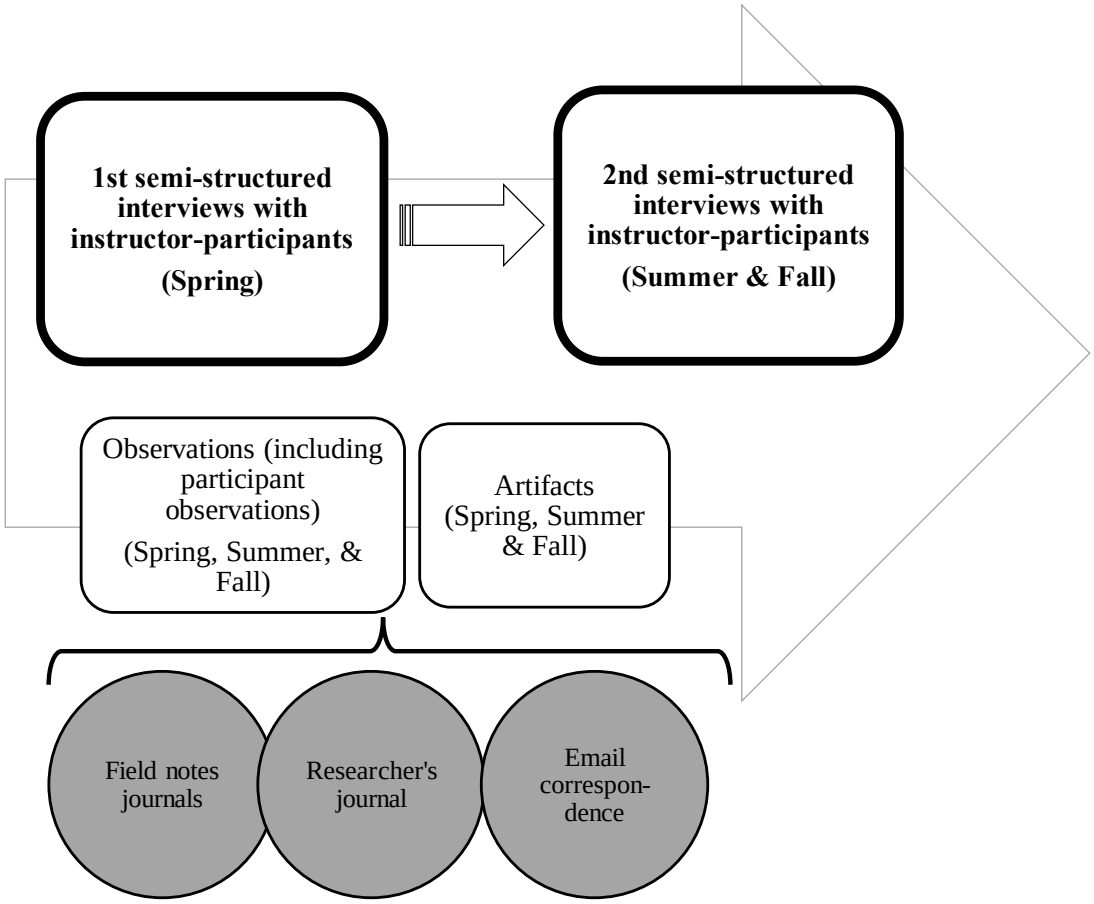

Figure 3.3. Data collection procedures for instructor-participants collective case study. Primary data sources are depicted in bold.

Student-participants Collective Case Study

In terms of data sources, the interviews also served as a primary data source in the student-participants collective case study (Figure 3.4). Furthermore, I utilized observations as secondary data sources. Finally, a field notes journal, researcher's journal and email

correspondence with the participants (Figure 3.4) created additional data sources in this collective case study.

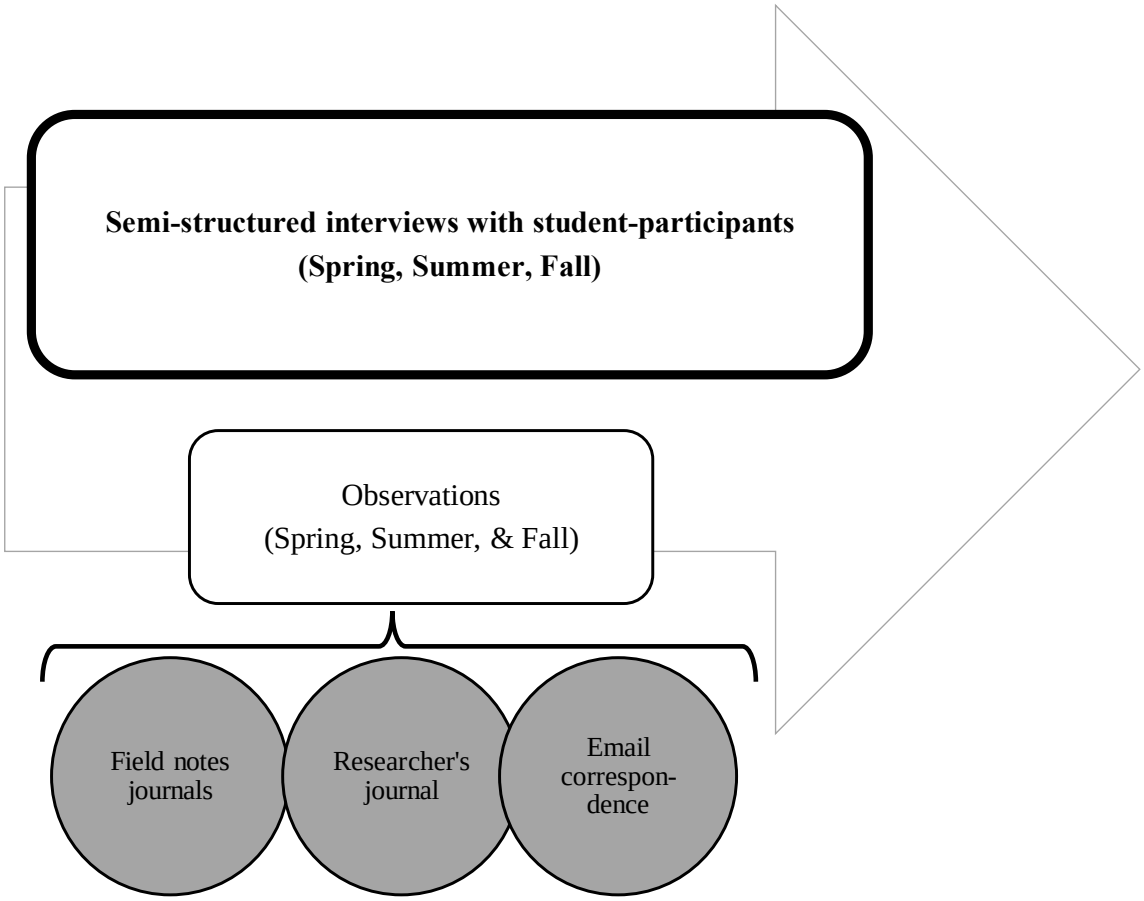

Figure 3.4. Data collection procedures for student-participants collective case study. Primary data sources are depicted in bold.

Semi-structured Interviews

I interviewed participants in both collective case studies throughout Spring, Summer, and Fall semesters. Stake (1995) urges to make trying out (i.e., piloting) interview questions routine (p. 65), which I did in the initial phases of the project. My main focus was on the experiences of the four instructor-participants and those of their six student-participants in the respective classes. I was working under the assumption that the interviews would be retrospective recollections.

My interviews were semi-structured and informal (Merriam, 1998), which allowed me to respond to the situation at hand as well as new emerging ideas on the topic. Thus, I developed two lists of questions, based on Liu and Fang (2017), Sercu (2006), Uzum (2013), and Yazdanpanah (2017), for student-participants (Appendix A) and instructor-participants (Appendix B) in advance. Also, semi-structured interviews tend to be flexible and allow for a better understanding of participants' perspectives (Baskarada, 2014). I was able to refocus the questions and prompt my interlocutors when novel information appeared. Also, I stayed aware to use probes like How? instead of Yes/No questions. I explained to each participant how the data would be used (i.e., written up in this document).

I aimed at evoking a comprehensive account of the participants' experiences. In some cases, I followed the questions, while in others, I varied and altered them, depending on the particular participant's story. Parallel to Stake (1995), I expected participants to have had unique experiences that would help me to portray the multiple realities I try to reveal through conducting a qualitative case study.

Semi-structured interviews in the instructor-participants collective case study. I audio-recorded each interview with the instructor-participants, which lasted between 45 and 60

minutes. I conducted each interview in a given instructor-participant's office, to guarantee the privacy of interviewing and to ensure that the interviewees felt comfortable sharing their thoughts. I interviewed each instructor-participant twice throughout the span of this project.

Semi-structured interviews in the student-participants collective case study. I audio-recorded each interview with the student-participants, which lasted around 60 minutes. I conducted each interview in an empty classroom on campus to also guarantee the privacy of interviewing and to ensure that the interviewees felt comfortable sharing their thoughts. I interviewed each Chinese student only once. What also proved to be a smart strategy was using Chinese for parts of the interviews that were harder to explain to or comprehend by some students. From instructor-participants' introductions of me to their students during classroom observations, I presume the student-participants most likely perceived me as an expert on China, as they would frequently call me *zhongguo tong* (in Chinese, literally, a foreign expert on China).

Observations and Artifacts

Because in this project I focus on the reports of participants' experiences, I consider observations and artifacts (Friedman, 2012) secondary data sources. Observations are also often conducted to triangulate emerging findings, especially in conjunction with interviewing and document analysis (Stake, 1995). In terms of artifacts, Saldaña (2016) states that artifacts are "social products" and therefore need to be examined critically as they depict the ideologies, values and interests of their authors and embody who they are (p. 61). Documents are not to be used in isolation. I used observations as a secondary data source in both collective case studies, while artifacts only in the instructor-participants collective case study.

Observations in the instructor-participants collective case study. I observed instructor-participants and their classes (with the student-participants in attendance) on multiple

occasions throughout the academic year, each class at least six times. Altogether, there were eight different course sections that instructors who agreed to participate in my study taught. They all took place at various times and locations on GLU campus. Each time, I had access to the PowerPoint through the university's platform, Learning Management System (LMS), and handouts were provided to me in a hardcopy format as well. I usually sat at the back of each classroom and took notes in my filed notes journals (more in the further section of this chapter).

Participant observations. In most instances, I sat at the back of the classroom and did not partake in any classroom activities. However, there were times when an instructor-participant would ask me questions (especially with regard to my experiences of teaching in China) or even ask me to participate in an activity or a discussion. Stake (1995) explains participant observation as an act of ethnographic observation while taking an active role in the group that is being explored (p. 44). This form of observation provided me with a wide lens for further interpretations. Interestingly, Patton (1990, p. 207) points out that the challenge lies in combining participation with observation. This, in turn, created for me a capability to understand the field site as an insider (emic perspective), while describing it as an outsider (etic perspective). My involvement in some of the observed sessions was always an idea put forward by the instructor-participant. Some instances where I was asked to participate were scheduled ahead of time, while others occurred spontaneously during the actual observation. I was a participant observer in two out of three sites, that is the college writing and the ESL context, but not in the business management context. All student-participants happened to be present during those instances of me actively participating in the observations.

Artifacts in the instructor-participants collective case study. All four instructor-participants granted me access to their course materials on the LMS. I was able to find their

syllabi, most handouts, major assignments and other course details on the site. From the course syllabi, I obtained the initial picture of a given course context. The instructor-participants delineated their course objectives, requirements, assignments, grading scale and weekly schedule on their syllabi. This also helped me to identify those classes that would potentially focus on tests or revisions for tests, so I could exclude them from my planned observations.

Observations in the student-participants collective case study. I observed student-participants in their respective classes on multiple occasions throughout the academic year, each class at least six times. During each of my observations, all student-participants were present in class. The classes took place at various times and locations on GLU campus. I usually sat at the back of each classroom and took notes in my field notes journals (more in the further section of this chapter). However, in case of the business management (BC) class I had opportunities to sit at the same desk with the student-participants as the format of the class required team seating set-up. This allowed me to follow the students' words and actions in person and in close-up. In those instances, what I recorded in my field notes journals pertains mostly to the Chinese undergraduate student who agreed to participate in this project.

Additional Data Sources

The four data sources delineated above created a comprehensive base for my multiple case study (Baskarada, 2014), which allowed me to develop an audit trail from data collection through data analysis to final interpretations and conclusions. In addition to those four data sources, I also used (1) field notes journals, (2) researcher's journal, and (3) email correspondence in both collective case studies.

Field notes journals. During the observations and participant observations, I took thorough notes in my field notes journals (a separate one for each class) using the traditional pen-

and-paper method. In Figure 3.5 below, I present a collage of assorted examples from my field notes journals.

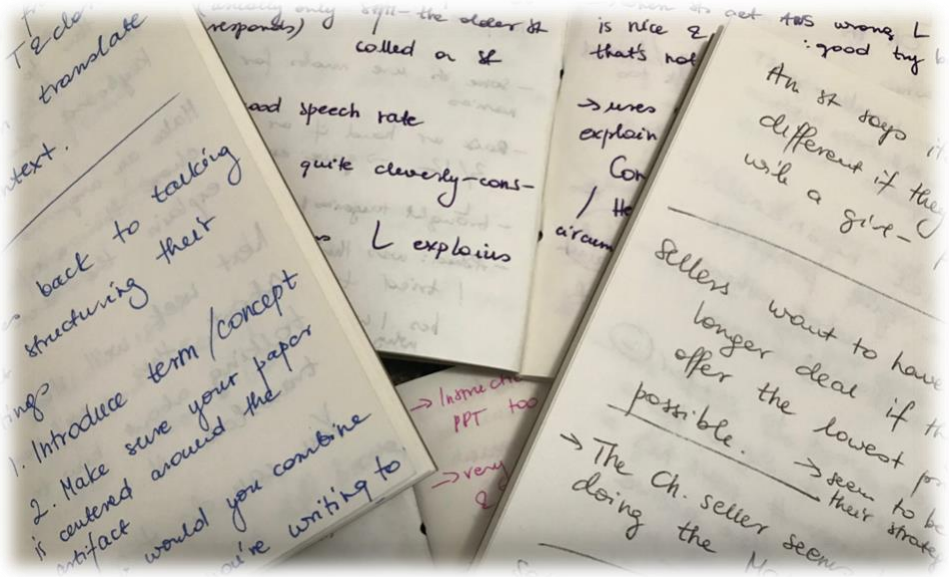

Figure 3.5. A collage of examples from the field notes journals.

Following Stake's (1995) suggestion, the field notes included a class seating plan, activity sequencing, the gist of the instructor-participants' PowerPoint slideshows, direct quotes, and early comments on what I saw (e.g., interesting classroom interactions, situations, teamwork, instructor-participants' wording, visual materials). Also, during each interview, I immediately took note of any striking issues in my field notes journals. After the data collection process had ended, I scanned the field notes and uploaded them to MAXQDA 2018 (a qualitative data analysis software) to store alongside other data sources for further analysis.

Researcher's journal. To organize the various aspects of data collection and data analysis processes, I kept a researcher's journal. In that journal, I jotted down researcher memos, latest ideas that arose from looking at the data, any pressing questions, and thoughts. I made sure to record information on a weekly basis (as a form of a summary of each week's research activities), such as the end-of-the-week reflections on the research progress or any ongoing

findings and their preliminary interpretations. I recorded any unplanned communication with participants, too. I paid attention to the seemingly trivial details of the research process, which facilitated a more accurate and complete description in the following reporting stage. Furthermore, the reflective journal helped me to capture my interpretations and thoughts right after significant episodes took place or were described to me. This, consequently, facilitated the organization of the whole data collection in tandem with analysis procedures for the multiple case study. All in all, many of my initial reflections, supported by multiple data sources, developed into more systematic interpretations in due course.

Email correspondence. I asked all participants (both instructors and students), through the consent forms that they signed at the beginning of the study, to stay in contact with me through email correspondence. From my first introductory email to the participants through our last communication event, I kept track of all email correspondence and subsequently added it to MAXQDA 2018 (a qualitative data analysis software) as an additional data source. These records served as clarifications on certain topics discussed during interviews but perhaps in need of elaboration.

Trustworthiness

To establish trustworthiness of the findings, I assessed the data quality by checking their credibility. In order to ensure the accuracy of the transcribed interview data, I asked a colleague to confirm it by listening to the recordings while simultaneously reading my transcripts. After I had written a draft of this multiple case study, I asked all participants to examine the transcripts for "accuracy and palatability" (Stake, 1995, p. 115), i.e., conducted transcript check. In instances of direct quotations, I stressed that the participants were to check whether the language they used was in line with what they meant to say. Through the transcript check, I encouraged

them to provide honest feedback but also made it clear that their involvement in reviewing the draft was voluntary. All of the participants acknowledged having received the transcripts, but none asked for changes.

Last but not least, I also conducted triangulation of data sources (Stake, 1995), as a method of establishing data credibility. Stake (2006) explains the purpose of triangulation is "to assure that we have the picture as clear and suitably meaningful as we can get it, relatively free of our own biases, and not likely to mislead the reader greatly" (p. 77). For me, it was important to triangulate data sources also to see whether the new views would be consistent with what I had already known about the cases. In a few instances, what I found did not agree with my prior knowledge of a given issue, but "mature is the researcher who rejoices in finding a big mistake" (Stake, 2006, p. 77). On a few occasions, a situation would occur in class during my classroom observations that seemed interesting to explore further. That might have been something an instructor-participant would say, or a student-participant would ask. I, then, made sure to ask them about the specific situation during our interview. This helped me to confirm my initial interpretations of the given situation and allowed the student or instructor-participant to elaborate on, explain or clarify the situation. What is more, in line with Merriam (1998), to avoid prejudgments, I incorporated anything I learned from data analysis back into the data sources inventory in MAXQDA 2018, alongside transcript checks, long-term observations, participatory research (in a form of participant observations) and disclosure of researcher bias (in discussing subjectivity in researcher positionality), which collectively solidified the credibility of my findings.

Data Analysis

On the whole, I collected over 17 hours of audio-recorded interviews, multiple artifacts, such as syllabi, handouts, and PowerPoint presentations, constructed field notes with extensive observation notes and a researcher journal in this multiple case study. I performed all interview transcriptions myself in MAXQDA 2018 (a qualitative data analysis software) in their verbatim forms, that is in exactly the same words the participants used originally. I did include pauses and fillers such as uhms, ahhh, etc. I depict an example of a conclusive version of exemplary transcripts from both collective case studies below, in Figure 3.6. They represent interviews with Stan (who was teaching the ESL RESL A class) and with Aurora (who took the RESL A class). They also show my initial codes, as I conducted first cycle of coding simultaneously with transcribing the interviews.

To notice recurring issues within each collective case, I looked at the data as a whole rather than analyzing them line by line. I divided the texts into broader descriptive codes. For instance, as visible in Figure 3.6, I created a new code for Stan's transcript, which I named "T's views on China" (which stands for teacher's views on China), and subsequently linked a chunk of text that explained particular instructor-participant's views on China with the code. Same goes for Aurora's transcript, where I created a new code "student's future study plans." Then, MAXQDA 2018 automatically added each code into the inventory of my initial codes. Then, I reread each corpus a few more times to obtain the view of its bigger picture.

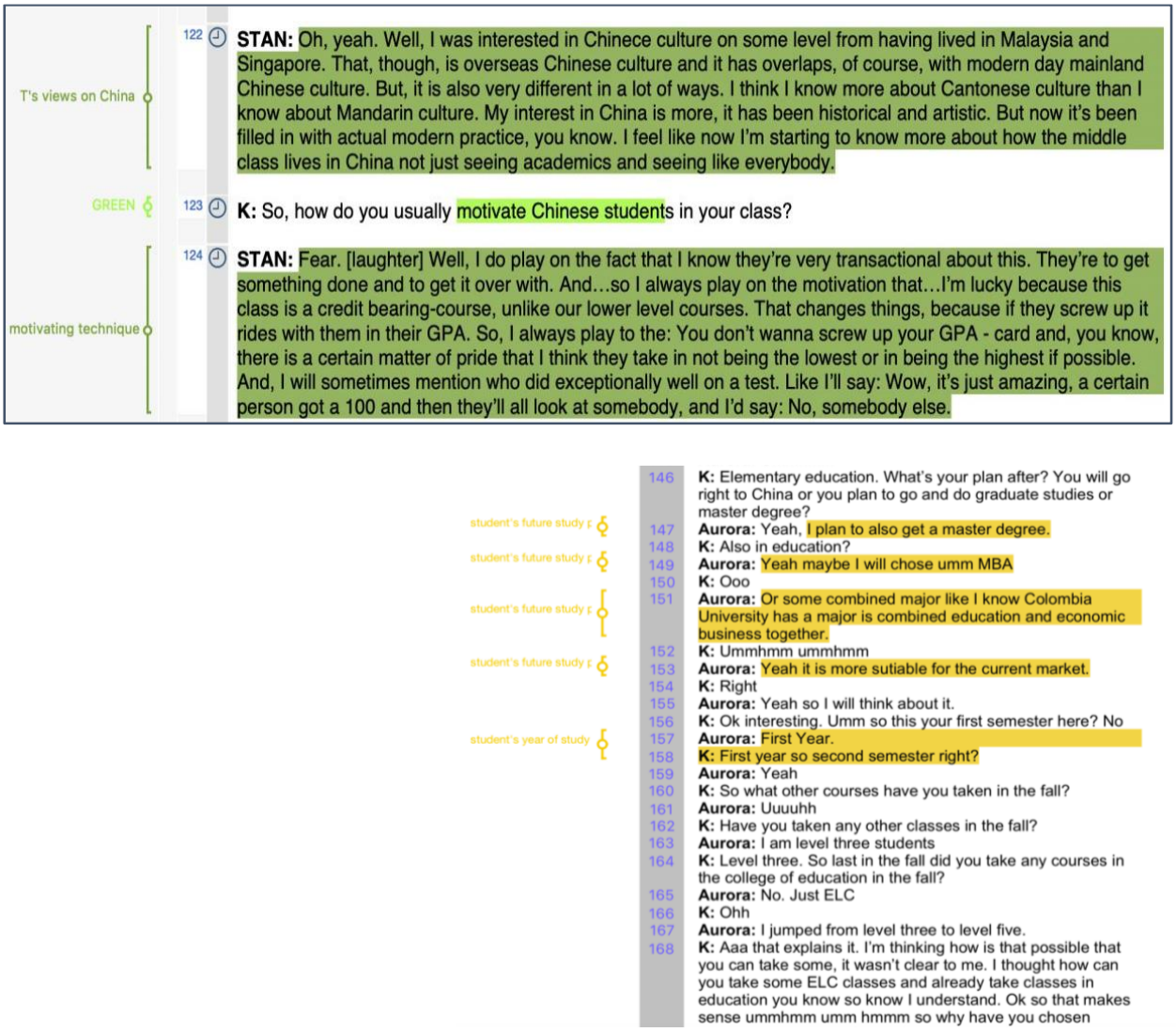

Figure 3.6. An example of transcripts from both collective case studies.

I stored other data sources in MAXQDA 2018 in separate catalogs but as one project, which allowed me to take a holistic view of all information provided by the participants. Both Merriam (1998) and Stake (1995), established voices when it comes to case studies, suggest conducting data analysis simultaneously with collecting data. Stakian fundamentals of data analysis are depicted in Figure 3.7.

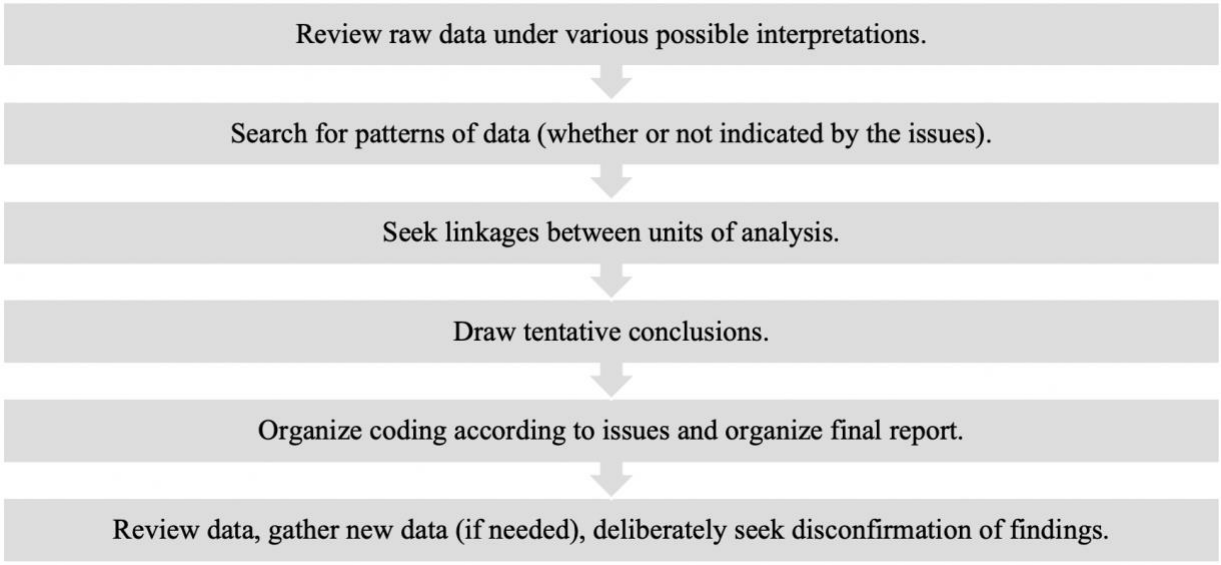

Figure 3.7. Stages of data analysis in case study research, according to Stake (1995, p. 53).

For both collective case studies, I followed Stake's order of doing analysis as I worked on classifying and filing all the data. First, I pre-coded the data in MAXQDA 2018 by highlighting, bolding, annotating, underlining, and color-coding significant and rich quotes that struck me from the data sources for each collective case study. For the instructor-participants case study, I utilized the transcripts from the semi-structured interviews, notes from the observations (classroom and participatory), and the submitted documents (artifacts). In Figure 3.8 below, I present an example of data analysis of an artifact, which is a syllabus from Andrew's college writing class. For the student-participants case study, I made use of the transcripts from the semi-structured interviews and notes from the classroom observations.

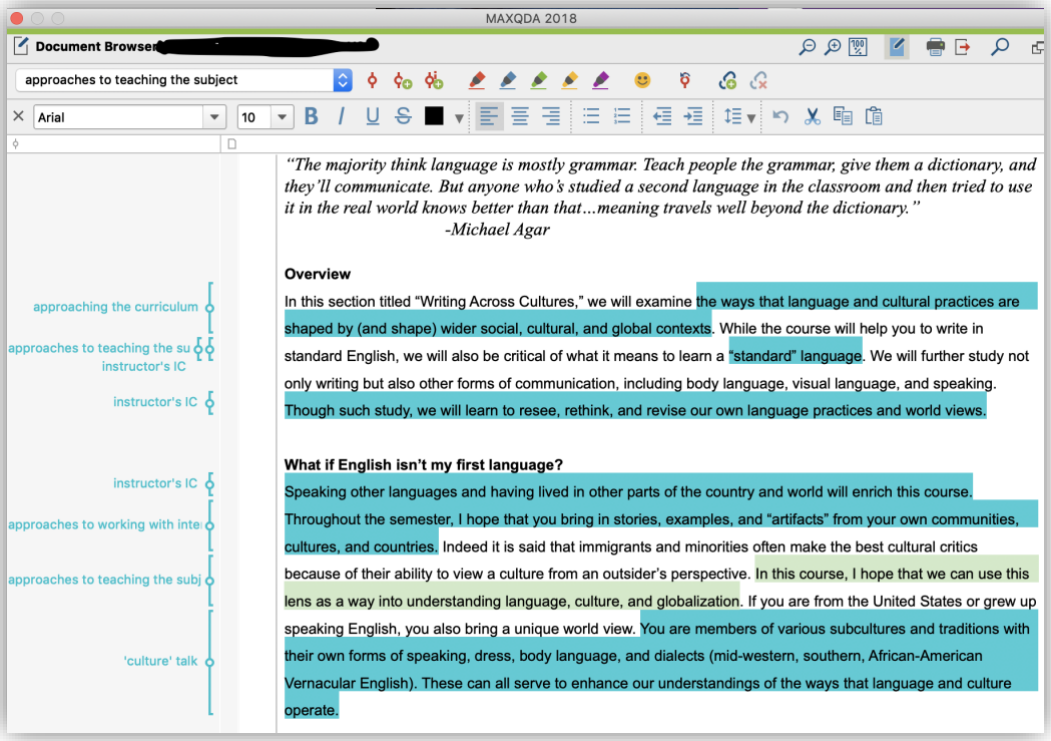

Figure 3.8. An example of data analysis of an artifact: one of the syllabi provided by the instructor-participants.

First Cycle Coding – Holistic Coding

I implemented one coding method in the first cycle of coding, namely holistic coding (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020; Saldaña, 2016) for both collective case studies. According to Saldaña (2016), one should take research questions, the scope of the study, and what we already know about the topic into account when choosing the most appropriate type of coding. Thus, because I wanted to apply a single code to a large unit of data in the corpus rather than perform detailed coding, I found holistic coding (Saldaña, 2016) the best fit for my data analysis. I also had a general idea, based on my review of the existing literature pertaining to the topics under scrutiny, of what to investigate in the data. By coding holistically, I was able to construct a list of 24 major codes for instructor-participants and 25 major codes for student-participants.

Table 3.3 portrays a list of codes for instructor-participants collective case study, while Table 3.4 shows the codes for student-participants. Both tables include names of codes, their definitions and an example of each code.

Table 3.3.
Codes from the first cycle of coding for instructor-participants with definitions and examples.

No.	Code	Definition of the code	Example of the code
1.	motivation to study in the U.S.	Instructor-participant describes what he thinks motivated his students to further their studies in the U.S.	I've talked to a few of our Chinese students, so I know some of their reasons, but I don't really have a complete perspective. But… some of the people I've talked to, and these are usually among the better students, they're just culturally interested, and they'd rather be overseas. Some of them, they failed to get placed in a decent Chinese university and this was better for them than suffering the humiliation of going to a lower rank university in China or nowhere […]. (Stan, Interview 1)
2.	'culture' talk	Instructor-participant mentions dealing with cultural differences, talks about culture in class.	Stan talked about Taiwan in class today. He said: "Taiwan, here. I'm not going to go into political details here." He skillfully managed to avoid getting himself into trouble by showing them a map. (Stan, Field notes journal)
3.	teaching methods	Instructor-participant describes the methods he uses to teach the course, how he utilizes students' prior knowledge and how he motivates them to participate.	[…] it just depends what we're focusing on and also how much you can focus on at any one time. So, it is strategically just trying to choose your moment, but I certainly don't go in a situation where I try to correct all of their errors, usually I'll try and categorize or focus on key ones and we'll talk around that. (Andrew, Interview 1)
4.	beliefs about Chinese undergraduate students	Instructor-participant shares his views and generalizations on China and Chinese undergraduate students.	I have a few observations. One is I think is we should expect they tend to associate socially together, like groups do. (Peter, Interview 1)
5.	experiences teaching Chinese undergraduate students	Instructor-participant shares his experiences teaching Chinese undergraduate students.	Han reporting on handling misbehaving Chinese undergraduate students in his class. "They chose to stay. I was, it was a problem, I was reaching out for help and

Table 3.3. (cont'd)

No.	Code	Definition of the code	Example of the code
			the advice to me was: Be serious with them in class, in front of everybody. The advice I received was: Cause it is that bad and I had observers come to my class too. […]" (Han, Interview 1)
6.	instructor's strengths and role	Instructor-participant reveals his strengths as an instructor and how he sees his role in a classroom.	I mean, you know, in terms of education, I mean, there are different approaches that I take at different time, so I don't know if I assume any one role all the time. I mean, certainly, if you look at the educational literature you could say it's student-centered, you know, facilitator when the students make mistakes or as you want to see the logic to those mistakes or the idea of error analysis. So, it's really trying to take a more descriptive approach, trying to understand logic but also cultural logics and understand the students. […] (Andrew, Interview 1)
7.	success measure	Instructor-participant explains how he sees class progress as successful.	Positive integration with others from wherever, you know. I would like to see more and more that people when they're in their formative years like this start to let go of some of the baggage that they probably we all bring with us from our parents or grandparents or whatever, you know, and just see that it's just US. And we're different. Yeah, but that's Ok. [...] (Peter, Interview 2)
8.	course materials	Instructor-participant shares how he prepares teaching resources.	"I rewrote this text for you, so it's more digestible to a non-native speaker's ear." (Stan, Field notes journal)
9.	approaches to working with international students	Instructor-participant explains how he differentiates (or does not) instruction and teaching approaches for international students.	I guess every student, every class somehow changes my thoughts and my thinking. I try to figure out how to answer that question because thoughts about international students, I'm not sure I… they're students and they're also international. I don't know if I see them as international students. They're just students […] (Andrew, Interview 2)

Table 3.3. (cont'd)

No.	Code	Definition of the code	Example of the code
10.	teaching frustrations and failures	Instructor-participant mentions challenges teaching international students.	Let me think. I just had a student this week that I did a zoom meeting with yesterday. An Asian student that felt, I don't know what the right word is. She was concerned, a little bit anxious about disrupting her team with some areas that she thought the team could perform better so… Any team you take in here, you've got everything from soup to nuts and it's never just this perfect, you know, that are all just very exactly the same. So, she was a little frustrated with one of her team members and she didn't know because it's 2nd language […]. (Peter, Interview 2)
11.	instructor's IC	Instructor-participant's understanding of interculturality and views on World Englishes.	Through such study, we will learn to resee, rethink, and revise our own language practices and world views. (Andrew, Fall Syllabus)
12.	instructor's self-identification	Instructor-participant reveals how he classifies himself in terms of his identity.	Just an American professor. (Peter, Interview 2)
13.	communication with Chinese undergraduate students	Instructor-participant describes any communication or interaction instances between him and Chinese undergraduate students in his class.	That's a good question. I know for sure one of them is because they came up to me and told me, which is why I've actually chosen some of the topics based on what they're interested in, which will be Education. So, I'm trying to work in… if students come to me, which one of them have, I want to work on things I know would help them, you know? If they're taking initiative. […] (Han, Interview 1)
14.	attitudes towards the Chinese	Instructor-participant shares his and others' (observed) attitudes towards the Chinese, including instances of presumed discrimination.	I'm sure it [discrimination] exists but I tell you something it's the young people today in the U.S. are very different from young people 10 years ago or 20 years ago or 30 years ago. The acceptance and the assumption that diversity is good, fine and lovely is prevalent and so I don't think the majority are white nationalists or whatever. I think the majority accept. (Peter, Interview 1)

Table 3.3. (cont'd)

No.	Code	Definition of the code	Example of the code
15.	class management	Instructor-participant describes how he manages the class and how logistics are handled.	Well. I guess maybe that's just a personality thing you know. I've been in a lot of classes where an activity will start and it will go for 7 or 8 minutes until the teacher finally realizes that they didn't really understand what I wanted them to do and then they have to stop it, they have to restart with the better understanding of what the teacher wanted and that's 7 or 8 minutes wasted. I would rather just take the 2 minutes up front and make sure everybody knows. (Stan, Interview 2)
16.	plagiarism	Instructor-participant reports instances of presumed plagiarism in his class.	I mean it was kind of intertwined. I didn't have a plagiarism problem because I actually, might have told you this, I talked with one of the supervisors beforehand about plagiarism problems they had had so I didn't have them pulling anything from articles. […] (Han, Interview 2)
17.	approaches to teaching the subject	Instructor-participant describes a specific approach he takes to instructing his subject.	No, I usually don't although in some cases I suppose I should. I probably don't grade if it's not a pedagogical question entirely, it's a little bit of a practical one, in terms of it's more work for me. I guess it would depend which little piece, like for instance, the reading I give on comics, in some sense, I think a lot of the Chinese international students struggle a lot with the reading itself even though it's comic, in terms of the language. And it works better when I give them, I suppose, worksheets with specific questions and I come and grade it. […] (Andrew, Interview 2)
18.	enjoyment teaching the course	Instructor-participant explains if he enjoys teaching the course (or not).	That's so sad, but I mean they're great students so I'm not judging them for the gaokao score. I wish I could just keep them forever. (Han, Interview 2)

Table 3.3. (cont'd)

No.	Code	Definition of the code	Example of the code
19.	group settings	Instructor-participant describes how he arranges group work and why.	Yeah, it's visible in the classes because of where they'll sit, right? And I tend to try to integrate, I do a lot of work with teams and the teams usually have 5 or 6 whatever, it is you know 4 to 6 members usually. And I will not allow self-selected groups. I drive that. I want the boys and the girls, I want the different ethnicities and I try to have that at least 2, you know, never just one woman or one man, never just one, you know, foreign student […] (Peter, Interview 1)
20.	approaching the curriculum	Instructor-participant shares how he writes, uses, adapts the syllabi and the curriculum.	For sure, because, and one of the things I've learned in the TESOL program here is that, you know, incidental learning and incidental teaching, and teaching based on the students' needs is usually better and they respond to that better than just chugging through a textbook, so that's why I try to, you know, make my own materials as much as possible. And of course, I do use the textbook, we're required to, but I also supplement it. (Han, Interview 1)
21.	knowing students' names	Instructor-participant explains if he knows students (Chinese) names.	I'm surprised Stan knows all of their names, in Chinese already. (Stan, Field notes journal)
22.	instructor training	Instructor-participant reports on any training opportunities he might have had.	You know, what I wouldn't like to do is what I've seen offered in other places, which is where somebody else who's got exactly as much knowledge as me stands up and gives a workshop about how to handle Chinese students but doesn't really know anything more about it than I do. But if I felt like somebody like you was in charge, having lived in China for so long, having studied cultural factors in their instruction, now that I think people would pay attention to. (Stan, Interview 1)

Table 3.3. (cont'd)

No.	Code	Definition of the code	Example of the code
23.	instructor's languages	Instructor-participant lists all languages he has studied.	Too far back. [gives a few numbers and basic expressions in French and German]. So that deep into a few languages so that when I travelled, I will admit that I found over time, it was more effective to just communicate in English. […] (Peter, Interview 1)
24.	teaching beginnings	Instructor-participant describes his first years of being an instructor and why he decided to teach.	I liked languages always, but my original major was computer science. So, my high school advisor kind of pushed me towards X language, as a language, because of companies like Samsung, LG being popular in the US. She was like that might give you a foot-in, and it's different from Spanish. You know? So, that was kind of the argument and I already was interested so…taking that advice, I enrolled my first semester here, X language, which was my first class and then…it went from there. (Han, Interview 1)

There were also instances were participants' words would fall under multiple codes, given the fact that I coded larger chunks of text (holistic coding); therefore, in a few cases (specifically 12) I applied multiple codes to the same data section.

Table 3.4.

Codes from the first cycle of coding for student-participants with definitions and examples.

No.	Code	Definition of the code	Example of the code
1.	new cultures	Student-participant describes something new in relation to being in the U.S.	In China doctors will give you the same thing for many diseases, in here not like that. Doctors will give you different diagnosis. (Jackson, Interview)
2.	comparisons of China and the U.S.	Student-participant compares China and the United States.	I want to know how to study in English. I want to improve my study skills like, I know how to study English and I know the Chinese education system and I know how to learn but I change the system and the teacher teach in different ways. (Aurora, Interview)

Table 3.4. (cont'd)

No.	Code	Definition of the code	Example of the code
3.	challenges in the U.S.	Student-participant describes challenging situations since he/she moved to the U.S.	No, because when got in the GLU, the 1st year I'm not comfortable to do something. Because when I am a stranger in the new environment, it's make me nervous. And I'm nervous to talk with other people and communicate. (Nick, Interview)
4.	preparation for study abroad	Student-participant elaborates on any language courses or other preparation efforts taken prior to study abroad.	I was in Rhode Island in high school. (Amy, Interview)
5.	major + year at GLU	Student-participant discloses their major and year of study at GLU.	My major is classical vocal. (Billy, Field notes journal)
6.	student's languages	Student-participant lists languages studied.	Ah, I only learn two language, one is Chinese is my first and mother language and my other is English. (Aurora, Interview)
7.	English proficiency	Student-participant reports his/her TOEFL score or self-assessed level of proficiency in English.	83, I believe. (Nick, Interview)
8.	learning English	Student-participant shares his/her experiences with learning English.	So, you're thinking in Chinese when you speak English? Aurora: Yeah. K: So, you're translating? Aurora: Yeah. K: In your head before you speak? Aurora: Yeah and I know lots of words, but I can't think, come up with that very quick in a second. (Aurora, Interview)
9.	student's future plans	Student-participant reveals what they want to do in the future, that is after their studies at GLU.	I plan to apply for my master's degree to the grad school. (Eve, Interview)
10.	daily life in the U.S.	Student-participant reports on daily life experiences in the United States.	I think it's convenient here, but it depends. It's convenient here because there is not so many traffic. But in China, there's so many traffic and so many cars, so the bus driver cannot care about every

Table 3.4. (cont'd)

No.	Code	Definition of the code	Example of the code
			person's feeling. They should follow the rules from the company to stop for each station, but in here it's not more traffic and not more car so it's convenient to pull the line [string] to let the bus driver know what time to stop and which station to stop. (Nick, Interview)
11.	living situation	Student-participant shares their living arrangements in the U.S.	In dorm […] but everyone is gone. It's just us. (Billy, Interview)
12.	kindness	Student-participant explains instances of when someone was kind to him/her in the U.S.	And professor is also like when I have some questions asked him, he will answer specifically and accurate. I have talked with him when the end of the 1st class and I said to him: I'm too nervous to talk with other people and He told me, like: Just go, when you make team, and just tell your teammates what's your problem and what's your idea. And he is also very smart. He said: he very care about my feelings and so he make the other Chinese boy with me in the one team. (Nick, Interview)
13.	description of teaching methods	Student-participant describes the techniques a given instructor uses when teaching.	Yeah, but most teachers like lecture, and lecture and it is boring. It is boring. (Jackson, Interview)
14.	grouping	Student-participant explains how they are grouped in class for teamwork.	3 American girls. Two American girls and one American boy. They are very very awesome and they help me do, like give me some ideas and for presentation and for the slides. (Nick, Interview)
15.	opinion about other Chinese students in the U.S.	Student-participant reveals what they think about their country mates.	Yeah, some my China friends want to still live after they graduate, they will still live in the US. K: Oh, they want to stay here? Aurora: Yeah, they want to stay here. They want to change some personality. (Aurora, Interview)
16.	self-assessment of student's experiences in the U.S.	Student-participant assesses his or her experiences in the U.S. thus far.	I think I don't have that kind of problem communication problems. (Amy, Interview)

Table 3.4. (cont'd)

No.	Code	Definition of the code	Example of the code
17.	feeling respected	Student-participant admits whether they feel respected at GLU or not.	Of course. (Nick, Interview)
18.	accommodating different students	Student-participant shares their thoughts on whether instructors should provide special treatment for students from other countries.	I think the teacher should to consider this because the language and different student come from different area, different countries high school so maybe their level or some knowledge they didn't learn before and they don't what the meaning in this academic term. So, they need to explain them in simple way. (Aurora, Interview)
19.	friendships in the U.S.	Student-participant talks about making friends in the U.S.	Yeah, it's true, so I think here I mostly communicate with just Chinese students. Because I didn't get a lot of chance to know American friends. Cause I lived in the east campus and there are also a lot of Chinese students living here. (Amy, Interview)
20.	interacting with the instructor	Student-participant shares how much interaction he or she might have with an instructor.	And professor is also like when I have some questions asked him, he will answer specifically and accurate. I have talked with him when the end of the 1st class and I said to him: I'm too nervous to talk with other people and He told me, like: Just go, when you make team, and just tell your teammates what's your problem and what's your idea. And he is also very smart. He said: he very care about my feelings and so he make the other Chinese boy with me in the one team. (Nick, Interview)
21.	classroom discussions	Student-participant comments on discussions in class.	Yes, yeah. We had an article about the Chinese negotiation. Yes, but I left China in at my at 18 years old, so I didn't know much about the Chinese business. (Eve, Interview)
22.	student's perceived role in a class	Student-participant explains how they see their role in a class.	Just a normal student, I think. Just like the others. (Billy, Interview)
23.	hopes and expectations at GLU	Student-participant shares his/her hopes at GLU and what they expect from	I hope for now, at first, I want to improve my English skill. (Aurora, Interview)

Table 3.4. (cont'd)

No.	Code	Definition of the code	Example of the code
		studying at GLU.	
24.	student's motivation to study in the U.S.	Student-participant talks about what motivated them to come study in the United States.	Probably because there's a lot of, the facility here is kind of good than China and I think the environment here is also better, the study environment here is also good, you know? You have a lot of students play in a practice room but there is a few in Chinese practice room. (Billy, Interview)
25.	place of origin in China	Student-participant states where they are from in China.	South, Shenzhen. (Jackson, Interview)

In addition, I kept analytic memos for each code that I established through MAXQDA's 2018 function of creating new codes. I present an example of one in Figure 3.9 below. These memos were thoughts that summarized or detailed my reactions to the data I was concurrently analyzing. This allowed me to keep record of how the analysis took shape and assisted my conclusions. Merriam (1998, p. 165) also suggests keeping track of one's musings, speculations, and hunches (my analytic memos) as they occur during analysis, since they might get interwoven with the raw data. This was different from my reflective journal which I kept as a hardcopy and used during data collection phase; while I used the analytic memos as a function in MAXQDA 2018.

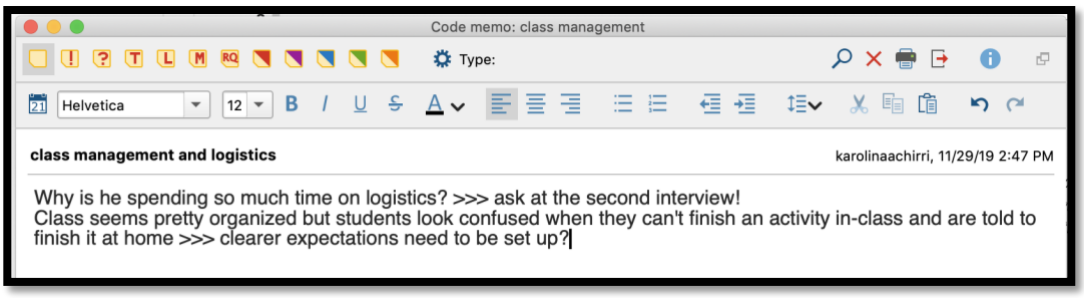

Figure 3.9. An example of an analytic memo from my data stored in MAXQDA 2018.

Second Cycle Coding – Category Construction or Pattern Coding

Merriam (1998) defines category construction as "capturing some recurring pattern that cuts across the preponderance of the data" (p. 179). For me, this process was highly intuitive, systematic, and informed by the study's purpose. In deriving categories, I paid particular attention to them being exhaustive and mutually exclusive, in both collective case studies.

On the other hand, Saldaña (2016) calls this cycle of coding: pattern coding. It is a way of grouping similarities from the first coding cycle into a smaller number of categories, or themes (Miles et al., 2020). Therefore, I based this cycle on similarly coded data in each collective case study. It allowed me to organize the data in a clearer manner and also attribute them preliminary meanings. I used a pattern coding approach, which helped me to see how major themes may potentially develop from my categories. Finally, I gathered all themes that emerged from the abovementioned procedures in each collective case study. Based on these themes, I constructed the headings in the subsequent Findings chapters (Chapters 4 & 5) for the instructor-participants collective case study and student-participants collective case study, respectively.

Theming appears to be a common strategy for the analysis of interviews, observations, and artifacts (Saldaña, 2016), therefore fitting a multiple case study (p. 200). In my analyses, I paid particular attention to how the themes were similar, different and to what bound them together. This process resulted in complete data charts for each collective case study (Tables 3.5 and 3.6). Each table depicts the overarching theme for each collective case study, i.e., for the instructor-participants (Table 3.5) and student-participants (Table 3.6), respectively, and the main themes for each of the case studies. I also included codes from the first cycle of coding that were assigned underneath each theme. I included one binding theme for each collective case study that became clear to me after I analyzed all data, i.e., transformative internationalization

for the instructor-participants collective case study and *kindness* for the student-participants collective case study. These tables served as a well-organized document with appropriate categories and possible relationships within data corpus and I used it as a major stepping stone for writing my interpretations in Chapter 6 (Discussion).

Table 3.5.
Themes for the instructor-participants collective case study that emerged from the second cycle of coding and codes from the first cycle of coding that I assigned to each theme.

Transformative Internationalization through Teaching Practices		
1.	Perceptions of Chinese undergraduate students	• (Code #1) motivation to study in the U.S. • (Codes #4 & #14) beliefs and attitudes towards Chinese undergraduate students • (Code #18) enjoyment teaching the course
2.	Cultural mélange	• (Code #2) 'culture' talk • (Code #10) teaching frustrations and failures • (Code #15) class management • (Code # 19) group settings • (Code #21) knowing students' names
3.	Pedagogical approaches to Chinese undergraduate students	• (Code #3) teaching methods • (Code #5) experiences teaching Chinese undergraduate students • (Code #6) instructor's strengths and role • (Code #7) success measure • (Code #9) approaches to working with international students • (Code #13) communication with Chinese undergraduate students • (Code #16) plagiarism
4.	Interculturality	• (Code #11) instructor's IC • (Code #22) instructor training • (Code #23) instructor's languages • (Code #24) teaching beginnings

Table 3.6.
Themes for the student-participants collective case study that emerged from the second cycle of coding and codes from the first cycle of coding that I assigned to each theme.

Kindness		
1.	Preparedness for and motivation to explore the new	• (Code #4) preparation for study abroad • (Code #9) student's future plans • (Code #23) hopes and expectations at GLU • (Code #24) student's motivation to study in the U.S.
2.	Language experiences	• (Code #3) challenges in the U.S. • (Code #7) English proficiency • (Code #8) learning English
3.	Beliefs and feelings about studying in the United States	• (Code #2) comparisons of China and the U.S. • (Code #12) being kind • (Code #13) description of teaching methods • (Code #14) grouping • (Code #16) self-assessment of student's experiences in the U.S. • (Code #17) feeling respected • (Code #18) accommodating different students • (Code #20) interacting with the instructor • (Code #21) classroom discussions • (Code #22) student's perceived role in class
4.	The social side of the new	• (Code #1) new cultures • (Code #3) challenges in the U.S. • (Code #10) daily life in the U.S. • (Code #11) living situation • (Code #15) opinion about other Chinese students in the U.S. • (Code #19) friendships in the U.S.

In line with Stake (1995) and Figure 3.7 (depicted previously), after completing this round of coding, I re-examined each collective case study's coded data for accuracy and sought any disconfirmation of the findings. In the end, I eliminated themes that did not match my research questions and this study's scope and focused on those that did.

Particularization

Finally, it is important to discuss how I approached generalization in this project. As mentioned before, the real purpose of a qualitative case study is particularization, not generalization. In fact, in Stake's (1995, p. 85) words, "there is no or little interest in generalizing from one case to another." On the basis of the respective data sources for each collective case study, I drew my own conclusions (assertions), which emphasized interpretations. Since I was to record as objectively as possible what was happening in front of me, I concurrently examined the meaning and redirected my observations or interview prompts to refine the observed meaning. Through doing so, I accentuated the uniqueness of the particular cases (the instructor and student-participants in their classes). Turning back to Stake (1995), case studies are well-suited for what he calls naturalistic generalizations, those that transform tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge and as a result provide readers with a vicarious experience within a given context (Tracy, 2010). I practiced those naturalistic generalizations in my interpretations of initial findings. In the end, I described the complex phenomena under study extensively, explicitly, and in depth.

In sum, I chose the methods delineated in this chapter to match specifically the types of data collected and research questions asked. Multiple case study research is rather valuable when researching issues pertaining to more than one case study (Stake, 2006), in this case two collective case studies. Now that the context, participants, data sources and analysis methods, as well as researcher positionality have been outlined, the following two chapters (Chapter 4 and 5) detail the findings derived from researching the experiences of the instructor-participants and student-participants, respectively. Following is Chapter 6, in which I discuss those findings. The last chapter in this project, Chapter 7, lays out my conclusions from this study.

CHAPTER 4

INSTRUCTOR-PARTICIPANTS: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences that four instructor-participants have undergone working with Chinese undergraduate students in their designated courses as well as the experiences of six student-participants in those very courses at a large public university in the U.S. (here: Grand Lake University or GLU).

In this chapter, I present findings from the collective case study for instructor-participants. Figure 4.1 shows how this case study was structured, that is at three different sites (Activity Site 1, 2, and 3) with four instructor-participants (Mini-Cases). I collected data through two semi-structured interviews with each instructor-participant, multiple observations (including participant observations, when asked by an instructor-participant), and a rich collection of artifacts (course syllabi, assignments, handouts, PowerPoint presentations, etc.). I coded all data holistically by conducting first and second cycle of coding. The second cycle of coding (pattern coding) allowed me to categorize data into four themes (Issues on Figure 4.1), namely (1) Perceptions of Chinese undergraduate students, (2) Cultural mélange, (3) Pedagogical approaches to Chinese undergraduate students, and (4) Interculturality. The four themes fit within a larger issue of transformative internationalization through teaching practices, which I discuss in detail in Chapter 6.

Findings

Firstly, I remind the reader of whom this collective case study is about, i.e., the experiences of instructor-participants teaching Chinese undergraduate students. Next, I present findings for this case bound by the abovementioned themes. I do not discuss cases one by one but rather create a narrative that flows from one theme to the next. Also, these four instructor-

participants share common elements of their narrative. Figure 4.1 represents this collective case study visually, as well as provides the multiple contexts surrounding and affecting the mini-cases in it. Research questions are also restated in the visual.

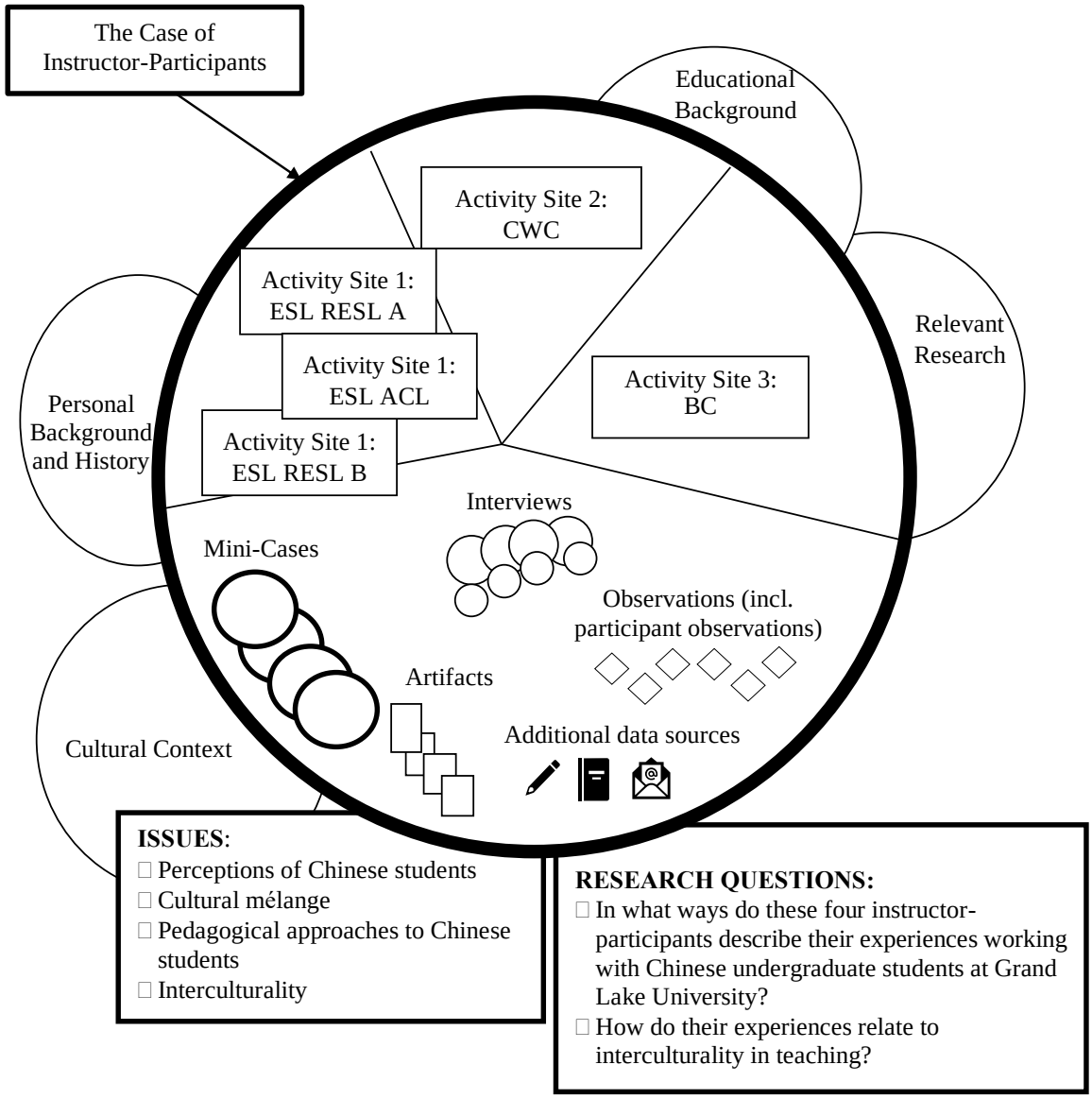

Figure 4.1. A graphic design of a collective case study for instructor-participants updated with main findings (issues) and research questions. The icons under Additional data sources represent a field notes journal, researcher's journal and email correspondence, respectively. ESL ACL stands for English as a Second Language: American Culture, while ESL RESL A and B represent English as Second Language: Reading (A and B were taught by two different instructor-participants). CWC stands for cultural writing course and BC for a course on business management. Worksheet used with permission from Stake (2006, p. 5).

Cases through Themes

This collective case study constituted four instructor-participants as mini-cases. Table 4.1 below reminds the reader about whom the instructor-participants were, their chosen pseudonyms for this study's purpose and their gender. I also listed their self-identification as U.S. instructors. None of the instructor-participants spoke Chinese, but some had been to China once or more. They expressed interest in China and its rich cultures. All four instructor-participants, though to a different extent, had had previous experiences teaching Chinese undergraduate students, that is to say, the classes I observed were not their first exposure to students from China. This fact rendered the interviews quite enriching as they had plentiful teaching experiences to share.

Table 4.1.
The list of instructor-participants, their gender, and self-identification.

No.	Pseudonym	Gender	Self-identification
1.	Stan	Male	American;
2.	Han	Male	American;
3.	Andrew	Male	American;
4.	Peter	Male	American.

Stan and Han both ran a class that focused on improving students' reading skills in an ESL context (ESL RESL A and ESL RESL B). These classes were predominantly made up of Chinese undergraduate students and had a maximum of 15 students each. Peter, on the other hand, instructed a class for students majoring in business management. His class was the biggest in terms of the number of students (about 45) and there were a few Chinese undergraduate students enrolled in it. This was a class only business majors could take.

Interestingly, one instructor-participant, specifically Andrew, taught a class that was designed to focus on crossing cultural boundaries, which resulted in many points of reference to cultures, comparatively U.S. and Chinese cultures, throughout both semesters of my observations. During both semesters, this class had around 10 students and most of them were

from China. In addition, Han's ESL cultural class also stood out as slightly atypical, primarily as it took place in the summer semester (in between the Spring and Fall), but also because its objective was to acquaint students (who were exchange students from two Chinese universities doing a joint undergraduate program between their universities in China and GLU) with American cultures through teaching them English. This class was unique also because it comprised only students from China (about 20) and was the shortest of all classes I observed (an intensive course of two weeks during summer).

In the next section, I present findings from the instructor-participants collective case study. I follow the order of themes presented in Table 4.2 below. Themes are followed by a discussion of pertaining findings in Chapter 6.

Table 4.2.
Themes for the instructor-participants collective case study.

1.	Perceptions of Chinese undergraduate students
2.	Cultural mélange
3.	Pedagogical approaches to Chinese undergraduate students
4.	Interculturality

Perceptions of Chinese Undergraduate Students

Instructor-participants' data revealed their perceptions when it comes to Chinese undergraduate students. Here, I present data related to how the instructor-participants perceived reasons behind Chinese undergraduate students' decisions to study in the U.S., followed by the instructor-participants' beliefs about and attitudes towards the Chinese undergraduate students as well as China in general. In addition, I weave in their satisfaction teaching a given observed course (or its lack thereof) into this section as it affected instructor-participants' perceptions of the Chinese undergraduate students.

Perceived motivation to completing a degree abroad emerged as a big category from my second cycle of coding. When it comes to what motivated student-participants in the observed classes to come and study in the U.S., different instructor-participants had different ideas. During our first interview, Stan elaborated on the matter (Excerpt 4.1) by sharing his conversations with some of the students from China in his class:

> Excerpt 4.1: Some of the people I've talked to, and these are usually among the better students, they're just culturally interested, and they'd rather be overseas. Some of them, they failed to get placed in a decent Chinese university and this was better for them than suffering the humiliation of going to a lower rank university in China or nowhere. And in other cases, the parents just think: You gotta get out of here, you're just hanging around, you're doing nothing. You know, go to the U.S. (Stan, Interview 1)

Stan's observations were very comprehensive. While a lot of Chinese undergraduate students tend to prepare for completing a degree abroad from an early age, there are also those who have failed to secure a spot at a prestigious university in China (Falcone, 2017). Stan also noted there is a group of students who simply do not have a clear plan for their future, so their parents encourage them to experience the foreign country while studying at the same time. He also made a distinction between students' English proficiency levels by contrasting those who are interested in foreign cultures (therefore higher proficiency level) with those who are lower levels as having failed at Chinese educational requirements.

Interestingly, Peter, who taught the business management class – a top choice for the Chinese in terms of a major at GLU, noted: "They need to bring this knowledge back to their parents because their dad is running a factory and they are supposed to take over. There's some sort of connection with the family." (Peter, Interview 1). Peter's experiences of having Chinese undergraduate students in his classes underline familial pressure as a strong factor that motivated his students to come to the U.S. It is expected that the students will return home after graduation, take over the family business and put all the knowledge they have obtained in the United States

schools into practice (Cheung & Xu, 2015). In Chapter 5, where I present findings from the student-participants collective case study, I reveal the motivations that the six student-participants reported as an impetus to come and further their education in the U.S.

The motivations instructor-participants saw behind Chinese undergraduate students' decisions to study in the U.S. are linked to their beliefs about these students and more generally, China. Their enjoyment teaching a given course was also dependent on what their attitudes towards the Chinese undergraduate students were. Stan was the instructor-participant who had been teaching the longest. He also visited China multiple times in the span of over two decades, so his beliefs about China and Chinese undergraduate students underwent a visible transformation. He claimed his attitude "went from almost a sort of admiration mixed with pity to admiration mixed with a resistance to rival cultural trends" (Stan, Interview 2). He no longer sees the Chinese as lacking anything. Instead, he developed a sense of admiration towards how the Chinese were able to develop in all levels of society. He even feels a tad jealous of China now ("resistance to rival cultural trends"). Stan's attitude to his Chinese undergraduate students evolved from a pitiful one to that of visible admiration. As visible in Excerpt 4.2, Stan looks at all China's achievements as a country as a representation of his Chinese undergraduate students' change as individuals. He also shows his intercultural development as an instructor by saying:

> Excerpt 4.2: Now, when I walk into a classroom, I think that there's a lot about modern culture they could teach me. I don't think they lag behind culturally. I think their culture is different but I don't think that their country is like a poor backwater anymore. (Stan, Interview 2)

For Stan, his current Chinese undergraduate students were a potential source of advancement for him in the classroom. My observations of his classes also confirmed that he was open to talk to his Chinese undergraduate students, willing to learn something new. Also, Stan was aware of cultural sensitivities, which he depicted through re-writing most of his course readings into

accessible language but more importantly stripped down from unnecessary and confusing cultural references. To illustrate, he asked Chinese undergraduate students in the course multiple times to provide an equivalent of a proverb in Chinese or to explain how certain things mentioned in a reading are done in China. In other words, the appreciation and awe Stan felt towards the Chinese and their cultures was confirmed through his abovementioned actions in a classroom.

On the other hand, Peter held some more stereotypical opinions of Chinese undergraduate students: "[…] I think we should expect they tend to associate socially together, like groups do" (Peter, Interview 1). Therefore, he was also very specific in the way he grouped students in his class by using an algorithm to establish fairness. He made sure ethnicities were as mixed as possible in a given group to allow the students to practice the "global mind." Peter's class was the biggest of all the classes I observed, with over 40 students and indeed the Chinese undergraduate students in it tended to sit together. Thus, his grouping system, broke the seating pattern of Chinese undergraduate students. That is because his business management class was structured based mostly on teamwork and students had to find their team members to collaborate with as soon as Peter assigned activities to teams, which happened almost every class I observed. As will be described in Chapter 5, many of Peter's Chinese undergraduate students appreciated being paired with local students.

Further, Andrew's class required advanced analytical and critical thinking skills, which could be challenging in a second language. His syllabus, however, sounded quite encouraging:

> Excerpt 4.3: […] the university is composed of numerous cultures (disciplines) each with their own "languages." This course will help you learn to navigate ways of writing, reading, speaking, and thinking in these cultures. This task is particularly challenging for those of us who are new indeed to this culture and may be fluent in other world languages. (Andrew, Syllabus Fall)

Andrew was extremely conscious of what working with international students' entails. He repeatedly said to me during the interviews that he did not like to separate international or Chinese undergraduate students from students as a whole. This way he was safe not to *other* any students based solely on their nationality or country of origin. In his awareness of keeping the classes inclusive for all, Andrew was also very eager to learn from Chinese undergraduate students. I observed this over and over again, where he would ask them to share their cultural artifacts and was trying to learn as much about where they come from as he possibly could. Thus, when he said, "They're coming out of a different educational system. […] I'm trying to learn more about their histories and where they're from […]" (Andrew, Interview 1), it did not surprise me at all. His attitudes towards Chinese undergraduate students (i.e., avoiding *othering*, inclusiveness, and willingness to learn from them) were clearly stated on his syllabus (e.g., You are members of various subcultures and traditions with their own forms of speaking, dress, body language, and dialects. These can all serve to enhance our understandings of the ways that language and culture operate. [Andrew, Syllabus]), repeated during the interviews and then represented in his teaching methods. In addition, Andrew indicated on his syllabus that one of his course's objectives was indeed transformation: "[…] we will learn to resee, rethink, and revise our own language practices and world views" (Andrew, Syllabus). By using 'we' as the pronoun on his syllabus, Andrew not only included but welcomed his students to participate in the processes of re-framing their beliefs as well. He also stated throughout our interviews that he learns from his students each time he teaches them. So, his beliefs of Chinese undergraduate students and his students' views of the world might have undergone a mutual transformation, to a different degree and in different ways, each time the processes of learning and teaching took place.

These three various beliefs about Chinese undergraduate students delineated above affect whether or not an instructor-participant would feel joy teaching his course. Specifically, Han enjoyed teaching the ESL cultural class over the summer. This might have been due to the fact that this class consisted of students from China only, but not typical Chinese undergraduate students (that is mostly seen by him as disengaged and disinterested) whom he would get to teach during spring and fall semesters. As I learned through the observations, these students were on an exchange and extremely eager and willing to learn. Han described his feelings about the class as follows:

> Excerpt 4.4: I was literally telling my friends: Oh my God, I can't believe they're so good. I was scared to teach this class, you know, because of my previous experience where there would be 2 or 3 students that were really focused and everyone else was like: attitude or they would tell me they thought my test was bad.[…] All of them are hard-working, even the weak ones. (Han, Interview 2)

Here, Han was positively surprised at how motivated his students were. He entered the classroom feeling a bit unsure of what this course was going to be, given it was his first time teaching it and the fact that the population was different from his regular student body. His opinion of Chinese undergraduate students changed, from seeing them all as disengaged and bored, to acknowledging that there are also students from China who are the exact opposite (such as these in his ESL ACL class). He repeatedly told me how happy he was spending hours on making materials for this course (the syllabus he was given was written in a quite generic way) and how he loved teaching this course. While Han thoroughly enjoyed his course, the other three instructor-participants did so as well, but had a few downsides to mention, such as administrative frustrations reflected in too big of numbers of students in class, or weird scheduling system.

The perceptions that the four instructor-participants revealed through this study oscillated around their perceived motivations behind Chinese undergraduate students' choice to study in

the U.S. as well as broader views and feelings when it comes to educating the Chinese. The perceptions were generally positive and showed growth and transformation both at a personal and at a professional level.

Cultural Mélange

The second theme that emerged from my coding process was the mix of cultures (i.e., cultural mélange). Dervin (2016b) defines it as a situation where "a culture is influenced and transformed by another culture" (p. 115). The key to understanding cultural mélange is the word "transformed" as it ties into my assumption that internationalization needs to occur as a mutual process to be meaningful. Cultural mélange might also include two or more cultures of learning, which this section touches upon as well. Hence, in this section, I discuss mentioning of dissimilar cultures in class and potential cultural clashes as their results. I also present findings on class management that links to mixing of cultures, including group settings. Lastly, I depict reported teaching frustrations and failures that might have been related to having to navigate a plethora of cultures in one course.

To begin with, I asked the four instructor-participants during our interviews if they incorporate cultural elements in their courses and if so to what extent and in what way. The answers I received varied greatly depending on the teaching context. Andrew said he focuses on cultures in his class primarily (CWC, college writing class) and how those might be navigated by students, while Han claimed to avoid talking about cultures altogether in order not to generalize or essentialize any one particular culture (ESL RESL B, reading class). Stan talked about integrating cultural elements quite a bit (ESL RESL A, reading class), for instance by manipulating reading materials that would describe a common concept in U.S. cultures to make

them more accessible to students, while Peter tended to focus on global contexts rather than one chosen culture (the business management class).

Andrew's syllabus was also filled with cultural annotations. Excerpt 4.5 presents one example of such notes. Importantly, his syllabus language did not position international students at any disadvantage but rather assured them that all are truly welcome to be themselves and learn from each other in his classroom.

> Excerpt 4.5: You are members of various subcultures and traditions with their own forms of speaking, dress, body language, and dialects (mid-western, southern, African American Vernacular English). These can all serve to enhance our understandings of the ways that language and culture operate. (Andrew, Syllabus Fall)

It was very obvious that Andrew wanted to include cultures in his classes every time I observed him teach. He would continually ask international students (mostly from mainland China, but not only) to share their own cultural elements with the rest of the class. On his syllabus, Andrew listed learning to "denaturalize everyday mundane and routine language practices […] That means thinking like an anthropologist in order to resee other cultures as well as our own to understand the connections between language, culture, identity, and globalization" (Andrew, Syllabus) as one of his course's objectives. He anticipated mutual changes ("resee other culture as well as our own") that the processes of teaching and learning in his CWC course would likely evoke. He also asked me to participate in a few discussions, including leading one based on a passage he had had assigned students to read from my China memoirs. Cultures were omnipresent in Andrew's class, his syllabus, his assignments and readings. He called cultures "the essence of the classes I teach" (Andrew, Interview 1). This is how he explained it further during our first interview:

> Excerpt 4.6: So, the whole center of my teaching is looking across cultures […]. It's just grounded in sort of the approach. It's like if we're discussing things and then the Chinese students will bring in a term like *tuhao* or whatever it is, that just serves as a focal point

> of discussions […]. Everything in the course is sort of geared towards that. (Andrew, Interview 1)

The term he exemplified this with, *tuhao* (土豪), can be translated from Chinese as nouveau riche and is relatively new in Chinese culture. Students took turns to explain what this word means in the Chinese context and some of them included their own opinions on the nouveau riche, including the information whether they belonged to the group or not. It was interesting to see how Andrew was able to build an entire class around culture specific words. Students were willing to share and because the atmosphere of the classes was very relaxing and low stress, they were open to provide cultural digressions, which Andrew then skillfully turned into the focus of his classes. In his approaches, Andrew was able to mix cultures and as a result to potentially allow for mutual transformations by letting Chinese undergraduate students' culture influence his ways of thinking.

On the contrary, Han was very cautious in bringing any cultural connotations into his ESL reading class (ESL RESL B). Because the main objective of the class was "to improve students' reading skills" (Han, Syllabus Spring), he had no pressure to incorporate cultural elements into that course. In his words: "Even with the U.S., it's very vast, it's not all the same place. That's why I try to stay away from culture in instruction." (Han, Interview 1). However, it was not the case with the ESL cultural class (ESL ACL) that Han taught over the summer. Because students were supposed to learn English through culture, the syllabus was built around their trips to various historical or cultural sites. He changed his approach and engaged the role of culture in classroom instruction based on the objectives of the course he was teaching. One of his classes that I observed focused on preparation for an upcoming trip to a local museum. Han could not avoid the culture talk. That is how he structured the class:

> Excerpt 4.7: Their culture topics related to their trips. […] So, I turned it into some games with vocab and they did some research about it. We did coat of arms presentations […] and then they made their own. Then, they presented about it using new vocab, […] it was super fun. So, it's like doing that kind of thing but in a fun way so that when they go back to China, they'll be like: Oh, I remember it because we did it in class; not kind of like drilling them. (Han, Interview 2)

Han was all about fun, learning through games and playing, which worked well with his Chinese undergraduate students. They were very engaged each time I observed, which was reflected through their active participation and frequent questions. He also cared about being liked, i.e., it mattered to him that students would remember him as the fun instructor and that they would be relaxed and open in class, as he admitted to during the interview. So, it was interesting to see how his approaches changed depending on the context of the class he was teaching, moving between "no culture talk at all" in his ESL reading class (ESL RESL B) to welcoming cultural digressions in his ESL cultural class (ESL ACL). This way, Han exemplified a definition of a cultural mélange, as a representative of one culture (the U.S.) being transformed by another culture (the Chinese) or vice versa.

Furthermore, Stan was very detailed when he described to me what cultural elements he integrated into his reading course (ESL RESL A). Through my classroom observations, I was able to see that he filled in a lot of cultural background for students by working with maps. Many readings mentioned specific places, and Stan did not want the students to be deficient by not knowing what they were reading about. What is more, Stan also addressed classroom cultures and cultures of learning quite a lot in his classes but teaching Chinese undergraduate students not only about the history of the United States but also making sure they knew what the etiquette of studying at GLU was. He elaborated:

> Excerpt 4.8: I think you've heard me say a couple of times: When you get into your freshman classes, this is gonna happen. We had a conversation early in the class about when you write an email to somebody how do you address it. Don't call somebody

> "teacher," only little kids call them "teacher." And also, when you prepare your homework, instructors will expect X, Y and Z, you know? I give them a lot of those really logistic types of things. (Stan, Interview 1)

Unlike Stan, Peter was concerned with making his students global citizens more than experts on American cultures. He emphasized collaboration as the one skill he was focused on instilling in all of his students, especially when it comes to collaborating with students who come from different cultures. Yet, his syllabus did not state that as his main objective. He expressed his opinion on the challenges international students might face in his classes here:

> Excerpt 4.9: Are my foreign students disadvantaged and where? They probably are, if I'm being honest, yes. I speak fast. I use colloquialisms that don't have any meaning to them, they have to figure it out. Later, they ask me what that meant. So, there's an extra effort required from them on that side. And then […] am I representing international business to my students? So those are two completely different factors and I've been more active on the vector of saying I want my students to be comfortable with issues related to international trade, negotiations, laws, you know, culture. It's a businessperson of the world, not of the United States. (Peter, Interview 1)

Because Peter used many colloquial phrases and idiomatic expressions in his classes, as well as spoke at a noticeably faster pace than other instructor-participants, it made it harder on Chinese undergraduate students to follow the lectures (as reported to me by students and observed in-class). Peter told me that he would often have to explain or clarify things he had taught after class to Chinese undergraduate students in his business management course, and it would usually be in relation to a meaning of a certain colloquialism he had used in class. Based on my teaching experiences, colloquial phrases are not often taught to learners of English as second language (which the Chinese are), as they carry heavy cultural backgrounds and therefore make it harder on ESL learners to follow. If an instructor uses multiple idiomatic expressions and colloquial phrases in his or her lectures, the ESL students are forced to draw on both cultures (that is their home Chinese culture and the new U.S. culture) in order to follow their instructor and comprehend what is discussed in class. However, as Peter told me many times, he was unable to

remain consistent in his vocabulary choices in class, which exacerbated the need to mix cultures (by having to explain things after class) and for his Chinese undergraduate students (by having to rely on dictionaries and peers' explanations). Still, he was disposed to reflection, which could open a pathway to transformation. When I commented on his use of colloquialisms during the interview I had with him and the pace of his speech, he responded that I was not the only person that had pointed that out to him. He also underlined that in as much as he tried to stay aware of that, it was hard for him to change the way he naturally spoke (e.g., with multiple sports metaphors). Even though he did not undergo a visible change, he exemplified awareness of the need for it.

As different instructor-participants expressed their unique ways of handling culture in their courses, I also observed varied ways of managing their classrooms. Many of these had to do with the students' ethnicity or first language, such as grouping systems instructor-participants implemented in their courses. Peter was the only instructor-participant who reported having used an algorithm for the purpose of creating teams:

> Excerpt 4.10: My grouping is very intentional. I have an online tool that I can use with an algorithm and I can play with the algorithm. So, what I use is: sex – male, female, ethnicity, their GPA and then on top of that their schedules. […] I run the algorithm and I look and see how the distribution is to have diversity in the teams, roughly half men half women. With ethnicity I can't go half and half. But I try to never put a single ethnic person alone if I have two or more. […] I've read that that's a good approach to not split them because they have a little comfort in being able to speak in the native language and participate instead of just being isolated. (Peter, Interview 2)

This approach was quite unusual in a sense the other three instructor-participants did not report to be using any tools to help them to team students up. As is clear from Excerpt 4.10, Peter was concerned about making teams fair as well as comfortable for 'ethnic' students in his class. During the interview, he mentioned diversity as a driving force to split teams the way he did. He also mentioned to me that some Chinese undergraduate students would come up to him at the

beginning of a semester and ask to be paired up with Americans. He saw that as their attempt to learn more about students from unfamiliar cultures instead of "being stuck" with those whom they already "knew all about" (Peter, Interview 2), that is other students from China. The other instructor-participants assigned groups at random and without any deliberate plan.

The way teamwork is divided amongst students was of importance for balanced and culturally mixed classrooms. So is clear classroom management style, one that Chinese undergraduate students could respond to and understand the workings of, given the stricter and more organized cultures of learning they come from. In terms of handling other aspects of classroom work, Han reported some problems his leniency brought upon him:

> Excerpt 4.11: Last semester I allowed cell phones […] but that led to them getting on WeChat or whatever and then telling me they were looking up words. So, for this semester I just said: If you don't know a word, I probably know it, ask me, or ask your classmate. When I go around during group work and I have some students who would bring out their phones, […] I do dock their points, which they're aware of, their in-class activity points. […] I keep a record in my notebook just in case somebody challenges me. (Han, Interview 1)

Han learned his lesson the hard way. Prior experiences of Han's struggles to control Chinese undergraduate students' social media use in class (WeChat is similar to WhatsApp in the U.S.) instead of working in a team, made him realize he needed to become stricter in terms of cell phone use policy in his class. Two cultures of learning clashed when Chinese undergraduate students, so used to relying on digital devices in their classes back in China, were abusing Han's leniency and instead of utilizing their phones for study purposes, went on social media. The fact that he recorded lost points for each student out of fear makes me wonder if he might have been challenged before by students who disagreed with a grade. Han also implemented a lot of teamwork in his ESL reading class, but it was more controlled, as he would walk around and make sure every student was participating and doing so in English, not in Chinese. Han's

classroom management style was not as controlled and strict as what Chinese undergraduate students might have been used to, therefore it created a strong mix of two cultures of learning.

Other instructor-participants reported different frustrations about teaching Chinese undergraduate students than their excessive cell phone use. For instance, Peter shared a story with me where he accidentally made a student cry at the beginning of his course, due to his lack of knowing that her culture of learning was very different from the style of teaching he often implemented. Peter said:

> Excerpt 4.12: I made the biggest mistake one day. […] Here I am, the first day of class and I asked a student right in front of me: What do you think? And she looked up at me and she shook her head No, and I said: You think not? That this is not true or what? What do you mean? And she shook her head No again. So, I moved on and 5 minutes later I looked over at her and she was sniffing and wiping her eye, and I said: Have you got allergies? Boy, are they hitting already! Anybody else? And … she didn't have allergies, she was crying. She was embarrassed. […] Afterwards, I apologized to her. (Peter, Interview 1)

This instance exemplifies Peter's style of teaching and his approach to any teaching failures well. He emphasized in both interviews that he wants students to feel comfortable in his class, but that he simultaneously tries to push them out of their comfort zones. He reflected upon this situation and apologized to the student immediately. He realized that he drew the entire class's attention onto the student and made her miserable in that moment. But more importantly, he fixed it by his empathy and reaching out to the student, which might have transformed his future approaches to putting Chinese undergraduate students on the spot in his classes.

Similarly, Stan pointed out that any frustrating experiences he had with teaching Chinese undergraduate students would have to do with the students' educational background. According to him, it makes a difference if a student went to an American high school or if they lived in a dormitory in the U.S. As he explained further:

> Excerpt 4.13: […] then they will speak more. But if their entire social group is young Chinese men, then I think there might even be some sort of unwritten rule in there: You don't out yourself in class. You just sit there, and you do as you're told. Usually the women are better than men, so I think it's more of a guy-thing. (Stan, Interview 1)

He was also the only instructor-participant who differentiated between genders of his Chinese undergraduate students and their role in students' classroom behavior. The "you don't out yourself" concept, according to Stan (Stan, Interview 1), was behind some students never speaking in class, actively participating or hiding within a group of classmates who were also Chinese. This made them feel safer and did not risk them losing face in front of the whole class. Culturally, Stan's thoughts on how Chinese undergraduate students' background affects their classroom behaviors were in sync with the idea of mixing cultures (cultural mélange). Even though, according to Stan's observations, his Chinese undergraduate students exhibited elements stereotypically predicted as Chinese undergraduate students' classroom behaviors, they also understood that their cultures of learning did not match those in the United States. Therefore, Stan was able to blend cultures by introducing these students to the U.S. system's rules and guidelines. As a result, he created a new blend of cultures of learning, and transformed his pedagogy, that held elements of Chinese and U.S. educational systems.

The cultural mélange, or mixing, was a theme that encapsulated different experiences in the classroom with Chinese undergraduate students. What brings instructor-participants together here is their ability and willingness to assess the reasons behind their students' behaviors. From recognizing varied cultures of learning through a tendency to stay with the familiar to avoid any unnecessary generalizations, the instructor-participants in this study practiced cultural mélange to various degrees.

Pedagogical Approaches to Chinese Undergraduate Students

The next theme that emerged after the second cycle of data coding was the pedagogical approaches instructor-participants demonstrated towards teaching Chinese undergraduate students. I broke this theme down into three main portions, namely teaching methods and approaches to working with international students in general as well as with Chinese undergraduate students in particular; instructor-participants' experiences with teaching Chinese undergraduate students and communication with them inside and outside of the classroom; and the role of an instructor and how it fits into measuring students' success. Here, I present findings pertaining to the abovementioned theme.

First of all, I was curious to see how the four instructor-participants tended to handle the 'English only' policy, so prevalent in many classrooms, not just language classrooms. Here, Andrew stood out as the one who welcomed translanguaging in his course. He encouraged it by saying to students in class: "If you have troubles doing so in English, you can start with Chinese." (Andrew, Field Notes Journal), when they were faced with developing a comic. He also praised one Chinese student who did a fantastic job outlining her comic and when asked to present it to the class, she proudly showed her outline heavily annotated with Chinese words. The instances of letting students discuss issues in Chinese were also a common view in Andrew's class. When I asked him about allowing students to use Chinese in class, he said he did not care much about the language they were using as long as it helped them to stay on task and be logical about it (Andrew, Interview 1).

To the contrary, in his ESL reading class, Han often walked around the room to ensure students would discuss a given issue in English. He explained to students that speaking English with their teammates was a sign of respect towards other group members, in case some of them

did not speak Chinese. When asked about his attitude towards 'English only' policy, Han elaborated:

> Excerpt 4.14: I don't go and say: Speak English, but what I find myself doing is walking over and kind of saying: Oh, are we speaking English? And then they always look at me and say: Yes, we are. And I'd say: What were we talking about? And I'd sit down. Because they might be talking about the text in Chinese, but the goal is English. As a language learner, I don't see it as necessarily bad if you're lost and you need to refer back but if it goes and goes and goes, that's a problem. (Han, Interview 1)

Han also told me that he started pulling classroom tables apart, to make them smaller, and to be able to sit students in groups of three. He found that much easier to manage and thought that students were more responsible in terms of speaking English that way. Han spoke two Asian languages, so he could also empathize with his students' struggles to discuss issues at length in English (Han, Interview 1). The language learner in him allowed for some flexibility and leniency when some of his Chinese undergraduate students would switch into Chinese in class.

What also caught my attention during classroom observations were different teaching modalities the four instructor-participants used to appeal to diverse kinds of learners. Peter received feedback from Chinese undergraduate students, which he inferred from the numbers and language used in the evaluation forms, that his use of colloquialisms impeded their learning. Therefore, he decided to make sure that everything that was on the exams or other forms of assessment was clearly laid out in the slides, in the articles or in his lectures. This eliminated a situation where students would complain that they could not follow the lecture and thus fail the final exam. Peter explained this approach as follows:

> Excerpt 4.15: I always wanna include both content and applied learning. So, lecture and applied learning as much as I can. The worst thing I can imagine is that I just lecture to them and they don't even click, nothing, just lecture and take notes. To me, that would be the worst possible scenario. (Peter, Interview 2)

Peter's focus on providing multiple modalities to students (that is lectures on content and practical learning scenarios) and on making sure all that was required on exams was included within these modalities was initially developed to help Chinese undergraduate students in his class. However, it eventually might have appealed to all students in his course, given the individual differences learners bring.

One of the teaching methods instructor-participants also talked about was their take on error correction. Obviously, Stan and Han were more focused on making sure Chinese undergraduate students understood the roots of their errors in English, given the nature of their classes (ESL RESL A & B, reading classes). Yet, Andrew, who taught the college writing class (CWC), developed quite a method in addressing Chinese undergraduate students' errors in his course:

> Excerpt 4.16: The focus in composition studies is […] on higher order issues as opposed to lower order issues. First, you want to categorize information and you want to categorize the errors. Chinese students in particular tend to have certain tense issues, so you can identify those. […] I think there's a tension. In general, I do focus on higher level issues. At the same time, I think to some extent you can be doing students a disservice if you're doing that too much with this particular population. They need much closer focus on a lot of grammar issues, as well. […] I will certainly focus on errors and I will let the students know that if I don't understand what they're talking about, then they need to make it clear. (Andrew, Interview 1)

Even though the main objective of Andrew's class was not to fix Chinese undergraduate students' language problems, he saw classifying their most commonly made errors as a strategy to help them to improve writing in English. That, in turn, might have led to helping them with the higher order issues that were his class' objectives. By reading his students' work closely, he was also able to gain a certain insight into Chinese undergraduate students' challenges by identifying the specific tense issues manifested in these students' work.

Interestingly, the four instructor-participants in this study had different opinions in terms of accommodating Chinese undergraduate students in their classes. Because Han taught Chinese undergraduate students in majority of his courses, he was in a way forced to attend to their individual needs. “I do try to accommodate the Chinese students because there are so many of them. The difficulties they might have are with stress, intonation, suprasegmentals […]” (Han, Interview 1). So, he demonstrated willingness to change or adapt his teaching for the sake of his Chinese undergraduate students. He was also aware of Chinese undergraduate students’ unique challenges in English pronunciation, which allowed him to make sure those were addressed through his teaching practices. However, Peter’s experiences with any special treatment were slightly different. Granted the class Peter was teaching, that is business management, assumed that all students’ English would be sufficient to not only exist in his classroom but also actively participate in the lectures. All international students in the business management class must have passed the required level of English proficiency in order to enroll. He reported to me that he did ask his admissions office about it and this is what he was told:

> Excerpt 4.17: […] What is my responsibility? How far should I go to accommodate? And I’ve been told they’ve passed all the exams to come here that show that you don’t need to accommodate them. So, it’s more of a subtle nuance, saying: Ok, I need to not say, you know, three strikes, you’re out, and expect that they understand what that means. That’s a baseball thing. How would they know. (Peter, Interview 1)

Peter was aware that eliminating cultural, sport, or colloquial phrases from his speech was not realistic. He also did not want to sound “robotic.” He did ask but was told that the Chinese undergraduate students in his class were expected to understand the content and to be able to study alongside their native speaking classmates because they had obtained the necessary language requirements for university studies. One way to interpret Peter’s interest in accommodating Chinese undergraduate students (i.e., by asking the admissions office about it) is

to see his willingness to transform his teaching methods to best serve all students in his class, assuring equity and comfort.

Whether or not the instructor-participants were willing to accommodate Chinese undergraduate students in his class also determined these instructor-participants' process of change. This stood up particularly in Andrew's case. For him, every student had the power to change his thinking. He realized that "working with students from other places, who speak other languages, always shapes my thinking." (Andrew, Interview 2). He saw teaching international students as an opportunity to learn something new from them, to transform himself.

> Excerpt 4.18: No matter they're Chinese or not Chinese, I always have to adapt. I think that's the nature of a teacher. And I guess the question is, you know, in what ways and to what extent. So, I think there's some sort of negotiation that's always taking place. So, I'm always trying to adapt in terms of type of the readings that I select, in terms of the way that I'm framing things. (Andrew, Interview 2)

Also, this excerpt is another exemplification of Andrew not differentiating between international, Chinese, American, or other types of students. To him, they were all just students. And this idea was reflected in his college writing class, he always asked them what they thought and why they thought it might have been different from what domestic students in the CWC shared in class. He informed me during our interview that "They change me every time" (Andrew, Interview 2). He understood teaching and learning as processes evoking mutual changes. He was not only willing to adapt but also ready for change.

In a similar vein, the experiences instructor-participants had with Chinese undergraduate students in their classes shaped the way they communicated with them. For instance, Stan expressed how his Chinese undergraduate student population had changed over the years of his teaching the ESL reading class. During our first interview, he compared the old Chinese student with the new Chinese learner. He described an average student in his class in previous years as

"the average 18-year-old Chinese boy" (Stan, Interview 1), who would only come to class but not "give anything." He said his teaching experiences used to be very frustrating, where the majority of his class were such Chinese boys. On the contrary, he saw the contemporary Chinese student as "more responsive, more pliable" (Stan, Interview 1). This shift in the student body type, according to Stan, also influenced a shift in his pedagogy. Because his current students had a higher level of proficiency in English than his previous ones, he had to adapt to their level as well as assign more updated texts to analyze in class. I saw this shift in the type of Chinese undergraduate students during my observations of Stan's classes, where the Chinese undergraduate students would not fit into any stereotypical vision of what a Chinese student might do or how they might behave. For example, students would demonstrate fluency in English and preparation for class by having previously checked the meaning of the unfamiliar vocabulary in the assigned texts (Stan, Field notes journal). Stan saw his students as responsive and liked to talk to them (often for long even after class). These instances also visibly influenced Stan's pedagogy in that reading class as he had to remain prepared and ready to adapt.

Similar to Stan, Peter held a high opinion of Chinese undergraduate students in his course. He stated:

> Excerpt 4.19: […] The Chinese students tend to be in the better echelon of my students. It's very rare that I would see a Chinese student that is getting a C and doesn't care. […] Usually they're high achieving. They have high expectations of themselves. They're bright and they want to understand. (Peter, Interview 1)

Peter's students were hard-working and focused. They cared for their grades and wanted to genuinely understand what was taught. So, Peter's experiences teaching Chinese undergraduate students were generally quite positive. Yet, he had a situation where a female Chinese student came to his office hours and disclosed feeling uneasy, conscious, and anxious about working well with her teammates. Since teamwork was a big part of students' final grade in Peter's class,

the student sought advice from him on how to communicate with her team members better. “She was a little frustrated with one of her team members and she didn’t know how to approach them because it’s her second language.” (Peter, Interview 1). The student did not want to switch teams but rather needed advice on how to deal with the situation. Peter saw this as a sign that Chinese undergraduate students in his business management class are willing to communicate with him and most importantly are not afraid to voice their concerns, which might have influenced his prior expectations of Chinese undergraduate students sticking together in his classes. Yet, it might be that they need help navigating new group dynamics, which seems true for most people facing new situations.

Another example of effective communication, this time on an instructor-participant’s side, was the way Han dealt with potential plagiarism problem ahead of time. Having experienced Chinese undergraduate students copy chunks of information from the Internet before (Han, Interview 2), Han decided to move away from academic writing assignments in his ESL cultural class and instead implemented posters. During class prior to the poster presentations, I witnessed Han telling students that if they used information from the website they should say: According to this website… (Han, Field Notes Journal). He did not teach them any particular citation style, such as APA or MLA, because the focus of the ESL cultural class was on oral English. However, students were asked to keep a journal in which they would write down their impressions from the cultural trips they were taking. In grading these, Han:

> Excerpt 4.20: […] made brackets and was like: Is this from the Internet? and I’d circle it. Because you can tell the style was totally different. I’m like: This sounds too perfect, and then it would be like her experience, something from the inside. I was like: you don’t need to do that, just write what you can do. And I could tell many of them were doing that but that’s how I would give grammar feedback. I would circle, I would make like a whole chart and show them how to match the subject with the verbs. (Han, Interview 2)

Han used the instances of copying from the Internet as a chance to teach his Chinese undergraduate students not only about what journaling about their experiences might look like but also why the parts copied did not match their actual language. Having written a chart with subject-verb agreements was an indirect but clever way to draw students' attention onto the issue without calling it plagiarism per se.

What also captured my attention in the instructor-participants' pedagogical approaches to teaching Chinese undergraduate students was the way they perceived their role as an instructor and how they measured success. To begin with, Stan had an interesting take on what his role was:

> Excerpt 4.21: […] my major role is a sort of their last opportunity to get individualized, detailed feedback and learning advice before they have to go into an English-medium class with professors who don't really care about what their English is like. […] the last guy to try to teach them a thousand more important words before they head into being freshmen. (Stan, Interview 1)

Stan's position was clear. For the Chinese undergraduate students in his ESL reading class, he was their last resort to improve English. It was also visible during his classes, which I observed on multiple occasions, as he stressed the fact that their future instructors would not pay attention to their English and most certainly would not assist them with any language challenges they might face. Even though his class was built around improving vocabulary as well as reading skills (as stated on his syllabus), he had a larger mission in mind: "I've just gotta be the one that keeps them working in English because if nobody is forcing them to, they won't." (Stan, Interview 1). Stan's position resonated with Andrew's take on his role in a classroom ever so slightly.

> Excerpt 4.22: […] There are different approaches that I take at different times, so I don't know if I assume any one role all the time. […] It's student-centered, you know, facilitator when the students make mistakes or as you want to see the logic to those mistakes. So, it's really trying to take a more descriptive approach, trying to understand logic but also

> cultural logics and understand the students. […] And so, I also change my approach according to a specific situation. (Andrew, Interview 1)

Andrew saw himself as a facilitator when need be, but also as the one who needed to understand the students through understanding their mistakes. His passion for learning about his students, and for crossing cultural boundaries, in his teaching style and classroom approaches, were transparent during my observations of his classes. He was not afraid to change his approaches, teaching methods or views if it meant he was receptive to his students' needs. He would frequently ask Chinese undergraduate students in his college writing class to share their learning experiences from China. Oftentimes he would encourage them to think about a given concept he was teaching from a perspective they might have not considered before. He was also the instructor-participant who asked me to actively participate during a few of my observations (participant observations), as he was curious to learn about my thoughts and experiences with the Chinese undergraduate students from when I taught in China. Multiplicity of roles as multiplicity of approaches (i.e., openness to transform and get transformed) appear to be Andrew's teaching trademark.

In terms of how the four instructor-participants measured their students' success, Peter pointed the ability to work with people from other cultures without being impeded by any baggage, understood as the fact they might come from different cultures and therefore have preconceived ideas about what cultures are like, as the most significant indication of success.

> Excerpt 4.23: Positive integration with others from wherever, you know, I would like to see more and more that people when they're in their formative years like this start to let go of some of the baggage that they, probably we all, bring with us from our parents or grandparents or whatever. And just see that it's just us and we're different, but that's ok. We should be respectful of those differences. That to me would be the best thing of all. And I've seen it. (Peter, Interview 2)

The above excerpt was just an introduction to a success story Peter shared with me about one of his Chinese undergraduate students. He had taken one of the teams for a competition outside of GLU and deliberately put one Chinese female on that team. Even though the student struggled with the language at first as well as with participation. She really wanted to do well. However, just as Peter started thinking that he might have made a huge mistake placing that student on the team, about a month into the competition, the student opened up and started thriving. "She was totally committed to doing her responsibilities on their team and they came out of it great friends." (Peter, Interview 2). He used that example to explain what true success meant to him, that is becoming a team player, building relationships with people from other cultures. So, being culturally open was Peter's definition of success measure. Peter's pedagogical approaches to the Chinese undergraduate students in his business management class (BC) were linked to how he perceived success. If being culturally open meant altering his ways of thinking and doing things and seeing into his students' classroom behaviors, then creating interculturally mixed teams where members felt equal and supportive was one viable way to go about it.

Slightly different was Andrew's description of students' success in his class. In his words, Andrew was careful not to categorize Chinese undergraduate students, or international students, as separate from just students in general. For him, seeing improvement in the way students think and talk about the writing elements that his class was teaching them could qualify as success. "I'm generally trying to change the students' disposition and approaches to writing, and then also orienting towards cultures." (Andrew, Interview 2). He gave an example of hearing students discuss readers in a certain way, such as "I thought the reader should do x." That would be an indication to him that students indeed learned what he was trying to teach them. "If I can

see logic, even a sort of cultural logic, even if there's an error…" (Andrew, Interview 2), that would be one way to measure success for Andrew.

The theme of instructor-participants' pedagogical approaches to Chinese undergraduate students epitomizes their accommodations towards Chinese undergraduate students in the classrooms in the various contexts they meet these students. The findings presented above represent an array of pedagogies, with relation to a class taught and a specific instructor-participant case study. The following theme extends earlier findings by delving into instructor-participants' interculturality and the practices that represent intercultural awareness in various teaching styles.

Interculturality

Through the fourth theme created out of instructor-participants' data, I bring the focus onto interculturality. For the purpose of this project, I define the term *interculturality* as the approach to others that is characterized by mutual responsiveness, appreciation and curiosity, its main goal being bilateral (i.e., mutual) communication. In this project, I do not take an evaluative view on instructor-participants' interculturality. In other words, I do not assess it following Dervin's (2016b) claim that interculturality cannot in fact be measured. Nevertheless, I am able to report words or observed situations that reflected interculturally responsive attitudes towards Chinese undergraduate students.

At the onset, Han's take on approaching teaching international students in his ESL reading and ESL cultural classes stuck out to me. He had previously traveled to Asia, where he was also working on improving one of the Asian languages he spoke. Han was interested in languages and cultures in general. When I asked him about his experiences from teaching beginnings, he explained how he positioned himself in a classroom from the very start:

> Excerpt 4.24: […] I don't go into the class feeling like I'm above them because especially in my summer class, a lot of them are way older than me, probably way smarter than me. […] So, when I walk into the classroom, I don't see it as me higher than them. I see it as kind of like: We're here to accomplish a goal. Let's do that together. I don't see myself as better than them. And I don't want to approach a class like that because then it's super weird when you try to talk with them in groups or something. I feel like I would rather be able to just walk up and it's kind of like more casual. More like we're on the same level. (Han, Interview 2)

In this excerpt, Han explains why seeing students as "equals" worked better for the type of a classroom community he wanted to establish. His ideas were interculturally responsive and indicated that he was open to the transformation of the hierarchy between students and instructors. He emphasized on multiple occasions in his class, which I observed, that he wanted Chinese undergraduate students to feel comfortable and confident to talk to him about anything. I did not see any instances of him resorting to strict discipline in class, neither did he have to; as the atmosphere in his classes was fairly relaxing. It was also clear that students benefited from his approach towards teaching, judging by their numbers who stayed after class to chat with Han. "I think they need to see that I care about them and that I'm not just some sort of authority figure" (Han, Interview 1). His interculturality was reflected in his openness and curiosity towards the cultural aspects that students contributed to his classes as well as his readiness to loosen the pre-existing dynamics where the instructor is perceived as a figure with authority and power.

Concurrently, all four instructor-participants reported to have studied an array of second languages. All of them also traveled abroad, either to study a language, to teach English, to work in the publishing industry or to do international business. Andrew became fascinated by the power of language at an early age. This is his story:

> Excerpt 4.25: […] My interest in languages comes from my history. I lived in country X for 4 years and so it's at that point that I became more interested in sort of language. […] Growing up basically in North America in the suburbs here, I was really fascinated when

> I'd speak with country X residents. It became like a game of chicken, so I would want to practice my country's X official language and they would want to practice their English. And it became like a game of one-upmanship and it was so constant, you could really feel the force and power. And suddenly it dawned on me how powerful language was, as a form of capital. It was so constant and all pervasive everywhere, I became fascinated with the way that it was bound up in identity and all sorts of other things. So, that's really what got me, just living there and sort of experiencing that sort of force and those sorts of everyday skirmishes. (Andrew, Interview 1)

In a way, Andrew analyzed his revelations about the power of language as well as power relations (which is one of the elements of interculturality) inextricably related to language. He was mesmerized by having the chance to play games with his friends who spoke the official language of country X. The "force" such language exchanges allowed him to feel, determined his later attraction to language on a professional scale. Having become a writing instructor might have had its beginnings in that moment of realization from his childhood. In a sense, his place of living and early life experiences surely sparked his interest in interculturality, which then were reflected in his classroom.

Although instructor-participants' paths to teaching Chinese undergraduate students in their designated courses were different, they taught at the same institution, that is Grand Lake University. I would not be able to look at these instructor-participants' intercultural teaching efforts if training from GLU was not discussed first. To illustrate, Andrew reported having support but also needing to seek it himself. "I feel in some sense, I have some support." (Andrew, Interview 2). His desire to look for training opportunities at GLU also indicates his willingness to welcome new ways of approaching Chinese undergraduate students in his college writing classes. Nothing was imposed on him by the department or college he was a part of. Counter to that, Peter not only stated directly that no support in terms of teaching Chinese undergraduate students was offered to him, but also expressed his concerns that "you can't educate all professors about interacting with so and so. […] I don't think some of us would want

to change the way they do things" (Peter, Interview 1). Yet, the other two instructor-participants, who were in the ESL context, Stan and Han had had slightly different experiences when it comes to being trained to work with students from other countries. Stan told me he had been originally hired as an administrator, not an instructor, so "one of the requirements for the job was two years of experience at the university level overseas" (Stan, Interview 1). When asked about training provided to other instructors whom he was working with, he said: "I don't think you'd get a different answer" (Stan, Interview 1). During both of our interviews, however, Stan mentioned that he saw a need for a solid intercultural training but in order for it to be successful in his teaching context it would have to be conducted by someone who knows China well and is familiar with the educational and cultural elements such training would likely address. Notwithstanding, Han taught in the similar context as Stan, but given the fact he was hired as a teaching assistant, his supervisors provided workshops and weekly meetings to focus on any class management problems he might have been facing.

> Excerpt 4.26: […] we were focusing on methods of teaching a language. We did things like literature circles, grammar, ways to teach a language […] but it was more because they're not native English speakers. We were focused on how to teach language. (Han, Interview 1)

Even though no particular training was given to Han that would address issues of interculturally responsive teaching, some training efforts, and thereby opportunities for transformation, occurred. This might have been because teaching a language requires specific skills and methods but also because Han was considered an instructor-to-be and therefore in need of extra support. He demonstrated intercultural efforts, but without having undergone any institutional training sessions at GLU, those efforts were just snippets rather than a whole approach to teaching Chinese undergraduate students.

Moreover, intercultural teaching encompasses many more factors that were visible in my classroom observations as well as the instructor-participants' interviews. As an illustration, Stan was quite reflective about his failures (in his words "pitfalls") when trying to implement interculturality into his teaching. "I wouldn't say it was a lack of cultural knowledge, but it was a lack of application of cultural knowledge." (Stan, Interview 1). For him, it was the applicability of what he knew rather than what he did not know that interculturality was contingent upon. He expressed his opinion on interculturality in teaching as:

> Excerpt 4.27: […] The most important part, I guess, is to recognize what classroom behaviors probably have cultural roots. It's kind of like trying to balance what you sense is their personality with what probably comes from cultural training and use that as a kind of combined assessment of the person. Like the other day, when you saw me talk about Taiwan. I was very careful not to call it China. (Stan, Interview 1)

Indeed, I was observing Stan's class when he was showing the map of China and Taiwan. This was just one example of many instances when Stan presented a clear judgment when it comes to being interculturally responsive in his teaching. He did not call Taiwan a sovereign country neither did he call it China. By doing so, he managed to avoid unnecessary tensions and potential quarrels amongst students from different countries. He gave all students a fair chance to be the best versions of themselves by continually encouraging them to share their views, even if or perhaps especially if they might have been different from his views. When issues arose (such as the potential problem with categorizing Taiwan as a sovereign country or not), he would not contribute them to a given student's country of origin but rather try to understand their behaviors from multiple angles (including different familial backgrounds, educational experiences, etc.).

Equally important was Andrew's stand on interculturality. When I asked him about it, he argued strongly that the term itself implies a binary approach, which he was not a fan of. In our first interview, he indicated to me that he would rather talk about transculturality.

> Excerpt 4.28: […] I understand culture as a set of expectations, or as a lens that shapes your worldview. And I understand language as deeply bound up in that process. I understand language is mediational and so that's the idea that we don't only use language, but language uses us. And so, I believe in then becoming more critically conscious of that process, the idea of developing double consciousness. So, seeing the world through the lens of home and host cultures. So, I like the idea of introducing students to seeing things from multiple perspectives and having multiple ways of seeing things. […] I'm trying to attune students to what I'd say is the rhetorical nature of language and culture and think about the way culture works. (Andrew, Interview 1)

For Andrew teaching interculturally meant helping students to explore the multiplicities of cultures and languages that come with it. He cared about students' consciousness and wanted to make sure that his teaching accelerated their progress in critical thinking. Even on his syllabus, he stated: "Speaking other languages and having lived in other parts of the country and world will enrich this course." (Andrew, Syllabus Fall), which confirmed his welcoming attitude towards *the Other*. During our first interview, Andrew also mentioned the notion of cultural reciprocity when explaining how he makes his teaching bilateral, that is a two-way process.

> Excerpt 4.29: I think teaching is about students. […] I mean there is a term, something like cultural reciprocity. The idea is that the teachers move, and the students move. So, there's a negotiation. I think that's central to any teaching. I think there are power dynamics and structures, so synergy implies of course you want to leverage that, but I think of negotiation not simply in terms of leveraging students as resources, but I think sometimes the students have to move, like they should. I think there are certain norms in the class, and they should move but I think also the teacher needs to sometimes. I think there's a struggle there. (Andrew, Interview 1)

Andrew was very aware of his role in intercultural teaching – he needed to move alongside his students in order to transform himself. He understood the process of teaching as a negotiation, not without pain, but rather pushing both sides towards bettering themselves. For him, there was no other way to work with students than to meet half-way on the road to a synergic relationship. Andrew was conscious of the choices he made on the syllabus, from the language to the phrasing. In a nutshell, he placed students at the center of intercultural teaching and was willing to undergo any mutually evoked changes with them.

This last theme, named instructor-participants' interculturality, included findings on their teaching beginnings and their languages. It also related to any institutional training those four instructor-participants might or might not have received from GLU as well as their unique takes on what intercultural teaching entailed. The abovementioned findings lead to their discussion, which is presented in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 5

STUDENT-PARTICIPANTS: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences that six student-participants have undergone during their studies at a large public university in the U.S. (here: Grand Lake University or GLU) as well as the experiences of four instructor-participants working with these students in their designated courses.

In this chapter, I present findings from the collective case study for student-participants. Figure 5.1 shows how this case study was structured, that is at three different sites (Activity Site 1, 2, and 3) with six student-participants (Mini-Cases). Site 1 refers to classes in the ESL context, Site 2 to classes in the college writing context, and Site 3 to the business management courses. I collected data through one semi-structured interview with each student-participant and multiple observations of their classes. In the first cycle of coding data, I used holistic coding (Saldaña, 2016), that is I applied a single code to a large unit of data. In the second cycle of coding (pattern coding), I categorized data into four themes (Issues on Figure 5.1), namely (1) Preparedness for and motivation to explore the new, (2) Language experiences, (3) Beliefs and feelings about studying in the U.S., and (4) The social side of the new. My analysis led to a larger issue of *kindness* in pedagogical approaches, which I discuss in detail in Chapter 6.

Findings

Firstly, I remind the reader of whom this collective case study was, i.e., the experiences of the six student-participants in their classes at GLU. Next, I present findings for each mini-case bound by the abovementioned themes. I do not discuss mini-cases one by one but rather create a narrative that flows from one theme to the next. Figure 5.1 represents this collective case study

visually, as well as provides the multiple contexts surrounding and affecting the cases in it. I also restated the research questions in the visual.

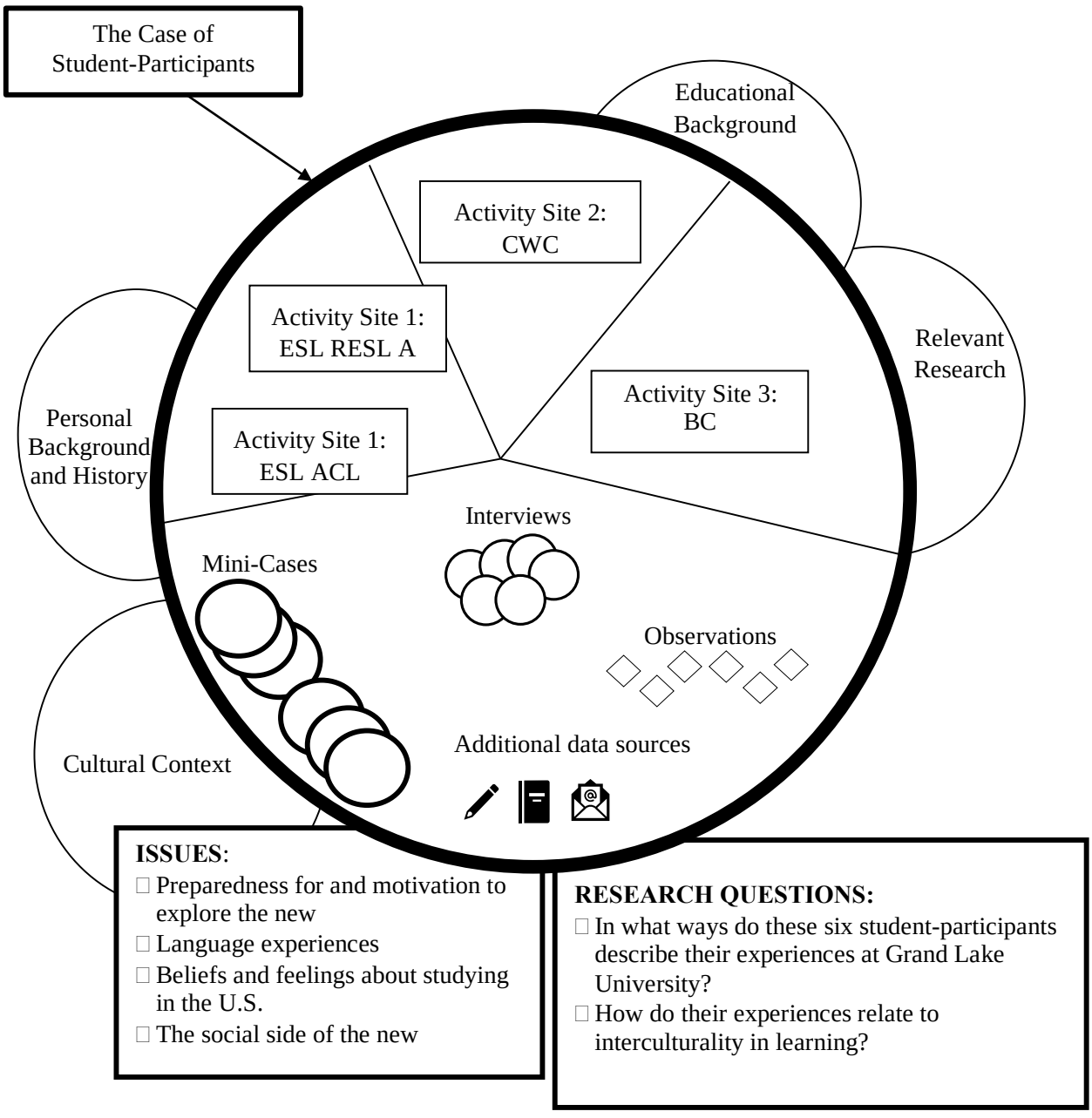

Figure 5.1. A graphic design of a collective case study for student-participants updated with main findings (issues) and research questions. The icons under Additional data sources represent a field notes journal, a researcher's journal and email correspondence, respectively. ESL ACL stands for English as a Second Language: American Culture, while ESL RESL A represents English as Second Language: Reading. CWC stands for cultural writing course and BC for a course on business management. Worksheet used with permission from Stake (2006, p. 5).

Cases through Themes

This collective case study constituted six student-participants as mini-cases. Table 5.1 below reminds the reader about whom the students were, their chosen pseudonyms for this study's purpose, their gender and which class they were in. I also listed their self-identification as Chinese. All student-participants spoke Mandarin Chinese as their native language, but most were also raised in a household where local dialects were spoken. They were also undergraduate students at GLU, although in three different contexts. Two were already taking their chosen major classes (those in business management context, BC), two were still in their freshman year (so taking university general requirements in the college writing context), while the other two were studying English as a Second Language (in the ESL context) (Figure 5.1).

Table 5.1.
The list of student-participants, their gender, self-identification and the course taken.

No.	Pseudonym	Gender	Self-identification	Course taken
1.	Aurora	Female	Chinese	ESL RESL A
2.	Billy	Male	Chinese	ESL ACL
3.	Jackson	Male	Chinese	CWC
4.	Amy	Female	Chinese	CWC
5.	Nick	Male	Chinese	BC
6.	Eve	Male	Chinese	BC

Interestingly, five out of six student-participants reported having obtained a TOEFL score of over 80 (which GLU requires for mainstream classes), even those who were still working on improving their English. In terms of different contexts, specifically CWC (the college writing class) focused on crossing cultural boundaries, which resulted in many points of reference to cultures, comparatively U.S. and other cultures, throughout both semesters of my observations on both student-participants and instructor-participants' side. In addition, the ESL ACL class (in the ESL context) also stood out as slightly atypical, primarily as it took place in the summer semester (in between the Spring and Fall), but also because all students in that class came from

mainland China. Its objective was to acquaint the Chinese undergraduate students (who were exchange students from two Chinese universities doing a joint undergraduate program between their university in China and GLU) with American cultures through teaching them English. This class was unique also because it comprised only students from China and was the shortest of all classes I observed (an intensive course of two weeks during summer). The business management class had a large number of international students, mostly from mainland China. Even more so, the ESL reading classes had 90 percent Chinese undergraduate students as a student body. Even though the six student-participants came from three different learning contexts, they shared the experience of being a Chinese undergraduate student at a U.S. higher education institution, though with different access to classes.

In the next section, I present findings from the student-participants collective case study. I follow the order of themes presented in Table 5.2 below. Themes are followed by a discussion of pertaining findings in Chapter 6.

Table 5.2.
Themes for the student-participants collective case study.

1.	Preparedness for and motivation to explore the new
2.	Language experiences
3.	Beliefs and feelings about studying in the U.S.
4.	The social side of the new

Preparedness for and Motivation to Explore the New

First of all, the six student-participants reported that they had spent significant amount of time and financial resources preparing for their sojourns years, while still in China. They mentioned having gone to a famous language school (English name: New Oriental) that not only prepared them for TOEFL and SATs but also provided them with study abroad agents, called *zhongjie* in Chinese, which translates literally as middlemen into English. Those agents offered a

comprehensive packet from filling out their college applications through proofreading their essays to making sure their college ranked from top 20 to top 100 (depending on the packet they obtained). Nick said: "I used *zhongjie*. I didn't do anything by myself" (Nick, Interview). A few students expressed to me that this was not an excellent choice as it might have stripped them from a chance to learn the ins and outs of applying to school abroad in English or to take control over which school abroad to apply to. Nick, however, was relieved and satisfied with their service. During our interview, he said he would use it again if he decided to go for his master's.

Secondly, Eve and Amy were not novices when it comes to studying in the U.S. Eve had previously taken part in a summer language exchange program in Florida, while Amy graduated from a high school in Rhode Island. Eve recalled:

> Excerpt 5.1: […] So when I came back to China, my father asked me how about the education in the United States? I think I told him that it's pretty good, so we decided I came to the United States for the university. Yeah, I think since my second year in high school I studied for TOEFL and SAT. (Eve, Interview)

Eve's preparation for GLU began early, and as we can see lasted at least three years in high school. On the other hand, Amy was able to avoid the Chinese testing regime by moving to the U.S. right after middle school. She told me her boarding high school, located in Rhode Island, was a small but very welcoming and foreigner-friendly institution. When asked if she was experiencing any problems in her college writing class (CWC), Amy said: "I don't think so, since I was in an American high school. […] Everyone was so nice to Chinese students." (Amy, Interview). Amy recognized *kindness* ("everyone was so nice") of people she encountered in her high school in Rhode Island as important enough to mention, too. She also said she missed the friendships she was able to develop during her studies in the Rhode Island high school as they all loosened once everyone got accepted to different universities in the U.S.

In addition, students-participants' motivation to study in the United States plays such an integral role in their exploration of the new. Three distinct catalysts behind choosing to further education abroad stood out. Billy was the most "different" case, since his home university in China offered a "three plus two" program, where students would study three years in China and then move to GLU for the remaining two years. Billy said he would get two diplomas. He was taking the ESL ACL class in the summer, as a part of that joint program. I asked him what made him choose the U.S. as his educational destination and he said:

> Excerpt 5.2: Probably because there's a lot, the facility here is kind of good, better than China and I think the environment here is also better. The study environment here is also good. […] The teachers really care for us. You have a lot of students play in a practice room but there is a few in Chinese practice room. (Billy, Interview)

Billy was a music major. He studied vocals. During our interview, as well as the ESL ACL classes I observed, Billy often expressed how seriously American students approach practice, and juxtaposed it with the Chinese undergraduate students back home who rarely utilize their practice rooms. He was also happy to tell me that his teachers "cared for him," which clearly mattered to him as he contrasted it later with his Chinese teacher being on their phone most of his music practice. He was impressed with the campus ("facility here is kind of good") and said he was going to study hard for his TOEFL to get accepted to GLU the following year.

Yet, Eve's choice of coming to GLU, and majoring in business, came purely from the ranking of the program. He said:

> Excerpt 5.3: […] before I came to GLU I knew that the business school here is pretty good, so I decided to go here. […] You know, some schools are higher ranking than GLU, but the business school is my best choice. (Eve, Interview)

For Eve, it was all about prestige. He wanted to graduate from a reputable program. His agent back in China told him that GLU's business program was highly ranked so it became his first choice. On the contrary, Amy was influenced by familial dreams and connections. She told me it

used to be her mom's dream to study abroad but "because my dad just can't speak English, so it was a little hard because they are already in a relationship" (Amy, Interview). Also, Amy's friend had studied in an American high school before and had had a positive experience, so she decided to follow the friend. Even though different forces and people motivated Billy, Eve and Amy, they all imagined a better future and none of them regretted their decision to study in the U.S. (as reported during their interviews).

What is more, motivation to complete a degree abroad is inextricably linked with students' future plans. While Aurora wanted to go back to China to build her own school and combine her education training at GLU with her economics inclinations (Aurora, Interview), Amy would rather have stayed in the United States:

> Excerpt 5.4: I guess I would like to stay here if possible, cause I think my parents, like they spent a lot of money and everything on me for like study abroad. […] actually, I think they have like more jobs opportunity here because of the population in China. It's really hard to get a great job unless you are really excellent. […] I'd love to stay here, and I love the environment and everything like housing and no pollution. […] People are so nice here. (Amy, Interview)

Amy recognized her parents' sacrifices in order for her study in the U.S to happen. She also saw China's problematic job market due to its overpopulation. She wanted to capitalize on her U.S. education as well as enjoy the country's living conditions, which she favored over those in China. She also described people she encountered in the U.S. as "so nice," which signifies that having good relationships with others is important to Amy. Interestingly, three other students, namely Nick, Jackson, and Eve expressed wishes to apply for graduate studies in the United States. Nick wanted to take a gap year to travel first, though. They saw greater potential in having an MBA or a master's degree from a U.S. institution than having one from a university in China.

This theme, comprising preparedness for and motivation to explore the new, allowed me to establish a foundation and impetus behind the student-participants' choices to come and study in the United States. In Chapter 7, namely Conclusions, I will also elaborate on how student-participants' motivation and preparations to study in a different country align (or not) with perceptions of their instructor-participants.

Language experiences

Coming from a different country where languages other than English are most commonly spoken, Chinese undergraduate students face a unique challenge in the United States. Not only do they need to prove their second language proficiency by passing international English exams, but also a certain level of cultural background that would allow them to adjust to the new environment.

In this study, five student-participants reported having surpassed the level of the TOEFL exam required by GLU, that of 80. However, Jackson was the one student who got admitted to GLU conditionally, "I got 78. This school required 79, so…" (Jackson, Interview). Therefore, he had to start his journey at GLU as a student of English as second language before he could enter a content classroom. Shortly after our interview, however, Jackson sent me an email proudly saying he scored 85 at his last TOEFL exam and would not have to continue with English classes the following academic year. Jackson experienced some disappointment with his TOEFL score: "[…] I didn't expect that I will be conditional offer, because I think I can pass the exam but actually the writing part is much more difficult" (Jackson, Interview). From my observations of the college writing class, I saw that Jackson struggled with English, especially when it came to expressing his thoughts on the spot, without preparation or time to write anything down, even though he told me he had previously spent a few months in Seattle "hanging out."

As English learners, the student-participants in this study experienced a myriad of learning adventures. All of them started learning English fairly early, that is in kindergarten: "because Chinese people are focused on education for when people are small, as a kid" (Nick, Interview). Aurora, for example, attributed any language challenges she might have had to her "mindset:" "You know, English and Chinese are different kind of languages, so their speaking mindset is different. So, I need to change that." (Aurora, Interview). She elaborated on that by saying she translates everything from Chinese into English in her head before she utters anything. That is due to the fact that "I can't come up with new words very quick in a second." (Aurora, Interview). She did not seem ready to start thinking in English.

For Nick, two things made his life harder in the business management class, namely his fear of communicating in English and his limited vocabulary (Excerpt 5.5). "I'm nervous to talk with people in English. I'm too shy. But in Chinese, it's OK." (Nick, Interview). He was not confident enough to communicate with Americans in English, but he did not feel the same about using Chinese. He was experiencing second language anxiety, which paralyzed him from confidently and logically expressing himself in English. However, he dealt with it by:

> Excerpt 5.5: I can handle English but some words to use to let them know what I mean, no. And American people know what I mean most of the time. They can make it shorter and I know what they mean. […] That's very kind of them, because they kind to me to slow down and speak short. […] I don't know why it's not the same in Chinese, but *hanzi* can connect together. But English is just letters. (Nick, Interview)

The above excerpt indicates certain efforts Nick had made to communicate with people in the United States. He appreciated their efforts to make communication with him easier ("they kind to me to slow down and speak short"). He saw that as *kindness* and was very appreciative of trying to make it easier on him during conversations in English. Yet, he struggled to move smoothly between two distinct language systems, i.e., English and Chinese. Chinese characters might have

made more sense to him as he approached them on a logical level "*hanzi* [Chinese characters] connect together", which is not the case with the Roman alphabet that English adapted. Also, these differences might have contributed to his anxiety when using English altogether.

Analogous to Nick, interesting was Billy's take on English as a whole. During the interview, he disclosed to me that his passion for English was brought upon him by his grandfather who used to work as a translator between multiple languages, including English. In fact, he said his grandpa taught him most of the English he knew. During our interview and my observations of his classes, Billy was unafraid and quite fluent in English. He did not show any problems communicating his thoughts directly and correctly in class, neither did he struggle finding the right words to describe his experiences to me during the interview.

> Excerpt 5.6: […] I mean, English is more kind of fun than Chinese. Like, you can say one thing in many ways, like you can express your emotion, that kind of stuff. […] Chinese kind of rough but English kind of nice, you know. […] But I often just talk to myself in English, especially when I'm really upset or when I'm down. (Billy, Interview)

Because of his early exposure not only to English but to learning English through his grandpa, Billy saw English as fun and exciting. He also indicted two different emotions towards English in comparison to Chinese: "Chinese kind of rough but English kind of nice." He had a positive attitude to English and enjoyed using it. He developed a technique, to speak to himself in English, which could have helped him to achieve fluency and assisted in developing his confidence to communicate in English.

In addition, student-participants expressed their view of using Chinese in classes at GLU, which links to the instructor-participants' opinions of English-only policy depicted in Chapter 4. Eve reported his experiences from the business management class: "If we need to discuss in a big group, we must use the English. But if we only two, we discuss with another Chinese student, sometimes we'll switch to the Chinese" (Eve, Interview). He did not see any benefits in using

English all the time and in all circumstances. On the other hand, Billy wanted all of his classes at GLU to demand English only. He studied in the ESL ACL class, the ESL context in the summer, where his classmates were his regular classmates from his university in China, though. He recalled:

> Excerpt 5.7: I think if you said Mandarin in class, it's kind of disrespect to Han. He is teaching English in class so I think we should just speak English all the time in class. The interesting part is that if we said Chinese in class, he would just start saying language X. But I think the students here, it's kind of hard to control themselves, like Mandarin is our native language so when we're exciting or something, they would just say Chinese. (Billy, Interview)

Han's, who was teaching the ESL ACL class, approach to handling Chinese in class was surely interesting: speaking another Asian language. Billy's recollections also resonate with findings from Han's class presented in Chapter 4, when he was trying to make sure English was used the majority of time in the ESL ACL class. What I found particularly striking in Billy's excerpt above was the fact that whenever he would speak of students using Chinese, he would switch to pronoun "they", as if he subconsciously excluded himself from the group. Indeed, having observed the ESL ACL class, it was clear to me that Billy was determined to use as much English as possible in class, as he was ready to volunteer answers to Han's questions and did not (to my knowledge) switch to Chinese in discussions, even though all his classmates were Chinese.

Furthermore, Jackson shared some academic struggles that derived from his (self-reported) low English level. "[…] because I like reading novels, so when it comes to English, sometimes I wish I can understand a novel normally like Chinese" (Jackson, Interview). Jackson claimed to have been reading a lot but if a chosen book (novel) was in English, he could not enjoy it due to the amount of unfamiliar vocabulary. In the same vein, he showed signs of

academic adjustment by telling me how hard it was for him to be able to stay on top of his responsibilities, his schedule and his general organization at GLU.

> Excerpt 5.8: So, I need a plan when I need to self-study but […] my schedule is a mess. It's hard to know when class is, how to prepare, if there is a test. That's painful. I often feel lost. So, then I read novels, that's why. (Jackson, Interview)

Jackson was not ready to organize his entire school life. He said back in China his advisor would handle all of that for him. He felt confused and lost when it came to setting up his own class schedule at GLU. Novels were his escape but having been unable to understand them thoroughly in English might have added to his stressors, too (Jackson, Interview).

Furthermore, both Eve and Nick (who were attending the business management class during Spring and Fall semesters) found the pace of their instructor Peter's speech problematic. Eve described listening to Peter lecture as "tough" (Eve, Interview), while Nick recalled a very encouraging experience with Peter after the first day of classes (Excerpt 5.9).

> Excerpt 5.9: And professor is also like when I have some questions, ask him, he will answer specifically and accurate, but he speaks super fast and has a funny accent, too. Not like my other teachers. I have talked with him when the end of the first class and I said to him: I'm too nervous to talk with other people, and he told me: Just go, when you make team, and just tell your teammates what's your problem and what's your idea. He also said he very care about my feelings and so he make the other Chinese boy with me in the one team. (Nick, Interview)

Even though Nick acknowledged that Peter spoke fast and with an accent, he was equally touched by his instructor-participant's *kindness*. He was happy that Peter took the time to listen to him ("he very care about my feelings") and that he accommodated Nick by teaming him up with another Chinese student. *Kindness* seemed to matter to Nick. In case of language, Nick felt confident having another Chinese speaker by his side. In fact, Nick perceived his fellow students as kind too:

> Excerpt 5.10: I think all American students I meet are very kind and they always help me. I have several cooperations with American people in different courses. And they are very kind and they help me to do language check and ideas. (Nick, Interview)

For Nick, *kindness* was clearly a principal factor when asking domestic students (or an instructor) for help. They were willing to help him with English as well as any coursework issues that might have stemmed from the fact that his native language was Chinese. Even though Nick did not hide challenges related to having to use English all the time at GLU, he was also not afraid to ask for help. He was determined to improve his studying experiences at GLU altogether.

Concurrently, it was of importance to student-participants to know what their instructor-participants' expectations and assessment styles were. Eve told me he struggled with adapting to the testing system at Grand Lake University.

> Excerpt 5.11: […] you need to prepare every test in the United States university but in the Chinese university they only care about the final test. […] so, if you done and took a midterm, per month per class, if you have four to five class average, you will take at least one test per week. (Eve, Interview)

He clearly struggled with the frequency of having his knowledge checked at GLU. That affected his schedule too as he had to accommodate sufficient study time for the upcoming quizzes, tests and other forms of assessments the classes he was enrolled in might have utilized. Similarly, Aurora also grappled with her old ways of preparing for class. She found it hard to concentrate on readings and was easily distracted from those readings that were assigned in more volume compared to what she was used to in China.

> Excerpt 5.12: […] Like I don't know which one is important. I think this one is important, but it didn't show on the quiz. In our class, the assignment was about the reading material, you know. And we will take a quiz after I read it. So, on the quiz always show some very important points in the whole reading. I found some questions I didn't see in my reading material, that's strange. I use highlight and I learn some skills while I read. But still didn't get the right answer for some questions. (Aurora, Interview)

In Aurora's case, the lack of critical reading skills and some helpful techniques might have caused her stress with not getting 100% on a quiz. It was clearly important to her to get all the answers right. She was trying to improve her studying methods but found herself at a loss when some questions on the quiz were not represented in the reading, or in what she remembered from the reading. Both Eve and Aurora were having some challenging time adjusting their learning styles to the course assessments.

While still at GLU, I asked student-participants about their hopes and expectations during the sojourn. "Improve English skills" was the most frequently coded phrase in the student-participants' data (Aurora, Billy, Jackson, Interviews). Additionally, both Amy and Jackson were in the college writing class, a compulsory course for all undergraduate students (domestic and international) at GLU, and they both mentioned hoping to improve their writing skills in English as well as their logic. Amy said she thought "professor is more focused on how to make a good story and not just like the skills of English writing" (Amy, Interview), which I confirmed through my observations of the college writing class.

To recap, the language experiences of student-participants were clearly not without challenges. Yet, they demonstrated awareness of the reasons behind their struggles and tried to solve the issues by asking for help or trying to adjust their learning approaches. While student-participants had to navigate a transition from one educational system to another, they were also able to notice acts of *kindness* that U.S. students and instructors extended towards them.

Beliefs and Feelings about Studying in the U.S.

The next theme that I found during data coding and analysis is related to what student-participants feel and believe about studying in the United States, specifically at GLU. This theme also includes quite a few emotional experiences that relate to these students' feelings towards

studying at GLU. For the purpose of space, I have picked the most interesting yet relevant reported words of the six student-participants.

Starting with student-participants' comparisons of the two systems, that is the Chinese education system with the U.S. education system (in particular at a large midwestern university), Jackson shed some light onto why some of his classmates, and himself at times as well, do not seem to participate actively in class discussions or are not willing to share their thoughts with everyone. "[…] Chinese think, in class, unless you get a very nice idea, they won't say anything, if it's not good enough…" (Jackson, Interview). According to Jackson, one needs to get a truly genius idea for it to be worth sharing with others in class. Based on my observations, student-participants tended to find comfort in conforming to whatever someone else said.

With relation to how student-participants perceived their own role in class, Nick told me during the interview that he still preferred the Chinese educational system over the U.S. one. He found it easy to just get tested on previously laid out material instead of having to really think about the questions and produce original solutions. Nick was taking the business management class, which either ran as a lecture or a pre-organized teamwork.

> Excerpt 5.13: It's very different. In China, Chinese teacher always talk about the knowledge, something you need to know in exam and the like. But in American course, the professor will say his experience, his advice to you and to let you know some problems can be solved in the future and help you solve problems in the future. But in Chinese, it's just knowledge, knowledge, knowledge and what you should know. It's only the test. […] Honestly, I prefer Chinese system cause I'm good at memorizing. But in American test, it's more focused on how to understand this thing. […] It's hard for me to understand all the questions. But in Chinese they just say: what's this? Definitions. (Nick, Interview)

For Nick, having the same structure in classes back in China, where the focus would be on a test, was clearly a better solution as he realized he was "good at memorizing." He struggled with the U.S. style of classes, too. He actually found the instructor-participants' digressions with firsthand

experiences and examples distracting and confusing more than helpful. The understanding of things was troublesome for Nick, since it required more than just simple definitions. His preference of what is known to him and what is more aligned with his studying style was something he had to continuously overcome if he wanted to fit into the U.S. system of schooling.

While Nick was getting adjusted to the new classroom reality the hard way, Aurora was telling me how much of a curiosity she had towards knowing her U.S. classmates and friends better, on a deeper level. "I want to know what they are thinking about. But I don't know how to ask them. […] I want to be kind to them." (Aurora, Interview). In fact, during my observations of ESL RESL A (ESL reading class), Aurora did not seem eager to ask such questions to students from other countries. She usually kept quiet and to herself. However, her curiosity of *The Other*, i.e., U.S. friends, shows that she was open to learn about their customs, habits and even belief systems. She simply did not know how to conduct such conversations with them. When I asked her why that might be the case, she attributed her fears to not wanting to be perceived as weird (Aurora, Interview), and "I want to be kind to them." This indicates that Aurora also cared about what her classmates thought of her and it mattered to her to be seen as kind.

In terms of student-participants' beliefs about their instructor-participants, Billy had a very strong opinion that compared his instructor-participant at GLU, Han, with his Chinese English instructor in China.

> Excerpt 5.14: […] the teacher here is kind of great. I think the way he taught is kind of different from China. His way of teaching is kind of encourage people to speak and to talk. If you're talking in a bad way, it's all right, he will just forgive you and encourage you to practice more. But in China, my teacher just don't give you a lot of chance to do that. She is always watching her cell phone and doesn't care much about me. (Billy, Interview)

Billy was quite observant. He was taking the ESL ACL class during summer. He had many chances to compare the two education systems. He appreciated his instructors' kind approaches

to him ("he will just forgive you"). It was clear that gentle encouragement "to practice more" was also a teaching strategy Billy responded to. Billy's words in Excerpt 5.14 made it sound like he needed more personalized attention from his instructor back in China, but most likely due to his class size there (over 40 people), the instructor was not able to work with every student individually. At GLU, Han's approach to teaching and visible caring attitude towards his students' success was what Billy appreciated.

Comparatively, Amy had a lot to say in terms of comparing the two education systems, as she also shared with me that her future dream job would be something of a cultural bridge type, where she could explain both (that is the Chinese and U.S.) cultures to those who might not seem familiar with one.

> Excerpt 5.15: […] in China everything is about *gaokao*. They won't look at your GPA or your essays. It's just one test. So, it's too much pressure and kind of unjust because you don't even need to study during the freshmen year in high school. But I think in here, mostly you need to pay attention to every homework and you need to be studying all the times. But you don't have a lot of pressure on a specific test. […] I like this style in here because I think students need to study all the time but not just during a specific time. It is fair. (Amy, Interview)

In fact, other student-participants also mentioned *gaokao*, the National College Entry Exam, as one of the main factors contributing to their decision of studying in the United States. If they had known early enough that they would not have been applying to Chinese colleges, they would not have had to take *gaokao*. To Amy, having one centralized test of such exorbitant stakes was not fair in terms of students' learning habits and study time commitments. Even though Amy claimed to have fewer classes in one semester at GLU than she would have at any Chinese college, she was confident fewer classes also provided her with enough time to prepare for all of them: "[…] though I don't have so many classes, but I have time to study for that in details. […] I'm trying to do all my classes really good." (Amy, Interview). From her interview, I learned that

having different class requirements also helped Amy to distribute her stress and pressure more evenly and made her strive to become an A student altogether.

Moreover, when asked how they would describe their instructor-participants or their U.S. classmates and friends best, all six student-participants used the word "kind", examples of which I present in Table 5.3 below. In fact, student-participants mentioned the word *kind* 28 times during their interviews. Table 5.3 depicts only chosen examples of these instances. The student-participants also implied *kindness* by describing their instructors' approaches to them as "nice", and "care for me." But the word *kind* was used most often in describing their instructors or peers.

Table 5.3.
Participants' own words describing their instructors and friends in the U.S.

Participant	Quotations from the student-participants' interviews
Nick	"All my classmates are very kind."
Billy	"The teacher here is also kind."
Aurora	"Everyone is so kind here. I feel good."
Jackson	"He [Andrew] is really kind to us. He is patient and always listens."
Amy	"People are kind in American."
Eve	"…it was very kind." (Referring to Peter's mentioning of Taiwan in class)

It was very important to them that the instructor-participants dedicated time to listen to them and that they wanted to help with their struggles. This was most reflective in ways the four instructor-participants grouped their students for teamwork or group work. Peter, as mentioned in detail in Chapter 4, was the only instructor-participant that used an algorithm to structure teams in the most optimal way in his business management class. He also accommodated Nick's challenges by adding another Chinese student onto his team, in case any language barriers arose.

Nick found this extremely kind and thoughtful. Nick also proudly pointed out to me that "the Chinese students and one international student in my group were best in the class" (Nick, Interview).

In addition, there were other instances where instructor-participants' classroom practices were perceived as kind by the six student-participants. For example, Amy saw Andrew's strategies to meet with students individually to discuss different stages of their written assignments as an act of *kindness*. "[…] a lot of advice he gave me is not like your grammar issues or structural issues. It's just like his own feeling as a reader, but he is always kind." (Amy, Interview). She elaborated by saying that Andrew "cared" about developing her creative thinking. To Amy, this was a sign that her instructor-participant cared about her as a person, by making sure she learned more than just what was in the reading materials or in textbook. Similarly, Eve perceived Peter's careful mentioning of Taiwan, neither claiming its sovereignty or dependence on mainland China, during the classes I observed, as his international competence.

> Excerpt 5.16: […] Sometimes they will consider Taiwan as a country, […] but other professors didn't know about that, so it might cause problems. It's hard to explain what the Taiwan problem is here, in America, to the American professors. But he knew. So, it was very kind. (Eve, Interview)

Given the ongoing political banter of whether Taiwan should be called a sovereign country or a part of China, Eve was very sensitive to the matter. When Peter mentioned Taiwan in his class, which I was observing, all Chinese students in the class looked at him with what seemed to me as admiration (Peter, Field Notes Journal). He pointed on the map which he pulled up online and said: "Taiwan, here. I'm not going to go into political details here." (Peter, Field Notes Journal). Judging by the looks on the students' faces, it was clear they respected him and took it as a gesture of intercultural openness. Nick saw it as an example of *kindness*, that is taking the

presence of Chinese undergraduate students in the class into consideration when making comments that could potentially spark an impromptu, yet unnecessarily heated discussion.

With regard to interacting with instructors in class or outside of teaching, Jackson told me his instructor-participant, Andrew, would treat you in response to how hard-working you appeared. “He will say: Oh, your paper is great, but if you work hard, he will say a lot, to help you.” (Jackson, Interview). In other words, Jackson thought that Andrew was attentive to his students’ progress as much as they cared about their own standing in his class. His observation seemed fair to me, as I got a similar impression from observing Andrew’s classes. Again, this, to Jackson, was a sign of caring. Jackson also pointed out that in class any cultural references that might have been made would focus on “some humorous things about Chinese culture” (Jackson, Interview). Andrew always alluded to other cultures, the Chinese one in particular, but made it so the Chinese undergraduate students in his class were engaged and willing to share pieces of their cultures with others. To my knowledge, based on the interviews and my classroom observations, there were no instances of visible insults or noticeable judgement in Andrew’s class. Hence, Jackson saw inclusion and genuine interest in his background as *kindness* (Andrew, Field Notes Journal).

Overall, when I asked the six student-participants if they felt respected in their classes at GLU, they all said yes without any hesitation. Amy gave me examples of how she knew her instructor-participant, Andrew, respected her: (1) “He knows my name, even my Chinese name.” (2) “He did not make me feel alone.” (3) “He was very interested in China and never make it look bad.” (Amy, Interview). This list was extremely important to the student-participants. It also contributed to their positive assessment of their experiences at GLU. Their responses could not have been any more unified than: *positive, I like it here, absolutely perfect*. That does not mean

the student-participants did not recall negative instances during their stay in the United States, but those situations were related to their social life more than school life; therefore, they will be discussed with the next theme.

The Social Side of the New

The last theme in this student-participants collective case study is the social side of their new environment, that is GLU and the United States more broadly. This theme encompasses student-participants' experiences with new cultures, any challenges they might have encountered in the social sphere and general daily life situations that were new to them.

First of all, student-participants shared their observations regarding several aspects of life in the U.S. with me. For instance, Aurora, who was taking the ESL reading class (ESL RESL A), compared the convenience of using mobile phones in China to pay in stores, to connect with friends through an application named WeChat (similar to WhatsApp) with the same functionality of any U.S. apps. "I found American apps very specific, one just to focus on work out" (Aurora, Interview). According to Aurora, the Chinese app WeChat combines functions of many apps in the U.S. in one, that is you can pay in stores with it, work out, sell and buy and use its friends circles to stay in touch with your friends at all times (Aurora, Interview). Aurora found WeChat more convenient than any of the U.S. apps she compared it to. Similarly, Nick reported his surprise with the public buses in the city GLU is located at, where one needs to pull a string to notify the driver of their desired stop. In China, buses have to stop at every designated station, regardless of having passengers get off or not. Nick elaborated:

> Excerpt 5.17: I think it's convenient here, but it depends. It's convenient here because there is not so many traffic. But in China, there's so many traffic and so many cars, so the bus driver cannot care about every person's feeling, can't be so kind. They should follow the rules from the company to stop for each station, but in here it's not more traffic and not more car so it's convenient to pull the string to let the bus driver know what time to stop and which station to stop. (Nick, Interview)

When comparing the two systems, Nick seemed quite observant and rational. He understood that convenience might have been the main argument for assessing how things worked in each country and one that evoked kind behaviors, too. He also maintained focus on following the norms each country imposed on its citizens. In sum, both Aurora and Nick mentioned convenience as an important value and used it as their judgment category.

In addition, student-participants also recalled a few instances where their roommates or classmates demonstrated interest in Chinese cultures. Nick's classmate often sought Nick's help on homework from his Chinese class.

> Excerpt 5.18: […] My teammate, he is learning Chinese, and he always does Chinese homework when I come to the classroom. He will ask me to check if it's right or not. He's always writing one word so many times and I told him that's what we do in China. He's kind to me so I want to be kind to him. (Nick, Interview)

Not only did Nick readily offer help to his U.S. classmate, whom he perceived as kind, he also wanted to share with him pieces of his culture. This explains why he told him multiple repetitions of Chinese characters were what students do in China when learning to write, too. He wanted to repay his classmates' *kindness* with his own *kindness*. Nick was willing to help and share his culture with those who were interested in it. In a similar vein, Eve reported his classmates in the business management class were curious about Chinese alphabet and how it might work with a keyboard. "I think I just told him a lot about *pinyin* […] that we developed something that we can use just like English, like some characters pushed together to pronounce the word." (Eve, Interview). Eve explained to his classmates how Chinese can be typed on a keyboard and used that opportunity to teach them something about the culture of Chinese language. Both Nick and Eve were willing to share their home cultures with their U.S. classmates in different social situations.

Anecdotally, student-participants also found certain instances of experiencing the new funny. In particular, Amy told me that someone at GLU asked her "if I know how to do kung-fu" (Amy, Interview). She told them it was a funny question because all Chinese people do not practice kung-fu. She thought it was a stereotype that person held about the Chinese but took it as a joke more than comment meant to offend her.

Not surprisingly, student-participants' experiences in the new social sphere were not free of challenges. To illustrate, Amy admitted having been homesick for a prolonged period of time when she first got to GLU. "I thought it would be a really cool experience cause I got curious about everything but at first I got really homesick." (Amy, Interview). Amy told me her mom had to come to stay with her for a few months so she could continue studies in her first semester. She did not expect to miss her family so much as she was excited to experience the new, so this feeling of homesickness caught her by surprise. Feeling homesick ties into making friends in the U.S. Nick said he only had one "American friend, but he's Korean American" (Nick, Interview). Jackson said: "meet friends in classes is more difficult than in a club" (Jackson, Interview), as he saw most students focused on assignments instead of socializing while in class. However, he did not hang out with any Americans at that point. In fact, he also did not spend time together with any Chinese undergraduate students after class. "[…] just by myself" (Jackson, Interview). When I asked him why he said:

> Excerpt 5.19: Because the Chinese students here is not really like the same people in our high school. Some students not work very hard so I not into them. They are rich, not like me, just very rich. It's hard to make friends with them, nothing in common. (Jackson, Interview)

Jackson saw himself as coming from a lower economic class than some of the Chinese undergraduate students he encountered at GLU, therefore he did not try to make friends with them ("nothing in common"). He also did not show much initiative to find himself American

friends. He preferred solitude where he could go home and read novels. Amy, Nick and Jackson experienced certain challenges in the social arena in the United States. While Amy solved her problem by asking her mom to come and stay with her for a while, Jackson continued to live alone, as he was likely not ready to engage in friendships with either Chinese or U.S. students.

Furthermore, when asked specifically whether student-participants might have experienced any situations of bias or discrimination, they said they did not personally, but a few of them heard of such instances from their countrymates. In particular, Aurora told me her Chinese friend was swore at by another student on GLU campus: "One of the white men said something bad to the Chinese, so my friend feel very unfair and angry about this." (Aurora, Interview). She learnt about that instance from Chinese social media (WeChat), where her friend made a post that was broadly commented on by other Chinese undergraduate students at GLU. She called it "inkind" (Aurora, Interview), but underlined the fact that this was the only time she heard of any such happening. Other student-participants could not recall any situations of such nature.

Lastly, the six student-participants had different living situations while studying at GLU. Some lived in dormitories on GLU campus, while others were renting apartments with either other Chinese undergraduate students or American roommates. Nick experienced a cultural difference firsthand when his American roommate would overuse the fan, turning their room into a very cold place.

> Excerpt 5.20: My American roommate, he always likes to turn on the fan and beside the window and cause me very cold. When I'm in the morning, I get up, poor me, always cold. I don't know why I see a lot of fans people put besides windows, the wind. It's too cold for me. (Nick, Interview)

From my own experiences with traditional Chinese medicine, confirmed through my conversation with Nick, Chinese people tend to believe that any form of draught that might enter

their body has a potential to make them sick. Nick pitied himself ("poor me") for having to deal with his U.S. roommate's habit of keeping a fan by the window, therefore letting the cool air enter the room. Yet, he did not address the issue with the roommate. When I asked him why, he said: "I should be kind to him" (Nick, Interview). Thus, he chose to stay quiet and suffer in silence. The importance of being kind to his roommate seemed to have overtaken Nick's discomfort. Other student-participants also did not seem to be capitalizing on the fact their roommates were local in terms of language exchanges or cultural learning.

The social experiences of student-participants varied on a pendulum from exciting to scary to challenging. They also mentioned *kindness* as an important element of their social life. The range of the student-participants' social experiences make an argument for them being a heterogeneous group that cannot be generalized. Some of them chose to learn from their social experiences, while others were yet to have seen such experiences as potentially educational.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I discuss findings from both collective case studies. First, I delineate a discussion of findings from the instructor-participants collective case study, followed by discussing the student-participants collective case study. Headers appear with accordance to themes presented in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively.

Instructor-participants Collective Case Study: Discussion

In this section, I discuss the presented findings with regard to existing relevant literature, the multiple contexts (represented visually in Figure 4.1) and my interpretations as the researcher. Finally, I end this section by summarizing instructor-participants collective case study and prefacing the following one.

Transformative Internationalization through Teaching Practices

Engaging not only in internationalization but in transformative internationalization, that is one which involves symbiotic changes in both students and instructors, matters in this context. The four instructor-participants either underwent changes evoked by teaching Chinese undergraduate students in their classes (e.g., Andrew, Stan) or were open to transforming their pedagogical approaches to these students (e.g., Han and Peter). Thus, I bound findings from this collective case study within the notion of transformative internationalization, since as will become clear later both instructors and students admitted having undergone mutually evoked changes.

Perceptions of Chinese undergraduate students. The way instructor-participants in this study perceive Chinese undergraduate students was the first theme I presented in the findings chapter. Earlier, based on the four instructor-participants' reports, I presented these instructor-

participants' perceived motivations behind Chinese undergraduate students' decisions to study in the U.S. I also showed how these instructor-participants' beliefs about and attitudes towards Chinese undergraduate students and China changed over time. In the midst of this, I delineated findings on how their general satisfaction teaching a given course relates to their perceptions of Chinese undergraduate students. Now, I will discuss these findings in light of existing literature and my (the researcher) interpretations.

One suggestion that Chung et al. (2018) offer for instructors in relation to Chinese undergraduate students abroad is to consider the extent to which these students' educational motivations are shaped by the politics of education in mainland China or constantly changing familial traditions. This concern was also reflected in Stan (students did not want to go through Chinese national examination regime or could not obtain a high enough score to be admitted to one of the best universities in China) and Peter's impressions as of why they had Chinese undergraduate students in their classes (i.e., family responsibility). Chung et al. (2018) found that their participating Chinese undergraduate students expected a wide range of benefits from having a foreign degree, namely knowledge advancement, improvement of their social communication skills, broadening their global perspectives and widened cultural exposure. In recent years, the Chinese government has expanded its plans of seeking maximum benefits of overseas education both in a form of cultural and social capital (Chung et al., 2018), of which this study's instructor-participants were likely not aware. The Chinese government has also planned to spread Chinese cultural values overseas while incentivizing internationally educated students to return to China (Chung et al., 2018). The hopes are that globally educated Chinese undergraduate students will contribute to the rise of the China nation in the future, but in order for this to happen their Chinese instructors need to be a part of the conversation.

Moreover, Chao et al. (2017) listed the most influential factors that might impact Chinese undergraduate students' decisions to study in the U.S. as the desire to gain a new perspective on China as their respondents' top incentive. Stan mentioned some of the students he spoke to where interested in new cultures and new worldviews. Stan also mentioned that some of the students he had encountered either did not want to go through Chinese national examination regime or could not obtain a high enough score to be admitted to one of the best universities in China. Chao et al. (2017) also ranked this reason as the second most common motivation to study in the U.S. Their participants also presented a clear awareness of the necessity to return to China upon graduation as foreign nationals might not be able to secure jobs in North America as easily, while this study's student-participants did not, as became visible in Chapter 5.

Peter's perceptions of what motivates Chinese undergraduate students to further their education in the United States stated that these students seem to be driven to complete their degrees abroad by family responsibility, even more so if their parents have already determined their future career, such as taking over a family business. Montgomery (2017) found that there were several push-pull factors that motivated her study participants from China to come to the U.S. schools. Amongst those were parental influences or good reputation of a given program, but the instructor-participants in this study were not aware of those. Chung et al. (2018) conclude that Chinese undergraduate students abroad see their education from a U.S. university as a path to join the elite nationals with rich global influences and experiences (p. 433), which partially matches what Stan and Peter stated above about what they perceived as motivation for the Chinese undergraduate students in their classes. Lu et al.'s (2018) findings also strengthen this conclusion, stating that Chinese undergraduate students' motivation to study in the U.S. is often linked to avoidance of unwanted societal pressures and stigmas in China. Unless a student-

participant directly confided in an instructor, the instructor-participants could only share their assumptions as to what motivated the Chinese undergraduate students to enter their classrooms.

In terms of the instructors' general perceptions of Chinese undergraduate students, Frenzel et al. (2016) claim that the emotions instructors have towards their profession influence not only their well-being but also the smoothness of running their classrooms. However, they caution against generalized claims and suggest contextualizing to a particular subject taught. In this collective case study, Han was the one who emphasized his enjoyment teaching the ESL cultural course (ESL ACL) the most. Because that class was quite specific in its context, that is ESL ACL – American Cultures and Language (henceforth ESL cultural class), it is safe to infer that reactions might have varied if the subject taught was different. Again, the findings discussed in this chapter are not to be applied onto different contexts, but rather seen as particularized to a specific situation, class taught, or cases examined. Even though Han expressed some anxiety over teaching the ESL cultural class, since it was his first time and he did not know what to expect from that group of Chinese undergraduate students, Frenzel et al. (2016) claim that teaching anxiety threatens instructors' well-being only and is not to be considered an impact on teaching quality. From my observations, Han was visibly nervous at the beginning of the course (he spoke fast, and his hands were shaking) but as the classes continued, he became more relaxed, confident (no more shaking hands) and exuded pleasure from working with that group of Chinese undergraduate students. I saw that in his strolls around the room and attempts at making jokes with students. This indicated to me that Han was transformed, by the mere power of his students being responsive to his teaching and having created a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom.

On another note, instructor-participants' beliefs about Chinese undergraduate students varied in this project as well. While Stan described his Chinese undergraduate students as changed, more culturally informed and new, Peter held more conservative ideas about how to work with Chinese undergraduate students by pointing out their assumed tendency to stick together. This is an interesting contrast. Stan taught an ESL class while Peter was an instructor of a business management class. Peter's observations of Chinese undergraduate students sticking together can be found in slightly older research findings, where Chinese undergraduate students were seen as struggling with the learner-centered approach that focuses on group work, active participation and sharing one's opinions (e.g., Yan & Berliner, 2009). Given the size of Peter's class, its convention as a lecture and its main teaching technique being teamwork (with instructor-assigned teams), having chances to develop close relationships with his Chinese undergraduate students might have proven difficult.

Conversely, Stan's attitude towards the "new Chinese learner" (as an amalgamate of the more conservative old and the more progressive new [Shi, 2006]) is more prevalent amongst recent research findings that portray Chinese undergraduate students as different but not deficient (Heng, 2018), heterogeneous, and in need of contextualization when explored (Du, 2015). Stan was open to learn from his students, which links with the bilateral nature of interculturality (Dervin, 2016b) and transformation as well. Only mutual changes can form well-rounded and globally educated individuals (Dervin, 2016b).

Interestingly, Stan said something during our second interview that grabbed my attention: "We have a new type of an ESL teacher these days" (Stan, Interview 2). When asked to explain what he meant by that, he stated the fact that instructors of English as a second language in this day and age are more globally informed, better traveled, and more versatile when it comes to

nationalities and their students' places of origin. This, in turn, makes them more receptive to accept change, try new teaching approaches and stay open to the new generation of Chinese undergraduate students. According to Stan, "the new type of an ESL teacher" has undergone a transformation in their attitudes, views and approaches to students who study English as a second language. Also, given what Shi (2006) found in her study, that is the fact that today's Chinese undergraduate students depict "something old" and "something new", shifting from traditional Confucian learners to more modern, individualistic and having much more in common with their Western equivalents than previously assumed, might make a potential reflection of the new type of the ESL teacher described by Stan.

The intercultural approach to teaching Chinese undergraduate students also brings the concept of *othering* into the forefront of this discussion. In the Introduction to this project, I defined *othering* as the stereotypes and faulty representations when meeting others. Andrew was very vocal about making sure he did not *other* any students in his class. The language on his syllabus was welcoming to non-native speakers of English as was his demeanor during the classes I observed. Even though he did point out that Chinese undergraduate students come from different cultures of learning, he was not judgmental in his observations. Dervin (2016b) points out that to *other* someone means to create "a boundary between different and same, insiders and outsiders" (p. 45). So, in order to *other* one would need to compare self to the others (Dervin, 2016b) and Andrew never did that during the times I observed his teaching, neither through his syllabus discourse nor his words or behaviors in the classroom. According to Ferri (2018), to essentialize through *othering* means to impose a new framework on *The Other*, thus essentialism lies at the core of *othering*. Andrew's syllabus was clear and welcoming "the other voices." It was quite inspirational to watch him teach, in a way, as by being aware of the processes of

othering he skillfully managed to avoid any instances of *othering* towards Chinese undergraduate students. He did not impose any ideas on them but allowed them to co-construct definitions of terms he was teaching though group discussions. He also encouraged Chinese undergraduate students to present themselves as they wanted to be perceived, without any presupposed ideas, assuring them that his classroom was a safe space to do so.

The findings of the first theme discussed above solidify the idea that internationalization does not suffice. In order to achieve transformative rather than symbolic internationalized environment, instructors' voices need to be heard. This study's instructor-participants' perceptions of Chinese undergraduate students and their multiple contexts show that celebrating the cultural richness international students bring about has the potential to affect these instructor-participants' teaching satisfaction as well as their beliefs about Chinese undergraduate students in general.

Cultural mélange. The instructor-participants in this study reported diverse levels of integrating culture into teaching their respective courses. Although the topic of culture appeared multiple times in other places during the interviews as well, I found it important to include 'culture talk' whether inside or outside of classroom that Chinese undergraduate students are exposed to on a daily basis as a part of a broader theme of cultural mélange.

The overarching idea behind the 'culture talk' in this instructor-participants collective case study was culturally responsive teaching (Farinde-Wu et al., 2017). Culturally responsive teaching challenges the idea that students from linguistically or culturally diverse backgrounds do not stand a chance to excel academically if they do not conform to "Western" ideals, beliefs and established ways (Farinde-Wu et al., 2017). Even though the instructor-participants revealed various levels of cultural or intercultural awareness, they were all indeed aware of the

importance of implementing cultural components into their courses. In this case, Chinese undergraduate students might have been potentially positioned at a disadvantage for the mere fact of being foreign to the U.S. cultures of learning. However, none of the instructor-participants reported having seen them that way. Only Peter mentioned once that Chinese undergraduate students struggled in his class due to his fast pace of speech or less common linguistic features. In fact, Farinde-Wu et al. (2017) describe a culturally responsive instructor as one who links instruction to students' cultural backgrounds, does not utilize any dominant or *othering* narratives, and not only appreciates but also promotes cultural awareness for students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (p. 282). Generally, for some instructors, the lack of knowledge of students' backgrounds might be enough of a reason not to try to adopt culturally responsive pedagogy in their classrooms. This study's instructor-participants did not share that characteristic. They were not only willing to share U.S. cultures with their students (Han) but also other cultures (Peter) and cultures of learning (Stan). They were also either already transformed by their students (Stan's attitude and Andrew's view of learning as a shared journey with his students) or at least open to changes that these students' might have evoked in their pedagogical practices (Han's shift in anxiety and Peter's attempt at knowing how his college approached accommodations). Andrew was also eager to learn new things about other cultures (mostly Chinese) from his students. Farinde-Wu et al. (2017) offer a concluding thought on the practicalities of teaching in culturally responsive ways: "teach them [students] to be responsive to a larger culture or other cultures […] pushing them to be global thinkers (p. 291)." Overall, this ties into the concepts of transformative internationalization and interculturality as the processes that have to work both ways (student-instructor, instructor-student) in order to become meaningful.

Moreover, Mott-Smith (2013) claims that in order to understand Chinese undergraduate students, it is crucial for instructors to understand not only the global context within which those students exist but also their unique cultures of learning. For the purpose of this project, I defined culture of learning as the socially established beliefs about learning and teaching. Mott-Smith (2013) suggests that gaining insights into Chinese undergraduate students' educational needs and practices might make instructors better facilitators of discussions, for instance. Mak and Barker (2006) claim that Chinese undergraduate students' difficulty to actively participate in class discussions is understandable given that it is not customary in Chinese classrooms, but this assumption seems a bit outdated in application to the latest generation of Chinese undergraduate students abroad (Heng, 2018). One idea is that Chinese undergraduate students' silence in class might come from their genuine fear and respect towards an instructor who holds their future in his or her hands rather than from the fact that Confucianism promotes submission.

The concept of cultural mélange fits into diverse cultures of learning and the challenges those bring into the classroom. Here, the four instructor-participants displayed diverse class management styles as well. For instance, while Peter was very adamant about relying on an algorithm to create student teams for his course, Han changed his cell phone policy and his approach to classroom discipline based on negative experiences from previous semesters. Dicke et al. (2015) concluded, from their study on the effects of classroom management skills training on beginning instructors, that solid training has a potential to reduce instructor's reality shock, which they define as "the collapse of ideals or expectations developed during teacher education" (p. 9). In Han's case and according to his words, specific training would have been very helpful. However, he did disclose having a coordinator who was ready to help and advise him on classroom matters. The coordinator was deemed as helpful in most of the troublesome instances.

Yet, I would take it a step further and say that perhaps classroom management training does not only alleviate reality shock but has an immense potential to familiarize instructors with styles of handling a classroom from other parts of the world, simultaneously contributing to cultural mixing. If the aim is a truly transformative internationalization, then perhaps we start by turning training into more of a global endeavor where multiplicity of cultures (including cultures of learning) is seen by all involved as an asset in a classroom.

Back to culture and its effects on how Chinese undergraduate students approach learning in the U.S. schools, the relationship between the instructors' knowledge about these students' cultural and learning backgrounds and their pedagogies cannot be denied. Amongst the instructor-participants, Stan had the most knowledge about where Chinese undergraduate students are coming from academically. Peter's failure to predict that calling on a student might cause stress, anxiety and even tears, could have been avoided if he knew more about Chinese cultures of learning. Maybe then he would not have been surprised by another Chinese student's request to be teamed up with American classmates. Schmidt et al. (2018) claim that interculturality has the potentiality to address any ambiguities that might occur in cross-cultural situations. They explain further that interculturality means empathetic communication where Chinese undergraduate students' needs and identities are openly discussed (p. 47). According to Schmidt et al. (2018), instructors could gain confidence by knowing that they can learn culturally appropriate approaches to Chinese undergraduate students. However, they also need to understand that this process is a hybrid of teaching about U.S. cultures and learning about the Chinese ones. This suggestion extends the idea of cultural mélange by raising a question whether it is time we moved beyond perceiving one culture as more dominant than the other. Of course, an equal split between cultural influences is not realistic, therefore, U.S. cultures will be more

powerful than the Chinese undergraduate students' home cultures in many instances. Yet, it does not mean that a mutual dialogue and respect amidst academic cultures cannot happen.

Overall, following Cortazzi and Jin's (2013) understanding of cultures of learning as "different cultural communities having different preferences, expectations, interpretations, values and beliefs about how to learn or how to teach" (p. 1), instructor-participants were aware of bridging the 'West' and the 'East' as a way to build strong classroom communities. Through efforts to bridge the two different cultures of learning, instructor-participants demonstrated awareness of the importance of transformative internationalization. Through my classroom observations, I noticed that all four instructor-participants were very aware of the fact that they had Chinese undergraduate students in their classes (e.g., they often made sure they pronounced their Chinese names correctly). Andrew made sure to not perceive the Chinese undergraduate students in his course as deficient, therefore, giving them a voice and an equal seat at the table. Han did not want to generalize, while Stan accommodated the fact that some of his Chinese undergraduate students were not familiar with the cultural backgrounds to the readings that they were expected to tackle by explaining it to them upfront. Lastly, Peter learned that cultures of learning differ the hard way, after having made a student cry, but that helped him to stay more reflexive (Dervin, 2016b) of his classroom teaching techniques. If learning is to be transformative, not just an act of transmission (Cortazzi & Jin, 2013), both parties need to stay open minded and ready for the new to enter their teaching and learning realms. Through such an approach, cultural synergy (understood as "reciprocal learning through reflection", Cortazzi & Jin, 2013, p. 2) might be a feasible goal in the midst of the cultural mélange. Indeed, in this study, instructor-participants displayed an open-minded attitude towards teaching Chinese undergraduate students.

Pedagogical approaches to Chinese undergraduate students. The ways instructor-participants decided to approach Chinese undergraduate students in their courses were many and equally diverse. Clark-Gareca and Gui (2019) claim that instructors' cultural and pedagogical beliefs affect their instructional practices. How this study's instructor-participants viewed Chinese undergraduate students in their classes (either as lazy, shy [Han], or hard-working and smart [Stan]), proved to influence their respective pedagogies. The four instructor-participants at GLU also differed when it comes to accommodating Chinese undergraduate students in their classes. While Han paid special attention to Chinese undergraduate students' pronunciation, Peter was told not to provide any special treatment to the Chinese undergraduate students in his business management class. The document on GLU's website that delineated instructors' teaching responsibilities does not mention any accommodations for the international students either. High quality teaching, however, is one of the criteria that instructors' promotion, retention and salary at GLU depends on. Still, instructors' understanding of student needs is believed to play a crucial role in making decisions about the curriculum (Clark-Gareca & Gui, 2019). However, when considering changes to teaching practices, one needs to stay cautious not to *other* the Chinese or position them as problematic in the class. Abelmann and Kang (2014) reported that some instructors required their Chinese undergraduate students to leave their books at the front of the classroom during an exam to prevent cheating, which in turn *othered* those students instead of simply explaining it by their unfamiliarity with the notion of intellectual property (p. 392). Thus, finding a balanced approach, one that would capitalize on Chinese and U.S. cultures of learning consequently might help to avoid tensions and unnecessary chasms. It holds the power to capitalize on the diverse cultures of learning Chinese undergraduate students have to offer for the U.S. academia as well as instructors' intercultural teaching skills.

Accordingly, the most striking observation to emerge from this theme was the issue of plagiarism. Mott-Smith (2013) talks about instructors looking at plagiarism as commonly done re-usage of text and warns against *othering* Chinese undergraduate students as the only ones who practice it. In addition, based on my teaching experiences in China, Chinese undergraduate students often come from a place where essays or even more so oral presentations are memorized for the purpose of a test or a better grade. They seem to have a different understanding of copyright and plagiarism from that of their instructors, which is reflected in a cultural clash of testing and grading practices. While GLU's policies, available online, define plagiarism as "presenting as one's own the words, work, or opinions of someone else," I did not see or receive a clear definition of what plagiarism might entail when I was teaching in China. Adequately, James et al. (2019) report that Chinese undergraduate students' belief in a "standard answer" as a representation of the correct answer to a given question on a test or assignment, is the main reason behind plagiarism. Yet, James et al. (2019) found business students to "be more focused on end results" (p. 637), perceiving plagiarism as a clear means to completing their writing assignments in college. Peter, who taught the business management class, did not report any similar experiences. On the contrary, humanities classes tend to focus on creating content, which is why students in the humanities tend to plagiarize less (James et al., 2019). Andrew, who taught the college writing class, did mention that as long as his students' writing makes logical sense, he did not mention concerns with issues of plagiarizing. Further, Bikowski and Gui (2018) see understanding how Chinese undergraduate students use sources in their native language as a potential solution to misunderstandings when it comes to text borrowings (p. 201), which is what Stan and Han skillfully did in their ESL reading classes (by asking their Chinese undergraduate students over and over again how things are done in a typical Chinese classroom). According to

James et al. (2019), Chinese educational system teaches students to restate authoritative sources. Admittedly, definitions of plagiarism also vary in different institutional and educational contexts. For instance, while a Chinese student might have intended to copy, they might have not necessarily intended to cheat. As Han rightfully noticed, having had his students make oral presentations rather than written reports, using effective and appropriate sources also depends on context. Overall, instructors' approach towards plagiarism not only matters but also affects their students' responsiveness to it. Open-minded perspective on cultural and educational contexts Chinese undergraduate students come from may influence the overall comprehension of the issue.

These project's instructor-participants operated in three different ones, namely English as a second language, college writing, and a business management class. It is important to note how these different contexts impacted their approaches to teaching Chinese undergraduate students. Peter (in his BC class) displayed an example of good communication between an instructor and a Chinese undergraduate student, when he listened to and advised his female Chinese student on how to handle team conflict. This goes against Erichsen and Bolliger's (2011) findings that Asian students' arduous work and intelligence was not acknowledged by their instructors. This study's instructor-participants demonstrated effort and commitment to working with Chinese undergraduate students in interculturally responsive ways and openness to transformation, that is without *othering* or stereotyping (Dervin, 2016b). This in turn allowed them to create a safe learning environment in a given teaching context (Erichsen & Bolliger, 2011).

The three different contexts in this study also helped me to determine how the instructor-participants perceive their current Chinese undergraduate students, as opposed to what they had thought of them in the past. Stan, who had been teaching Chinese undergraduate students the

longest, emphasized that U.S. institutions are dealing with the new type of Chinese learners these days, who according to Shi (2006) could not be any further from a traditional image of passive rote-learners. Stan described them as hard-working and culturally rich. By extension, Lin and Reinders (2019) elaborated on how ready instructors might be to foster Chinese undergraduate students' autonomy of learning. Conversely to Stan, Lin and Reinders' (2019) participating instructors understood their role in cultivating learner autonomy and even showed willingness to promote it, but their pedagogical practices did not reflect those realizations. They were deemed "psychologically, but not technically or behaviorally, ready for autonomy" (Lin & Reinders, 2019, p. 85). Despite the fact that Stan certainly showed awareness and willingness to explore the new Chinese learner further, the question whether a contemporary instructor can move beyond established representations of Chinese undergraduate students, either from literature or their own teaching experiences, remains. Facing the new Chinese learner in U.S. classrooms might require adjustments and changes in pedagogies (such as adapting teaching approaches and changing beliefs) that do not come easily or naturally to seasoned instructors.

Analogously, attitudes towards English-only policy also varied in this study participants' classrooms. Wang and Curdt-Christiansen (2019) see translanguaging pedagogy as a force that can shift focus onto the content learning and loosen the tights on correctness. Translanguaging was first termed by Williams in 1996 as a purposeful type of language teaching where the input and the output are done in two different languages or modes (Williams as cited in Wang & Curdt-Christiansen, 2019). In this study, Han was a bit more adamant about his students using English, but since his class was in the English as a second language context this did not come as a surprise to me. Neither did Andrew's openness towards World Englishes and his encouraging practices to translanguage in the college writing class. While experts in applied linguistics tend

to believe that including students' first language in classroom instruction or pedagogical practices serves as a valuable resource, the U.S. schooling system seems to think that using any other languages while learning English might affect the process in a negative way (Holdway & Hitchcock, 2018). Holdway and Hitchcock (2018) state that the instructor's approach to languages other than English in a classroom stems from one's ideology and whether or not one recognizes any value in multilingualism in a classroom setting. Their participating instructors came to understand that providing an English-only learning environment is not only pernicious but also promoting inequality (Holdway & Hitchcock, 2018, p. 68). Indeed, implementing translanguaging practices in any classroom has the potential to contribute to an open attitude towards English variations and their mixing. This in turn might prove helpful in moving away from the monolingual ideology in the U.S. classrooms (Wang & Curdt-Christiansen, 2019) and facilitate transformative internationalization of the higher education in the U.S. Interestingly, other scholars (Garcia et al., 2011) also proved that students tend to succeed when their first language is used, even in the mathematics classroom. Therefore, just like Andrew's classroom, this study's contexts other than ESL, such as the business management class, might have benefitted from welcoming translanguaging into their classrooms.

Lastly, in terms of instructors' measure of success, Paldy (2015) points out the importance of exploring teaching successes as many research studies tend to focus on challenges only. For Peter, Chinese undergraduate students' integration into the new system, that is U.S. educational system, was a sign of his successful teaching. In contrast, Andrew measured success in visible progress not only in the way the Chinese undergraduate students in his course wrote, but also in their classroom language and way of thinking. Following van der Zanden et al. (2018), amongst a wide spectrum of predictors of student success are students' previous

academic achievement and their intrinsic motivation to do well in a given class. Students' critical thinking skills, for instance, tend to be related stronger to the learning environment (van der Zanden et al., 2018), which is why Andrew's observations might have been fitting given his multicultural learning environment in the college writing class.

In my examination of the experiences of the four instructor-participants teaching Chinese undergraduate students at Grand Lake University in the U.S., I found clear willingness to accommodate these students' unique needs and educational and cultural backgrounds. This study's instructor-participants did so without complaining or *othering* Chinese undergraduate students in their courses. It was clear that the instructor-participants' teaching experiences, as well as their own educational backgrounds, influenced their approach to teaching students from mainland China. The instructor-participants did not disregard Chinese undergraduate students' knowledges or cultural inclinations. They achieved or strived to achieve a balance between their U.S. ways of teaching and welcomed adjustments to their established pedagogies. I did not see instances of pure coexistence (Abelmann & Kang, 2014), but rather mutual teaching and learning experiences (Dervin, 2016b) conducted in the spirit of mutual conviviality. While these findings cannot be generalized onto the entire U.S. higher education system, the instructor-participants' experiences at GLU offer hope for transformative internationalization.

Interculturality. Last but not least, a theme of the instructor-participants' intercultural teaching revealed itself. Tolosa et al. (2018) found that intercultural focus has the potential to add depth to one's teaching as well as the power to develop interculturality in students. Wang (2012) takes it a step further by claiming that Chinese undergraduate students may even help their instructors to recognize the value they bring to multicultural classrooms, which indicates a potential to transform them. One of this study instructor-participants, Andrew, understood that

teaching interculturally is done in reciprocal ways, ways that enrich both the instructor and the students alike. However, Tolosa et al. (2018) conclude that "language learning is in a privileged position to develop intercultural learners ready to engage in plurilingual contexts" (p. 234). Therefore, Stan and Han, who taught in the ESL context, as well as Andrew, who taught in the college writing context, seem to have had an advantage over Peter when it comes to their pedagogical practices potentially reflecting interculturality.

In light of this dissertation's findings, I argue that when teaching Chinese undergraduate students, one needs to strive for interculturally responsive teaching, as culturally responsive teaching does not suffice in that context and suggests dominance of one culture over the other. To do so, Bovill et al. (2015), who call it transnational teaching, suggest four principles to implement in one's teaching: (1) modelling particular pedagogies and practices, (2) ensuring mutual benefits, (3) ensuring individual integrity alongside institutional credibility, and (4) not only developing but also supporting transnational staff. Even though instructor-participants of this study did not demonstrate all four of the above principles, they demonstrated "practice what you preach" approach, which indicated awareness. The big issue, as expected, was with making teaching a mutually beneficial or transformative practice. As an instructor-to-be, Han showed the biggest degree of being willing to adapt to the needs of his Chinese undergraduate students, while the other three instructor-participants, more seasoned instructors, experienced a few self-developed pushbacks when it came to pure reciprocity. That was likely due to their beliefs about what teaching is and their established routines and practices when working with Chinese undergraduate students in previous years as well as GLU's policies they needed to adhere to. In terms of holding oneself and one's institution accountable for the outcomes of education provided to Chinese undergraduate students, Bovill et al. (2015) point out that U.S. higher

education system and its general lack of focus on languages other than English might certainly limit the instructors' view on how to work with students from abroad. Hence, we cannot hold these four instructor-participants accountable against what they simply might not have known or might not have been exposed to. In addition, Byram and Wagner (2018) claim that interculturality brings the notion of mediation into the mix. They understand it as "acting as a go-between and a link between two people or groups" (p. 145). Byram and Wagner (2018) also establish a clear distinction between having the ability to live in two cultures (or being bicultural) and having the ability to act as a mediator between people from two or more linguistic or cultural backgrounds (p. 145). The instructor-participants in this study were able to maneuver in the space between multiple cultures. Lastly, although "establishing and maintaining partnerships across cultures can be challenging due to different […] expectations amongst individuals and institutions" (Bovill et al., 2015, p. 21), they are part and parcel of true intercultural teaching. Therefore, it does not seem enough to require certain experiences and languages from staff, like in Stan's case, but also to continually support the staff in re-examining and reflecting upon their beliefs in order to broaden their cultural awareness and sensitivities, and consequently become agents of transformative internationalization.

All in all, this study's instructor-participants demonstrated a fair number of approaches and practices that could lead towards interculturality. Dervin (2016b) doubts if interculturality can be feasibly achieved and prefers to look at it more as a goal that instructors need to aim for. The instructor-participants here, indeed, invoked some helpful approaches to teaching Chinese undergraduate students like thoughtful grouping, knowing students' names or welcoming their use of Chinese language when needed in class. Chen and Yang (2017) name knowing students as one of the appropriate strategies. The instructor-participants knew their Chinese undergraduate

students' names, either their Chinese names or the English names the students preferred to have been addressed by. Han, Stan and Andrew showed an interest in their Chinese undergraduate students' backgrounds, especially in situations culturally tricky. They were curious and therefore asked many culturally related questions, even about how teaching and learning differ between China and the U.S. Peter claimed not to have had time to get to know his students better given the size of his class and its structure, mostly lectures. Yet, intercultural responsiveness assumes that instructors cannot teach what they do not know or lead whom they do not know (Chen & Yang, 2017). Interestingly, instructor-participants had a hard time locating intercultural training for faculty at GLU. No wonder the four instructor-participants felt like some enhancement of their interculturally responsive approaches had been overdue. Whether institutional leaders see guiding GLU towards more truly interculturally solid practices as their role remains a question. "When leaders consistently communicate a commitment to academic achievement through culturally responsive teaching approaches for all students and maintain a similar commitment to continuous, life-long learning for themselves and their schools' faculty and staff" (Chen & Yang, 2017, pp. 84-85), studying in the U.S. might prove to no longer be a challenging experience for Chinese undergraduate students.

One cannot discuss intercultural teaching without looking at *othering*. From the instructor-participants' narratives, a conclusion can be drawn that all of them were aware of *othering* being the culprit in maintaining intercultural attitudes and practices when teaching Chinese undergraduate students; and that might have been why they tried to avoid it in their pedagogies. Dervin (2016b) introduces the concept of diverse diversities as an understanding that everyone, despite where they come from, is diverse and needs to regularly deal with own as well as others' diversities. "If I am ready to accept my own diverse diversities, maybe I can start

noticing and accepting them in the other as well." (Dervin, 2017, p. 90). Working under the assumption that interculturality is a fluid process (Dervin, 2016b), I see how it shapes differently depending on the context and intersectionality (defined here as a mix of different identities and instances of exclusion). Dervin (2017) names unwillingness to un-learn or re-learn as a failure of interculturality. It can also be seen as an obstacle to transformative internationalization. Importantly, if knowledge is transactional and co-constructed (Dervin, 2017), then calling dos and don'ts-list-like approach intercultural might prove a bit misleading. Though the four instructor-participants in this study operated in different educational contexts, they were cognizant of the fact that "all learning is re-learning" (Dervin, 2017, p. 91). They were open to learn from the Chinese undergraduate students in their respected courses.

To sum up, instructor interculturality is a phenomenon to be tirelessly built through meaningful interactions with students, not only cultural but intercultural self-awareness, and as Smolcic and Arends (2017) rightfully state, awareness of the dynamism and complexities of cultural identities (p. 63) of both themselves as instructors and their students, which this study's instructor-participants displayed. By practicing interculturality, instructors also had a chance to re-learn their pedagogical approaches as well as un-learn their long-established ideas about students from China.

To recapitulate, I discussed above the findings from the instructor-participants collective case study, namely their perceptions of Chinese undergraduate students, cultural mélange (or mix) in their teaching, pedagogical approaches they had taken towards Chinese undergraduate students and their interculturally responsive teaching efforts. These findings tie into the concept of transformative internationalization, that is reciprocal changes in both student-participants and instructor-participants. Transformative internationalization of individuals involved in the

teaching-learning processes requires transitions on both personal and professional levels (Wihlborg & Robson, 2018). For this purpose, academic mobility needs to continue. According to Jin and Cortazzi (2017), what is needed is commitment to reinforcing learning environments to share knowledge in order to transform meaningfully. In sum, teaching in ways that welcome students' diverse cultures of learning has the power to truly transform and internationalize in reciprocal ways.

In the following section, I discuss findings from the student-participants collective case study. These are also organized by four themes that emerged from earlier data coding and analysis processes. Following that, in Chapter 7, I present conclusions to this dissertation project, as well as its pedagogical implications, limitations and suggestions for future directions.

Student-participants Collective Case Study: Discussion

In this section, I discuss findings from the student-participants collective case study with regard to existing relevant literature, the multiple contexts (represented visually in Figure 5.1) and my interpretations as the researcher. Finally, I end this section by summarizing student-participants collective case study and prefacing the following chapter.

Kindness

According to Gao (1998, p. 169), the main goal of communication in Chinese culture is to maintain harmony. The Chinese word for harmony, *he*, encompasses values such as peace, unity, and *kindness*. The Chinese care about *kindness* in all sorts of relationships, be it familial ties, neighborhood relations or business connections. Gao (1998) names *kindness* a necessary component of an interculturally developed person, which then extends onto the entire society. Thus, I saw this phenomenon binding findings from this collective case study very coherently,

since all six student-participants articulated the importance and presence of having a kind instructor-participant and classmates (see Table 5.3 for examples).

Preparedness for and motivation to explore the new. There has been a recent change of international education from an elite to a mass occurrence (Altbach, 2015). Given the competitiveness of international education, effective recruitment of students is key to internationalization efforts of hundreds of schools worldwide. Despite the fact that most institutions offer interactive online application tools, Chinese undergraduate students prefer face-to-face contact when it comes to arranging their future, hence the spread of local agents (Zhang & Hagedorn, 2011). This study's student-participants reported having used the services of an education agent when applying to GLU and other schools. According to Zhang and Hagedorn (2011), the major factor deciding who uses and does not use an agent turns out to be insufficient knowledge about foreign college application process. The lack of familiarity with the U.S. higher education system seems to be a determining impetus to working with education agents back in China. Interestingly, almost half of their respondents claimed that they had better chances of getting accepted when hiring an agent (Zhang & Hagedorn, 2011). This did not, however, prove right in the case of Jackson, who received a conditional offer from GLU. As reported during interviews, the majority of this study's student-participants would not have used agencies again.

In terms of Chinese undergraduate students' preparation for study in a different country, Baumbaugh (2015) found that it did not affect students' adaptation process much. The six student-participants in this project certainly put time, finances and efforts to prepare for the U.S. school. As a contradiction to Baumbaugh's (2015) claim, Amy was a good example of preparation making the transition process easier, as she attributed her lack of study problems to both prior training at a high school in Rhode Island and studying at the training school back in

China. Yet, Falcone (2017) reports that the part of China a student comes from affects their preparedness and likelihood of academic success. Rural areas in China struggle to prepare students for the national exams and as a result fail to set them up for a success in their college life (Falcone, 2017). With studying fees having gone up in the past few years, parents may no longer afford the best education for their child, which in turn opens opportunities for the foreign schools to recruit those Chinese who cannot afford the elite education back home (Falcone, 2017). This, however, could not have been confirmed by the student-participants as they came from larger cities in China.

When discussing preparedness to study in a different country, we cannot forget experiencing U.S. education in interculturally responsive ways. One needs to learn to negotiate the similarities and move away from focusing on differences (Dervin, 2016a, p. 154), as differences might strengthen "we are better than you" attitude. Student-participants mentioned pressure from society, parents and themselves to learn about the U.S. culture and to "experience" it. Dervin, however, cautions against creating a "must-do" list that Chinese undergraduate students would have to tick off in order to become intercultural learners (Dervin, 2016a, p. 164). Instead, whether Chinese undergraduate students would be better off left alone to go through the new with the right to fail remains a question.

Based on the interviews, this study's student-participants utilized all available sources to them apart from agents, i.e., online searches, exchanges, family and relatives. However, for example, if Amy's friend had not had the best experience studying at a U.S. college, she might have not decided to come to the United States herself. Machart (2016) claims that even though multiple studies blame Chinese undergraduate students for their poor adaptation to the unfamiliar environment due to their lack of adequate preparation. It might not be the culprit. The

participants in Machart's (2016) study did not excel in intercultural interactions despite demonstrated cultural awareness. Their informal online preparation efforts also ended up being futile as they would rely on outdated stereotypes about the destination. Taking the above into consideration, well-rounded interculturally responsive preparedness (whether in one's home country or already in the host country) might not be achievable even if steps are taken to learn and educate oneself about the new.

In addition, the student-participants' impetuses behind exploring the new in the United States varied from seeking better environment (both study- and pollution-wise) of a highly ranked program to parental hopes and expectations. With regard to motivation, Chao et al. (2017) found that Chinese undergraduate students tend to primarily seek "education with a worldview and opt to break from the Chinese system of learning" (p. 257). They also reported the inability to attend their dream school back in China due to poor results from the National College Entry Exam as the second most common reason for coming to the U.S. (Chao et al., 2017). This indicates that Chinese undergraduate students tend to perceive foreign education as simply easier to be admitted to. This did not prove true for the student-participants, as they reported preferring Chinese styles of learning, too (e.g., Jackson). In this study, Amy wanted to fulfill her mother's long-held dream to study abroad. However, she emphasized her mom's support and did not mention any forms of maladaptive parenting strategies to get her to study in the U.S.

Finally, Aurora was the only student-participant who expressed to me the will to return to China upon graduation, but only to gain working experience before applying for graduate studies back in the States, just like the other student-participants. Contemporarily, China might be suffering from "the worst brain drain in the world," as on average a quarter of students do not

return to mainland after graduating from schools overseas (Cheung & Xu, 2015). One of the explanations for this phenomenon might be offered by Li (2004), who claims that Chinese undergraduate students recognize a significant gap between U.S. and Chinese study environments, which some of this project's student-participants also mentioned. That is why, one possible solution might come in a form of better and kinder working environment (e.g., Amy's experiences) rather than higher salaries if China wants to bring some of its talent back (Cheung & Xu, 2015). Also, given this study's three different contexts, that is an ESL class, a college writing class and a business class, it is notable to mention that, just like the student-participants in this study, students majoring in business were more likely to return to China than those studying education or social sciences (Cheung & Xu, 2015). According to Cheung and Xu (2015), business students recognize more job opportunities in China than in the United States. In contrast, education majors for instance, seem dissuaded from returning to China due to potential low income (Cheung & Xu, 2015). However, this study's student-participants did not seem to follow these patterns. Overall, they considered future employment when making decisions whether or not to return to China upon graduation from GLU. Even though they recognized more competitiveness on a current Chinese job market due to a large population (Yan & Berliner, 2016), they still planned to complete graduate studies in the U.S. before facing the decision on where to settle down.

The theme of preparedness for and motivation to explore the new created a coherent introduction to this study's student-participants' larger experiences in the United States. While all six student-participants reported efforts to prepare to study in a different country, their motivations varied as did their willingness to return to China immediately upon graduation or later on.

Language experiences. When Chinese undergraduate students move to the United States to begin their college lives, just like many students from other nations, they are confronted with not only living and surviving in another country but also with adapting to living in English, and in particular using it for educational purposes. Therefore, this theme of language experiences is imperative to comprehensively discuss student-participants' experiences at GLU.

To start with, Chinese undergraduate students in the U.S. seem to complain mostly about inadequate language training prior to their sojourns as one of the most relevant factors accounting for their language difficulties (Yan & Berliner, 2016). On the contrary, this study's student-participants did not represent the same experiences. All six of them found their language training, be it in China or in the U.S., useful and sufficient to at least survive in the U.S. school. The training in English they received back in China, at "cram schools", might have been designed to enable students to pass the TOEFL exam. Yet, according to Yan and Berliner (2016), it could have overlooked the academic demands of their respective programs in the U.S. However, in the experiences of the student-participants, none of that was reported as a result of poor language preparation or too low of a TOEFL score to begin with. "Cram schools", which the student-participants reported to have attended, are believed to affect students' access to information (Lin, 2020). Interestingly, according to Lin (2020) "cram schools" might be selective in presenting information about a given test, such as TOEFL, giving students an impression of that test carrying more weight than it actually does in a college application process. Yet, Rawlings and Sue (2013) found that language preparation in China falls short, compared to "Western schools," due to different teaching methodologies and learning styles. This is interesting because Jackson was given a conditional offer from GLU as his TOEFL score did not reach the cut score. Lin (2020) sees such organizational practices of "cram schools" or

agencies mentioned before as potential foundations to "inequities in student mobility" (p. 14). Since the student-participants used the services of "cram schools" or educational agencies, I was not able to juxtapose their experiences against the experiences of those who did not use them.

Also, Yan and Berliner (2016) claim that the need to develop self-management and self-discipline proves hard for Chinese undergraduate students who are more used to directions and strict discipline in studies in general. The six student-participants came from different English-related narratives. Amy went through an American high school in Rhode Island, and thus felt pretty confident about her language abilities at GLU. On the contrary, having come from a traditional high school in China (where English was taught by Chinese instructors), Jackson struggled to achieve the required TOEFL score as well as to adapt to managing his school life by himself. While U.S. education system encourages autonomy and self-directness (Yan & Berliner, 2016), the Chinese are likely to find it problematic to adjust to the decentralized nature of it.

In line with the stressful language requirements, student-participants in this study faced second language anxiety that clearly affected their experiences at Grand Lake University. For instance, Aurora reported having translated what she wanted to say in her head from Chinese into English first, while Nick was anxious to communicate in English altogether as he believed his proficiency level was not adequate. This discovery agrees with findings from Cheng and Erben (2012), where Chinese undergraduate students were unable to communicate confidently and proficiently at the beginning of their respective programs in the United States. Yet, student-participants in this project did not avoid using English as a strategy to deal with the anxiety (Cheng & Erben, 2012), but that might have been due to the fact that some of them (specifically those in business management context) were already more advanced in their studies at GLU. As Nick reported, his domestic classmates and his instructor were helping him to overcome his fear

of being misunderstood both in class and outside of the classroom, and they were doing so in a kind manner, which Nick found important to mention. In other words, language did not seem a barrier for student-participants but might have been an obstacle. Rather, depending on how confident they felt with their capabilities in English, it served as a stressor (Yan & Berliner, 2016), which some students chose to capitalize on (e.g., Billy's bravery to use English only and not defer to Chinese while at GLU) while others struggled to overcome (e.g., Jackson's inability to think in English and frustrations from not understanding everything during his classes at GLU).

Among other language-related challenges Chinese undergraduate students encounter when coming to study in the U.S., was their willingness to communicate with their instructors and domestic classmates. It was enriching to have heard that the six student-participants did not find this an obstacle to their academic success at GLU. Even though Nick was not able to understand his instructor, Peter, fully and at all times, he actively sought ways to find solutions to the issue by asking his classmates for help and reaching out to Peter either via email or during his office hours. He saw Peter's openness to help him as a sign of *kindness*. Nick disconfirms Yan and Berliner's (2016) findings that Chinese undergraduate students tend to be reluctant to talk to their instructors due to the lack of knowledge of what might be culturally acceptable in student-instructor relationships and interactions. Similarly, the argument that for Chinese undergraduate students communication in English poses threat to their success in the U.S. academia (Swagler & Ellis, 2003), as it is rooted in their personalities, does not apply to these student-participants. Instead confidence, as related to ability in English, might have affected student-participants' communication efforts (e.g., Nick). After all, only Billy reported instances of seeing any form of bias on the basis of his Chinese classmates' accent or general low English

ability (Wang, Ahn, Kim, & Lin-Siegler, 2017), but that was reported in social situations (waiters in restaurants) rather than in classroom settings. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that student-participants in this project found ways to communicate despite having to use English and did not find themselves isolated or discriminated because of English being their second language.

Moreover, student-participants' exam anxiety and unfamiliarity with testing conventions in the U.S. influenced the way they felt at GLU, too. Aurora expressed her concerns with being anxious on tests and not knowing how to study for a test in an appropriate and efficient way. Interestingly, Rappleye and Komatsu (2018) maintain that "Western" education systems tend to stereotype Asian students, including those coming from mainland China, as "exam-crazy" (p. 750). They argue that such a view of Asian schooling does not reflect reality and that Chinese undergraduate students in fact do not lack either knowledge or English language skills (Rappleye & Komatsu, 2018), which was the case with Aurora. Instead the problem might come from the attitudes on the instructors and researchers' side in Anglo-American academia. Again, the question remains whether the problem lies with comprehending Chinese cultures of learning, where different things are considered important than those typically valued at U.S. schools, such as U.S. academic institutions placing value on individualism, student-centered, deep learning while Chinese academia focusing on rote, instructor-centered, collectivist learning (for a detailed list of differences, refer to Table 1.1 in Chapter 1). However, this difference should by no means lead to any further divides, which creates *othering* of Chinese undergraduate students as "less than." Student-participants in this study did not make excuses, but rather sought solutions to their initial struggles with things that did not make sense to them at first, which consequently opened new pathways to learning for them at Grand Lake University.

In addition, student-participants were quite aware of the fact that their new life in the U.S. would not be free of certain degree of pain. Dervin (2016b) points out that recognition of power relations is one of the main elements of interculturality, which I defined for the purpose of this study as mutual responsiveness, appreciate and curiosity with its main goal being bilateral (i.e., mutual communication). The six student-participants not only presented an accepting attitude towards their language challenges but also towards an understanding that a certain amount of pain when in an unfamiliar environment cannot be escaped. Having acknowledged that painful experiences did not stop them, however, from recognizing acts of *kindness* their instructors or peers extended to them. They also demonstrated respect towards their instructors, bearing in mind that their studies and lives in the U.S. depended on these instructors. It did not, however, seem to create any unhealthy power imbalances (Dervin, 2016b), which led me to believe that student-participants' learning at GLU may, indeed, be considered intercultural.

It was extremely interesting to see how student-participants' reported experiences at GLU link to the notion of *kindness*. Nick, in particular, mentioned how "kind" his instructor was by making sure he would have a language buddy on his team. Nick also repeated multiple times how helpful and kind his classmates were to him in times of confusion. Loreman (2011) states that "a pedagogy of love can only occur in an environment in which kindness exists" (p. 19). That means Peter, Nick's instructor-participant, developed personal *kindness* in order to share it with his student. Peter's grouping strategy was also intentional, as reported in Chapter 4. His decision to add another Chinese student into Nick's group, so that they can speak Chinese whenever necessary, definitely manifested his care for Nick and was perceived as care by Nick. According to Loreman (2011), instructors should keep two equal goals in mind, particularly maintaining academic progress and pursuing *kindness*. Nick was an example of when *kindness*

worked, as he was not scared of Peter from that moment on, neither was his communication with him impeded.

In conclusion, honing in on student-participants' English language experiences at GLU, one is left wondering if they might have had any connection with their instructor-participants speaking fast or using slang and colloquialisms. Even the expectation that Chinese undergraduate students would maintain an eye contact with their instructors (Roy, 2013) might have sparked a problem with understanding these students' cultures of learning. Student-participants faced challenges with English as much as any international student would have when placed in new learning environment, visibly different from what they might be used to. Yet, I did not find student-participants' English proficiency levels to have been restraining them from experiencing learning at Grand Lake University in interculturally responsive ways. They were responsive to learning new ways of life as much as they were reflective of their educational journeys at GLU.

Beliefs and feelings about studying in the U.S. How Chinese undergraduate students feel when they study in the United States is oftentimes influenced by their beliefs of the U.S. education, and in particular their beliefs of the instructors. This study's student-participants shared a range of feelings and beliefs with me. I tied them with the motif of *kindness* because all student-participants mentioned *kindness* multiple times during our interviews (see examples in Table 5.3). Every student-participant mentioned how kind their instructor-participant or their domestic peers had been to them. Thus, I will discuss the findings from this theme with relations to *kindness*.

First of all, people who have positive emotions and behaviors such as *kindness* while interacting with others tend to show less psychological symptoms of stress and anxiety (Duan et al., 2015). This might partially explain why the six student-participants in this collective case

study deemed their experiences at GLU as positive, since they mentioned *kindness* multiple times as an important element of their sojourns. Even with instances of not-so-friendly situations outside of the classroom they deemed their experiences at GLU as overall positive. According to Magnet et al. (2014), *kindness* in the classroom requires a commitment to "thinking with" (p. 9), which excludes any divides, be it disciplinary, national, gender, etc. Therefore, student-participants would not have been able to experience *kindness* if it had not been for their instructor-participants' conscious decisions to include "thinking with" in their pedagogies. In this case, *kindness* that student-participants reported was feasible only thanks to the four instructor-participants' openness and willingness to include it.

The fact *kindness* was important to student-participants is not a precedent. Boshier (2017) lists "kind" as one of the six most frequently cited words amongst over 300 of his respondents from China. If the instructor was friendly and kind-hearted, the Chinese undergraduate students would consider them their favorite (Boshier, 2017). Interestingly, Boshier (2017) also contrasts this with the Chinese government's attempts at reforming universities, labeling them as materialistic and hegemonic endeavors (p. 223). The six student-participants did not mention any of those elements as crucial to their positive experiences at GLU, though. The human factor of their instructor overtook any other feelings or observations these students might have made.

Kindness was also represented through encouragement and friendliness. Billy saw Han as caring, just like Amy recognized *kindness* in Andrew's personalized approach to every student. Heng's (2017) participants shared that encouraging students with a gentle nod brings about reassurance and takes away fear. They explained that students in China typically perceive instructors as authority figures, which causes confusion in their relations with instructors in the U.S. (Heng, 2017). Regardless of Chinese undergraduate students' language competencies, they

seem to hope for active initiative from their instructors and peers to connect with them (Heng, 2017). Especially when Chinese undergraduate students first arrive and face adjustments on many levels, not just academically, the show of care and inclusion might improve their motivation, self-esteem and more importantly intercultural experiences, as was visible in student-participants' reports.

What is more, student-participants reported having struggled with test preparation in their respective classes at GLU. Zhang-Wu (2018) claims that Chinese undergraduate students rigorous test preparation programs in China do not seem to prepare them adequately for authentic life situations in the United States. Nick admitted the Chinese "no thinking" type of test suited him better (Nick, Interview). It is clear that on top of having to re-learn language skills, student-participants needed to adjust to new communication and learning styles, too. In fact, Heng (2018) maintains that Chinese undergraduate students are used to being given information directly (that includes questions for the test), and so being given a framework to work with in the U.S. classroom or being asked for conclusions (on a test) that students need to derive themselves might inadvertently create tensions. This links to a commonly used dichotomy between U.S. and Chinese academic values (presented in Table 1.1, in the Introduction), which I do not use as a starting point in this study, but of which I am aware.

In terms of a common assumption that Chinese undergraduate students, as a homogenous group, tend to stay quiet in class due to their shyness or a lack of adequate English skills, through this study I not only juxtaposed the assumption of homogeneity (by particularizing experiences of each Chinese student) but also demonstrated the need to consider cultures of learning. The student-participants clearly explained that they would typically keep quiet in class if they thought their idea was not innovative enough, not because they felt too shy to speak. They also shared

that working on their own, without help from instructors or advisors, created an uncertainty of whether they would do things the right way, such as sufficiently prepare for the test. Following Haarms et al. (2018), Chinese undergraduate students face obstacles when asked to explore a given subject under guidance rather than be given answers by the instructor. One thing to consider here might also be the fact that student-participants come from cultures of learning where being kind means caring for others' feelings (Heng, 2018). Thus, by staying quiet in class they might have actually tried to show their respect for the instructor and for their peers.

Interestingly, the student-participants partially confirmed Will's (2016) findings that despite their good enough TOEFL scores they could not express themselves on a deeper level during class. Her participants experienced many "lost in translation" instances, where they could not articulate their thoughts clearly enough (Will, 2016). Some student-participants (e.g., Amy) reported keeping to themselves in class out of fear of being misunderstood or due to her inability to express her opinions in clear English. Some others (such as Billy) were not passive even if they felt like their English was not good enough to participate in a class discussion. Instead, Nick, for instance, actively tried to find other ways of being a part of the class community, such as asking his domestic classmates for help and seeking his instructor-participants' advice. In a similar vein, Heng (2018) also points out that Chinese undergraduate students might keep to themselves in class to avoid face-to-face confrontations, especially in group discussion settings, as such confrontations are considered impolite in their cultures of learning, and thereby portray them as unkind. This study's student-participants varied in their approaches to using English in class.

Another interesting finding that this theme encompassed was discussing politically sensitive cultural elements in class, such as Taiwan. Eve appreciated Peter's smooth handling of

the matter in class, which allowed him to avoid any cultural clashes and made Eve see Peter as kind. According to Dervin (2010), in order to practice interculturality instructors need guidance in selecting sensitive language for cross-cultural comparisons and examples. Peter was clearly ahead of that. It seemed to me, when Eve was reporting the occurrence that I had also previously observed, that Peter's interculturality might have in fact led to Eve's intercultural learning. Again, the process of transformation happened mutually, that is Peter's transformative and kind teaching approach resulted in Eve's interculturally responsive learning moment.

The abovementioned student-participants' beliefs and feelings paved a path to discussing interculturality. Yu and Moskal (2018) state that structural conditions and institutional arrangements might be making intercultural contact for Chinese undergraduate students difficult. In their opinion, the environment overwhelmed with international students could hinder Chinese undergraduate students' intercultural learning chances (Yu & Moskal, 2018, p. 666). However, that was not the case at GLU. While the numbers of international students were quite high, they were not higher than those of domestic students in the BC and CWC contexts, which provided student-participants with ample opportunities for intercultural contact.

The social side of the new. In a world quickly advancing in mobility and open borders, globalized attitude to experiencing the new seems more important than ever. This study's student-participants came to the United States to further their education at GLU but also to embrace the unknown cultures. Their reported experiences at GLU, and more broadly in the U.S., indicate that they might have understood that interculturality requires acceptance of simplexity (Dervin, 2016b). According to Dervin (2016b), we need to experience the social side of life as a concurrent simple and complex phenomenon. There are tensions to be expected as the simple interacts with the complex (Dervin & Byrd Clark, 2014). In fact, neither simplicity nor

complexity, can be fully reached (Dervin, 2016b). Student-participants' reported experiences made it clear that simplexity helps one to navigate between different social arenas and makes one's experiences more interculturally responsive.

This leads to another issue of portraying Chinese undergraduate students as constantly struggling individuals in the context of studying abroad (e.g., Biggs, 1994; Chao et al., 2017; Du, 2015; Heng, 2018). Dervin (2016b) recognizes the importance of speaking about failures on the road to interculturality, but he discourages focusing on failures only. This study's student-participants experienced a certain amount of failure, but my focus, as a researcher, was more on where they have succeeded despite any challenging situations. In the experiences of the new social sphere they found themselves in, student-participants in this project were not hiding their failures, either. Instead, they did not dwell on them but rather learned from them (such as Billy, Aurora, or Nick's cultural discoveries). Ryan (2010) attributes frequent research findings concentrate on how hard it is for Chinese undergraduate students in the U.S. schools to outdated dichotomous characteristics of the "Chinese learner" (presented in Table 1.2. in the Introduction). Mutual respect seems useful to understand contemporary Chinese undergraduate students' experiences in the U.S. society. Additionally, as long as Chineseness, a largely generalizing term, is defined as "deviance from Western norms" (Ryan, 2010, p. 40), it tends to ignore the diverse learning contexts Chinese undergraduate students come from. Therefore, centering the cases around the experiences of student and instructor-participants is more appropriate than treating them as a homogeneous group.

What is more, when studying at GLU, student-participants had varied experiences when it came to making friends. While Jackson struggled to make friends with anyone, be it the Chinese or American students, Nick made some friends with his U.S. classmates somewhat

unknowingly, by helping them with their Chinese homework on a weekly basis. He also called them "kind." Student-participants did not avoid making friends with the local students. Further, most research claims that Chinese undergraduate students are not willing to meet people from their own country abroad, in fact preferring to become friends with the locals (Dervin, 2016b, p. 38). That might be due to the fear of "being stuck with the same." That is why the word local is problematic: do we define it by place of birth, nationality, language? (Dervin, 2016b, p. 38). This study's student-participants were neither for nor against creating friendships while at GLU, which might lend support to the notion of their heterogeneity.

In a similar vein, Gu (2016) claims that the Chinese see relationships as interdependent, while Americans might not care about selfless support of friends. Because none of this study's student-participants admitted having been close friends with a U.S. person (other than interacting with some due to being at the same place at the same time, such as classroom or dormitory), it is impossible to judge whether that idea could be represented in their relations. However, when Nick's roommate tended to overcool the room, making Nick feel uncomfortable, Nick did not face him but instead "suffered" in silence because he wanted to be kind to his roommate. According to Gu (2016), from the aspect of *kindness*, Chinese people prefer to save face by avoiding confrontations and thus conflict. This could be one explanation of Nick's reluctance to solve his conundrum.

By the same token, student-participants were aware of the cultural divide between where they came from and where they came to. They were accurate and critical in comparing elements of social life in China and the U.S. as an explanation of their cultural lessons or any challenging situations. Differences mentioned included different living preferences, different conceptualizations of friendship and different ways of coping with the unfamiliar. Spencer-Oatey

et al. (2017) call this occurrence a cultural distance (p. 750). For their participants, on the one hand differences contributed to students' reluctance to establish friendships with U.S. students (e.g., Jackson), while on the other hand created opportunities to "learn about other people's thoughts" (p. 751) (e.g., Aurora). As presented above, this study's student-participants confirmed that claim in both of its directions.

Baumbaugh (2015) states that the more international students tend to perceive Americans as friendly, kind, and warm towards them, the more likely they are to adapt to American cultures (p. 40). So, in other words, any stereotypical or judgmental attitudes or behaviors from their U.S. friends have a potential to affect student-participants' experiences at GLU in a negative way. On another note, student-participants recalled situations where they themselves or their Chinese friends might have been stereotyped (e.g., Amy and her kung-fu recollection). If that is true, then analogically, positive attitudes, warmth and *kindness* can affect student-participants' experiences positively. According to Heng (2018), the situations where U.S. college students stereotyped their Chinese peers as bad in English and unsociable seem to be a thing of a past decade.

Furthermore, through this study, I tried to highlight the fact that the experiences of Chinese undergraduate students abroad cannot be discussed without looking into the ever-changing sociocultural contexts these students are placed within. I suggest that even within one nationality, international students' experiences might comprise a flux of various aspects, for instance different fields of study, as was this study's case. In fact, Chinese undergraduate students have been found to be a heterogeneous group (Heng, 2019). In particular, they have been able to interact with individuals from other cultures without losing their cultural features, which in turn leads to reciprocal (i.e., mutual) learning. That is what Yuan and Xie (2013) call cultural synergy. This notion sees dialogue as a necessary element of any learning process (Yuan

& Xie, 2013, p. 21). According to Yuan and Xie (2013), such dialogue cannot be, however, a simple sum of all differences between a Chinese student and their instructor, but instead should create contextualized forms of reciprocal learning. This study's student-participants exhibited a tendency to make a two-way conversation with their instructors as well as their U.S. classmates or friends. Yet, they cared about maintaining harmony, peace, and *kindness* in any social situation (such as Nick not telling his roommate he was cold), and above all, stayed open and receptive towards their U.S. peers and instructor-participants inquiring into their cultures. By Yuan and Xie's (2013) rules of the cultural synergy, target culture needs to recognize its lack of cultural knowledge of the Chinese undergraduate students' backgrounds, which likely gives roots to cultural misunderstandings. If culture is seen as a resource (Yuan & Xie, 2013, p. 31), then there is a need to use distinct cultures of learning in positive and enriching ways. This study's student-participants were ready to share and explain their cultural inclinations to those who were curious.

Withal, social networks established through social media also played a role in student-participants' experiences at GLU. They reported using WeChat (a Chinese application similar to WhatsApp) as a major vehicle not only to learn about social events and experiences of other Chinese undergraduate students at GLU, but also to make their daily lives convenient. Fu and Izuma (2018) claim that the intensity of using social media sites, such as WeChat, positively influences Chinese undergraduate students bridging of social capital. The researchers conceptualize bridging social capital as weak ties in social relationships (Fu & Izuma, 2018). Thus, bridging social capital refers to the capacity to access resources through those weak ties in social networks, such as acquaintances, coworkers, strangers (Fu & Izuma, 2018). In this project, WeChat played a role in creating opportunities for student-participants (e.g., Aurora) to

communicate not only with their countrymates but also with U.S. peers. This conforms to the claim that Forbush and Foucault-Welles's (2016) put forward, viz. that Chinese undergraduate students in the United States who utilize social media (mainly WeChat), build more diverse networks abroad, compared to those who do not make use of social media. Consequently, students whose social networks are diversified tend to adapt better to the new social realities of the host cultures (Forbush & Foucault-Welles, 2016).

The findings from this theme, that is the social side of student-participants' new life in the United States, are important for intercultural understanding between students from China and their instructors. "Appreciating the complexities of Chinese students' experiences may minimize the entrenchment of a deficit discourse of these students […]" (Heng, 2018, p. 33). If Chinese undergraduate students' experiences in the U.S. fall on the positive side, they can lay a foundation to future interculturality in relations between China and any other country of study.

To recapitulate, I discussed above the findings from the student-participants collective case study, namely their preparedness and motivation to study in the United States, their language and sociocultural experiences as well as their beliefs about studying at Grand Lake University. These findings tie into the concept of *kindness*. Hui (2005) advocates for *kindness* to be added as another moral virtue in Confucianism. Originally, there are five moral features listed as Confucian virtues, namely benevolence, righteousness, propriety, intelligence, and honesty (Hui, 2005). This study's student-participants frequently mentioned how kind instructor-participants and peers were towards them, especially in situations when they needed help. Loreman (2011) claims that by developing empathy we develop *kindness*, since understanding *The Other* increases the chances of helping them. When this study's student-participants mentioned that someone was kind to them, what they meant was actually an understanding they

might have shown of the diversities Chinese undergraduate students bring not only to the U.S. sociocultural arena but also to U.S. classrooms.

In the following concluding chapter, I summarize and offer conclusions on the findings from instructor-participants collective case study (Chapter 4) and student-participants collective case study (Chapter 5). Following that, I present pedagogical implications, limitations and suggestions for future directions.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

The focus of this study was to explore the experiences that four instructor-participants have undergone when working with Chinese undergraduate students in their designated courses as well as the experiences of six student-participants in those courses at a large public university in the U.S. (here designated as: Grand Lake University or GLU). In order to achieve this goal, I employed a broad range of research techniques, and recruited students and instructors as participants from three different university contexts, namely the ESL context, the college writing course (CWC), and the business management context (BC). I applied a multiple case study approach (Stake, 2006), with two collective case studies as its main parts, to examine the abovementioned experiences and their impact on both instructor-participants and student-participants in terms of intercultural ways of teaching and learning (Dervin, 2016b). Each collective case study was guided by two research questions:

- the instructor-participants collective case study
    1. In what ways do these four instructor-participants describe their experiences working with Chinese undergraduate students at Grand Lake University?
    2. How do their experiences relate to interculturality in teaching?
- the student-participants collective case study
    1. In what ways do these six student-participants describe their experiences at Grand Lake University?
    2. How do their experiences relate to interculturality in learning?

I interpreted the findings of this study carefully because this study focused on four instructor-participants and six student-participants at a specific institution, that is, Grand Lake

University. Thus, I was not concerned with generalizability of the findings beyond the experiences shared with me by the participants (that is, instructor-participants and student-participants).

In terms of research techniques, I utilized semi-structured interviews as a primary data source in both collective case studies. In the instructor-participants case study I was able to capitalize on observations (including participant observations) and artifacts as secondary sources of data. In the student-participant case study, however, only observations served as a secondary data source. Also, for both collective case studies, I made use of additional data sources such as the field notes journals that I kept for each course, and the researcher's journal and email correspondence with the participants. Collectively, these data allowed me to concurrently examine the emerging meaning and refine that meaning. In sum, I chose these methods of data collection to match specifically the types of data collected and research questions asked. Multiple case study research is valuable when researching issues pertaining to more than one case study (Stake, 2006), in this case two collective case studies.

In this concluding chapter, I will summarize the main findings of this study, followed by its pedagogical implications. Next, I will draw the reader's attention to the limitations of this project. Finally, I will suggest viable future research directions that materialized through my conducting of this study.

Main Findings

The main findings from both collective case studies merged within the motif of transformative internationalization being possible through *kindness*. In order to reach transformative rather than symbolic internationalized learning environment, the instructors' voices must be heard. That is because their interculturally responsive attitudes towards

international students constitute a core of truly transformative internationalization. In this study, the four instructor-participants demonstrated open-minded approaches towards Chinese undergraduate students, making the multiple cultures of learning they brought to their classrooms an asset rather than a barrier. The richness of these Chinese undergraduate students' cultures showed to have positively affected these instructor-participants' teaching satisfaction, too. Equally, the findings challenged some of the long-standing stereotypes surrounding Chinese undergraduate students abroad. The instructor-participants demonstrated not only culturally responsive pedagogies but also pedagogies that were interculturally rich and encouraging. They tried to serve as a bridge between the ways that instructor-participants teach and the ways student-participants learn. Following Cortazzi and Jin (2013), if learning is to be truly transformative and not just a single act of transmission, both parties need to stay ready for the new experiences. My examination of the experiences of the instructor-participants in this study revealed that they were not only ready, but also willing to accommodate the uniqueness Chinese undergraduate students bring into their respective courses. Instances of mere coexistence oftentimes reported in research literature (e.g., Abelmann & Kang, 2014) turned out to be mutually convivial intercultural teaching and learning (Dervin, 2016b) in this project.

Instructor-participants' Described Experiences (RQ 1)

Through the first research question in the instructor-participants collective case study, I was looking at the ways instructor-participants described their experiences of working with Chinese undergraduate students at GLU. What I found was that transformative internationalization came through their approach to teaching. Interestingly, Madge et al. (2015) maintain that instructors are involved in daily practices of international students, whether directly or indirectly, that produce knowledge. Therefore, the four instructor-participants in this study

acknowledged their agency to alter traditional forms of internationalization and to capitalize on their Chinese undergraduate students' transformative potential. I believe that the experiences of working with Chinese undergraduate students which these instructor-participants reported to me were mutually transformative only due to their openness, empathy, and intercultural demeanor. Granted, transformative internationalization, as a mutual occurrence, also affects the students. In fact, as Lamberton and Ashton-Hay (2015) conclude, transformative approach "entails students and instructors making paradigm shifts and viewing work from the perspective of different racial, cultural and gender groups" (p. 156). Following the above, I found instructor-participants demonstrating the willingness and ability to work with Chinese undergraduate students in their courses in a transformative way while the student-participants embraced the changes they faced at GLU in order to be successful. While Jackson (2018) states that transformative learning is not guaranteed when Chinese undergraduate students study in a different country, I was elated to observe that both student-participants and instructor-participants showed genuine efforts to learn from each other.

Student-participants' Described Experiences (RQ 1)

Following the first research question in the student-participants collective case study, I looked at the ways student-participants described their experiences GLU. What I found mattered the most to these students most was the notion of *kindness*. Although not a part of the original five traditional moral Chinese virtues, culturally, *kindness* has been a significant element of Chinese cultures for generations (Hui, 2005). In the midst of preparing for their sojourns overseas, the six student-participants in this study faced language challenges and new social realities often challenged their beliefs about what studying in the U.S. entitled. However, if anything, these six student-participants did not allow the differences between their cultures of

learning and these in the U.S. ruin their experiences at GLU. They were aware of those differences, ready to overcome them. That is wherever any instances of *kindness* were offered to them, either directly or indirectly, the student-participants communicated successfully with instructor-participants and peers, in their social life and in their evolving ideas about GLU (e.g., Nick in his team in BC class). Magnet et al. (2014) claims that in order to practice *kindness* in the classroom one must "think with" (p. 9) rather than "think of." This is where *kindness* also reflected interculturally responsive pedagogies, where being kind is a core approach to any student, no matter their nation, skin color, or first language. Coming from an instructor-participant, this approach aligned with the student-participants' approaches to confrontations in and outside of classroom, which might have contributed to their overall positive experiences at GLU.

Moreover, having seen that kind responses made student-participants feel welcome, comfortable and a part of a larger community at GLU, it led me to the notion of self-compassion. Birkett (2013) found that Chinese undergraduate students, in general, might experience self-compassion as both a positive and negative emotion. In this study, the six student-participants claimed to have benefitted from kind gestures of their peers and instructor-participants. To illustrate, some students reported that their instructor-participants simply listened to their dilemmas. Loreman (2011) lists compassionate and active listening as one of the strategies for the development of *kindness*. Also, these students reflected on their experiences after their instructor-participants exhibited *kindness*, which might have resulted in shifting paradigms. Challenging one's own reality can be achieved through dialogue with others and this often leads to conscious changes in one's thinking (Loreman, 2011). Such shifts were visible in both student

and instructor-participants and made me believe that *kindness* more often than not, creates a path towards effective transformative internationalization.

Interculturality in Teaching and Learning (RQs 2)

Both collective case studies were guided by a second research question which allowed me to look at interculturality in teaching (for the instructor-participants collective case study) and in learning (for the student-participants collective case study). I concluded that interculturality, defined here as the approach to others through mutual responsiveness, appreciation and curiosity with mutual communication as its main goal, could have played a crucial role in the experiences of both participant groups, that is, students and instructors. Wihlborg and Robson (2018) claim that intercultural teaching and learning must see transitions on both professional and personal levels (e.g., Stan's shift of opinion of Chinese undergraduate students). The student-participants reported that their experiences at GLU changed them, so did their instructor-participants. Multiple and bilateral (i.e., mutual) attempts at empathy and understanding each other allowed for capitalization on the differences in terms of true diversification of the observed courses.

Even though the idea of interculturality has been with us for quite some time now (Garrett-Rucks, 2016), Dervin's (2016a, 2016b) approach to it brought new insights and more inclusive take on experiences of two or more individuals from distinct cultures. Simpson and Dervin (2019) claim that this notion suffers from a few misunderstood and yet prevalent assumptions, such as Western-centrism (p. 673) or comparativism. Thus, in this study I took a stand of not treating student-participants as deficient in any way, or their instructor-participants as superior or deficient to them either. This allowed me to avoid culturalist interpretations and hopefully helped me to present this study's participants' reported experiences through an intercultural lens. Accepting plurality of meanings and identities, on both sides of the spectrum,

that is student and instructor-participants, has a potential to move away from the cultural do's and don'ts, what is permissible and what is not, and extends the experiences of the participants into bilateral ones. In such experiences, cultural synergy (Yuan & Xie, 2013) becomes not only possible but also necessary, as it focuses on what two parties have in common and then uses those commonalities to create long-lasting relationships in the spirit of conviviality. That was visible in the instructor-participants' foci on what made Chinese undergraduate students in their classes similar to their peers as well as the student-participants' desire to learn about the new cultures of learning.

Last but not least, this study was conducted in three different contexts, namely the ESL context, the college writing context, and the business context. I was strategic in choosing these three sites as they represented a trajectory that seemed typical to Chinese undergraduate students at GLU. First, they would take an ESL related class (ESL), then, once they have tested out of the ESL program, they would take a writing course that prepares them for college writing (CWC). Finally, majority of the Chinese undergraduate students at GLU would choose a business management related major (BC), according to the information I obtained from the statistician at GLU. I found these three contexts very interesting in terms of the ways classes were structured, instructor-participants were approaching international students, or the ways materials were made for each course. Even though seemingly so different, all contexts showed similar care for Chinese undergraduate students' success, as well as kind approaches to these students. Granted the instructor-participants approached Chinese undergraduate students in their classes in many different ways, but they all shared *kindness* in these approaches.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this multiple case study have multiple practical implications. Participants' challenges in learning and teaching processes appear crucial to improving classroom practices and providing instructors with solid ways to make their classrooms intercultural. This could be one reason why Chinese undergraduate students have topped the number of international students in the United States. An interculturally responsive classroom makes an ideal environment for international students to thrive as it does for their instructors to develop professionally. To take this a step further, if instructors, administrators and other stakeholders are required to incorporate interculturality in their methodologies (which might not be the case), their institutions need to provide them with necessary knowledge and skills to do so (Sercu, 2006). This study's instructor-participants had mixed experiences with support and training at GLU, such significant elements of enhancing pedagogies. Also, each collective case study's individual findings may inform not only instructors' approaches to teaching Chinse students but also those students' preparation for study in a different country and their general success rates in the U.S.

In addition, through conducting this study I ascertained what teaching or learning adaptations might be beneficial to provide interculturally responsive experiences for Chinese undergraduate students at GLU and equally for their instructor-participants. In order to foster the construction of interculturally competent students and instructors in the process of data collection, I unpacked some stereotypes surrounding Chinese undergraduate students and their instructors. That might have helped both groups of participants to firstly understand and to effectively navigate through various social interactions. I found that students and instructors developed a set of skills such as language skills and personal views of the two cultures. They

were motivated to successfully implement interculturally responsive behaviors in reciprocal ways. That allowed me to focus on both successful and unsuccessful instances of reciprocal learning and teaching, which in turn informed a deeper understanding of student-participants and their instructors.

Furthermore, this study's findings (especially these from instructor-participants collective case study) indicate that it would be beneficial for higher education institutions in the United States to move from "institutions of learning" to "learning institutions" (Ryan, 2010). This might be achievable by understanding Chinese undergraduate students' educational motivations (or cultures of learning they are coming from) in order to create sustainable programs. This could also be started at the instructional level, one instructor at a time. When Chinese undergraduate students see that instructors also learn from them, it makes them feel valued and consequently helps them to develop self-esteem and confidence (Jin & Cortazzi, 2017), which are important characteristics of any successful international student. By having combined this study's theoretical underpinnings with its findings, I provide tools for interculturally responsive learning environments at the classroom level and for transformative internationalization at the institutional level. For instance, truly intercultural teaching can be achieved by constant questioning of one's world views and letting go of taking anything for granted when teaching Chinese undergraduate students. Thus, understanding culture as the lens through which both Chinese undergraduate students and their instructors construct and interpret meaning seems like a critical starting point towards interculturality in education. Also, empathy and attempts at understanding *The Other* without actually *othering* them might also prove helpful in creating truly interculturally responsive classrooms, that would welcome Chinese undergraduate students and capitalize on the array of diverse values they embody. Next, Chinese undergraduate students

seem to appreciate kindness. It would be beneficial to include it in pedagogies as well as on the institutional level in policies for instructors. In addition, Chinese undergraduate students could benefit from familiarizing themselves with U.S. cultures of learning, which would in turn ease their acclimation to the U.S. academic environment. Finally, both instructors and Chinese undergraduate students might approach learning and teaching as a mutually transformative experience, thus stay open to changes in both of them.

Limitations

While all studies have their limitations, a study that ventures into previously unresearched interdisciplinary territory, naturally has a few limitations. First of all, I interviewed the participants and their recollections of reported experiences might have been distorted by time and memory. I cannot be certain that situations reported to me by participants actually took place. I had to trust their memories though it is evident that memories tend to be fallible for all humans. For instance, Jackson tended to say "I can't remember exactly" many times during our interview. Secondly, it is important to contextualize current findings by understanding the characteristics of the participants. Since I recruited the instructor-participants through direct emails (following suggestions that I received about those that were likely to show interest in the study), I had to recruit the student-participants from their respective classes. This might have affected the characteristics of the student-participants, given that they were volunteers, and therefore presumably open-minded. It also influenced me not to use three student-participants' stories in this study because they did not identify as Chinese undergraduate students. Also, since *kindness* emerged as an essential factor in transformative internationalization, it was an emotional concept that I did not measure. I had to rely on participants' reports and their feelings about the experiences they were sharing with me. Due to the newness of *kindness* as a concept, I

would look forward to finding ways of exploring this idea in the future. In addition, in the case of one of the ESL reading classes, specifically RESL B, I ended up having no student-participants. That is because even though I interviewed one Chinese undergraduate student, that student revealed to me that they did not identify as Chinese, therefore I could not use their data. Thus, for RESL B, I only observed the class from the instructor-participant's perspective. Lastly, I have to acknowledge my own subjectivity as a researcher in this project. At the time of data collection and analysis, I shared the identities of both groups of participants, that is I was a student (graduate but international) as well as an instructor at GLU. Due to my prior living and teaching experiences in China, I may have been more disposed towards the students more than towards their instructors. "Subjectivity is not seen as a failing needing to be eliminated but as an essential element of understanding" (Stake, 1995, p. 45). I was curious and compelled to see how they handled their studies in the new educational settings. Therefore, my report might read as slightly favoring student-participants' experiences.

Future Research

Theoretically speaking, the future is wide open to researchers who would like to explore the experiences of Chinese undergraduate students and those of their instructors in the United States' institutions of higher education. To begin with, in the process of conducting this research and reflecting upon its findings, I realized that the notion of equitable education promoted by Rancière (1991) could be helpful in understanding equality in educating international students. Equitable education is understood as education that sees students and instructors as equals in their practices, level of knowledge and rank (Rancière, 1991). Rancière's conceptualization constitutes an ideal that has the potential to enhance education. Because power relations can be detrimental to the co-construction of knowledge, Rancière's concept of equality, as an ideal to

create context for effective learning and teaching, potentially decreases unequal power struggles. I also see his characterization of potential equality fitting situations that international students often find themselves in. The concept that all people, regardless of their race, color, age, economical background, and the like are uniformly intelligent (Rancière, 1991), might resonate especially well with Chinese undergraduate students in the U.S., given any pigeonholing experiences they might face at U.S. institutions.

Moreover, in my future research, I intend to focus on differences and similarities between undergraduate and graduate Chinese students in the U.S. schools as well as educational experiences of those Chinese students who complete their bachelor's degrees in the U.S. and those who did not. That might extend research findings on the roles of diverse cultures of learning in creating multicultural and intercultural learning environments. Also, the research design of this multiple case study enabled me to look at two groups of participants, that is student-participants and instructor-participants. With relation to internationalization, through future studies I might want to explore the third group, namely administrators. Their contributions to the experiences of Chinese undergraduate students and their instructors allow for transformative internationalization on all levels. Both students and instructors interact with administrators multiple times in a semester and for diverse reasons. Therefore, their perspectives on intercultural education could prove unmatched. In addition, I wish I had been able to track my student-participants' trajectories as they moved through different contexts step by step. It was not possible to extend the time of data collection into another academic year. I was also not able to find Chinese undergraduate students who were going from the ESL context to the college writing context to the business context in the consecutive semesters. Having a more longitudinal data collection technique could have contributed to the depth of the participants' stories which might

have created a stronger link between the three contexts and the four instructor-participants teaching in these contexts.

However, for now, I have aimed to make a valuable contribution to the literature on interculturality in education as well as research on transformative internationalization and the application of the pedagogy of *kindness* in higher education. I also wanted to strengthen the interdisciplinary links between second language acquisition, international education and interculturality as well.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Semi-structured Interview Questions for Student-participants

(Based on Liu & Fang, 2017; Sercu, 2006; Uzum, 2013; Yazdanpanah, 2017)

1. Which part of China are you from?
2. What languages have you studied and what is your proficiency in each?
3. What do you plan to do upon graduation?
4. What courses have you taken so far? What did you learn from them?
5. What got you hooked on... (Business/English)?
6. What were your expectations for this course?
7. How would you describe your role in this class?
8. How do you understand intercultural competence?
9. How much interaction do you have with your instructor? How would you describe it?
10. How would you compare your role in this class to your past experiences in China?
11. How would you describe teaching methods in this class?
12. How would you compare these methods to your past experiences in China?
13. How would you describe the exchange of cultural information in this class?
14. Do you recall any particular experience that you have found interesting regarding the U.S. culture?
15. Considering what you've learned in this class, how being from a different culture affected the way you studied?
16. Would you say you've become more aware of this culture's educational practices, expectations or behaviors? Can you give a specific example?
17. Did your instructor ask you to compare aspects of your culture with aspects of American culture?
18. In your opinion, to what extent should your culture be considered in learning this subject?
19. Did you feel respected in your class (by the instructor and your classmates)? Why/why not?

20. Do you have any examples of cultural understanding or misunderstanding in class to share with me?

21. To what extent are you willing to introduce Chinese culture to your classmates and instructor? What aspects are you willing to introduce?

22. Is there anything else you'd like to share at this time?

APPENDIX B: Semi-structured Interview Questions for Instructor-participants

(Based on Liu & Fang, 2017; Sercu, 2006; Uzum, 2013; Yazdanpanah, 2017)

1. What languages have you studied and what is your proficiency in each?
2. How did you first become interested in teaching…?
3. What is your experience with students from other cultures and speaking other languages?
4. What are your course objectives? What knowledge, skills do you want students to learn in this course?
5. What do you think are your strengths as an instructor?
6. Would you say that your classes are going as planned so far?
7. How would you describe your role in this class?
8. How would you describe your teaching methods in this class?
9. How would you describe your classroom management?
10. Do you provide differentiated instruction based on students' nationality and first language?
11. Have you received any instructor training since you started teaching at the university? (especially one focusing on teaching international students)
12. How many international students do you currently have in your classes? (Percentage?)
13. Please tell me about your teaching experiences with international students thus far.
14. How do you understand intercultural competence?
15. Do you believe that intercultural skills can be taught at school? Why/why not?
16. How would you describe your interaction with international students in this class?
17. Do you think various cultures international students bring into your classroom should be considered in your teaching approaches? Why/why not?
18. What is your position on incorporating culture into this course? (Possible ways to do so?)
19. Do you feel like you bridge any cultural differences among your students through your instructional practices? Why?

20. Do you feel like learning conditions in your class might be sometimes challenging for international students? How?

21. Would you say you're knowledgeable about Chinese culture and students' expectations, practices and behaviors?

22. How much interaction do you have with Chinese students in your class? How would you describe it?

23. Do you motivate your students to communicate with people from different cultures? If so, how? If not, why not?

24. How extensively do you deal with particular cultural aspects, such as cultural expressions, values and beliefs?

25. For ESL instructors only: How is your teaching time distributed over 'language teaching' and 'culture teaching'?

26. For ESL instructors only: What kinds of culture teaching activities, if any, do you practice during classroom teaching time?

27. Please tell me about your teaching experiences with Chinese students this semester.

28. How were your course objectives met (or not)?

29. Have you received any institutional support (in terms of teaching international students) throughout the course of this semester?

30. Did you enjoy teaching this course? Why/why not?

31. What has been the most valuable aspect of teaching this class?

32. What has been the most challenging aspect of teaching this class?

33. What have you learned from teaching this class? How will you apply this to your future teaching?

34. Throughout the course of this semester, have you experienced any situations where you had to modify or adapt your behavior to communicate more effectively with Chinese students in your class?

35. Think about a lesson (or activity) that went particularly well with international students in your class. What do you think was good about it?

36. Think of a lesson (or activity) that did not go the way that you planned. What do you think the problem was? What would you do differently if you were to do this lesson (or activity) again?

37. Did you have a chance to incorporate “intercultural awareness” into your teaching in any way this semester?

38. In what ways, if any, have your ideas about international students changed? What do you think has caused this change?

39. Has your teaching philosophy changed in any ways? How?

40. Do you have any examples of cultural understanding or misunderstanding in class to share with me?

41. How much U.S. culture do you think your Chinese students might have learned in your class?

42. Do you feel like your intercultural competence has increased through teaching this class? Why/why not?

43. To what degree do you think awareness of Chinese culture should be raised in class having Chinese students?

44. Did you have a chance to organize any intercultural (cross-cultural) activities this semester?

45. How do you measure success in teaching international students?

46. Is there anything else you’d like to share at this time?

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