

From International Student to Integrated
Academic:
Supporting the Transition of
Chinese Students and Lecturers in UK Higher
Education

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Abstract

This study explores the experience of international students who become members of staff in a UK university. The role transition from international student to international staff member brings new challenges, while previous difficulties experienced as an international student may persist. Relatively few studies have investigated the challenges encountered by international staff, and discussion on how to support the transition process for Chinese academics appointed to positions in UK Higher Education (HE) institutions is limited. This study aims to explore whether previous educational experience as international students influences the transition of staff members in UK HE institutions. Data were collected from Chinese students and lecturers through focus groups, interviews, narrative stories and documentary analysis, to provide rich and in-depth data. The findings indicate that Chinese lecturers and students encountered similar challenges, and that comprehensive support arrangements can help international students to transfer smoothly to the role of university lecturers. An academic transition framework is proposed as a guideline for HE institutions to provide integrated support for Chinese academics according to their different needs and transition stages. The implications of this research may be broadly applied to other international students and lecturers, who may face similar challenges in the UK context.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This chapter explains the purpose and focus of this research study and outlines the research aims. A brief overview of the structure and organisation of the study is also provided.

1.1 Definition of terms

The definition of some specific terms used in this research is given below.

Integrated academic

The term in this study refers to international academic staff members in UK Higher Education (HE) institutions who have integrated into the educational setting and transitioned from being 'outsiders' to being 'insiders' in their chosen professional environment.

Chinese students

The term in this study refers to ethnic Chinese students who have received most of their education in mainland China (or Taiwan) before coming to the UK for postgraduate study. Although the researcher has not intended to exclude ethnic Chinese from Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia or other areas, the participants coincidentally are mainly from mainland China and only a few are from Taiwan.

Chinese lecturers/academic staff

The term is used to refer to ethnic Chinese who have received most of their education in mainland China, and are currently employed as lecturers (including senior lecturers, readers, and professors) in UK HE institutions and have been so for more than one year.

These criteria have ensured that participants have sufficient knowledge and understanding of Chinese educational pedagogy and expectations, while having a reasonable period of time to experience and adjust to UK pedagogy and UK university culture. The researcher has not intended to exclude ethnic Chinese lecturers from countries or areas other than mainland China. The participants, however, are coincidentally mainly from China.

1.2 Rationale of the study, research aims and research questions

University internationalisation has become an important trend in recent decades. Internationalisation involves a wide range of strategy, policy and practice developments: e.g the internationalisation of curriculum and local institutions; the mobility of students and staff; transnational cooperation between international institutions; the development of overseas campuses; and the recruitment of international students and staff (Turner and Robson, 2008). Nicola Dandridge (2010), the chief executive of Universities UK, has stated that UK HE institutions 'rely on' international staff and students for their academic talent, cultural richness, and the financial income brought by international student fees. A review of existing literature indicates that recent studies on HE internationalisation have focused on how to support international students or how to improve institutional policy, but that research on the experience and the needs of international staff is very limited (including senior lecturers, readers, and professors). In HE institutions seeking to develop an inclusive, internationalised teaching and learning environment, however, the support needs of all stakeholders should be addressed (Turner and Robson, 2008).

In recent years, the number of international academic staff in the UK has increased noticeably. In 2008/9, full-time international academic staff constituted 26% of academic appointments (University UK, 2010). It has been suggested that international

staff may face challenges that are similar to those of international students (Luxon and Peelo, 2009). Moreover, the everchanging immigration and visa policy and the cuts in university funds starting in 2011 have made the situation of international academic staff even more difficult (Dandridge, 2010; Shepherd, 2011). In addition to considering how to attract more international students and how to provide a high quality learning experience, it is also important for educational institutions to examine how to better support international academic staff in order to attract and retain talented professionals, as they are a valuable resource for HE institutions. The issues of empowering and enabling non-UK academics to add diversity to the UK context, rather than viewing them as a negative influx, are becoming increasingly crucial.

The present study thus aims to investigate the challenges faced by ethnic Chinese students and academic staff in UK HE to understand how UK institutions can provide better support to meet their needs. Currently, there are studies available on the experiences of international academics teaching and living in countries such as Egypt (Garson, 2005), the Sudan (Markee, 1997), Thailand (Ferguson, 2009), Arabic countries (Hamza, 2009), and the UK (Luxon and Peelo, 2010), but studies specifically focusing on the experience of Chinese academic staff in UK HE institutions are very limited . To date, only one paper has been directly related to Chinese academics' experiences in the UK (Jiang et al., 2010). The reasons for focusing on ethnic Chinese students and lecturers in this study are as follows:

1. China remains the top country in terms of input of non-UK students (HESA, 2010) and non-UK academic staff (Universities UK, 2007).
2. Traditional Chinese pedagogies and educational systems are very different from Western ones, and consequently Chinese academics are likely to have a strong impact when active in UK universities.

3. Ethnic Chinese groups are most likely to encounter language issues and are more vulnerable to discrimination problems because of their appearance.
4. As an ethnically Chinese person who has experience of living and studying in the UK, it has been easier for the researcher to develop an intimate connection with the participants and obtain 'insider' information. In addition, the participants and the researcher share the same culture and language. This has minimised possible misunderstandings during interviews which may have been caused by cultural and language differences.

Many previous studies have focused on the UK experience of international students reading for one-year full-time taught master's programmes (e.g. Wu and Hammond, 2011; Schweisfurth & Gu, 2009; Huang, 2008; Zhou and Todman, 2008). These studies have mainly discussed the difficulties encountered by international students learning in the UK, and how UK HE institutions can better support them. The adjustment process of international academics undertaking just one year of study is acute. As mentioned by a programme director in the business school of one UK university: "It's not fair to expect them to cope with culture shock; they need a year to acclimatize" (Turner and Robson, 2008, p.81). This study explores the experiences of Chinese students and compares them with those of Chinese lecturers as they make the transition to academic positions in the UK.

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the transition of Chinese students and lecturers in the UK, the present study has investigated the opinions of Chinese students, international lecturers, and Chinese lecturers at one UK university. Moreover, a documentary analysis of the university's policy and service in terms of supporting international students and staff was conducted and this was compared with the participants' opinions in order to discover how the university can improve its current practice.

From the experiences of both Chinese students and lecturers, it was hoped to build up a comprehensive picture of their transition process in the UK. The cross-sectional comparison helps to provide a longitudinal understanding of the UK experience of Chinese students and staff, rather than approaching the issue in a fragmented manner.

The main research questions that this study explores are as follows:

1. What are the challenges faced by Chinese students and lecturers in UK HE institutions (from the perspective of Chinese students, UK and international lecturers, and Chinese lecturers)?
2. What are the academic and cultural transition processes of Chinese students and lecturers in the UK?
3. What is the university's current policy and support service for Chinese/international academics?
4. How can UK HE institutions better support Chinese/international academics in the UK and establish an internationalised teaching, learning, and research environment?

1.3 Organisation of the thesis

A literature review of studies covering Chinese/international students and lecturers in the UK/a foreign country is provided in Chapter 2. In the same chapter, a two-ring framework is proposed to classify the challenges faced by Chinese/international students and staff into three categories. The discussion of related studies covering the challenges faced by international staff and students thus places studies into one of the three categories and is presented in three different parts for clarity. Chapter 3 discusses the research method, research questions, and data collection instruments used, as well as the participants in the research. Chapter 4 presents the findings obtained from the focus

groups and interviews. For the purpose of consistency, the data are also classified into three parts, as demonstrated in the two-ring framework. Chapter 5 presents the narrative stories of two Chinese lecturers at one UK university. Chapter 6 compares the documentary analysis of the university's website (with regard to its support service) with the comments of Chinese students and lecturers. Chapter 7 discusses the main findings and makes recommendations for future research. Chapter 8 concludes and highlights possible implications of the study's findings with regard to the field under consideration and also identifies the limitations of this study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review:

The Transition of Chinese Students and Lecturers in UK HE

Institutions

This chapter first reviews the broader aspects of the transition patterns of Chinese/international staff and students into western HE institutions. A framework is then developed to examine the challenges facing Chinese students and academic staff in UK HE institutions. Detailed discussions of the challenges are subsequently presented in three separate sections.

2.1 ‘Culture shock’ and ‘academic shock’

International students and academic staff are likely to encounter both ‘culture shock’ and ‘academic shock’ when entering a new environment. ‘Culture shock’ was first proposed by Oberg (1960), who defined it as a feature that is:

...precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse. These signs or cues include the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life. (p.176)

The consequences of culture shock may result in “...feelings of helplessness, irritability, and fears of being cheated, contaminated, injured or disregarded” (Adler, 1975, p.13).

Weaver (1994) further referred to three basic causal explanations of culture shock.

These were: 1) the loss of familiar cues; 2) the breakdown of interpersonal communications; and 3) an identity crisis. The first two explanations are in accordance with other definitions (e.g. Oberg, 1960; Hofstede, Pedersen and Hofstede, 2002), but Weaver specifically points to the identity crisis that students and academic staff may encounter in a new environment.

‘Academic shock’, also referred to as ‘learning shock’ (Griffiths, Winstanley and Gabriel, 2004; Gu, 2005) or ‘education shock’ (Yamazaki, 2005), occurs when new knowledge fails to integrate into one’s existing structure, causing a feeling of ‘cognitive dissonance’ or confusion. Hofstede, Pedersen and Hofstede’s (2002) definition of culture shock is also applicable in describing academic shock:

...a sudden immersion into a non-specific state of uncertainty where the individual is not sure what is expected of him or her, nor what to expect from other people. It can occur in any situation where an individual is forced to adjust to an unfamiliar social system where previous learning no longer applies. (p.22)

Academic shock and culture shock usually influence each other, as the psychological and physical feelings of a lack of satisfaction often prevent the individual from pursuing higher goals related to self actualization, as discussed in Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs (see Figure 2.1).

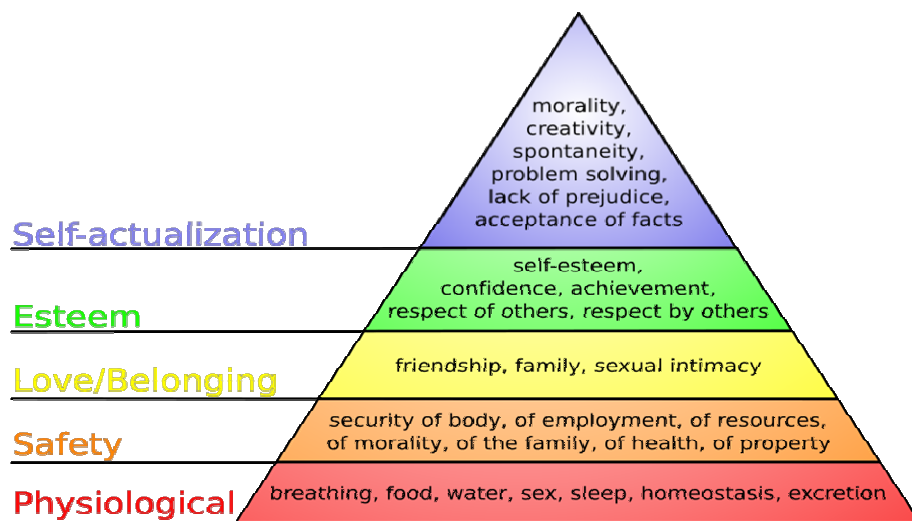


Figure 2.1: Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs (Diagram created by Finkelstein, 2006)

According to Maslow’s (1943) theory, there are layers of human needs. When a human being’s basic needs (e.g. physiological, safety, love/belonging) are not fulfilled, the pursuit of higher needs is prevented. When social and linguistic incompetence (Lewthwaite, 1996) is challenged by a new living and working environment, this can

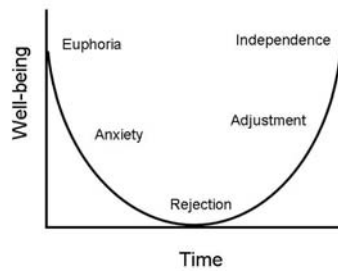
impact on one's self-esteem and morale (Gu, 2005). When one's physiological (e.g. breathing, food, water, sleep) and psychological (e.g. safety, belonging, self-esteem) needs are satisfied, one can pursue higher needs and perhaps finally achieve self-actualization.

As different nations and cultures have different priorities in terms of their educational policies and approaches (Groom and Maunonen-Eskelinen, 2006), international academic staff and students may be unfamiliar with the academic conventions and expectations of the host country. Moreover, each HE institution has its own policy and culture, and an experienced teacher might be a novice in local teaching practices due to a lack of familiarity with the new environment and will therefore have to adjust to local practices (Luxon and Peelo, 2009; Garson, 2005). Hence, it has been suggested that adaptation into a different academic culture is far more difficult than social and cultural adaptation (Gu et al., 2010). This study thus concerns itself with how international academic staff adjust to both culture shock and academic shock, and aims to understand the process of adjustment in terms of academic, cultural, and identity issues.

2.2 Transition patterns

International staff and students usually need to pass through several adaptation stages before they can establish their identity within the new environment. Historically, there are many theories and frameworks which have discussed the stages of 'culture shock' of international academics. The most popular and commonly cited patterns are the U-curve pattern (Lysgaard, 1955) and the W-curve pattern (Gullahorn and Gullahorn, 1963). The W-curve pattern differs from the U-curve pattern in that it describes the re-entry shock that international academics are likely to experience when returning home.

The 'U-curve' pattern in adjustment to a new culture
(Culture shock)



Adapted from Lysgaard 1955

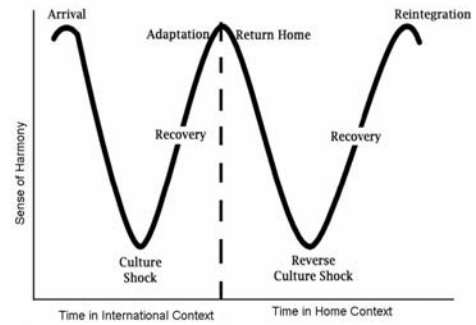


Figure 2.2: 'U-curve' and 'W-curve' pattern in adjustment to a new culture (culture shock) (adapted from Lysgaard, 1955; Gullahorn and Gullahorn, 1963)

Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) proposed four phases of a sojourner's adaptation process, as follows: honeymoon/tourist phase, crisis or disintegration phase, re-orientation or re-integration phase, and adaptation/ resolution phase. Adler (1975) combined several studies (e.g. Lysgaard 1955; Gullahorn and Gullahorn 1963) and further proposed five stages:

1. Honeymoon stage;
2. Distress (disorientation/disintegration) stage;
3. Re-integration stage;
4. Autonomy/ adjustment or integration stage; and
5. Independence (or biculturality) stage.

Adler's five stages differ from Gullahorn and Gullahorn's studies in that a final *independence stage* is proposed which indicates that individuals have established multicultural identities and have become comfortable in both the original and the new culture.

A similar adaptation pattern on the part of Chinese students in a UK university was observed by Gill (2007). This involved a three-fold 'stress-adaptation-growth' process. The three-fold pattern is actually very similar to the U-curve pattern (Lysgaard, 1955). International staff and students usually first encounter 'cultural shock', whether in positive or negative ways, and then go through a stressful or hostile stage before integrating into the new environment and gaining insightful knowledge and experience. If international staff and students cannot overcome stressful and alienating feelings, they might not achieve the 'growth' or 'independence' stage. Pedersen (1995) has questioned whether international staff and students can actually achieve the 'independence' stage.

Other studies suggest that study/work abroad can lead to a personally transforming experience and to intellectual and social development (Hoffa, 1998; Comp, 2008; Wilson, 1993). Comp (2008) identified the possibility that international staff and students are likely to encounter changes from four perspectives: intellectual change, psychological change, social change, and physical change. In terms of intellectual and social change, study/work abroad experience can result in a positive transformation for international academics by enhancing their language proficiency level and professional knowledge and understanding of the society, culture and the education system of the host country (Opper, Tiechler and Calson, 1990). International students and staff can become more independent and confident in their abilities, and develop a global perspective (Wilson, 1993). In contrast, international academics are more likely to experience mental, physical and academic problems than native academics (Furnham and Bochner, 1997). This might relate to difficulty in adjusting and adapting to the new environment which could eventually lead to severe psychological disorder (Weaver, 1986, p.111).

Recently, Green and Myatt (2011) conducted research into the experience of eight international academic staff in one Australian University and proposed five adjustment phases as illustrated in Figure 2.3:

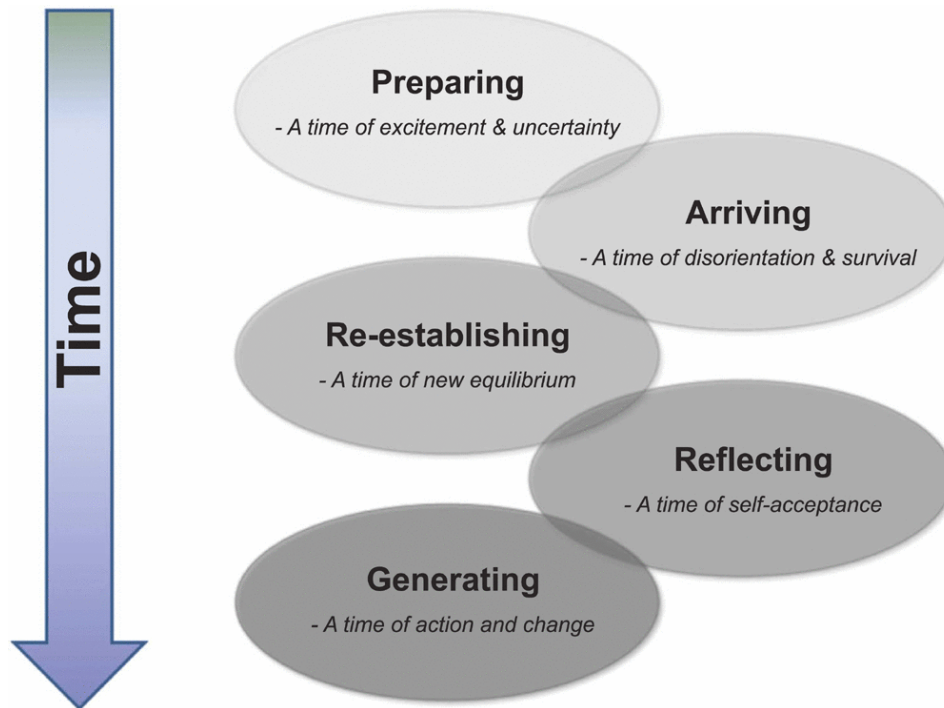


Figure 2.3. The five phases of transition for new international academic staff. (Green and Myatt, 2011, p.37)

Similar adjustment phases were proposed by Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) and Adler (1975). Green and Myatt (2011) also suggested that international academic staff would first encounter the honeymoon stage in their "preparing phase" characterised by feelings of excitement and uncertainty before arrival into the new environment. They may feel disoriented and distressed in their "arriving phase", which is referred to as "crisis or disintegration phase" in Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) and distress (disorientation/disintegration) stage in Adler (1975). The "reflecting" stage is similar to the "Independence stage" (Adler, 1975), during which international academic staff establish "the sense of belonging to two or more places" (Green and Myatt, 2011, p.40). The last "generating" phase emphasizes the ambitions of international academic staff "to change at least some aspects of their new environment" (ibid, p.41) in terms of teaching

practice. To sum up, the five adjustment phases proposed by Green and Myatt (2011) differ slightly from those identified by Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) and Adler (1975) in that they describe the desire of international academic staff to "change" the host environment.

This study explores the challenges facing newly recruited international university lecturers in that they have to adjust not only to culture shock and academic shock, but also to the challenges of the transition from being an international student to being a university lecturer. However, existing studies that have especially focused on the experience of Chinese lecturers have been very limited, and the transition process from being an international student to being an international lecturer in the UK are very rare (e.g. Jiang et al., 2010; Luxon and Peelo, 2009). The adaptation to the new environment and the transition to their new roles may not be smooth process as they have to establish/re-establish their cultural identity and their professional teaching identity. Tusi (2007) conducted research using a narrative inquiry approach with regard to the experience of a newly recruited Chinese EFL teacher in a Chinese university. The narrative story of the EFL teacher explored the challenges that an individual may encounter during the transition process from being a student to being a university lecturer. Tsui's study revealed that a newly recruited university lecturer who had once been a student in the Chinese university had encountered educational conflicts due to the contradiction between the institutional expectations and his own teaching beliefs. Second, the participant faced difficulties when dealing with teacher-student relationships. When he became a university lecturer, his junior friends became his students, and his teachers became his colleagues. He was friendly to his students who were his friends, but was criticized by his senior colleagues for being too close to the students. Colleagues were concerned that this would undermine his authority. Although the setting of Tusi's study was not a UK university, new lecturers in the UK are likely to encounter similar challenges related to different cultural and pedagogical conventions.

Describing and understanding the adaptation and adjustment patterns of culture shock may help international staff and students to realise that the 'shocks' they encounter psychologically or physiologically in the new environment are normal (UKCISA, 2008). They can thus 'predict' or 'expect' the next stage, and then may adjust more easily, particularly if support is available during the different stages. The key rationale for this study is to investigate the academic and cultural transition processes of Chinese students and lecturers in the UK and to identify the support required to ease the adjustment process.

2.3 Review of studies on Chinese students learning in the UK

Historically, Black and Stephens (1989) argued that international academics need to make intercultural (psychological and sociocultural) adjustment in three domains:

General adjustment: managing daily life;

Interactional adjustment: relating effectively to host nationals;

Work adjustment: accomplishment of work-related objectives.

These domains remain applicable after two decades. More recently, Arkoudis (2006, p.5) has listed the following four main challenges for international students, related to the cultural and academic shock that international students may encounter:

Learning and living in a different culture;

Learning in a foreign university context;

Learning while developing English language proficiency; and

Learning the academic disciplinary discourse.

Both studies have indicated the common challenges of learning, living and working in a foreign context, which incorporates issues of daily life, academic perspectives, language issues and intercultural communication.

A number of studies investigate the experience of Chinese students in UK HE institutions (e.g. Zhou and Todman, 2008; Barnes, 2006; Huang, 2008; Gu and Maley, 2008; Edwards and Ran, 2009). The majority of these studies focus on the experience of students in one-year taught postgraduate programmes and highlight the adaptation patterns and learning difficulties experienced by students (e.g. language barriers, academic issues, daily life and cultural adjustment, which will be further discussed in later sections). Although these studies help us to understand the difficulties facing Chinese students in the UK context, it could be argued that they present a stereotypical-view of them as passive, silent, and incompetent learners (Liu, 2005). As most Chinese students who participated in these studies had only been in the UK for one year, and it was difficult for them to make the academic, cultural and societal adjustments in such a short time period. These studies have mostly yielded negative examples of how students failed to integrate into UK academic and sociocultural settings. Many studies also describe how UK staff and students view Chinese students from a 'deficit mode' rather than perceiving them as a rich cultural resource for the university (e.g. Robson and Turner, 2007; Higgins, 2006). International staff and students themselves did not feel they made a significant impact on the culture in their institutions (Borg et al., 2010). It is therefore suggested that more studies are required on how Chinese/international students and lecturers can positively influence UK educational practices, policies, and the research environment.

2.4 Review of studies on Chinese academic staff teaching in the UK

As mentioned previously, international academic staff face very similar challenges to those facing international students. In addition, they may face other new challenges that are specifically related to their roles (Luxon and Peelo, 2009). It is important to further discuss the challenges related to teaching in a foreign context. In order to gain an

overall understanding of Chinese academics in UK HE institutions, several related studies are reviewed. Since studies specifically focused on ethnic Chinese are very limited, the experience of other international academic staff teaching in the UK are also examined in order to obtain a broader picture.

Markee (1997) has noted that international staff are usually “...linguistically, culturally, and professionally ill equipped” (p.12). Jiang et al. (2010) echo Markee’s statement by identifying three main categories of challenges faced by Chinese academic staff in UK HE institutions: 1) different academic practices in the UK and China; 2) disciplinary identity; and 3) language obstacles and cultural affiliation. Luxon and Peelo’s (2009) study of non-UK staff in a British university also observed that international academic staff thought it important to establish their place in their disciplinary field, but language issues affected both daily communication and relationships and also their choice of teaching style. These studies indicate that Chinese academic staff and other international academics face many similar challenges, and thus this study of Chinese academic staff may also be useful in helping UK HE institutions to enhance their current practice in terms of supporting international academic staff in general.

2.5 The framework: transitional challenges facing international students and lecturers

Gill (2007) investigated a small cohort of Chinese postgraduate students and then proposed three facets of the intercultural learning process, as illustrated below:

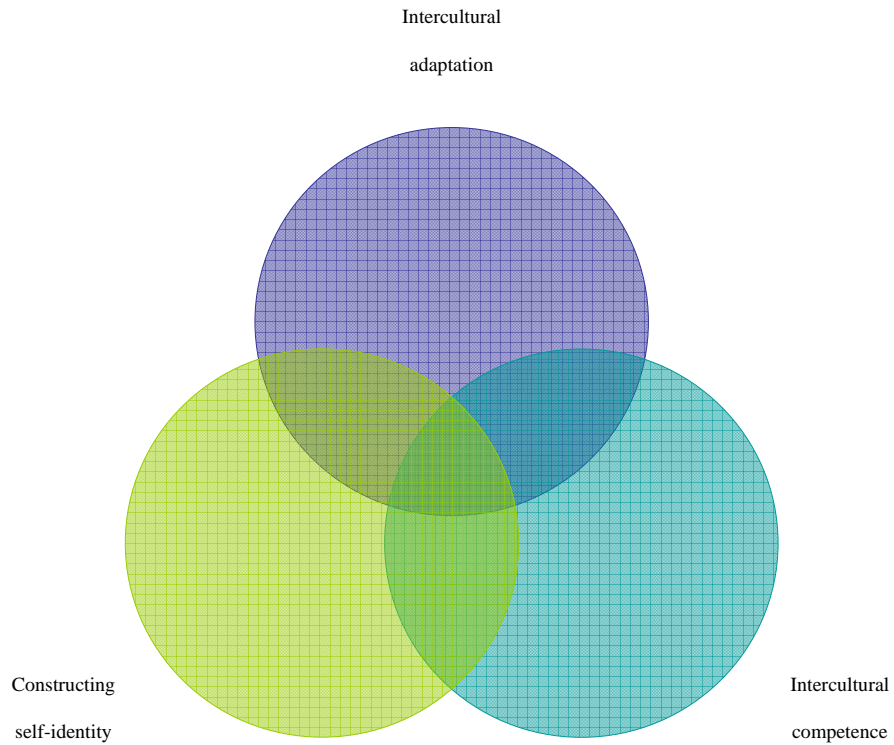


Figure 2.4: Interconnected facets of the intercultural learning process (Gill, 2007, p.171)

Gill (2007) proposed that the three facets of the intercultural learning process would eventually lead to personal growth. However, she did not provide a clear definition of the relationship between the three facets. In the present study a two-ring framework is proposed to categorise the challenges facing international students and lecturers in the UK.

The review of previous literature on the transition patterns and experiences of international/Chinese students and academic staff suggests that their challenges in the new environment mainly involve daily life issues, academic adjustment, identity crisis and language issues, including communication with host nationals. Huang (2008)

categorises the education literature on international students' experience under the following headings:

1) practical challenges, eg accommodation, visas; 2) emotional and affective issues, eg stress, homesickness; 3) cultural adaptation and integration, eg developing adequate cross-cultural skills; 4) English language acquisition and competence; 5) pedagogical difficulties, eg seminar skills, writing skills; 6) curriculum and assessment, eg appropriate course design; and 7) performance and outcomes. (p.1009)

The study presented here proposes that these challenges can be classified into three large categories, which are: *academic adjustment*, *sociocultural adaptation*, and *language, identity and relationship* (see Figure 2.5). The classification helps to approach the issues facing international academics in a more systematic and holistic way. For instance, by utilising the two-ring framework, Huang's (2008) list could be re-classified into three simple categories:

Academic adjustment:

- 5) pedagogical difficulties, eg seminar skills, writing skills;
- 6) curriculum and assessment, eg appropriate course design; and
- 7) performance and outcomes.

Sociocultural adaptation:

- 1) practical challenges, eg accommodation, visas;
- 2) emotional and affective issues, eg stress, homesickness;
- 3) cultural adaptation and integration, eg developing adequate cross-cultural skills;

Language, identity and relationship:

- 4) English language acquisition and competence;

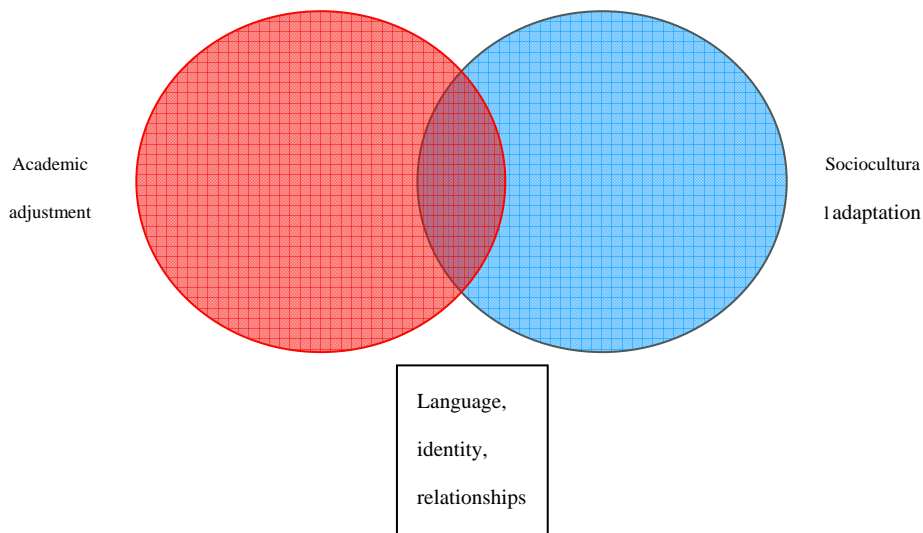


Figure 2.5: Two-ring framework of the transitional challenges of international staff and students

Note: ‘Academic adjustment’ and ‘sociocultural adaptation’, with overlapping elements ‘language, identity and relationships’.

‘*Academic adjustment*’ in this research refers to the adjustment of academic conventions and expectations, assessment systems, teaching and learning pedagogies, academic identity, professional development, etc. ‘*Sociocultural adjustment*’ covers adjustment to UK culture, lifestyle, physical and psychological differences, communication patterns, accommodation, food and leisure, etc. However, there are overlapping elements between the two categories in the form of *language, identity and relationships*, as adjustment to these three elements could happen in either ‘academic’ or ‘social and cultural’ settings.

Comparing Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs with the two-ring framework, it was interesting to find the two frameworks match very well. The two lowest levels in

Maslow's hierarchy are safety and physiological, which underpin the category of sociocultural adaptation in the two-ring framework. The esteem and love/belonging levels in Maslow's hierarchy are similar to the classification of 'language, identity, and relationships'. Furthermore, the academic transition aspect is associated with Maslow's self-actualisation level. The difference between Maslow's framework and the two-ring framework is that the former emphasises the hierarchy between each need, whereas the latter suggests that each aspect develops synchronously. Ideally, the basic needs of human beings need to be fulfilled before higher needs can be pursued. However, it is argued that international academics need to adapt to the three aspects at the same time, and thus the two-ring framework may better describe the overall adaptation experience/pattern of international academics in terms of academic, sociocultural, language, identity and relationship aspects.

Having developed a preliminary understanding of the challenges facing Chinese students and lecturers in UK HE institutions, further discussions of these challenges are presented in later chapters based on the categories proposed in the two-ring framework. It is important to note that the discussion on 'language, identity and relationships' is in a separate section for clarity, but the elements are actually embedded in 'academic adjustment' and 'sociocultural adjustment'.

2.6 Language, Identity and Relationships

In investigating the research question: "What are the challenges faced by Chinese students and lecturers in UK HE institutions?", this section reviews the most commonly discussed issues of Chinese students and lecturers in UK HE institutions in terms of the aspects of language, identity and relationships.

2.6.1 Language issues

Concerns relating to language issues are common for international students with regards to acculturation into the new environment, and may persist when they become academic staff. Insufficient English language ability may have consequences in terms of learning and lecturing in English, influencing both students' academic performance and the lecturers' teaching practices.

2.6.1.1 Learning and teaching in English

Language abilities are considered a useful predictor of international students' academic performance in the host institution. A study of the relationship between the IELTS scores of Chinese students and their academic performance in one UK university showed a positive correlation, especially in the first semester (Yen and Kuzma, 2009). Speaking and writing in English appear to be the most difficult language skills for most Chinese and international students (Green, Unaldi and Weir, 2008; Wray, 2008; Liu, 2000). In addition, different writing and logic thinking styles may give the impression that Chinese students write in an illogic and non-critical way (Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey, 1988; Carroll, 2005; McLean and Ransom, 2005). Due to the unfamiliarity with native language speaking, non-native students may need a longer

time to respond to lecturers (Turner and Robson, 2008; Devlin, 2006). Many students experience difficulties in understanding lecturers' spoken English and colloquial language (Bretag et al., 2002). A lack of confidence in their English abilities may also limit their participation in in-class discussion (Turner and Robson, 2008; Wray, 2008; Watkins, 1996).

Similarly, lecturing in English can be stressful and may be a source of anxiety and pressure for many Chinese lecturers, who generally think it is important to continue improving their English whilst teaching in the UK (Jiang et al., 2010). Despite the fact that many international colleagues will have obtained their degrees or other qualifications in English-speaking countries, language issues may persist when they take up academic positions. To teach in English may be difficult and tiring even for those international staff who have high language proficiency. Chinese lecturers reported spending considerable time preparing course materials and feeling exhausted after 20-25 minutes concentration on speaking English (Luxon and Peelo, 2009). Lower proficiency in English affects their teaching (Braine, 2006):

'because English is not my native language, I have to spend more time preparing for the course, also the problem of communicating with students. (Jiang, 2010, p.9) '

A review of the existing literature on the language issues concerning international lecturers indicate that the main difficulties relate to the following areas: 1) accented pronunciation; 2) unfamiliarity with the cultural connotations of English; 3) not being accepted by colleagues and students.

Pronunciation is considered to be the most obvious and evident indicator to differentiate native and non-native speakers (NNS) (Kachur, 1982). Many non-native speakers reported that native accent is the most difficult barrier they encounter, and some have felt that their identities were denied when asked to adapt the local accent

(Mawhinney and Xu, 1997). Many students thought non-UK academics had ‘bad pronunciation and outdated language use’ (Benke and Medgyes, 2006, p.206). Thomas (1995) showed that only 10% of the Slovakian students considered Indian teachers to be native speakers and only those born in the US or the UK were classified as native speakers. This indicates that although NNS lecturers may already achieve native or native like accent, students might still not consider them as native speakers because of their countries of origin.

Lack of understanding in cultural connotations also appears to be a crucial issue in learning and teaching. The competence to understand the “...hidden societal and cultural values and norms attached to the language” (Gu et al., 2010, p.16) may be more important than simply having good pronunciation and grammar. Non-native students have reported difficulty understanding idioms, dialects, local accents and cultural contexts in English (Edwards and Ran, 2006; Cortazzi, Jin and Zhiru, 2009). Similarly, non-native lecturers have reported that they have difficulties in understanding the accent of British students (Luxon and Peelo, 2009) and the colloquial usage and idioms used by young British people. Other elements that influence intercultural communication including, ‘knowledge, speed of interactions, the prioritisation of understanding, how to interrupt interaction, unfamiliarity of refuting and reframing, and face negotiation’ (Akazaki’s, 2010, p.366). One has to understand the connotation of a language, timing for interrupting or taking turns in a conversation, and to deal with situation that may in conflict with their cultural norms (e.g. ‘face’ issue). The more competent one’s English, the more likely it is that one would have the confidence to take the initiative in discussion (Akazaki’s, 2009, p.12)

Further difficulties may result from the responses of students and colleagues. Studies reveal that international or home students or even their parents showed negative attitudes toward non-native speaking (NNS) lecturers (Nomnian, 2008; Greis, 1985)

believing that being lectured or tutored by NNS academic staff creates an additional language barrier (Smith and Zhou, 2009). From the students' viewpoint, all Caucasians (including Finns, Germans, Russian, and Swedes) were considered to be NS of English (Braine, 2006, p.22; Amin, 1997). Therefore, a British-born-Chinese may still not be considered as NS by students because he or she is not Caucasian. NNS lecturers have been questioned by their students about their English abilities and professional knowledge because of their appearance (Liu, 1999). The exclusive attitudes of colleagues may also make international lecturers feel alienated. A female teacher expressed, 'My male colleagues criticized my accent, my practical work and a lot of pressure was put on me (Ghuman, 1995, p.27)', which caused mental and physical problems, 'My tension got worse, I couldn't swallow food...(ibid, p.27)'.

Language issues leading to difficulties in daily communication with colleagues and students (Jiang, 2010) may hinder full participation in a new community (Huntley, 1993). In contrast, when NNS demonstrate 'near native' language abilities, with native-like pronunciation, confident language abilities (particularly regarding idiomatic language) (Coppieters, 1987; Medgyes, 1994), NS may not be able to differentiate between native or non-native speakers (Inbar-lourie, 2006). Other studies have shown that when L2 users demonstrate native-like English ability, they are more likely to integrate into the host community, and NS find it easier to be friends with NNS who have advanced English proficiency when they have things in common to talk about. Having fluent and accurate English ability thus may assist one's entry to the target community and help to gain power and influence.

Language abilities influence a lecturers teaching styles. When international lecturers have difficulty in understanding the accents, colloquial usage and idioms of British students, they are likely to adopt a traditional didactic teaching method in order to avoid unpredictable student input in class (Luxon and Peelo, 2009). This may explain

why many students reflected that NS teachers have a more relaxed teaching style and are more confident in the classroom (Benke and Medgyes, 2006), since they do not need to worry about their language usage and can adopt an interactive discussion-based teaching approach.

Language issues may be different depending on the discipline (Wang's study, 2011):

...students of humanities and social sciences found most challenging but desirable efficient and effective understanding of a large number of readings and writing quality academic papers; science majors did not feel reading and writing were much difficult for them, but to follow the seminars and participate in discussions were given priority (p.225).

Her study found that language issues appear to be less acute in science disciplines, but were more problematic in social science subjects. Students in the disciplines that have high demands in language abilities tend not to form close teacher-student relationships. For instance, students from social science programmes thought their lecturers tried to avoid them because of their English, whereas students in engineering and science programmes often had stronger and closer relationship with their teachers and peers in the programmes (Chen, 2006). This may be because engineering and science programmes share a 'universal language' (e.g. mathematics).

Chinese/international academics need time to grow accustomed to the environment of English-speaking countries and to learn the common idioms and slang. While most universities provide language support for students and staff, sometimes the support is insufficient (Turner and Robson, 2008). Learning techniques such as informal conversations, peer-pairing or buddying systems may prove helpful (ibid) or students and international staff may be unaware of the support that is provided.

Some home and international students have commented positively on the benefits of having international academic staff who 'can provide more thorough exam

preparation, ‘can promote language learning more effectively’, and ‘supply the L1 of certain English words and develop translation skills’ (Benke and Medgyes, 2006, p.206). In contrast, UK academic staff were thought to lack a shared language with international students and a communication gap often appeared because of the cultural and language differences (ibid, 2006, p.206).

2.6. 1. 2 Language, identity and community of practice

As teaching in English is stressful for many international staff, this may also impact on self-confidence and identity. Numerous studies have discussed the relationship between language and identity (e.g. Edward, 2009; Lin, 2008; Besemeres and Wierzbicka, 2007; Cho, 2000; Baker, 2001, Fishman, 1991), and how the use of a language might influence identity (e.g. Inbar-Lourie, 2006; Rajagopalan, 2006; Kramersch, 1998; Amin, 1997; Clement and Noels, 1992). Although most of the studies focused on NNS lecturers who teach English, the guidelines can be useful in relation to other international staff in UK HE institutions.

Language and identity are intertwined since language usage ‘signals one’s ethnic, political, social, religious, professional or national community and allows the individual to share the cultures, values and social prestige represented by the language’ (Kramersch, 1998 in Inbar-lourie, 2006, p.266). Accent, vocabulary, and discourse patterns can indicate one’s socio-economic status and educational background. A group of people may purposefully use language to differentiate themselves from non-group members. Conversely, an ‘outsider’ may gain entry or membership of a group by using the language associated with the group (Rampton, 1995; Harris, 2006; Jaspal, 2008). For example, teenagers may have their unique expressions which must be learned in order to gain recognition from the group. Likewise, professionals have to learn jargon and technical terms in their field in order as members of the professional group.

Language is further related to ‘power relations’ (Bourdieu, 1991). Having the ability to use prestigious language is a means to gain access into the social networks and secure employment (Cervatiuc, 2009; Norton, 1997). By using particular language, an ‘outsider’ may gain entry or membership to a group or community (Rampton, 1995; Harris, 2006; Jaspal, 2008). Hence, for international academics, being a member of the target language community may be associated with better employment opportunities, higher pay and increased social status (Bourdieu, 1991). Being able to use the professional terms and jargon of the community of practice may help international academics to become ‘insiders’ in the community.

Resources and power may also be driving factors that motivate people to identify themselves with one language rather than another (Heller, 1988; Goldstein, 1995). When one is dissatisfied with one’s language community or social identity, one may try to assimilate into another language that appears to offer a more positive group identity (Giles and Coupland, 1991; Clement and Noels, 1992). International academics thus may wish to gain a new identity by speaking English and learning technical terms in their field of study so as to be recognised as an insider of their community of practice in the UK.

‘Learning a language, learning through language and becoming a particular person are all closely related (Stevens, 1996, p.264)’. By learning a language, one may be recognised as a member in the community, gain higher social identity and find a better job. However, there is a risk of gaining or losing something in the process of obtaining a new identity in the new community. When one is successfully recognised as a member of the new group, one may obtain a positive and satisfying identity in the community. In contrast, some international staff are unable to integrate into the new community either because they are not recognised by the community or they feel more secure in their own community.

International staff continuously negotiate their identities within the new community through the use of language. Factors that may influence perceived identities include: ‘pronunciation, familiarity with the target language and its culture, self-efficacy in teaching the subject matter components’ (Amin, 1997; Braine, 1999; Greis, 1985; Medgyes, 1999 in Inbar-lourie, 2006, p.269). Other factors also influence how others (e.g. native-speaker colleagues, students) perceive the teacher, e.g. learners’ own education, ethnic and culture background, cultural expectations in learning and teaching.

In sum, the competence of speaking English influence how one views oneself and how others see us. Those with advanced English proficiency level may gain more power and have privileges. In contrast, those with limited English ability are disadvantaged

Norton (2000) argues that identity is shaped through language use, and can change over time in response to different social situations. As learning and teaching in English is stressful for many international academics, this may negatively influence confidence and willingness to contribute to discussion (Turner and Robson, 2008) and cause shyness and deference to perceived authority figures (Smith and Zhou, 2009).

2.7 Identity

I’ve got two sets of values: one is for here and one is for China... I think they are just natural... I’m a grown-up here. When I went back to China, I just went back to being the same – who I was – before I came here (Jiayi, China). (Gu et al., 2010, p.17)

Identity has been described as ‘the self’ and ‘one’s self-concept’ (Mead, 1934) integrating various statuses, roles and experiences into a coherent image of self (Epstein, 1978). Identity is constantly shaped by how one views oneself and how others view us (Styker, 2007; Beijaard, 1995; Ivanic, 1998; Giddens, 1991; Denzin, 1989; Stevens,

1996a). The two factors interplay with each other and gradually form one's identity.

The formation of identity is affected by social, cultural and economic processes (Leung, Harris, and Rampton, 1997; Ogulnick, 2000; Uchida and Duff, 1997):

'We have both personal identity and social identity, and the kind of person we are is influenced by our social setting, particularly how other people categorise us and assign roles to us (Stevens, 1996a in Pollak, 2005, p.19)'.

2.7.1 Shift of identity

Many people believe that their identities shift when they are in another country, speak another language, or even operate in a new working or study environment. It is very likely that international students and staff shift and reshape their identities in response to their new environment. Those who were previously experienced teachers or managers lose their 'power' and 'authority' when they come to the UK in order to study or work. They need to adjust to these feelings of 'powerlessness' and a 'lack of a sense of belonging' (Gu et al., 2010, p.17). Changes in social and professional identity, and social values, structures and systems in the new environment often give new members feelings of being rejected (Oberg, 1960; Lewthwaite, 1996; Furnham, 2004; Gu et al., 2010, Liu and Xiu, 2010). One's identity may change over time in response to different social situations (Norton, 2000). During the process of establishing one's identity in the new environment, one may gain or lose resources as a result of being assigned native or non-native identity (Louw-Potgieter and Giles, 1987). International academics may encounter 'identity crisis', as they may consider themselves belonging to the community, while students or colleagues may not consider them to be 'insiders' and therefore exclude them. Studies have observed the conflicts between one's perceived identity and one's actual identity (e.g. Tusi, 2007; Liu and Xu, 2011). In Tusi's study, the participant tried to establish authority by deliberately maintaining a distance from his

students but students still referred to him using a funny nickname. His colleagues also questioned his professional qualifications in that he did not have a masters degree. Whilst the participant considered himself a respectable teacher with a good deal of professional knowledge, his students and colleagues had different opinions regarding his professional teaching identity. This eventually led the teacher to have a marginalized status. This example shows the discrepancy between an individual's perceived identity and his/her actual identity. This 'defined in' or 'defined out' dilemma (Inbra-lourie, 2006, p.267) often leads to feelings of depression (Singer, 1993) and low self-esteem (Lawrence, 1996).

Studies have indicated that self-esteem is positively correlated to academic achievement. When students have high self-esteem, they tend to have high academic achievement and vice versa (Marsh, 2003; Jen and Chien, 2008; Mapples, 1992). Teachers also need to maintain esteem in the classroom (Pollak, 1993). As teachers have strong influence on students, teachers with low self-esteem may negatively impact on students (Ruben, 1986; Mapples, 1992). International staff may encounter discrimination that may threaten their self-esteem, such as the questioning of their professional knowledge, ethnic and cultural origin, previous educational background and language abilities.

2.7.2 Cultural identity: host vs. home

When entering a new environment, international students and staff face the dilemma of whether to identify with the host environment or uphold their original cultural values. International students and staff may have divergent opinions with regard to their cultural values; they may view their original culture as being positive, neutral, or negative (Jiang et al., 2010).

When individuals strongly identify with their own culture rather than the host culture, it may hinder their integration into the new environment (Jiang et al., 2010). Chinese students or staff who persist in maintaining traditional Chinese values are less likely to adapt to the host environment, and may be less likely to accept and adopt the western values (e.g. about independent and autonomous learning), as these values may contradict with the collective and harmonic values in Chinese culture (Skinner, 2008). The strong attempt to maintain one's cultural identity and characteristics may further lead to a marginalised position if one refuses to, or is unable to maintain relationships with host groups, as illustrated in Table 2.1:

Acculturation attitudes		Is it considered to be of value to maintain cultural identity and characteristics?	
		Yes	No
Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with other groups?	Yes	Integrated	Assimilated
	No	Separated	Marginalised

Table 2.1: Acculturation attitudes (Berry and Kim, 1988, p. 245)

Due to an identity crisis and other difficulties (e.g. language barrier, discrimination), some nationals tend to stay within their own community (Kashima and Loh, 2006; Jiang et al., 2010), despite the fact that they may have been in the host country for a long time.

Sussman (2000; 2002) proposed the cultural identity model to classify the extent to which an individual adapts to the host country, and how their adaptation to the host country influences their degree of repatriation distress. The four types of identity shifts are: affirmative identity, subtractive identity, additive identity, and global identity. Those who are classified as having affirmative identity have low adaptation to the host country and low repatriation distress. In contrast, those who have subtractive identity are highly adapted to the host country but encounter high levels of distress when

returning home . Similar to subtractive identity, additive identity refers to those who have high adaptation to the host country but also encounter high re-entry shock. The difference is that the latter embrace many aspects of the host culture and as a consequence their cultural identity changes, and thus returning home becomes a negative experience. As for global identifiers, they are highly adapted to the host country but have moderate or low repatriation distress because they have developed the global identity.

In addition to the four types of cultural identity shifts above, Tamnyah and Chng (2006) identified two additional types of identity shift: resistive identity and marginal identity. Resistive identity means that individual resists changes in the cultural environment. Marginal identity means individuals displayed no adhesion to either the host or home cultures.

Sussman's (2000; 2002) characterisation of global identity is similiar to the "integrated" category in Berry and Kim's (1988) acculturation attitudes. Both of these terms refer to individuals who retain their original cultural identity but also adapt well to the host country. On the other hand, Tamnyah and Chng's (2006) marginal identity and Berry and Kim's (1988) "marginalised" category both describe those who show no strong affinity to either the host or home culture.

The aforementioned studies demonstrate that the extent to which an individual identify with his/her own culture may influence the degree to which one integrates and adapts to the host environment. If an individual strongly maintains their cultural identity but can also adapt well to the new environment, then they are likely to develop global identity that enable them to perform comfortably in both the host and the home country. In contrast, an individual may fall into a marginalised status when one fails to identify oneself with either the host or home culture.

2.7.3 Academic identities

International academic staff may encounter further academic identity issues that specifically relate to their roles. Adaptation into a different academic culture is far more difficult than having to adapt to the new cultural and social environment of the UK (Gu et al., 2010). Different nations may have particular priorities in terms of educational policies and approaches (Groom and Maunonen-Eskelinen, 2006), and each host institution has its own policies and culture. An experienced teacher might become a novice in terms of lack of familiarity with the academic conventions and expectations and local teaching practices in the host country (Luxon and Peelo, 2009; Garson, 2005).

Discrepancies between the local institutional culture and teacher's own teaching beliefs are often reported. International academics may need to renegotiate and adjust their original academic identities to fit in with the UK HE settings. Tsui (2007) observed that one Chinese EFL teacher alternates between insider and outsider in his academic practices in the process of negotiate his identity. Nelson (2008) also described the process of a Chinese student who struggled to integrate into the academic practices of her doctoral programme in the United States. Liu and Xu (2011) used narrative inquiry to illuminate the experience of a new university lecturer whose actual identity conflicts with the designated identity in the community of practice affecting her professional development.

International academics reflect on and modify their professional identities, disciplinary identities, and research identities in new environments. These identities often overlap with each other, but may have different levels of impact. For instance, international academics may have fewer issues when it comes to coping with disciplinary identity changes, as each discipline has its own common and universal language (Jiang et al., 2010).

2.7.4 Teachers' professional identity

Teachers are often viewed as “..accomplished subject specialists” (Chetty and Lubben, 2009, p.814) who do not require further assistance in terms of their teaching career. However, a novice teacher may be equipped with sufficient subject knowledge but may not necessarily have the necessary pedagogical and didactic skills. It has been found that new British teachers in Higher Education institutions usually need at least three years to familiarise themselves with teaching practices and to develop a research profile with minimal support (Murray and Male, 2005). The formation of the professional identity of international academic staff will be influenced by their different backgrounds, ages, years of teaching (Bloom, 1988), and educational and life experiences (Liu and Xu, 2011; Xu and Liu, 2009; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Kagan 1992; Beijaard 1995). Novice Chinese lecturers may take longer to adjust in the absence of proper support, as their prior teaching or educational experience may not be applicable in the new environment (Ferguson, 2009) and the new educational or cultural context may cause them frustration (Tsolidis, 2001). Despite the fact that many Chinese/international lecturers have obtained their postgraduate degree(s) in the UK, and have developed adequate research skills, they may not have gained pedagogical knowledge and teaching skills.

The formation of teachers' identities is influenced by both internal and external perceptions (Coldron and Smith, 1999; Beijaard et al., 2004), Teachers have ideal identities and perceived identities, which are especially important to the construction of teachers' self-identities (Inbar-Lourie, 1996). There may be a conflict between ideal identity and the identity perceived by colleagues and students (Liu and Xu, 2011; Xu and Liu, 2009; Inbar-Lourie, 2006). Clandinin and Connelly (1996) borrowed Crites's (1971) terms “sacred story” and “secret story” to illustrate the conflict for teachers who have to decide whether to give up their original teaching beliefs and methods in order to

meet the institutional expectations, or to deliver what they believe to be the best for students. When teachers cannot strike a balance between institutional expectations and their personal beliefs, they are likely to live with two stories: the sacred story prescribed by the authority; and their lived, self-reflexive secret story (Xu and Liu, 2009). Teachers may exclude themselves from the community of practice in order to gain more liberty:

“When she was excluded from the community, however, she was no longer bound by its membership and thus there was no need for her to demonstrate that she was making efforts to align with the liberal discourse. In a less constraining context, Hui developed a new persona as a free thinker, an eclectic practitioner, and an innovative researcher” (Liu and Xu, 2011, p.595).

Threat to one’s identity will also affect one’s teaching practice and classroom behaviour (Beijaard et al., 2000; Norton, 2000). For instance, students often associate teachers’ English ability and professional knowledge with their appearance or country of origin (Ghuman, 1995; Thomas, 1995; Liu, 1999).

It is interesting to investigate how Chinese lecturers who have received most of their education in Confucian cultural pedagogies engage with Western pedagogies while teaching in the UK. Questions that need to be explored further include: Do they adopt Western educational pedagogies and teaching style or continue with Chinese pedagogies while teaching in the UK? How do their traditional cultural values and prior experiences influence their teaching practice? How do they develop a professional teaching identity and teaching skills in the UK? Answering these questions may help us to understand how Chinese academic staff adjust and accommodate their teaching beliefs, and how their prior experience and original cultural values may advantage or disadvantage their teaching practice. It may help institutions to further identify the challenges facing Chinese academic staff in their professional development so that institutions may provide proper support.

2.7.5 Research identity

The roles and responsibilities of lecturers in HE institutions vary in different countries and cultures with regard to teaching and research roles. In the UK, lecturers are generally expected to undertake both research and teaching. In contrast, a clear difference between the roles of teaching staff and research staff has been often found in China:

My impression is that Chinese universities focus more on teaching than on research. Here it seems that you need to do well in both research and teaching [UK]. It's possible for Chinese universities for some people only do teaching. In the UK you have to keep up with research work all the time. (Jiang et al., 2010, p.161)

Similarly, lecturers in a Southern Africa university also consider teaching and research to be dichotomous, and felt that the teaching role and the research role should be kept separate (Lubben, 2009). To be research active has been found to be the main source of uncertainty for many lecturers in both Australia (Lee and Boud, 2003) and the UK (Sikes, 2006), and may be related to stress and illness (Sullivan, 1997; Chalmers, 1998). The unbalanced emphases on research and teaching are often observed in UK HE institutions, and lecturers are more likely to be rewarded for research excellence and the ability to gain research funding rather than for teaching excellence (Marginson and Constadine, 2000; Tight, 2000). Although universities may have mission statement which reflects parity of esteem for teaching and research, or have award schemes for teaching excellence, the chances of being awarded for excellence in teaching is limited. In the university under study, for example, the website states that each year 10 to 12 staff are rewarded for teaching excellence, which is a small proportion of the whole academic staff of 1,400.

While many Australian (Bazeley, 1994) and South African (Lubben, 2009) university staff have identified the need to improve their research skills (e.g. academic

writing skills, writing funding applications, journal publications), many Chinese lecturers have expressed the view that their PhD and post-doctoral work helps them to become familiar with the academic conventions of UK universities and has equipped them with adequate research skills (Jiang et al., 2010). Although doctoral studies may equip students with research skills, they do not guarantee the development of the language skills and teaching skills that are required for teaching in an English-speaking country. Moreover, research productivity does not necessarily lead to better teaching quality. In fact, the two are hardly related (Housell, 2002; Hattie and Marsh, 1996; Ramsden and Moses, 1992). It is therefore suggested that equal value should be placed on both (Gibbs, 2002) in order to ensure that research and teaching can benefit from each other.

2.7.6 Disciplinary identity

Despite the issues surrounding teaching qualifications, international staff generally report few problems in terms of gaining a disciplinary identity in a new academic environment, and their strong confidence consists of "...developmental grounding in the academic field and establishment of their own disciplinary reputation" (Jiang et al., 2010, p.8). By publishing in quality publications, presenting at international conferences, or securing funding for projects (Jiang et al., 2010; Luxon and Peelo, 2009) international lecturers can gain a sense of disciplinary identity in the new environment. Moreover, members in the same discipline tend to be in the same 'community of practice' (Wenger, 1998; Lave and Wenger, 1991), and share a common interest that can form the basis for interaction. Disciplinary identity is considered to be the main unifying concept between members from different cultural backgrounds (Becher and Trowler, 2001). Shared knowledge and language help one to be easily recognised as a member of the group.

Disciplinary structures play an important role in shaping disciplinary cultures (Becher 1989, p.159), as each discipline has its own teaching approach and assessment methods (Shulman, 2005). Biglan (1973) classified disciplines into four categories: ‘hard pure’ disciplines (e.g. maths, physics, and astronomy); ‘hard applied’ disciplines (e.g. engineering, economics, and computer science); ‘soft pure’ disciplines (e.g. literature, history, philosophy); and ‘soft applied’ disciplines (e.g. education, social care, foreign languages). It is argued that lecturers tend to adapt problem-based approaches and primarily focus on examination questions in hard disciplines, whereas soft disciplines emphasise debates and discussions, critical engagement and reflection, essay writing and project reports (Donald, 1995; Neumann, Parry and Becher 2002).

Disciplinary identity plays a crucial role for both international students and academic staff in the process of acculturation into a new academic practice and grants them full entry into the new academic culture (Maunder et al., 2009; Jiang et al., 2010). When international students and academic staff are recognised in their discipline, this can help them to establish self-confidence and earn respect. Having a common language may also facilitate multicultural communication.

2.8 Relationships

Chinese students and lecturers can find it difficult to establish relationships with UK students and colleagues. From the students’ perspective, a survey has shown that international students’ anxiety levels when working with British students increases significantly in the first academic term compared to pre-arrival (Schweisfurth and Gu, 2009). The survey has shown that communication barriers are not necessarily eased over time, but that anxiety with regard to intercultural communication is likely to increase. Despite the fact that many international students depend on same national peers for social support (Montgomery, 2009; Harrison and Peacock, 2007; Volet and

Ang,1998), they may feel disillusioned and disenchanted when there is little or no contact with home students or the local community (Turner and Robson, 2008; Brown, 2009). Moreover, home students have been found to be unable to "...offer the structure, support, and esteem needed by international students" (Skinner, 2008, p.4), and may feel that there is no need to establish relationships with international students as they have other support structures (Leder and Forgasz, 2004; Devlin and Peacock, 2009). All these factors hinder the establishment of intercultural relationships. Hence, it is rare to find Asian students asking for emotional support from home students (Skinner, 2008). Although mentoring (or buddying) schemes, which pair existing students with new international students, have been implemented in many institutions to "...speed up the process of transition and allows the recipients to adjust more quickly" (Partridge, 2008, p.6), a survey by UKCISA (2008) found that only 29% of 154 institutions provided mentoring schemes specifically for international students.

As for Chinese academics, they may be discriminated against by colleagues or by students and can be criticised for their English accent. When in a foreign land, outsiders may have feelings of "...estrangement and disorientation, of invisibility, voicelessness, and ineffectualness" (Mann, 2001, p.11). To be involved socially with British colleagues and neighbours is considered an important step in academic acculturation, and Chinese staff think it is important to be 'socially capable' and to be 'socially one of them' (Jiang et al., 2010, p.10). Although everyday conversation can be a great source of informal teacher development (Haigh, 2005), it is sometimes difficult for non-UK staff to establish relationships with colleagues due to different communication habits and patterns or language barriers. In a study by Luxon and Peelo (2009), a Chinese lecturer expressed his/her frustration with regard to attempting to ask his/her colleagues out for lunch in order to establish relationships and to ask for more information about the new educational setting, finding that "only a few people go out for lunch". In another study, a Chinese staff member expressed the view that British people do not

usually comment on whether what they have done is right or wrong (Jiang et al., 2010). also International colleagues have found it difficult to establish close relationship with colleagues, as teachers mostly talk about students or work-related topics even during casual dinner talk (Cohen, 2010).

Relationships between teachers/students and peers may be influenced by cultural differences with respect to the perceived role of the teacher (Jiang et al., 2010). The teacher-student relationship in Chinese culture is usually more hierarchical (Biggs, 1994; Chan, 1999; Ho, 1999), and students seldom challenge their teachers in class as a way of showing respect to their teachers (Biggs, 1996; Ho, 1993; Scollon and Wong-Scollon, 1994). These differences, however, may sometimes become a source of anxiety for teachers. In one study, a lecturer expressed the following view:

I feel that British students make me feel intimidated maybe it isn't their fault but sometimes this attitude and the way they speak, even when you write an email, the language they use, sometimes they don't seem very polite. (Jiang et al., 2010).

Nevertheless, Chinese teachers often develop close personal mentoring relationships with students out of class that can last a long time after the formal educational relationship has ended. This reflects the Confucian master/disciple tradition (Cua 1989; Chen 1994; Philo, 2007; Cheng 1994). British teachers, conversely, are less likely to form close mentoring relationships with students out of class.

The different research training structures which have been developed to meet the different requirements of each discipline, can also impact on peer relationships and student-teacher relationships. The "Teamwork research training structure" (Chiang, 2003, p.17), which involves students and supervisors working together toward the same project, is usually observed in "hard disciplines". On the other hand, the "Individualist research training structure" (ibid, p.18) is a common norm in "soft disciplines" where students and supervisors work on different individual research projects. As a

consequence, students in "teamwork research training structures" can obtain immediate advice from supervisors and other members of the group and students tend to form closer relationships in "hard/ hard applied" disciplines. The overall atmosphere in "hard/ hard applied" disciplines also appears to be casual, friendly and lively. Chen's (2006) study echoes Chiang's (2003) by suggesting that students in social science subjects disciplines tend not to form close relationships with their teachers and peers, whereas students in engineering and science programmes may have stronger and closer relationships with their teachers and peers.

Furthermore, when teachers and students are from the same nation or culture, they have a tacit understanding of each other's expectations, and thus may be able to communicate more effectively. In contrast, when teachers and students are from different nations or cultures, different expectations and interaction patterns are likely to hinder the establishment of a close relationship. The co-national friendship, in this sense, was historically viewed as the foundation for building further multicultural friendships (Bochner, 1977). Ying and Liese(1994) support the view that ethnic social networks can provide a sense of security and facilitate psychological wellbeing in the transition into the new environment. However, 'cultural bonds' (Schweisfurth and Gu, 2009) and 'cliques' (Edwards and Ran, 2009) have been criticised and perceived as an affront by British educators and students. Thus, it is important to balance same national relationships with host contacts .

In addition to the desire for support from co-nationals and local people, international academics also expect their institutions to provide them with appropriate support:

I know that I'm supposed to go and ask other people, if they will answer me. The thing is sometimes if you don't know what to ask, you cannot ask the question, if you don't know what to ask! So I find there is not much information given to me. (Luxon and Peelo, 2009, p.653)

International academic staff may encounter many difficulties that are similar to those faced by international students, but at the same time they are expected to provide support for both home and international students, which may cause more stress. Their needs should therefore not be overlooked.

2.9 Academic Adjustment

In examining the research question: "What are the academic and cultural transition processes of Chinese students and lecturers in the UK?" This section discusses the different educational expectations and conventions in the UK and China and explores how these differences may become challenges to Chinese academics in terms of academic performance.

Chinese students and lecturers are likely to encounter similar problems while studying, teaching, and living in the UK. A number of Chinese lecturers will have obtained their degree(s) in UK HE institutions and are thus able to recognise and empathise with the difficulties of Chinese students. The four main challenges facing international students have been classified as: "...learning and living in a different culture; learning in a foreign university context; learning while developing English language proficiency; and learning the academic disciplinary discourse" (Arkoudis, 2006, p.5). International academic staff are likely to encounter similar problems (Luxon and Peelo, 2009), which include accommodation to different cultural, linguistic and interaction patterns in UK HE institutions.

2.9.1 Different educational systems and pedagogies

International students and lecturers not only encounter 'culture shock' but are also likely to face 'academic shock' or 'learning shock' (Griffiths, Winstanley and Gabriel, 2004),

when new knowledge fails to integrate with existing knowledge, and prior learning no longer applies to current situations (Hofstede, Pedersen and Hofstede, 2002).

2.9.1.1 The Nature of Knowledge and Education

The East and the West have very different philosophical traditions that underpin the thinking and behaviour of their respective ethnic groups and shape the customs and cultures in the Eastern and Western worlds. The two great philosophers, Confucius (551-478 B.C.) and Socrates (470-399 B.C.), had a great impact on shaping the cultural norms and values and educational thinking and beliefs in the East and the West respectively.

The Confucian educational traditions are often interpreted as being more conservative and convergent, and are usually considered to offer a surface approach that cannot lead to the real acquisition of knowledge, since they are assumed to encourage the memorisation of unstructured factual details and superficial learning (Chan and Drover, 1997; Kingston and Forland, 2008). In contrast, Western educational traditions are regarded as being more speculative and divergent, which helps with the learning of extended knowledge based on a deep approach to learning (Biggs, 1987; Kingston and Forland, 2008). The teaching styles which operate in the Confucian culture are usually described as being didactic and teacher-centred, whereas Western teaching styles are often more communicative and student-centred (Jin and Cortazzi, 2006; Shaw, Moore and Gandhidasan, 2007; Jiang et al., 2010).

Biggs and Watkins (1996) argue that teaching and learning need to be interpreted from both contextual and cultural perspectives, otherwise misinterpretations may occur when examining the situation from a Western perspective. It is argued that each culture

has its educational value and its own expectations with regard to a ‘model student’, a ‘good teacher’, and a ‘good learning environment’. Teachers and learners in different cultures also have their own beliefs in terms of teaching/learning styles, expectations, and attitudes. It is inappropriate to simply interpret the behaviours of Chinese learners or teachers through western lens and label them as inferior. Further discussion on different educational expectations and the rote learning issue are presented in later sections.

2.9.2 Expectations of good teachers

The expectations of ‘model teachers’ vary in different cultures, and may conflict with an individual’s traditional values and beliefs. Teachers are traditionally required to have “subject matter knowledge (subject expert); pedagogical knowledge related to ethical and moral features (pedagogical expert); and didactical skills (didactical expert)” (Beijaard et al., 2000, pp.751-752). Although Biggs and Watkins (2001) argue that good teaching and learning are common across cultures at a deep level, local academic practices differ in each country and also each host institution. The experience of studying in the host country can familiarise the student with the academic and research environment. However, it is doubtful whether such experience and doctoral training can actually provide the student with sufficient skills to become a lecturer.

Table 2.2 shows the differences in the expectations of a ‘good teacher’ in China and the UK (Cortazzi, Jin and Zhiru, 2009). According to the table, both Chinese and British students in two British universities expect a teacher to be a responsible person, caring and helpful, friendly, patient, able to arouse students’ interest, able to help students to study independently, explain clearly, and use effective methods. However, there are some differences between the two. Chinese students expect a teacher to have deep

knowledge, to be warm-hearted and understanding, to offer a good moral example, and to be humorous. Yet those values are not ranked in the first 12 from the point of view of British students. British students expect a teacher to be sympathetic, lively, to be able to discipline students, and to be able to organise a variety of activities.

In China a good teacher... (N=129)	In the UK a good teacher... (N=205)
has deep knowledge	arouses students' interest
uses effective methods	explains clearly
is a responsible person	uses effective methods
arouses students' interest	is patient
is friendly	helps students to study independently
is warm-hearted, understanding	is caring and helpful
Helps students to study independently	is a responsible person
is patient	is sympathetic
explains clearly	is lively
offers a good moral example	organises a variety of activities
is humorous	controls student discipline
is caring and helpful	is friendly

Table 2.2: Characteristics of 'good teachers' rated by Chinese and British university students (Cortazzi, Jin and Zhiru, 2009, p.118)

These different expectations with regard to the 'good teacher' may become an issue for Chinese lecturers who teach in the UK context; they may have to adjust their teaching styles and beliefs to meet the expectations of a 'good teacher' in UK institutions, despite the fact that they may have quite different concepts of what it is to be a 'good teacher'. This study is concerned with how Chinese lecturers accommodate their traditional academic expectations to UK norms, and how this influences the formation of their academic identity.

2.9.3 Expectations of model students

The nature of knowledge also influences expectations with regard to 'good' students. In the West, students are expected to learn 'how to learn'; a model student should have the ability to think critically and seek knowledge independently. However, Chinese students, from a collective culture, often find it difficult to criticise existing knowledge, to build an argument, or to show contradictory opinions from those of their peers or tutors (Edwards and Ran, 2009; Tomalin, 2007). This confrontational educational value was historically referred to as 'educating-against-culture' (Hofstede, 1985, p.353). Some people refer to the phenomenon as 'Westernization' (Devos, 2003; Rasool, 2004) or political imperialism (Mayor, 1998; deWit, 2002), as the transition of knowledge was from advanced countries to newly developing ones (Turner and Robson, 2008).

The different educational expectations are shown in the table below:

Chinese student – “model” experience	UK system’s expectations of “model” student behaviour	Perceptions of Chinese student performance in UK Higher Education
Experienced in developing techniques for processing large quantities of data	Experienced in taking a critical approach to complex problems and literature	Experienced in rote learning and memorisation of data
Accustomed to individual-based approaches to learning and assessment	Accustomed to working in groups and alone	Students do not make contributions to group work
Accustomed to expressing knowledge as unitarist ideas and factual truth; knowledge as conformity	Understanding is achieved by reconciling conflict opinions; knowledge as iconoclasm with the past	Students do not understand how to build an argument or reference; find it difficult to express complex ideas
Examinations accurately measure academic accomplishment	Examination are one of many different methods of assessment	Students poor at assessment other than exams; they do not take coursework “seriously”
Lecturer is the “expert” who conveys absolute knowledge and truth	Lecturer is a mentor who opens up the doors to reflective, independent thinking	Students ask lecturers to provide “all the answers” to learning development
Learning happens to the young; maturity should bring full understanding	Learning is a lifelong process	Students want to “get through” their education; they want “all the answers”

Table 2.3: Chinese student experience and perceptions vs. UK higher education attitudes (Turner and Acker, 2002, p.168)

The table demonstrates how different cultural expectations with regard to the 'model student' could influence the learning attitudes, behaviours and performance of Chinese students, and how others may perceive or stereotype them. For instance, the table shows that examinations are usually the only measure of academic accomplishment in China, which might result in Chinese students not taking coursework “seriously” and not being eager or competent when it comes to participating in a group discussion in class. The

discrepancies between the expectations of the Chinese and UK educational systems may lead to misperceptions about Chinese students (Cortazzi, Jin, and Zhiru, 2009; Watkins and Biggs, 2001) and makes Chinese students more vulnerable than their European counterparts since European students may have similar cultures, educational conventions and systems to those found in the UK (Gu, 2005).

Bearing in mind that different cultural expectations may cause possible misunderstandings, it is suggested that lecturers should be more culturally sensitive in terms of their teaching (Turner and Robson, 2008). International staff need to gain an understanding of local educational expectations, and to try to adopt appropriate and effective teaching styles in the host environment. Yet this does not mean that one's own cultural values and previous teaching or work experience is worthless in the current setting. Rather, the clear differences in the teaching/learning pedagogies and environment of the host country may become resources. By effectively utilising the cultural differences to illustrate issues in subject areas, and by inviting British students to contribute their own cultural background to the contexts (Luxon and Peelo, 2009), lecturers and students can learn from each other and the differences need no longer be a barrier.

2.9.4 Expectations of a 'good' learning environment

Just as the nature of knowledge and education are different in the East and the West, the notions of a good learning environment are also different. The following table shows these differences:

Western environment (Biggs and Moore, 1993)	Chinese environment
- small numbers of students in a class	- large classes with 40-60 students (Watkins and Biggs, 2001)
- a conducive teaching environment; stimulating, encouraging, and inspiring learners' intrinsic appreciation of learning; facilitating cooperative group work and learner-autonomy	- an expository teaching environment; highly competitive; high pressure on both students and teachers to perform; teaching style has been described as authoritarian
- encouraging learners to be independent, assertive, curious and inquisitive	- big classes that do not allow sufficient time to properly engage with a subject in depth

Table 2.4: Learning environment: Western vs. Chinese (Adapted from Biggs and Moore, 1993; Watkins and Biggs, 2001)

Generally, a UK classroom tends to have a small number of students (excluding some popular departments, e.g. Business School). In contrast, a typical HE classroom in China usually has 40 to 60 students or more. The size of the class and different cultures and pedagogies may influence teachers' teaching styles and students' learning styles. As shown in Table 2.5, western pedagogy aims to encourage and inspire students to become independent learners, and thus group work or discussion-based tasks may be common activities in a western classroom.

These differences in the learning environment and teaching styles found in the UK sometimes makes Chinese students feel insecure. For instance, it has been reported that Chinese tutors tend to give out the answers straight away, whereas British tutors, in contrast, often do not tell students directly what is right and wrong (Gu, 2005). Students thus need to find answers for themselves and it sometimes gives them the impression that UK education is "...not very systematic" and has "...unclear criteria for assessment" (Gu and Maley, 2008, p.230). This issue is possibly caused by the notions of a 'good' learning environment being different in China and the UK. Chinese students

may get used to an expository teaching environment and thus expect their teachers to always give them clear instructions on what to do and how to do it. Western teachers may adjust their ways of teaching or explain the nature of knowledge and education in the UK to help Chinese students understand educational expectations in the UK. It is argued that institutions also have a responsibility in terms of supporting new students to adapt to the new environment (Coverdale-Jones, 2009; UKCISA, 2007). As stated in Biggs and Watkins (2001), "...we need to think in terms of the whole system, not of isolated components; in term of teaching, not of teachers" (pp. 280–1).

2.10 Common academic issues of Chinese students

Many researchers have discussed the difficulties and culture shock that Chinese students encounter in UK universities. Griffiths, Winstanley and Gabriel (2005) have gone further to suggest that students (including UK and international students) are likely to encounter 'learning shock'

...experiences of acute frustration, confusion and anxiety experienced by some students (who) find themselves exposed to unfamiliar learning and teaching methods, bombarded by unexpected and disorienting cues and subject to ambiguous and conflicting expectations. (p. 276)

This refers to the situation where new knowledge fails to integrate with existing knowledge. Under these circumstances, learners may experience 'cognitive dissonance' or 'academic shock' (Davidson, 2009).

There have been a substantial number of studies on the educational and pedagogical differences between Confucianism and Socratism. The most common stereotypes of Chinese students' academic performance are silence in the classroom, plagiarism, insufficient English language skills, lack of critical thinking skills, rote learning styles, inability to contribute to group work, depending too much on the staff, tendency to stay

within Chinese groups and seldom making friends with home students. Further discussions of these issues will be presented in the following sections.

2.10.1 Rote learning issue

Many studies have described Chinese students as having good rote learning skills but lacking critical thinking skills (Chan and Drover 1996; Cheng 2000; Liu 2002; Zhou et al., 2005). This may reflect the educational system that the students have experienced in China. In the UK, the ability to think critically and to form arguments is considered essential and an indicator of higher or deeper learning (Valiente, 2008). In contrast, the rote learning skill is considered to be a 'surface' approach. Chinese students have been observed in studies to map poorly onto Western educational values (Cottrell, 2003; Sinfield and Burns, 2003).

Many studies have criticised the rote learning (or memorisation) issue with regard to Chinese students. Biggs (1994) argues that Chinese students actually possess "sophisticated decomposition strategies" and "high-level" or "deep-learning strategies", rather than the long misperceived rote learning. Other studies also support the view that memorisation and understanding are non-separable learning processes (Marton et al., 2005; Gu et al., 2004; Dahlin and Regmi, 2001; Mugler and Landbeck, 2000). Rote learning, along with repetition learning, was considered to lead to a deeper understanding over time (Chan, 1999; Biggs and Watkins, 1996; An Ran 2000).

Although Chinese students have been criticised for a lack creativity and original thinking abilities, this may be attributed to their expectations of the learning environment which are grounded in their earlier experience of an authoritarian education system and the pressure for conformity in a collective culture (Salili, 1996; Spence, 1985). It is possible for Chinese students to demonstrate creative and critical thinking, if the expectations for learning and assessment are made explicit.

In contrast, Chinese students' outstanding performance in Mathematics and Science in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and even Western countries (Beaton et al., 1996a; 1996b; Stevenson and Stigler, 1992) may demonstrate that Chinese students not only have good memorisation ability (Stevenson and Lee, 1996), but also have excellent "...understanding and analytical ability" (Connell, 1987, p.203).

The above studies imply that Chinese students are not passive learners or lacking in critical thinking ability; Chinese learners' learning styles and the cultural differences in terms of the host environment may be the reasons why Western educators misinterpret or underestimate the abilities of Chinese learners. This again reflects the importance of cultural sensitivity when teaching Chinese or other international students.

2.10.2 Group work and presentation

Chinese students are usually described as lacking group work experience and presentation skills. This may be attributed to the traditional didactic and teacher-centred teaching style in a Chinese classroom (Shaw, Moore and Gandhidasan, 2007; Jiang et al., 2010). In a teacher-centred classroom, students are not provided with the opportunity to do group work and make presentations; rather, students are usually passive learners who learn verbatim. This kind of teaching atmosphere is not considered to help students develop independent learning and thinking skills.

In UK universities, it is common for students to work in groups, and as teams and make presentations. However, cross-cultural group work is not usually successful and has many problems. First, language obstacle (Henderson, 2009) and a lack of things in common (Wray, 2008) are usually major challenges for Chinese students in classroom participation and group discussion, and it makes it even harder to build intercultural relationships.

Second, it is found that international students (e.g. India, Nigeria, China) tend to stay with same nationals during group work (Edwards and Ran, 2009) and talk in their native languages (Wray, 2008). The tendency to ‘stay together’ within one’s own ethnic group usually gives home students the feeling of being excluded and they may be reluctant to invest in cross-cultural friendship (Edwards and Ran, 2009).

Moreover, home students may not see the benefits of a diverse learning community (Turner and Robson, 2008) and avoid working with international students to avoid the burden of proofreading for their non-native group members and being the figure head to speak on behalf of the groups (Peacock and Harrison, 2009).

The issue has long appeared to be a dilemma for students and staff. International students want to practice their English and work with other nationals, but are worried about their language ability and the lack of common objects of interest with home students. Home students may expect to work with international students to exchange knowledge and to enrich their cultural awareness, but may also be afraid of the extra burden. Lecturers want to facilitate communication among students, but what is the appropriate way to ask students from different nations and cultures to work together? The present research has tried to find answers to these issues by gathering the opinions of students and lecturers. Further discussion is presented in a later chapter.

2.10.3 Silence

Chinese students are often described as silent and passive learners from a Western point of view (Valiente, 2008; Griffiths, Winstanley and Gabriel, 2005). The reasons for their silence may be language obstacles, cultural differences and pedagogical differences. The language obstacle is one of the main reasons for Chinese students’ silence. Their silence may indicate they have difficulties understanding the lecturer and thus cannot

offer feedback. It may also indicate that students need more time to think about the answers and require more probing and encouragement from lecturers (Chan, 1999; Cortazzi and Jin, 1996; Ballard, 1996).

Chinese culture is a collective culture that highly values harmony within the group, and thus individuals tend not to express different voices which might harm the harmony within a group (Chan, 1999). The other reason for their silence may be because of the 'face problem'. In traditional Chinese values, 'face' is closely related to one's dignity. If one did something very stupid or shameful, one would lose one's face, and other people would look down on one. The 'face' problem is commonly discussed in Chinese-culturally related studies (e.g. Kirkbride and Tang 1992; Chan, 1999). Students are afraid of being laughed at by others if they ask 'stupid' or 'incorrect' questions in class, and thus prefer to remain silent.

Western students start to learn the skills of speaking up or presenting one's ideas or opinions to a group at a very early educational stage. This is considered to be an important skill for future employment (Turner and Robson, 2008). European students receive similar educational training to British students and thus are accustomed to the teaching and learning tradition found in the UK (Gu, 2005). In contrast, Chinese students usually have not had the opportunity to practice these skills, and may feel inferior to their EU and UK counterparts in these aspects (ibid). The focus groups used in this study involving Chinese students aimed to explore the reasons behind their silence.

2.11 Academic writing and plagiarism

There are various ways of evaluating students' academic performance in UK HE institutions, such as group work, searching for background information and knowledge from journal articles, books, and the Internet, reflective writing, report writing, a

critique involving the evaluation of articles, oral presentations, and projects (Foster, 2003). Submitting 3,000 to 5,000 words essays at the end of the semester is one of the most common forms of assessment in UK universities. In many Asian countries, however, examinations seem to be the only form of assessment (Turner and Acker, 2002; Plicher, 2006). Essay writing skills are therefore the most critical issue in terms of international students' academic performance. Many Chinese students have problems in essay writing because they have not received much training in essay writing skills in their home country. Even if they have received relevant training, the format of essays and the referencing system used may be different from that expected in the UK. Being unfamiliar with essay writing and referencing styles, Chinese students may be accused of 'plagiarism' and a lack of 'critical thinking' skills. These issues have been widely discussed by several authors (Schmitt 2005; Gu 2005; Gu and Brooks 2008; Edwards and Ran, 2009). Plagiarism can be viewed from three aspects, as outlined in the following sections.

2.11.1 Plagiarism as a process of language acquisition

Students may copy a sentence or phrases from a book or journal without referencing them properly. They may do this because they think that the author writes better than themselves. The copying strategy is often found in the early stages of study (Pecorari, 2003; Howard, 1999), and may decrease gradually when learners have better English proficiency levels to express their own ideas and can develop their own argument out of the sources. It may also be because students have become more acquainted with the referencing system. One Chinese postgraduate student expressed the following view:

At the beginning, I thought it was too complicated and too much effort to write bibliography and make detailed references. When we first started writing essays for theory courses, we all kind of copied ideas from books and website and then

added with our own comments and ideas. But after a lot of practice and writing assignments, we began to have our own ideas and views and making references had become a habit. . . .Originality and creativity is of crucial importance to someone working in my subject. We learn from and build on classic works, from which we then develop our own ideas. (Gu and Brooks, 2008, p.349)

2.11.2 Plagiarism of ideas

Copying words is viewed as straightforward plagiarism. However, writers may come up with the same or similar ideas with others, and thus it becomes difficult to judge if one has copied others' work (Schmitt, 2005). Under this circumstance, it is hard to determine if words or ideas are the innovation of the student him/herself, are inspired by other writers, or just an imitation of others' ideas (Smith and Zhou, 2009). This situation is not only restricted to international students but may also happen among native speakers. When students find their own idea is in accordance with those of other writers, they do not know whether they should claim it as their own idea, or whether they should reference it as another's idea.

2.11.3 Plagiarism and culture

Plagiarism can also be viewed from the cultural aspect. Many have pointed out that plagiarism is related to the Western moralistic approach (Scollon, 1995; Pennycook, 1996). Chinese students may want to show their respect to the author by copying the words of others: "Some Chinese students have the need to show respect for an author by using his work in some way.....They think that if they copy out chunks they are actually complimenting the author (Edwards and Ran, 2009, p.10)." However, using text without referencing is viewed as a 'mortal sin' in Western culture (Edwards and Ran 2009; Gu and Brooks, 2008) and be interpreted as an invasion of the author's

intellectual property. The cultural and moral values associated with using others' words appear to be very different in Chinese and British cultures.

After carefully examining the possible reasons for, and types of plagiarism, it can be seen that Western universities should be more sensitive in dealing with the plagiarism issue involving international students.

2.12 Professional issues of Chinese academic staff

Study of international academic staff in the UK is a new trend that has only attracted attention in recent years. There have been several studies on this issue, but gaps still exist. McNamara, Lewis, and Howson (2005) have discussed the most challenging issues facing overseas-trained teachers (those who were trained outside of the EU) in the UK, which are: "students/pupils; teaching in the UK; National Curriculum and assessment; school; working/living in the UK; education system; and parents" (p.32). However, the majority of the participants in their research were from English-speaking countries or Commonwealth countries. It did not include teachers from Asia or South Asian countries, where English is not a native language, and the challenges of language and cultural differences may be overlooked.

Similarly, Luxon and Peelo (2009) have studied the experience of 32 non-UK academic staff in UK universities. They discussed the challenges of non-UK academic staff in terms of induction, language and teaching, student-staff interaction, and cultural barrier. Their study suggests that international students and staff may face similar challenges in a new academic environment. However, the participants' genders, education and ethnic backgrounds, as well as number of years of teaching, were not specified in the study. Besides, the participants were completely 'new' to the UK environment and had never lived, worked, or studied in the UK before. It is argued that many international academic staff nowadays have obtained their undergraduate or

postgraduate degrees in the UK. Although the UK environment is not completely new for them, many international academic staff appear to have difficulties adjusting to their roles as teachers. It is thus interesting to further investigate the transition pattern of an international student who became an international academic staff on completion of their study in the UK.

Induction

Studies have shown that international academic staff are not given enough information upon arrival in the UK and do not know who to ask for support (Hodkinson and Taylor, 2002; Luxon and Peelo, 2009). Although in these studies the participants' nationalities were not identified, the research pointed out that novice lecturers thought that induction was important, and perceived it as an essential right and the responsibility of the university. The participants were of the opinion that the university should offer tailored induction programmes to meet their specific needs, especially those recruited from overseas or from industry (Hodkinson and Taylor, 2002). Current support, however, has been found to be "piecemeal and uncoordinated" (Edwards and Ran, 2009, p.189).

Culture shock and identity issues

International lecturers not only have to adapt to physical and psychological 'culture shock'. They may also encounter difficulties that specifically relate to their roles as university lecturers. Their professional identity may be threatened by differences in culture and local practices, and they may need a period of time to shape and re-shape their professional identity. Their prior teaching experience may be inapplicable in the new environment, as a respondent in one study highlighted: "My practice that won over my students back home failed me here" (Ferguson, 2009, p.5). Different educational or cultural contexts may also bring about frustration (Tsolidis, 2001).

Academic conventions and teaching practice

After international lecturers have gradually come to understand and adapt to the culture and conventions in the new environment, they are able to develop a sense of empathy with their students (Alfred, 2003). The academic adaptation process has been described by Ferguson (2009), who used narrative inquiry to describe his own integration process and teaching experience in Thailand, and how he gradually developed a sense of belonging and a 'cultural sensory' for teaching in a foreign context. He eventually learned that Western-style-methods were not suitable for teaching his Thai students, and he adjusted his teaching style to fit the new environment.

As indicated above, international lecturers may need to adjust their own teaching beliefs and preferred teaching style to meet the cultural and educational expectations of the host country. Chinese academic staff may also encounter different educational values and expectations in the UK. Their original culture (e.g. saving face in front of teachers, memorising words of wisdom from ancient masters) may be less important in the host culture (Gu, 2005). Disadvantages of language may influence their teaching practice in the UK. Some Chinese academic staff may insist on the traditional didactic teaching method and avoid communicative-based teaching methods because they lack confidence in their English (Luxon and Peelo, 2009).

Transition and acculturation

During the transition process from student to teacher, teachers usually need a period of time to negotiate and establish their professional identities as teachers (Cohen, 2010; Sutherland, Howard and Markauskaite, 2010). Many individuals experience a

disorienting 'outsider' period during this transition process (Lin and Cranton, 2005; Hoggart, 1957). This shows that the transition from being a student to being a lecturer is not a smooth process, and it requires effort and time for new lecturers to adapt to their new roles in a new environment, and gradually to develop their professional identities and skills.

Maunder et al. (2009) and Jiang et al. (2010) have studied the acculturation of Chinese and Central/South American doctoral students and academic staff in terms of UK academic practice. Both of their studies recognise the importance of disciplinary identity in facilitating the acculturation of international academic staff. The two studies also explore how different academic conventions influence the academic practice of international academic staff in the UK. These studies, however, mainly focused on discussing the academic acculturation of international staff but neglect sociocultural aspects. Yet academic acculturation cannot be treated separately from general acculturation. Thus, more in-depth studies are needed to understand how international academic staff integrate into both UK academical life and daily life. There are many unanswered questions, e.g. how do new lecturers develop their skills in teaching, what training or support is provided by universities to develop their teaching knowledge and skills, and to what extent is this training successful?

The transition process of international lecturers may be investigated from several points of view: academic and teacher development in UK HE institutions, the sociocultural integration process in the UK, and the impact of language barriers, identity shift, and relationships with others. The stories provided by international lecturers help us to understand how their previous educational and working experience influences their professional practice in the UK, and how they cope with the challenges of teaching in a new environment and establishing an academic identity. If the transition is successful, it may lead individuals to personal growth and development (Anderson,

1994). In contrast, if individuals cannot adapt to their new environment, feelings of frustration and anxiety are likely to occur.

2.13 Sociocultural Adaptation

When international academics and students come to the UK, they face not only cultural and language differences but also a range of issues to be managed in their daily lives, such as finding accommodation, opening bank accounts, locating support for health matters, etc. (Luxon and Peelo, 2009). They may need to spend time finding accommodation and becoming familiar with their new local environment. Before they find a proper place in which to live and eat, they may feel less competent in terms of being able to function effectively. This may impact on their basic psychological needs (Chirkov et al., 2005) as they adjust to the new cultural, social, and academic system that may appear to be overwhelming to them (Black, Mendenhall and Oddou, 1991; Church, 1982).

Historically, international students have been reported to worry most about finance, academic courses, and housing issues (Klein, Miller and Alexander, 1974). Immigration regulations and visas are also important issues for both Chinese academics and students (Hamassab and Tidewell, 2002).

Being in a new country can lead to culture shock among both international students and academics. Culture shock is defined as when "...an individual is forced to adjust to an unfamiliar social system where previous learning no longer applies" (Hofstede, Pedersen and Hofstede, 2002, p.22). Studies by Zheng and Berry (1991), Skinner (2008) and Vansteenkiste et al. (2006) and Cushner and Karim (2004) have shown that international staff and students may experience poorer psychological and physical health after arrival in the new host environment compared to pre-departure, and experience more adaptation and communication problems:

Strange food upsets people's stomach and lack of sleep can make people irritable. When these physical difficulties are added to those arising from not being able to communicate confidently and the uncertainties presented by different customs, then frustrations, anxieties, and illness can occur. (Skinner, 2008, p.19).

The physical, emotional, and intellectual wellbeing of international staff and students is challenged, and the transition and adjustment to a new sociocultural environment is often stressful (Berry and Kim, 1988; Anderson, 1994; Cushner and Karim, 2004). Chinese academics and students are separated from their home environment and relationship network that normally help them cope with the stresses such as those associated with change (Turner and Acker, 2002, p.169). It usually takes international international staff and students a period of time, from several months to years, to adjust and become acculturated into the new environment.

2.13.1 Adaptation to the UK environment

Barnes (2006) surveyed 102 Chinese postgraduate students in a UK university and the results revealed that most Chinese students experienced negative culture shock while in the UK. Zhou and Todman (2008) studied the adaptation patterns of 257 Chinese postgraduate students in the UK and their results indicated that students were generally positive about their study-related issues in the UK; whereas their negative comments increased significantly with regard to general life and social life issues while studying in the UK. Similarly, Andrade's (2006) study also showed that international students were generally satisfied with their overseas experience with regard to academic aspects, but not necessarily with regard to social aspects. This indicates that international students may need more support for social and cultural adjustment in order to enhance their intercultural experience and help them integrate into the host country more smoothly.

Spencer-Oatey and Xiong (2006) conducted an empirical study of Chinese students' psychological and sociocultural adjustments to Britain. They studied two cohorts of Chinese students on a one-year foundation course, three months after the beginning of the academic year. Their findings indicated that Chinese students were not experiencing undue psychological stress. However, it has been argued that the Chinese students in the study were non-degree students and thus may have faced less academic pressure and may still have been in the 'honeymoon' stage (Gullahorn and Gullahorn, 1963) when the study was conducted. However, the study revealed that a "clash of values" and a "lack of things in common" were reasons that hindered Chinese students' social interaction with British people. In contrast, Borg et al. (2009) refer to the fact that some international PhD students only focus on achieving their degrees, and have no intention to integrate themselves into the host environment. However, international students or staff who choose to work in another country and immerse themselves in another culture, and learn the language (Smith and Zhou, 2009), may have a richer experience. In one study, a postgraduate Chinese student commented:

I have stayed here over three years. I could never want to be with Chinese all the time because I came here to study English. I don't want to stay with Chinese, speaking with Chinese all day. A lot of students come here and want a different life style. (Edwards and Ran, 2009, p.191)

Some studies (e.g. Devlin and Peacock, 2006; Coverdale-Jones, 2006; Philo, 2007; Gu and Maley, 2008) show that whilst being open to a different lifestyle, many Chinese students do not adapt to the food, weather, or lifestyle in the UK. Other concerns include encountering badly behaved teenagers and drunken people on the street, being discriminated against and being attacked physically and verbally (Philo, 2007), finding it hard to make friends with local people and UK students (Gu, 2005; Devlin and Peacock, 2006; Wray, 2008), and lacking a sense of belonging to the community or society. Gu (2008) summarised Chinese students' concerns with regard to living in the

UK into three categories: “(a) leading a boring and lonely existence; (b) feelings of alienation to the host society; (c) dislike of food” (p.232).

Financial problems may also hinder the social integration of Chinese students, as they may have to work part-time. The volume of academic study may also seem immense: in one study a respondent stated: “I came here to study. I would love to have the time to do other things but I have got so much work to do, so much reading” (Edwards and Ran, 2009, p.191). Therefore, the stress of living in a new country not only stems from cultural differences but also from academic and financial burdens. All of these factors may hinder integration into the new culture.

The aforementioned studies indicate that Chinese students may experience difficulties with regard to satisfying their basic needs when studying in the UK. The effort required to adapt to different life patterns may be more stressful than actually studying in UK universities (Gu and Maley, 2008). If international students and staff cannot overcome stressful and alienating feelings, they might not achieve the ‘growth’, ‘resolution’ or self-actualization phase. Many international students and staff do not completely integrate into the host environment, even after staying in the country for a long time.

It is important to understand the needs of Chinese/international students and lecturers as their numbers are increasing. An annual university report shows that “...non-European student numbers have doubled in 10 years” (Guardian, 2009) while the numbers of international students increased 19% in 2009 from 2008 (UKCISA, 2010). Studies on the challenges facing Chinese students and lecturers in UK HE institutions are still very limited. Therefore, further research needs to be done in order to develop an in-depth understanding of these issues in order to better support the needs of Chinese students and lecturers.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the rationale for the research methodology, the research procedure, and the selection of participants for the study. The research comprises an empirical study that has employed a triangulated mixed methods approach. The data collection methods used were focus groups, interviews, and documentary analysis. The participants were twenty four Chinese postgraduate students, eight international lecturers, and six Chinese lecturers.

3.1 Research questions

The purpose of this study has been to explain the transition and integration of Chinese students and lecturers into UK higher education institutions and to investigate how institutions can support their transition and improve their experience in the UK. The main research questions are:

1. What are the challenges facing Chinese students and lecturers in UK HE institution X (from the perspective of Chinese students, UK and international lecturers, and Chinese lecturers)?
2. What are the academic and cultural transition processes of Chinese students and lecturers in the UK?
3. What are the university's current policy and support service for Chinese/international academics?
4. How can UK HE institutions better support Chinese/international academics in the UK and establish an internationalised teaching, learning, and research environment?

3.2 Research process

The research methods and purposes of each research phase are illustrated in Table 3.1.

Detailed discussions on the research methods, rationale of the research design, and data collection procedure, data analysis approach, and ethical consideration issue are presented in later sections.

Phases	Research method(s) and purposes	Participants
<p>Phase One</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To understand if there are any similarities or discrepancies between the interpretations of Chinese students' learning difficulties and their behaviour 2. To understand what causes these differences 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To investigate the challenges facing Chinese students in UK HE institutions through focus groups <i>Compared with</i> 2. To find out the attitudes of UK and international academic staff toward Chinese students through in-depth interviews 	<p>Focus groups: 24 Chinese postgraduate students (8 in each group) from three different disciplines</p> <p>Interviews: 10 international lecturers:4 Chinese, one Portuguese, one Singaporean, one Malaysian, one German, and 2 British from three different disciplines Gender: 3 females; 5 males Age: 30 to 40</p>
<p>Phase Two</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To reveal what difficulties still persist in the transition from student to lecturer 2. To understand what challenges have already been overcome and what coping strategies are being used 3. To map the transition patterns of Chinese students and lecturers in the UK 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To understand the challenges facing Chinese lecturers working in UK HE institutions through in-depth interviews <i>Compared with</i> 2. To find out the challenges for Chinese students in UK HE institutions (data from <i>Phase One</i>) 	<p>Interviews: 6 Chinese lecturers Gender: 1 female; 5 males Age: 30-55</p>
<p>Phase Three</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To understand if any discrepancies exist and what causes these differences 2. To understand why Chinese students and lecturers seldom utilise the support service of the university 3. To discuss how the university can improve its service support for 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To investigate the university's policy and current support service for international students and staff through documentary analysis of the university's website <i>Compared with</i> 2. To find out the views of Chinese students and lecturers on the support service they have received from the university (data 	<p>Documentary analysis</p>

international students and staff	from <i>Phase One and Phase Two</i>)	
Phase Four 1. To explore the narrative stories of two Chinese lecturers about their transition from student to lecturer	1. To understand the identity shift and transition trajectories of Chinese lecturers through their narrative stories	Interviews: 2 Chinese lecturers Gender: 1 female; 1 male Age: 30s

Table 3.1 Four phases of the research procedure

The process of data collection and data analysis of qualitative research is usually *iterative*, which means that “the analysis starts after some of the data have been collected and the implications of that analysis then shape the next steps in the data collection process” (Bryman, 2004, p.399). This shifting between the different research phases of qualitative research is also inductive (Bryman, *ibid*; McMillan and Schumacher, 2001; Seidel,1998)

Seidel’s (1998) qualitative data analysis process framework clearly describes qualitative research as an iterative and progressive, recursive, and holographic process (*ibid*, p.2). In this process new themes continuously emerge through collecting, thinking, and noticing. New themes emerge through the first research cycle, the data analysis leads to a second cycle, and as as new themes emerge in the second cycle this leads to a third cycle, and so on.

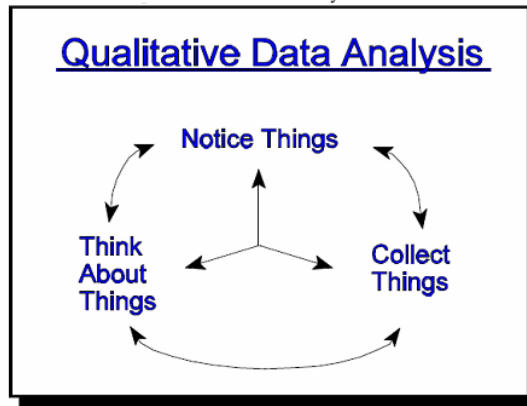
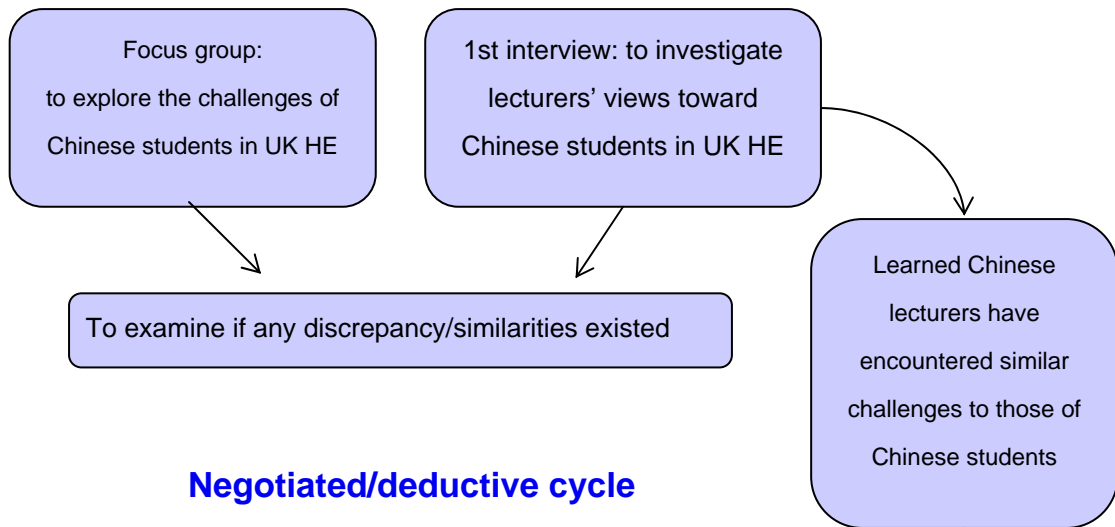


Figure 3.1: Qualitative data analysis framework (Seidel, 1998, p.2)

As indicated in Seidel's framework, new themes and questions constantly emerged during the research process of this study. This led to different phases and techniques of *data triangulation* (different groups of participants) and *methodological triangulation* (focus groups, interviews, and documentary analysis). Data were coded and analysed using *constant comparison* and *cross-checking* through each research cycle and the research directions and questions were adjusted correspondingly. Figure 3.2 depicts the research cycles of this study.

Exploratory/Inductive cycle



Negotiated/deductive cycle

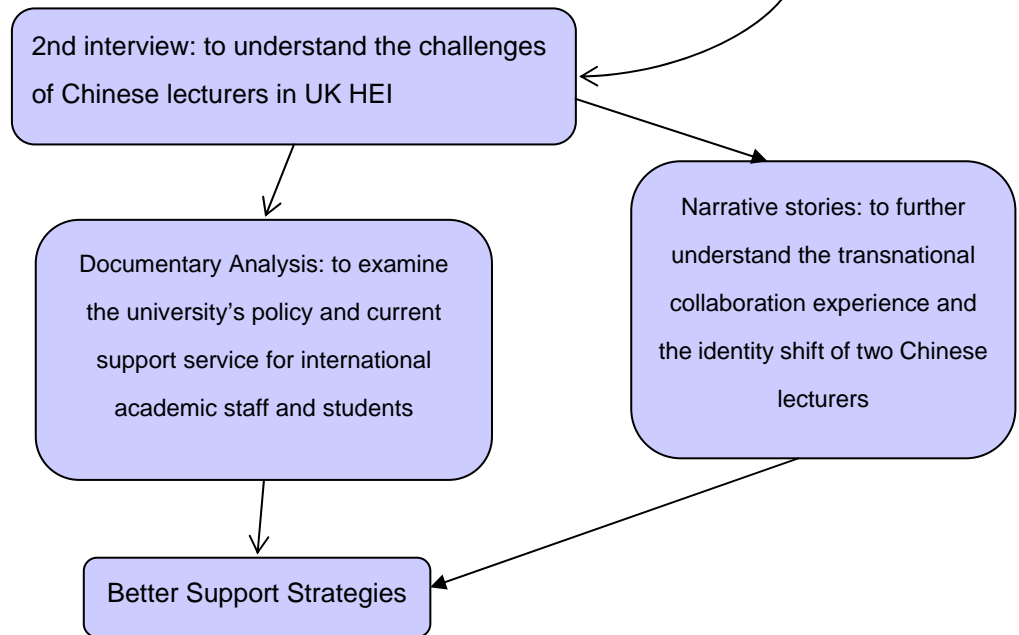


Figure 3.2: Research cycles of the current study

Throughout the two research cycles (*Exploratory/Inductive*, and *Negotiated/deductive*) new themes continuously emerged.

Initially, the research focus was on the support available for Chinese students in UK HE institutions. In the Exploratory/Inductive cycle, focus groups and interviews were conducted with twenty four Chinese students and six international lecturers. The purpose of the focus groups was to explore the challenges facing Chinese students in UK HE institutions, and the interviews investigated lecturers' views on Chinese students in UK HE institutions to cross-check for discrepancies and similarities. The preliminary analysis of the research results of this cycle showed that students and lecturers had divergent views on the same issues in many aspects. A more interesting point was that a new theme emerged from the first research cycle: the reflection of several Chinese lecturers on how students challenged their professional and language abilities because of their ethnicity. This suggested that international academics may encounter similar challenges to those faced by international students (e.g. language issues, discrimination). Although most of the interviewees obtained their postgraduate degree in the UK and were later recruited as university lecturers, the difficulties they had experienced as international students sometimes persisted when they became lecturers. This interesting new theme drew my attention and led me to the decision to conduct a second phase of research in order to understand the challenges faced by Chinese lecturers and the transition from being an international student to being a university lecturer. This demonstrates the iterative nature of qualitative research and led to the emergence of new research questions. The early data presented insights to the challenges facing Chinese students in UK HE institutions. The second cycle explored the transition of Chinese students who became lecturers, to develop an understanding of the adaptation processes of Chinese academics in the UK.

Although it is argued that each person represents a different case, and that the story of one person cannot represent the experiences of others, the research assumes that the adaptation and transition patterns of Chinese students and lecturers will share some similarities.

In the second cycle, six Chinese lecturers were interviewed to understand how they adapted to the UK in terms of both academic and daily life, and how they negotiated and reshaped their identities as they transitioned from being students to being lecturers. They were asked what new challenges they had encountered as lecturers (in comparison to their challenges as students) in the UK, how they had coped with these challenges, and how their previous educational and working experiences had influenced their academic practice in the UK.

Chinese lecturers were the focus of the second cycle because they reported more problems with language and discrimination in the first interview phase than EU lecturers. Previous studies have indicated that Scandinavians are usually considered native speakers and are less likely to encounter discrimination because of their appearance (Braine, 2006; Amin, 1997; Furnham and Bochner, 1997). Moreover, Chinese academics appear to be in the majority among non-UK academics and the number of Chinese students who become lecturers after completing their degrees in the UK is increasing each year. Furthermore, as an ethnically Chinese person who has lived and studied in the UK, the researcher was able to understand the challenges facing Chinese staff and students in the UK. It was possible to establish empathic and intimate connections with the participants and obtain 'insider' information. Since the participants and the researcher shared both culture and language, this helped to minimise possible misunderstanding during the interviews.

In order to understand the support offered to international academics at the university under investigation, a documentary analysis of the university's website was conducted. The data were then cross-checked and compared with the narratives obtained from Chinese students and lecturers to identify discrepancies and find possible answers.

Afterward, in-depth interviews with two Chinese lecturers were conducted in order to further explore their experience of transnational collaborative activities and their identity shift after living, studying, and working in the UK for some time.

The data analysis and research findings are presented according to the two-ring model proposed in Chapter 2.

3.3 Rationale for research design

The mixed methods research study presents the experiences of international staff in one UK HE institution.

The qualitative aspects of the research are concerned with the way in which participants interpret their social world and “embodies a view of social reality as a constantly shifting emergent property of individuals’ creation” (Bryman, 2004, p.20). Qualitative research is broadly defined as “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The researcher tried to understand and explore social situations through the eyes of the participants but also brings her values to the research. This may impact on the interpretation of the research.

There are different ontological considerations concerned with the nature of social entities. The two most frequently mentioned ontological positions are: objectivism and constructionism. Objectivism asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are

independent or separate from social actors, whereas constructionism claims that social phenomena and categories are constantly accomplished and revised by human beings (ibid). This research adopts a constructivist perspective, based on the belief that the social order is constantly changed and reconstructed over time by social actors.

Gubrium and Holstein (1997) have classified emotionalism as one of four traditions of qualitative research: emotionalism concerns “the inner reality of humans” and exhibits “a concern with subjectivity and gaining access to ‘inside’ experience” (Bryman, 2004, p.267). Since this study concerned the ‘inner’ experience of Chinese academics in UK HE institutions, the choice of data collection methods (focus groups and interviews) aimed to gain a rich picture of the participants' experiences.

Qualitative research has been criticised for its lack of wider validity and credibility (Flick, 2009). The constructive and interpretive orientation of qualitative research have been criticised by positivists in that researchers' biases are likely to influence the interpretation of the findings. However, the main purpose of this study is not to generalise the findings to a wider universe but to generate complex, in-depth and comprehensive data and to generate theory out of the findings (Mitchell, 1983; Yin, 1984).

Triangulation

A triangulation technique was adopted to enhance the validity, credibility and quality of the data within this study, and to explore the research questions from multiple perspectives (Denzin, 1978; Patton, 1990; De Vos, 1998).

Triangulation has been defined as an “attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint” (Cohen and Manion, 2000, p.254). Denzin (1989, pp.237-241) identified four types of triangulation: data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory

triangulation, and methodological triangulation. Data triangulation was used in this study of the phenomenon (internationalisation) through the different perspectives of the individual participants. The present study aimed to understand the challenges faced by Chinese academics not only from the perspective of Chinese academics themselves, but also from that of Chinese students and international lecturers so as to obtain rich and comprehensive accounts. Documentary analysis via the university website also informed the research questions. Within the case study the different techniques— focus group discussions, interviews, and documentary analysis —explored and analysed the research from different perspectives. Cross-checking between sources and data (O’Donoghue and Punch, 2003) provides a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon (Altrichter et al., 2008). Triangulation “allows the integration of a variety of qualitative approaches into a more general research design” to validate and strengthen the study (Flick, 2009, p.452; Jonsen and Jenn, 2009).

Narrative Inquiry

The study adopted narrative inquiry as one of the techniques for data collection. *Narrative inquiry* is described as a research method that investigates the lived experience and story of individuals in order to understand the linkage between their past and the present (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Narrative inquiry complimented the main purpose of this study since it is concerned with temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin, Pushor, and Orr, 2007). *Temporality* indicates the past, present, and futures of participants. *Sociality* refers to the relationship and interaction of the participants with other people, or with the researcher. *Place* emphasises the impact of events in different locations. These three dimensions were especially suitable for the purpose of this study, which sought to find out how past educational and working experiences

influence the current teaching and other working practices and present experiences of Chinese students and lecturers in the UK.

Although narrative inquiry has been criticised as being not theoretical (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000), it is commonly accepted in educational research (Clandinin and Connelly, 1990), teacher development (Conle, 2000), and teacher preparation (Conle et al., 2000). Narrative inquiry can be conducted in many forms (e.g. interviews, emails, fieldnotes, letters, etc.) to emphasise the lived stories of the participants, and the consequences and linkages to their current and future lives, whereas general interviews may focus on current events or perceptions without investigating past experience.

3.4 Data collection instruments and the participants

Multiple data collection instruments were used to elicit richer information and to obtain a holistic perspective of the questions under investigation. Several groups of participants were studied in a number of ways: focus groups with Chinese students, interviews with international staff and Chinese staff, and documentary analysis of institutional policies and perspectives accessed via the university website (see Table 3.1). The research adopted a purposive sampling technique, which meant the subjects were selected according to specific characteristics and criteria (Patton, 1990). The data were cross-checked to confirm the validity of the findings and to investigate whether the data converged with, contradicted, or complemented each other (see Data Analysis Approach and Data Collection Procedure).

Setting

All of the participants in the case study were students or academic staff at one university in the UK. The university was chosen because it has a significant proportion of

international students and academics. The university is among the top 20 largest recruiters of international students in the UK (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2007/2008) and has approximately 1,000 Chinese students (14% of all international students). The university also has a large number of international academic staff, many of whom are Chinese.

The data collection process took place from July 2009 to October 2010. The focus groups took place in July 2009, when Chinese postgraduate students had finished their taught modules and were engaged in their Master's dissertation. It was more appropriate to conduct the focus groups at that time because students were more flexible since they did not need to attend courses. Besides, collecting data at the end of the semester allowed them time to reflect upon their UK experience over the whole academic year. The three phases of the interviews were conducted in July 2009, May 2010, and October 2010 respectively. The time for conducting the interviews mainly depended on the availability of lecturers and the progress of the research.

Focus group

In order to understand the needs of Chinese students in different disciplines, students studying architecture, business, and building technology were selected. Table 3.2 shows the background information of the focus group participants.

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
	Master of Architecture in Urban Design	Master of Science in Sustainable Building Technology	Master of Arts in Business
Gender	Male 4	Male 3	Male 1
	Female 4	Female 5	Female 7
Age	24~43	24~27	22~24
IELTS	6.0	6.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Finance & Investment—7.0 ● Marketing—7.0 ● Operations Management (Master of Science)—6.5
Class size	10 to 20 people (usually with home diploma students)	10 to 20 people (no home students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Finance & Investment > 100 people (50% Chinese, 50% Indian) ● Market—20 people (4 to 5 Chinese) ● Operations Management – N/A
Person who had studied abroad before	One male: China—9 years UK—8 years (from high school to postgraduate)	None	One male: UK—3 years (from undergraduate to postgraduate)

Table 3.2 Demographic Details of Focus Group Participants

The focus group questions were presented in both English and Chinese in order to avoid any possible language barrier. Recording devices were utilised during the focus groups.

The data was then transcribed and analysed. The questions for the focus group were:

Focus group questions

1. Can you talk about your motivation to come to the UK for study, and how did you choose your university?
2. Do you think there is any difference between the educational system in the UK and that in China? What is your educational experience in China? How about

your educational experience in the UK? Try to cover the following aspects:

- in class (class size, presentation, teaching method and styles, learning styles, the interpretation of silence, group work, etc.);
 - assignments (writing essays and critical thinking, plagiarism and referencing system, doing a project, etc.).
3. What kind of assessment methods did you experience in China? How about the assessment methods in the UK? What kind of assessment methods do you prefer?
 4. How are your relationships with the staff and your peers in your university? Do they support you in any way? What kind of support do you think your university and others should offer? (e.g. language support, personal tutorial support, financial support, proofreading services, a buddy system, an orientation programme, etc.).
 5. What are your views on your curriculum/programme? Are you satisfied with the courses offered in your school? What kind of learning experience do you enjoy? What kind of learning experiences do you think your programme should offer as part of the curriculum?

A focus group method was used to explore the perceptions of current Chinese taught postgraduate students in the case university. "Focus interviews are typically based on homogeneous groups. Focus interviews involve conducting open-ended interviews with groups of five to eight people on specially targeted or focused issues" (Patton, 1990, p.173). Based on this definition, three groups of Chinese students from different disciplines were selected. Each focus group consisted of eight Chinese postgraduate students. Selection of the participants was made according to the criterion for selecting participants for a focus group, namely that they "are known to have been involved in a

particular situation" (Merton et al., 1956, p.3). The participants were Chinese students who shared similar learning experiences -those who had obtained undergraduate degrees in China and were engaged in Master's taught programmes in one UK university.

When selecting the focus group for this study, a natural group was favoured by the researcher so that the discussion would be as natural as possible. In a natural group, the participants (e.g. Friends, friends, students) are known to each other to some extent and thus may be more likely to express their true feelings (Bryman, 2004), as commonly found in collective cultures. Most of the previous studies of Chinese students in UK HE institutions were conducted with students on foundation courses, language courses or postgraduate students without focusing on specific disciplines. However, students may encounter different issues in different disciplines, a point which has been rarely discussed in other literature. The selection of participants in this study was made according to the definition mentioned earlier; they were "ethnic Chinese students who have received most of their education in mainland China before coming to the UK for postgraduate study".

The benefits of adopting the focus group approach rather than using individual interviews were as follows:

1. Key issues could surface, since the researcher acted as a moderator or facilitator rather than an interviewer, and relinquished a certain amount of control to the participants.
2. The free discussion among the participants elicited a wide variety of views, and the discussion of particular phenomena constructed a collective explanation of why and how people behave in particular ways.

3. The data obtained were more realistic than those gained from individual interviews, as social phenomena do not arise among individuals in isolation from others. Rather, they occur through interaction and discussion with others.
(Bryman, 2004)

There were also some possible drawbacks of employing a natural focus group. For instance, some assumptions may be made since participants who know each other may feel no need bring these issues to the fore. Besides, some individuals may dominate the discussion. Moreover, since students participating in the focus group were from the same course, their views may not be representative of the larger student body (Bryman, 2004). In order to eliminate the drawbacks of collecting data from a focus group, the researcher encouraged every participant to state their views.

Interviews

Semi-structured one-to-one interviews with international staff were conducted to obtain in-depth perspectives. The interviews allowed staff to describe their own experience of teaching international/Chinese students and the data were cross-checked with students' opinions to enhance the validity and credibility of the research.

Semi-structured interviews are more flexible than structured interviews and allow participants to express their thoughts more freely. The semi-structured interviews were conducted from an 'interview guide', which is an informal "grouping of topics and questions that the interviewer can ask in different ways for different participants" (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002, p. 195). Although questions may not have been asked in the same way in every interview, all of the questions were covered and similar words were used. The interview guide prepared the researcher for the interviews and enhanced the reliability and comparability of the data (Bryman, 2004).

The reasons for adopting personal interviews were partly pragmatic. Staff had less flexible time than students. Each member of staff had a different schedule for teaching and this made it difficult to coordinate them. There were more variables among staff than among students. Staff had different numbers of years teaching experience, different experience in dealing with international students, and may have taught in very different areas. In contrast, the Chinese students were around the same age and all were taught master degree students. Staff interviews enabled richer data to be sought and offered flexibility to probe issues of particular interest in more depth.

The interviews were conducted in three phases, as explained below.

Phase I

The criterion for selecting the participants at this stage was lecturers who were teaching or had taught Chinese postgraduate students. In order to understand the opinions of university lecturers toward Chinese students in UK HE institutions, the interviewees were not limited to any nationality.

First interview questions

1. Do you think there are any differences between Chinese students and home students in terms of their academic performance and their learning styles, motivation and attitudes? What causes these differences? (e.g. assignment writing, English proficiency level, participation in class, asking or answering questions, participating in group work, presentations, or project work, design studio, etc.).
2. Has any Chinese student come to you to ask questions or discuss their marks and obtain feedback?
3. How do you or your school provide support for Chinese/international students in terms of academic life and daily life?

4. How is the interaction between Chinese students and home students from your observation? How do you facilitate multicultural communication in your class? (e.g. assigning students from different backgrounds to one group).
5. Do you introduce knowledge from other cultures/countries while teaching to deliver global contexts, or do you prefer to cover the UK context in particular (as students come here to learn the UK experience)?
6. What are the pros and cons of having international students in your programme/university?

Ten international lecturers participated in the first interview phase: four Chinese, one Portuguese, one German, one Singaporean, one Malaysian, and two British. There were three females and seven males aged between 30 and 40. The participants were selected from three disciplines that were in accordance with the focus groups: architecture, business, and building technology.

Table 3.3 Demographic Details of the Participants of the First Interview Phase

	M/F	Discipline	Country of Origin		M/F	Discipline	Country of Origin
1.	F	Architecture	China	6.	M	Building Technology	China
2.	F	Architecture	Brazil	7.	M	Building Technology	UK
3.	F	Architecture	Germany	8.	M	Business	China
4.	M	Architecture	China	9.	M	Business	Singapore
5	M	Building Technology	UK	10	M	Business	Malaysia

Phase II

The criteria for selecting the participants in the second interviews were based on the following definition of Chinese academic staff:

Ethnic Chinese who have received most of their education in mainland China, and are currently employed as lecturers (including senior lecturers, readers and professors) in UK HE institutions and have been so for more than one year.

These criteria ensured that participants had sufficient knowledge and understanding of Chinese educational pedagogy and expectations, while also having a reasonable period of time to experience and adjust to UK pedagogy and UK university culture.

Second interview questions

1. What support or training is provided by your university to assist new lecturers in terms of academic life and daily life? What support has been most successful for you?
2. How do you think your culture, educational or working experience affects your teaching and research practice in the UK?
3. Compared to your experience as an international student, what are the new challenges of being a lecturer in a UK university? What challenges still need to be conquered?
4. How are your relationships with other colleagues and students? Do you have more same nationality friends than UK /other nationality friends?
5. Which stage of the integration process do you think you have reached? How do you manage the adjustment process? (i.e. the honeymoon stage; the culture shock stage; the recovery stage; the adaptation stage; reverse culture shock; re-recognition and re-appreciate stage; interdependent stage; transfer of international experiences and knowledge stage).
6. What advice would you give to other new international academic colleagues?

Selection of the participants did not consider gender or age factors, but depended on their willingness to participate in the research. Five of the participants were male and one was female. The participants were from different disciplines: architecture, building technology, and civil engineering. All of the participants had completed their undergraduate study in China, and most had obtained their postgraduate degree from the university at which they were currently working. Half of the participants were newly recruited lecturers who were in their early thirties and had worked or taught for a maximum of two years at the university. The rest of the participants were between the ages of 40 and 50 and had more years of teaching experience. Six ethnic Chinese academic staff at the university were interviewed separately for 30 to 90 minutes. The interviews were conducted in Mandarin to eliminate possible misunderstandings that might be caused by the language barrier. Interview data were recorded, transcribed and coded.

Table 3.4 Demographic Details of the Participants in the Second Interview Phase

	M/F	Discipline	Masters	PhD	Years in UK	Working experience	Recruited as a lecturer in UK
1	M	Architecture	UK	UK	2003 (7 years)	6 months (FT) at architecture practice; (PT) architecture designer (hourly based, nearly 3 months)	2008
2.	M	Civil Engineering	China	one in China, one in UK	1999 (11 years)	Lecturer: China – 15 years, UK – 10 years; Research Fellow – 2 years	2000
3	M	Architecture	UK	UK	2001 (9 years)	Tutor and teaching assistant while as a PhD student	2008
4	M	Architecture	China	UK	2004 (6 years)	Tutor and teaching assistant while as a PhD student	2008
5	F	Architecture	UK	UK (not yet finished)	2005 (5 years)	Tutor and teaching assistant while as a PhD student; hall tutor – 6 months	2009
6	M	Building Technology	China	UK	1994 (16 years)	Lecturer: China – 10 years, UK – 5 years; Research fellow – 8 years	2005

Phase III

Two Chinese lecturers were selected from the six participants in Phase II for further interviews. They had both participated in the same transnational collaborative programme between China and the UK. Both interviewees were in the architecture discipline and were in their early thirties; one was female and the other was male. They also had similar educational backgrounds: they had received most of their education in China and obtained their master and doctoral degrees in the UK. Since the purpose of the third phase interview was to obtain in-depth narrative stories from the two participants,

an unstructured interview strategy was adopted to allow them to express themselves spontaneously (Bryman, 2004). The interviews were conducted in Mandarin and each one lasted for around one hour.

Documentary Analysis

This study included documentary analysis from the HE institution in order to achieve a contextual understanding of its policies and support services for international students and academic staff. Documents can reflect real everyday practices and issues when they are not deliberately produced for the purpose of research (e.g. reports, internet resources, etc.) (Payne and Payne, 2004; Bryman, 2004). Documentary analysis can be helpful in understanding social realities in institutional contexts and can supplement other forms of data (Flick, 2009). Moreover, documentary analysis can elicit a large amount of information in a limited time. Due to the length and scope of this study, it was not practical to interview every staff member, administrator, and authority to understand the university's policies and support service provisions for international students and academic staff. Therefore, analysis of the university's website with regards to its support policies and services was used to provide other data.

Although the content on the website was sometimes outdated, it provided a general indication of the university's current policies and practices.

Some unique features of internet documents are their 'non-linearity' (Flick, 2009, p.276) and cross-referencing (Mitra and Cohen, 1999). Web texts are not like traditional texts that have a beginning and an end; one text links to other texts. The university website contains a great deal of information and the main menu of the university website was checked and then further searches for subordinate menus were made with the key words of *student support*, *international teacher development*, *international office*, and *teacher development*.

3.5 Data analysis approach

Techniques for analysing the data involved coding, constant comparison, and cross-checking.

Coding was the starting point for most of the qualitative data analysis (Bryman, 2004). Qualitative data analysis focuses on the classification of important things, persons, events and properties (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). In this study, thematic coding was applied, which meant that the data were analysed and categorised according to similar themes and patterns (Flick, 2009). All of the data obtained through the focus groups and interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. The audio-recordings then were repeatedly listened to so as to ensure that important information had been extracted, and to identify and describe recurring themes and patterns. The transcribed data were later classified into different categories, e.g. language issues, relationships, daily life issues. Most of the interviews were conducted in Chinese and the data were later translated into English by the researcher, who is bilingual in Chinese and English. Presentation of the data was organised so as to present the opinions of the majority and to discuss special issues raised by individuals.

After the coding, the data were compared and cross-checked. *Constant comparison* of newly obtained data with previous data tested emerging themes and generated new research directions and theories (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Goetz and LeCompte, 1981; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). *Cross-checking*, a feature of triangulation, resembles constant comparison by comparing data from different sources so that different kinds of data supplement each other and a more comprehensive view is established (O'Donoghue and Punch, 2003; Altrichter et al., 2008). The data were also compared and cross-checked with previous theories (Tuckman, 1999) and research so as to show the similarities or discrepancies between this and related studies.

The data analysis procedure is demonstrated in Figure 3.3:

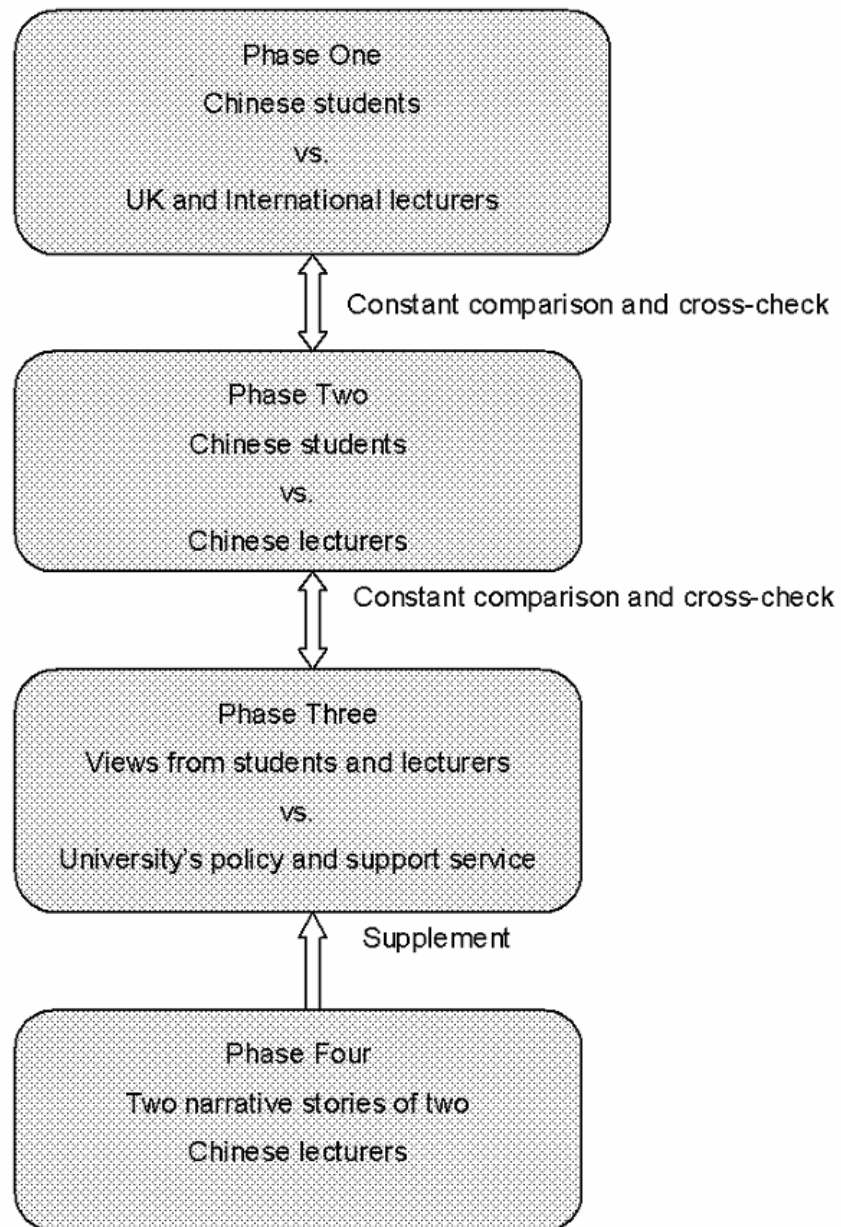


Figure 3.3: Data analysis process

3.6 Ethical considerations, confidentiality and anonymity

The researcher is aware of ethical issues when conducting a culturally sensitive research.

Therefore, this research was conducted under the Ethical Guidelines of the Social

Research Association (2003). The Ethical Guidelines point out the researchers' obligation to subjects, which are:

- 1) *Avoiding undue intrusion*
- 2) *Obtaining informed consent*
- 3) *Protecting the interests of subjects*
- 4) *Enabling participation*
- 5) *Maintaining confidentiality of records*
- 6) *Preventing disclosure of identities*

Before conducting the research, an informed consent form was sent to every participant. The Heads of Schools signed the permission letter (Appendix I) for this study, and every participant signed the informed consent form (Appendix II and III). The informed consent form informed the participants about the purpose of the research, how it would be conducted, and assured their entitlement to human rights and privacy.

Moreover, based on the *Code of Practice for the Safety of Social Researchers* by the Social Research Association, research should be conducted in places where the safety of the participants is ensured as well as that of researchers themselves. Hence, the interviews or focus groups were conducted in the classroom or the office in the university under study. The researcher tried to establish a relaxed and casual atmosphere while interviewing the participants, and the participants were encouraged to express their thoughts freely. The researcher sometimes shared her own experience of living and studying in the UK to show empathy with participants.

The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were assured. All participants agreed that the interviews and focus groups could be audio-recorded. The researcher promised that the recordings would be destroyed after the data analysis and only the

researcher would access the recorded data. The researcher also guaranteed that the data obtained would only be used for research purposes.

3.7 Limitations of research design

This study was conducted at a single university in the UK, and it may not be possible to generalise the experiences of the participants to Chinese/international academics in other UK HE settings.

Another limitation of this study was the fact that the university has a large number of international students and lecturers, and thus it may be more experienced than other UK HE institutions in meeting the needs of international members. The findings may not, therefore, represent the challenges of Chinese/international members who are at institutions with fewer non-UK staff members. Moreover, the majority of the Chinese lecturers in this study had obtained their master and doctoral degrees from the university under investigation before being recruited as lecturers, and thus they were already familiar with the environment and tended to have fewer difficulties in adapting to the academic and local environment. However, this study adopted a qualitative research approach as the objective was to explore the research questions in depth rather than to obtain generalisable data. Further research may explore the experience of lecturers who are completely new to the UK and who work in universities with few non-UK academic staff.

3.8 The role of the researcher

It is important for researchers to reflect on their own role and position in a research study and how it may affect the research design and the interpretation of the data (May, 2001; Greenbank, 2003; Halliday, 2002). The researcher adopted an interpretivist

approach to this study and the role and attitude inevitably influenced the use, selection, and interpretation of data (Malcolm, 1993; Bryman, 2004). Greenbank (2003) supports the view that educational research cannot be value-free and that “researchers who do not include a reflexive account should be criticised” (p.796). Hence, I have provided a discussion on how my own role as an outsider and insider (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009; Kanuha, 2000; Maykut and Morehouse, 1994) to the participant groups may have influenced this research.

Maykut and Morehouse (1994) stated that researchers are expected to dwell in the experience and meaning systems of the participants but also to be aware of how their own biases and perceptions influence their understanding of the data. As a Chinese student in the UK, I share a similar cultural background and educational experience with the participants and I am able to identify and sympathise with their feelings and experience easily. In addition, some of the participants already knew me before conducting the research, so the feeling of trust and intimacy between us enabled me to obtain more insider information. Since the participants and I share similar experiences, I could understand the challenges they were likely to encounter and could raise questions that outsiders may not have paid attention to. Nevertheless, it was also likely that I may unwittingly have omitted some information that insiders often take for granted but may have been important for outsiders.

On the other hand, I am an outsider in the sense that I am not associated with the same university as the participants and I am not an academic staff member. Because each institution has its own institutional culture and policy, it is sometimes difficult for outsiders to understand how insiders would feel and what they experience in their community of practice. As a consequence, I may be unable to ask probing questions due to my lack of familiarity with the institution and the position of academic staff. To address this weakness, I reviewed related literature produced by insider and outsider researchers to understand how others have approached it. This helped me to develop

comprehensive research questions and reduced the likelihood that important information would be omitted.

When conducting focus groups and interviews, I attempted to play the role of a facilitator to encourage my participants to reflect on their experiences rather than to impose my own thoughts on them or to lead them to satisfy my assumptions. For instance, many studies (e.g. Jiang et al., 2010; Huang, 2008; Mann, 2001) have indicated that Chinese academics are likely to encounter challenges related to language use and discrimination. However, I could not assume that all participants will have encountered these challenges and would wish to talk about these issues if they had not experienced them. During the focus group and interviews, I invited the participants to talk about not only their negative experiences but also positive ones to avoid problematising or bias in the data.

The analysis, interpretation and presentation of the data may also be influenced by my 'insider' perceptions of what is important for ethnic Chinese students and staff in UK HE. However, as an outsider to the institution and to the teaching role, my interpretation of the data may not perfectly convey their thoughts. These weaknesses inevitably exist in qualitative research (Rose, 1985). My approach was to present the data as completely and authentically as possible, to try my best to avoid bias and not to misinterpret or misrepresent participants' words.

Reflexivity raises the level of objectivity and authenticity of a research account (Kanuhua, 2000). I aimed to demonstrate critical reflexivity on my role as an insider and outsider to the studied group through this discussion and to indicate how it may have affected the results of my study.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis and Findings

Data Analysis Part I – Language, Relationship and Identity

This chapter presents the analysis and findings of data collected. The data are discussed and organised into three parts according to the two-ring framework proposed in Chapter 2.

4.1 Language skills

Language issues appear to be the biggest challenge for international students, and can influence their academic performance in various ways: understanding lectures, essay writing (e.g. criticality, plagiarism), presentation skills, group work, and interaction and communication with others.

The majority of the lecturers and Chinese students considered current language entrance requirements for international students (IELTS 6.0) to be too low and felt that their English language ability was not sufficient for their postgraduate studies. Many international students had difficulty understanding lectures and communicating with others. Although most lecturers encouraged international students to speak English in class, Chinese students were often found to speak Mandarin in class. Such language issues were not only found among Chinese learners, but also among other international students (e.g. Greek, Cypriot and French).

The majority of lecturers showed empathy towards international students. They understood international students' need to work on improving their language skills and

understanding academic content at the same time, and they paid more attention to the depth and quality of students' writing rather than their grammatical errors.

Interestingly, language issues not only arose among international students but also international lecturers. Three Chinese lecturers mentioned that they had to present course materials very clearly because home students would blame the lecturer's English if they did not understand the content (physics, math, and computer software) of lectures. The data obtained from the focus groups showed that Chinese students also considered the English accent of non-UK lecturers to be a problem, and they preferred to be taught by native UK lecturers. Other studies have also shown that many international and home students, and their parents, believe that they should learn from native speaking (NS) lecturers while studying in the UK (Nomnian, 2008; Greis, 1985), as they think that being lectured or tutored by NNS lecturers will cause problems due to an additional language barrier (Smith and Zhou, 2009). Many students have been found to hold the opinion that non-UK academics have "bad pronunciation and outdated language use" (Benke and Medgyes, 2005, p.206). Pronunciation and accent also appear to be barriers faced by non-native-speaking lecturers (Kachur, 1982; Mawhinney and Xu, 1997).

In the second set of in-depth interviews, undertaken with six Chinese lecturers, most interviewees considered that language was not a serious issue. Although most Chinese lecturers thought it was very difficult to achieve near native-speaker level, their English ability was sufficient to deliver course content clearly. One Chinese lecturer expressed the following view:

All international lecturers should not have big problems in their English. Since we are recruited as lecturers, it means we have sufficient professional knowledge and language ability to teach students.

This is possibly because their length of stay in the UK is long and their language abilities have improved over the years. The length of stay is relevant to English and communication competence, and impacts on other daily life issues such as financial problems, food, tax, insurance, and health insurance (Lou, 1990; Liu, 1998).

Two Chinese lecturers had received feedback from students regarding their English. One was told he was “speaking too fast with some accent”. The other Chinese lecturer was criticised for his English while teaching calculation-related subjects. It is of interest to note that calculation-related subjects are ‘hard disciplines’ (Biglan, 1973) that have a universal language (e.g. Arabic numbers, formulas), and language should not be a concern. However, students attributed their lack of understanding of content to Chinese lecturers’ poor English. The same issue was referred to by another lecturer in the Business school in the first interview phase, who stated that they had to prepare course materials very well and deliver content very clearly.

A lack of background knowledge on cultural connotations in English was considered the main obstacle in communication. One lecturer mentioned:

Language might be a problem but it is not the biggest problem. Not knowing much about British culture is the biggest problem. It'll lower your teaching quality.

Without knowing the cultural connotation of a language, foreign students may have difficulty understanding conversations in TV programmes, movies, or in daily conversation. One Chinese lecturer said:

When I watched British movie in a cinema, everyone laughed so hard but I didn't understand why they laughed. My daughter who grew up in the UK also laughed so hard, but I just couldn't understand what's so funny.

This confirms that barriers are likely to occur when there are difficulties interpreting colloquial language and cultural connotations of a different culture (Edwards, 2006;

Cortazzi, Jin, and Zhiru, 2009; Bretag et al., 2002). Chinese lecturers may have to spend time explaining culture-related concepts to students from different cultural background.

Some participants made efforts to learn British culture, history and stories in their leisure time in order to communicate with British people more effectively and improve their teaching quality.

4.2 Relationships

4.2.1 Teacher-student relationship

Most Chinese students thought that the teacher-student relationship in the UK was not as close as it is in China. International lecturers also stated that students seldom asked them questions. Students said that they usually first seek help from friends, parents, or Google before asking their lecturers. Factors preventing students from asking lecturers questions were language barriers and unfamiliarity with lecturers.

Although every student has a personal tutor, tutors and tutees only met three times per semester (which are the minimum requirements according to the university's regulations). Female tutors tend to have closer relationships with their tutees, and students are more likely to talk with them about personal issues (e.g. relationship issues). Tutors are expected to provide 'pastoral care, advice, and support' to assist students in developing their academic potential (Hixenbaugh, Pearson, and Williams, 2006, p.47). Students in this study also wanted lecturers to provide proactive support according to students' nationalities, potential and merit, and to facilitate intercultural communication among different nationals.

The findings support the idea that disciplinary structures may influence the teacher-student relationships (Garrison, Cleveland-Innes, and Fung, 2010; Arbaugh, Bangert, and Cleveland-Innes, 2010). The participants from 'hard applied' disciplines

(e.g. architecture, civil engineering, the built environment) tended to have better teacher-student relationships than those in 'pure applied' disciplines (e.g. business), as the nature of 'hard applied' disciplines usually requires teachers and students to work with practical skills and conduct experiments together in a laboratory or studio (Chiang, 2003).

Interestingly, unlike other studies, Chinese teachers tended to establish close mentoring relationships with their students (e.g. Philo, 2007; Chen, 1994). Three young Chinese lecturers who are in their early thirties stated that they maintain a distance from their students on purpose in order to establish authority:

I don't want to be too close with my students; otherwise they won't listen to me.

Only one Chinese lecturer, who is 30 years old, reported having very close relationships with Chinese students, and usually provided extra help for students related to both their academic and daily life. He said that he could recognise and identify with students' difficulties easily since he was once an international student himself.

Lecturers generally treated all international students equally and did not offer special support for international students. However, one Chinese lecturer said that he had higher expectations of Chinese students and was stricter with them because he treated them like his own children:

I have a son who is also a university student now. My students are all around his age so I treat my students as my children. My Chinese students' parents spend a lot of money and send their children to a country far away home. I understand parents' expectations toward their children so I want my students to really gain useful knowledge and can contribute to China when they return home. I am stricter to my Chinese students. When they have low academic performance, I ask them to come to my office to understand their difficulties.

4.2.2 Relationship with colleagues

The majority of Chinese students expressed the difficulties of making friends with home students. The reasons were lack of contact, language barriers, being excluded, and cultural differences.

In the opinion of lecturers, the unbalanced ratios of home students and international students made intercultural communication limited. In some programmes there were no home students at all. Chinese students in Focus Group 2 mentioned there were only two nationalities in their class: Chinese and Indian. In these circumstances, Chinese students had limited opportunities to meet home students and had no local friends.

In contrast, some programmes (e.g. architecture, marketing) had many home students. Although home students in these programmes held many social events to facilitate intercultural communication, Chinese students still found it difficult to form close relationships with home students. Some Chinese students thought that home students did not sympathise with them and avoided making friends with Chinese students.

Some misunderstandings also occurred because of cultural differences. An appropriate action in China may be interpreted as inappropriate in the UK. For instance, Chinese students tend not to greet strangers and this behaviour may be perceived as impolite by locals. Moreover, different interpretations of eye-contact can also cause misunderstanding. Some Chinese people do not look at people in the eye to show respect, but this can be perceived as rude by British people.

Although the 'clique' phenomenon was commonly found among Chinese students (Edwards and Ran, 2009), Chinese lecturers purposely avoided establishing close relationships with other Chinese lecturers in their workplace. They considered many traditional Chinese virtues (e.g. trust among people) to no longer exist following the 10 year Cultural Revolution in China. Instead, the relationship between people became competitive. In addition, establishing good rapport with people of higher status became

more important than one's professional knowledge and competence. These factors prevented the formation of close relationships with other Chinese colleagues at work. Relationships among colleagues were considered more equal in the UK, whereas they were more complex and hierarchical in China. Many studies have demonstrated the hierarchical relationship in Chinese culture (Liu and Xu , 2011; Xu and Liu, 2009; Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998; Zhai, 2004). Xu and Liu (2009) described how a Chinese university lecturer changed the way she evaluated students' work under pressure from her course leader. These complex and hierarchical aspects also existed when applying for research funding and conducting research, which is discussed in later sections.

Chinese lecturers tended to have closer relationships with colleagues who were in the same research group or with colleagues who had offices next door. Time spent with colleagues seemed to have more influence than nationality when it came to peer relationships. Unlike the negative intercultural experience described by other Chinese lecturers (Luxon and Peelo, 2009; Jiang et al., 2010), the participants generally had good relationships with their colleagues.

Although many studies have found that international lecturers are likely to encounter discrimination in their workplace (e.g. Arora, 2005; Ghuman, 1995; Kim, 2005), none of the Chinese lecturers had been discriminated against by UK colleagues or students. They thought that this may be because they have been at the university for many years and many colleagues had taught them before. Furthermore, there are many international lecturers in the university's departments and thus colleagues tend to have higher multicultural awareness.

In terms of daily life, however, many Chinese lecturers formed close relationships with same nationals. A home network was found to be "a source of emotional and moral support, understanding and reassurance" (Gill, 2007, p.174). Moreover, sharing culture and communication patterns enable Chinese people to understand tacit Chinese cultural connotations without further explanation. For instance, celebrating a traditional festival

and eating together were considered important aspects of forming close relationships with other Chinese people. The importance of the 'eating culture' among Chinese people has been discussed in many studies (Anderson, 1988; Luxon and Peelo, 2009).

Different eating habits may hinder intercultural relationships:

I can eat spicy hot pot with my Chinese colleagues and friends, but it is impossible to eat that with UK or European colleagues.

Similar to Chinese students' experience, Chinese lecturers also thought a lack of common interests and experiences (Ippolito, 2007) was an obstacle to intercultural communication and resulted in superficial relationships:

The conversation between me and other national friends are usually very superficial although we often go to pubs or eat out together. I talked about my culture and customs; they talked about their culture and customs. We can talk about British culture, but usually I became a listener because I don't know much about British culture. When they talk about TV programmes or famous movie stars, jokes, stories, toys or games they played in their childhood, I can only listen.

Nevertheless, one participant thought that British people treat 'insiders' in a very friendly way so it was important to be recognised as an insider:

When you are recognised as an insider by British, they become very nice and trust you. They consider you are a friend.

Making a contribution to the host country was considered an important way to become accepted by British people as an insider. In addition, spending time living or travelling with local people were considered important ways to localise oneself and become integrated into UK life. This echoes Tusi's (2007) assertion that 'participation is central to identity formation (p.678)'. Wenger (1998) also suggests that nonparticipation progressively marginalises an individual.

Although support from same nationals was considered a strong source for easing initial adaptive stress (Walton, 1990), Kim (2005) warned that excessive dependence on

same nationals may hinder integration into the host environment. The Chinese lecturers in this study appear to have developed good relationships with both same nationals and local people, and both groups seem to play different but important roles in their lives.

4.2.3 Identity: cultural identity and academic identity

As discussed in the literature review chapter, individuals have an ideal identity and a perceived identity, and sometimes the two identities may conflict with each other (Inbar-lourie, 2006). Three Chinese lecturers in this study mentioned how they were criticised about their non-native English accent by students, despite the fact that the native language of one of the lecturers is English. The Chinese lecturer thought that students identified him as a non-native speaker of English because of his appearance, rather than because of his language ability or professional knowledge. This finding echoes the results of other studies (e.g. Ghuman, 1995; Thomas, 1995; Liu, 1999; Braine, 2006; Amin, 1997).

The interview data also indicated that most Chinese lecturers appreciated British academic culture but still highly valued their Chinese cultural identity. Most of them fell into the 'integrated' category of Berry and Kim (1988), which means they have good relationships with other nationals but still maintain their cultural identity and characteristics. However, only one Chinese lecturer, who has been in the UK for 16 years, seemed unable to recognise himself as a member in the British community, and he strongly identified himself with his home culture. His circle of friends is also limited to same nationals and thus his acculturation status is somewhat 'separated' and 'marginalised'.

Acculturation attitudes		Is it considered to be of value to maintain cultural identity and characteristics?	
		Yes	No
Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with other groups?	Yes	Integrated	Assimilated
	No	Separated	Marginalised

Table 4.1: Acculturation attitudes (Berry and Kim, 1988, p.245)

This lecturer also seemed unable to identify with the research and disciplinary culture in his school. He mentioned that he preferred the collective research culture and atmosphere, as well as the advanced facilities in the private practice in Asia where he worked before. This again indicates his marginalised status and confirms the view that people who strongly identify with their original culture are hindered from integrating into the host environment (Skinner, 2008; Jiang et al, 2010).

Data Analysis Part II – Academic Adjustment

4.3 Academic challenges facing Chinese students

Unfamiliarity with UK academic conventions and standards appeared to be the biggest issue for Chinese students. Different assessment criteria and standards created feelings of uncertainty. Essay writing is a common method used for assessing students' academic performance in UK postgraduate programmes. However, the majority of students stated that lecturers usually do not give clear guidance and instructions on assessment of assignments and exam preparation. Moreover, feedback from lecturers was not considered to be sufficient for students to understand how their work had been evaluated. Students did not know how to 'satisfy' assessment criteria and usually learned through trial-and-error.

In contrast, home students appeared to have better classroom performance and higher assessment marks because of their language advantage and familiarity with the logical thinking patterns and academic conventions and standards of the UK. The participants suggested that lecturers should introduce UK academic conventions at the beginning of programmes, e.g. the requirements and standards of assessing and evaluating assignments.

The majority of lecturers thought there was no significant difference in the academic performance of home students and Chinese students. They considered students' motivation and previous educational background to be more significant than their cultural and ethnical backgrounds in determining students' academic performance. Students with strong motivation tended to have higher academic achievement, and those who had gained profound professional knowledge from their previous education and work also performed outstandingly in class. Lecturers also thought international students usually significantly progressed in the second semester, as by then they had

gradually improved their language ability and learning skills, and had become familiar with the academic conventions of the UK.

The main academic challenges facing Chinese students are discussed in detail in the sections below with a comparison of the views expressed by international lecturers and Chinese lecturers.

4.3.1 Plagiarism

Chinese students and lecturers had diverse opinions regarding student plagiarism.

Chinese students thought they were aware of plagiarism and referenced properly to avoid plagiarising. To their knowledge, none of the students they knew were guilty of plagiarism. However, lecturers indicated that there were two or three students found guilty of plagiarism every year, and that the plagiarism issue was not only found among Chinese learners but also home students and other international students.

Some lecturers thought that the language barrier contributed to international students' plagiarism. One said:

Some students thought it was difficult to express their own thoughts in perfect English, so they just copied the sentence from a book or the Internet.

In accordance with the findings of other studies (e.g. Edwards and Ran 2009; Gu and Brooks 2006), the participants also thought that cultural differences in interpreting what was appropriate might influence students' perceptions of plagiarism. A study by Stappenbelt, Rowles and May (2009) yielded similar results, indicating that international students have the necessary skills to avoid plagiarism but their understanding of plagiarism is poor aligned with university academic policy.

4.3.2 Criticism and critical thinking

Cultural and pedagogical differences may have implications on how learners perceive criticism and critical thinking. Many Chinese students considered the concept of ‘criticism’ to be in conflict with traditional Chinese cultural values. Chinese culture emphasises harmony, but criticism seems to break the harmony between lecturers and students, and challenging teachers is considered impolite. Moreover, Chinese people value ‘face’, and to criticise people in class is seen as ‘shaming’ them in public (Durkin, 2008). Furthermore, Chinese students in this study considered that lecturers criticised their weaknesses without offering constructive suggestions. They felt frustrated by the lecturers’ criticism as were not offered any practical help.

Although Chinese/international students have been described as lacking criticality in their work (Volet & Chalmers 1997; Kember 2000), the majority of the lecturers thought that Chinese students and home students showed the same level of criticality, although language obstacles may disadvantage their expressiveness. Only one German lecturer voiced a different opinion:

Chinese students had difficulty in understanding the concept of criticism. They did not fully understand what the critical argument was and the level of criticality in their work was usually superficial.

Huang’s (2008) study also supports the view that Chinese students usually lack sufficient language skills to express their thoughts clearly and critically in English, and also lack clear understanding of critical thinking.

The differences in educational pedagogies and expectations also lead to different types of learners. Chinese students themselves considered UK pedagogies to highly regard analytic ability and criticality. However, one student mentioned that in China:

It is easy to write an essay in China. I can finish an essay over one night just by coping and pasting from different articles.

Other participants agreed and stated that essay writing style in China was usually descriptive.

Chinese lecturers also considered UK students were more spontaneous and independent in their learning. In contrast, Chinese students seemed to do and ‘absorb’ whatever lecturers taught them. One Chinese lecturer said:

In our design studio, different tutors or lecturers evaluate students design every week. For Chinese students, they changed their design totally every week according to the critiques from different tutors. However, home students picked up the suggestions that they agreed with and ignored those they didn't agree with.

Another Chinese lecturer also mentioned similar issues:

Chinese students just do what the teachers ask them to do without knowing why. Actually, although every tutor gave students different suggestions, they just help students to think critically from different aspects, the basic principles in our discipline are still the same. What the tutors said did not conflict with each other. Chinese students usually did not understand this. Home students usually don't have this kind of problems since they are used to this educational pedagogies.

It indicated that students in Eastern societies are expected and trained to learn ‘how to do’, whereas they are expected to learn ‘how to learn’ in Western societies (Hofstede, 1986).

4.3.3 Presentation and group work

A common debate on group work is whether lecturers should assign students to groups or allow them to choose their own group. Although Harrison and Peacock (2009) argue that proactive management of group work is vital for developing an “internationalised classroom”, lecturers in the present study had divergent opinions on whether or not to assign students to groups. Lecturers who allowed students to self-select groups did so

for the following reasons: 1) students prefer to work with their friends; 2) students blame lecturers when their group does not work well.

Although lecturers had different opinions on whether or not to assign students to groups, students in this study generally hoped lecturers would assign them to a mixed group. International students considered group work a way to enhance employability skills (Osmond and Reed, 2010), although they can also lead to more work due to language barriers and a lack of familiarity with group work. It has also been observed that Chinese students expect greater contact with their tutor than home students (Nield and Thom, 2006).

Chinese students in this study mentioned that an unofficial survey by a lecturer in an architecture school revealed that home students considered it a waste of time to explain things to international students. The results accord with a study by Peacock and Harrison (2008) which found that home students usually chose to spend more time with other UK students than international students because “it’s so much easier to go with what’s easy (p.9).” A study by De Vita (2002) also showed that home students preferred mono-cultural groups because they thought multicultural groups would pull down their average mark. Chinese students in this study said that they found it more comfortable to discuss complex issues in Mandarin due to the language barrier, although their UK counterparts complained that they could not understand Mandarin. This division reinforces negative perceptions (Thom, 2009), and home students and other international students thus stated that they avoided working with Chinese students.

Many lecturers stated in this study that they do assign students to groups so as to enhance the mixture of students from different backgrounds and nations. Although they knew it was human nature to be with same nationals, they tried hard to facilitate intercultural communication by assigning students to mixed groups. They deliberately mixed students from different countries and backgrounds and encouraged them to use only English to communicate. One Portuguese lecturer mentioned that students were not

happy about the assigned mixed group at the beginning and that the group members often complained about each other. At the end of the semester, however, students stated that they had learned a lot from each other and that they would like to work together again in the future. They also learned to respect other people's ideas. This demonstrates the success of assigning students to a mixed group.

The majority of the Chinese students thought they had more opportunity to practice their presentation skills and group work skills in UK HE institutions, and that these two skills can improve their employability. They thought that through group work, they had more opportunities to communicate with others, to learn to respect other cultures, and to learn the UK context (e.g. UK firms and brands) from home students. However, Chinese students seldom volunteered to make a presentation because they lacked confidence in their English.

Most lecturers considered home students to have better presentation skills than Chinese students. Apart from the language issue, lecturers thought that different pedagogies and curriculums in the East and West may be contributing factors. In the West, students have many chances to practice presentation skills from a young age, as it is embedded in the pedagogies. In contrast, Chinese students usually have little training in making presentations, as presentation skills are not evaluated as part of university entrance exams and thus educators usually do not emphasise these skills to students. Thus, some Chinese students were said to even have problems making a presentation in Mandarin. Such a lack of presentation skills, however, may influence one's employability and thus there are many cram schools in China for adults to learn presentation skills.

4.3.4 Issues with master programmes and curricula

When asked about their academic experience of the one-year postgraduate programme in the UK, Chinese students stated that they had learned to take responsibility for their own learning and had acquired knowledge of practical research methodologies, analysis software, and an insightful understanding of the European context. Nevertheless, many Chinese students had the impression that UK universities did not emphasise the quality of master programmes but only aimed to gain financial income from international students. They thought there were several drawbacks to master programmes in the UK:

1. Class sizes in some UK master programmes are very large, with only a small number of home students (e.g. business school, architecture school);
2. Descriptions of programmes/modules were ambiguous. Students sometimes found that what they had learned did not match the programme/module descriptions;
3. The syllabuses were usually incoherent and the sabbatical leave of lecturers made the issue of incoherence more acute;
4. A one-year master programme was too short for students to deal with culture shock and academic adjustment at the same time within one year;
5. Lecturers in the UK only taught superficial and introductory knowledge;
6. Teaching hours in the UK are less intense than they are in China. Every semester there is nearly two months holiday.

Similarly lecturers also thought the one-year master's programmes were too short for students to fully develop their language ability and understand British culture. By the time students finally got used to everything, they had finished their course and had to go home.

Lecturers also considered class sizes to be too large, leaving them no time to give extra support to students. Large class sizes also limited classroom activities and lecturers had to adopt didactic teaching methods. They also had to spend a lot of time

marking students' assignment, meaning they did not have time to give students detailed written feedback, rather they tended to give oral feedback in class.

Besides, students studying UK master programmes were found to come from different nations, with different educational and working backgrounds, which made it difficult to design a curriculum that suited everyone. Lecturers thus tended to teach introductory knowledge and encourage students to further study the issues by themselves.

Moreover, teaching hours are also less intense in the UK than they are in China. In China, students usually have 6 to 8 contact hours per day during undergraduate study, and thus Chinese students tend to have a more solid foundation than home students. These differences may have implications for the design of curricula, syllabuses, and teaching content in both Chinese and UK HE.

Most Chinese lecturers considered curricula and syllabuses to be more systematic, solid, and sturdy in China. Teachers in China also give students more practice and exams to help students review what they have learned. Many of them stated that they had to teach simpler content and material in the UK than they did in China for home students usually lacked a solid foundation:

Most UK master students have no basic knowledge in architecture design and their sketch skills are not as good as Chinese students. In China, we spend one to two years learning these basic skills in our undergraduate study. In the UK, they never teach that in undergraduate level so I have to teach them that even when they are graduate students now.

Chinese students are usually good at engineering and mathematics related subjects. However, home students find that difficult so I tend to teach less complicated contents in the UK.

Nevertheless, the majority of Chinese lecturers and students highly valued UK educational pedagogies and systems because they help to develop independent, critical,

and creative learners. They also considered UK HE institutions to have advanced theoretical knowledge, resources, and facilities. They enjoyed the open, free and equal atmosphere in UK HE institutions. Other studies also support the view that UK learning and teaching styles are more active, open, and attractive (Kingston and Forland, 2008; Hills and Thom, 2005).

The opinions and experiences of students and lecturers can help institutions to consider the challenges faced by lecturers who teach in a multicultural environment, to improve their communication with students on master programmes so they understand the expectations for study, and to enhance the learning experience so as to attract more intellectual students and lecturers to the outstanding UK educational environment. Further suggestions and implications are presented in the discussion chapter.

4.4 Academic challenges facing Chinese lecturers

4.4.1 Teaching identity and professional credibility

Establishing professional credibility and teaching identity appeared to be the biggest challenge facing most of the Chinese lecturers, especially the young ones. Young Chinese lecturers stated that students preferred to seek advice from European lecturers and have classroom interaction with experienced lecturers rather than young Chinese lecturers. In their first year of teaching, they thought this was a form of racism and discrimination toward their professional knowledge and nationalities:

My mentor is an experienced UK lecturer. We taught many courses together last year. When he was teaching, students looked so excited and attentive. When I was teaching, students looked not so engaged. It might be because he has better teaching skills, or it might be discrimination. I can't tell.

Other Chinese lecturers mentioned that the feeling of being discriminated against by students may not be completely true. It may only be their own interpretation of students' behaviour:

In my first year of teaching, I thought students preferred to seek advice from European lecturers. I thought it was discrimination. But later, I found it might not be true. I became a course director in my second year, and I found students tend to ask my opinions first. So, I realised that students may tend to ask the opinions from course director first then turn to other tutors since the course director was the one who mark their assignment.

However, when students and lecturers became more familiar with each other, students gradually began to trust the professional knowledge of the Chinese lecturers:

At beginning, students may think European teachers looked more professional. Even when European teachers did not have real working experience and just talked about some theoretical thing, students still thought it persuasive. But after students became familiar with Chinese lecturers, these problems gradually diminished.

4.4.2 Techniques for developing professional identity and teaching skills

The interviews identified several key techniques adapted by the Chinese lecturers to improve their teaching skills and establish teaching identity.

1) Feedback from students

All the Chinese lecturers mentioned that 'student evaluation of teaching' significantly helped them adjust their teaching style and improve their teaching skills. One Chinese lecturer said:

Students reflected my class was boring, so I tried to think interesting activities to attract them. They also reflected that I speak too fast and unclear, and sometimes hard to understand. So I practiced three times (reading aloud course materials) before each class and speak slower to make sure everyone can understand. By practicing, I can gain more self-confidence and assure better teaching quality.

2) Reflective thinking

Most Chinese lecturers reflected on their own teaching after and during class to examine how to improve their teaching skills. Comparing past and current teaching practice was also a strategy employed by one Chinese lecturer, who called it “a dialogue with oneself”, aimed at finding out the differences between teaching in China and the UK. They often recognised their weaknesses in teaching during class time. One said:

While teaching, I found if I could put more pictures in the PowerPoints, then it may be easier for students to understand. Also, I adjusted my ways of presenting the contents to make sure students can understand.

Reflective thinking helped teachers adjust their teaching methods and skills:

In my first year of teaching, I observed there was no interaction between students and I. I then designed many games for teaching in my leisure time. Now students enjoyed these games and even took photos of my class and upload them to Facebook.

The experience of learning in the British context provides opportunities for Chinese lecturers to continuously compare their current situation with their previous learning experience in China (Gill, 2007). Continuous learning and evaluation (Chan and Pang, 2006; Putnam and Borko, 2000) are considered by teachers to be ways to achieve sustainable and generative qualitative change in their teaching (Richardson and Placier, 2002). Moreover, critical self-reflection of one’s own culture and worldview can facilitate a transformative process that leads to internationalisation at the level of individual teachers (Sanderson, 2004; Cranton, 1992).

3) Gaining the latest knowledge

Gaining the latest knowledge was thought to help lecturers improve their teaching quality and help establish a professional teacher/academic identity. Generally, practical

experience and active research were considered important methods to obtain the latest knowledge. Other methods, such as attending conferences and seminars and reading journal papers regularly, were also considered ways to update one's knowledge.

The majority of the Chinese lecturers considered teaching and research to be inseparable and thought that they could benefit each other. In addition, practical work experience made their teaching more persuasive. One participant said:

The experience of working in a practice helps me a lot in teaching. I can give students real examples from real situations. I told them the challenges I encountered while working in the practice. Students can easily understand and accept what I said.

4) Co-teaching with mentor/experienced teachers

Three of the Chinese lecturers mentioned how co-teaching with a mentor or experienced teacher helped them to learn practical teaching skills. One Chinese lecturer mentioned that his mentor usually gave him practical lecturing skills and suggestions after class:

Sometimes I teach the first half of the class, and my mentor teaches the other half. He often observes my teaching and tells me how I can improve my teaching skills. For example, don't ask students questions right after you finish your class. You should allow them more time to think. Also, you can review the course contents before asking questions to help them recall what they have learnt today.

The other two Chinese lecturers also had a similar experience in China and thought that it was very helpful in improving their teaching skills.

5) Learning British culture

Continuously learning British culture was considered helpful for Chinese lecturers to improve their teaching quality. By telling British jokes or mentioning British history in class, the participants motivated students and became more intimate with them. They

learnt British culture either by interacting with UK colleagues/friends or through self-study (e.g. reading books, magazines, TV programmes). Two of the Chinese lecturers, who had very close British friends, were especially highly motivated to learn British culture, history and stories.

6) A model teacher

Having a model teacher as a role model also helped shape teaching identity. By observing experienced teachers' classes, the participants learned classroom management skills and teaching skills. One Chinese lecturer mentioned an experienced teacher in the UK university who had adapted many activities to attract students:

The lecturer put a red brick on the desk and then he stepped on it. He wanted to show how heavy the brick can bear. Everyone looked at him so attentively.

Another Chinese lecturer often watched lecturing videos of his role model on YouTube and hoped to become a humorous teacher like him.

4.5 Issues in learning, teaching and research

4.5.1 Student-centred vs. teacher-centred

Typically, a traditional Chinese classroom was described as a monologue by the teacher and students writing down notes verbatim. Chinese lecturers were historically described as focusing on drilling skills and competence before allowing students to proceed on their own, regardless of the learners' interests, whereas Western teachers usually allow students to explore their environment (Gardner, 1989). These different student-centred and teacher-centred pedagogies and teaching styles were mentioned by one Chinese lecturer:

No matter you are a talent student or not, lecturers would give lots of repetitive practice, drills, and exams to help every student reach an average level in China. In the UK, it depends on students' own talents and interests so not every student could achieve the same level.

Nevertheless, many Chinese students, especially those in the business school, stated that their typical classroom activities also had a dictating teaching/learning style. This was possibly because of the large class size (usually more than 100 students), which left no time for other activities. However, most Chinese students had no negative feeling about the dictating teaching style. To the contrary, they were accustomed to it and felt quite secure when taught in this way. A discussion-based classroom usually made students feel nervous because of their poor language skills.

A discussion-based and student-centred classroom sometimes also made Chinese lecturers uneasy, especially given students' attitudes toward lecturers. Chinese lecturers highlighted how students in China seldom 'challenged' them in class and tended to show respect to lecturers; facts that other studies (e.g. Biggs, 1996; Liu, 2002; Ho, 1993) have also revealed. One Chinese lecturer expressed the necessity to meet the needs of students, seeing students as 'clients' in the UK settings:

In one training seminar, we discussed about these issues with other international lecturers. We concluded that education is commercialised in the west – students are the clients, lecturers have to meet their needs. The education system in the UK is student-centred. Lecturers have to adjust syllabus and curriculum according to students' interests. I have to teach simpler contents in the UK than in China otherwise students won't understand and will feel bored. In China, lecturers usually teach students whatever they considered important rather than respect students' interests and needs.

This again confirms that the British educational system tends to be more student-centred, whereas educational systems tend to be teacher-centred in China (e.g. Hofstede, 1981; Turner, 2006). Students in the UK have more freedom to select courses and content that

they are interested in. In contrast, Chinese teachers tend to teach in a structured manner and deliver that which they believe to be important.

Since UK pedagogies emphasise student-centred teaching methods, there are usually no core textbooks. Many Chinese lecturers stated that they therefore had to spend more time preparing course materials due to the lack of emphasis on core textbooks in the UK and also their language problem. In China, teachers usually choose one or two textbooks and teach chapter by chapter, which can save much time in terms of preparing course materials. It also enables students to preview course content. However, teachers have to prepare their own course materials and teaching aids in the UK.

4.5.2 Assessment standards

Different assessment methods appeared to be confusing for both Chinese students and Chinese lecturers. Chinese students stated that they did not know the criteria or standards to which their assignments were evaluated and assessed and assumed that this depended on the lecturers' subjective opinions. Students thus thought it important to know lecturers' 'preference'.

Similarly, some Chinese lecturers were also unclear about the UK assessment system. One Chinese lecturer said:

In China, seventy was considered low grades, whereas it was distinction in the UK. I didn't know that in my first year of teaching in the UK. I used to give students 70 to 80 very often. After one year, I learned the difference and then I wouldn't give them such a good grade so easily anymore. Nobody tell me the differences!

Confusion about UK assessment criteria has previously been found among international students (Akazaki's, 2009; Gu and Maley, 2008) and lecturers (McNamara and Lewis, 2004; Tran, 2010; Lea and Street, 2000). This suggests that the university

should provide clear guidance and training to help international lecturers and students better understand UK assessment criteria.

4.5.3 Teaching materials: international context vs. local context

The debate over whether to teach an international context or a UK context has been a popular issue for decades. Some insist that international students come to the UK in order to learn the UK context, whereas some claim that international students may find the UK context incompatible when they return to their home country.

When asked about their opinions on this issue, lecturers said that they generally include the international context when teaching unless the course is specifically focused on UK regulations and laws. One Chinese lecturer mentioned that he involved international contexts to enhance students' comprehension. For instance, he used the examples of Tibet in China and the Highlands in Britain to explain how different pressures influence the boiling point. He also used real examples of the USA to explain why Britain does not use a heat pump system anymore. Another lecturer in the business school used real examples to introduce firms and brands from Europe and the UK. Students thought learning the UK/EU context would help them broaden their international perspectives.

Generally, students responded positively to the issue of internationalised contexts. Many students asked lecturers to not only cover the UK or EU context but also the context of their own culture (e.g. Islamic architectural history). When doing assignments, 45% of the students choose to write topics related to their own context. This shows that although students are interested in learning the UK and EU contexts, they are more concerned about the context in their own country, as many of them will return to their home country to work. This reveals that students do not merely want to

learn the UK experience but are also concerned about how they can apply what they have learned in their home country and how it can increase their employability.

Chinese students described how they once had a serious conflict with a lecturer who insisted on covering the UK context only. The lecturer insisted that students should follow the UK context since they were in the UK, but neglected the fact that Chinese people have a different preference about the orientation of houses and the functions of each room. Chinese students thought the lecturer should respect differences in cultural preference/convention, since the majority of them will go back to China and work in local architecture practices, and what is considered proper in the UK may not be appropriate in China. Although international students come to the UK in order to learn the UK context and experience, Chinese students thought that their original cultural values and educational background should be respected.

Despite the fact that most lecturers considered it to be beneficial to introduce global contexts, the scope and variety of internationalised contexts covered mainly depended on the nature of the discipline and subject. This finding is similar to the findings mentioned in other studies (e.g. Sawir, 2011; Lueddeke, 2003). A German lecturer said that she would not deliberately involve different cultures while teaching, as the principles of design were more or less similar in all cultures. Some subjects (e.g. the history of architecture) inevitably involved the global context, whereas some subjects (e.g. physics, mathematics, computer software) had universal contexts already. Other subjects naturally discussed the local context (e.g. UK building regulations, UK laws). This shows that the nature of the discipline and the course content can influence the extent to which the content can be internationalised. subject nature and individual characteristics had more influence than disciplinary differences on how staff responded towards international students and teaching practice.

4.6 Language of teaching

Some Chinese lecturers indicated that they sometimes needed to be more assertive with (or in his own words ‘demanding’ of) UK students, otherwise their suggestions would not be taken seriously:

One time a British girl challenged me and didn't trust my professional advice and suggestion. I then told her very seriously, "You should trust me, what I am telling you now is trying to help you avoid further mistakes. Whether you listen or not, depends on you". Later on, we developed good teacher-student relationship because she found what I said was right.

The belief of being a strict (*yan* 嚴) teacher was usually found among Chinese teachers who believed that “*yan* denotes a serious teacher with high expectations of students so that they will strive hard and follow the desired path” (Chan and Rao, 2010, p.329). However, this kind of assertive and directive language for teaching may cause problems:

I had a PhD student who was going to submit his thesis. I was so worried that he wouldn't pass the viva so I told him what he should do otherwise he wouldn't pass the viva. It is quite common to say this to students in China, but that student wrote a compliant letter said I should not threaten him and give him pressure.

This Chinese lecturer then learned to adapt indirect and euphemistic British expressions to avoid confrontation. Some Chinese learners, however, interpret these kinds of inexplicit expressions too ambiguously (Gu, 2005). Generally, Western educators aim to create an optimum learning environment which can facilitate student learning and help them develop the ability to share ideas, view a topic from different perspectives, and stimulate critical thinking. The language used for teaching in the West, therefore, is rather analytic and deductive in comparison to Eastern educational traditions where language is more explicit and inductive.

As mentioned previously, teachers in China may adapt a direct and dogmatic style when communicating with their students. They tend to use expressions such as “I will

tell you what you should do...”, and “you should do what I say, otherwise...”. However, British people tend to use indirect and suggestive expressions, which may sometimes appear ambiguous to foreigners, such as “I suggest you...”, ‘Why don’t you try...’, and ‘It might be...’. Differences in the language used for teaching has been discussed earlier.

4.7 Influence of past experience on current teaching practice

Many Chinese lecturers thought that their experience of being international students in the UK helped them to easily recognise and identify the difficulties faced by Chinese students. It helped them develop an empathetic attitude towards such students:

I understand students may have language barrier, so I only focus on the contents of their essay rather than their English. I am also able to offer more effective support and useful suggestions to improve students’ learning experience.

Their experiences as students also helped them adjust their teaching and assessment methods:

I know students usually do their assignments several days before the submission day at the end of the semester, hence they usually don’t study until the last minute. I then assigned two or three assignments in one semester and set the submission dates reasonably to make sure students will not only study at the last minute.

Many of my students bring their laptops to the classroom. From my own experience as a student, I know students sometimes don’t listen attentively and may play games. I then walk around the classroom when teaching so students won’t dare to play games in class.

From my previous experience as a learner, I know students are shy to ask questions in front of class. So I run individual tutorial to encourage students to ask questions. Students usually ask many questions in individual tutorial. It usually brings me more pressure since I won’t know what students will ask, but it is really beneficial for students.

A study by Hockings et al. (2009) yielded the same result, that teachers’ prior experience of overcoming challenges in learning enabled them to provide practical

suggestions to help students deal with their problems. Chinese lecturers' experiences of being international students also helped them to understand the expectations of Chinese students and lecturers' expectations in UK HE institutions. However, Chinese lecturers sometimes found it difficult to strike a balance between these two different cultural and educational expectations:

As a teacher, I expected students to become independent learners but from my own experience as a learner, I know students expect lecturers to tell them directly what to do and how to do. It's a gap, a dilemma. I still don't know how to strike a balance.

The mismatch between academic expectations of British university staff and overseas students has been observed in previous research (Cortazzi and Jin, 1997), and it remains an issue in today's UK HE institutions. It has been indicated that UK HE institutions should provide clear guidance to help both academic staff and international students understand the different academic expectations of each culture so as to eliminate possible challenges.

When asked whether they adopted a Western or Eastern teaching style, many international lecturers stated that they adopted a UK teaching style since they were teaching in the UK context. Some others said that they adapt a 'mixed' teaching method that combined their previous educational experience with their current teaching practice so as to establish a unique teaching style. There were others who were not conscious of the particular teaching method they adopted. One said:

The most important thing is to deliver knowledge. It does not matter which teaching method you adapt. The key is to teach effectively.

This indicates how one's previous educational background, work experience, and personality may influence how one teaches.

Two Chinese lecturers thought that pre-higher education was a key stage for learning UK pedagogies and philosophies. However, international lecturers usually missed this important stage. Hence, although many international lecturers had obtained a postgraduate degree in the UK, they felt they could not fully understand UK educational and cultural expectations.

4.8 Research and disciplinary culture

Most Chinese lecturers had received their doctoral degrees from the UK and had research fellow experience in a UK university, and thus adapting to the research and disciplinary culture of UK HE institutions was not a new challenge for them. The same finding has been mentioned by Jiang et al. (2010). However, the data differentiated from the findings of some other studies in which Chinese lecturers felt they were under less pressure to publish material in the UK (Sikes, 2006; Sullivan, 1997; Chalmers, 1998), with many stating that it was more stressful in China. One participant mentioned:

In China, the quantity of research paper is the main focus; in the UK, research quality is emphasized.

The differences in the research culture of China and the UK have also been referred to in Jiang et al. (2010), which states: “research practice in China emphasised a short-term research strategy, whereas in the UK the focus was more long term” (p.7).

Similarly, the differences in research quality and quantity were also mentioned by the Chinese students. They thought that evaluation and assessment standards were higher and stricter in the UK, whereas the research papers they produced in China were usually very shallow. One Chinese student even said:

I can finish an essay over one night. You just need to copy and paste from different articles.

In contrast to Lubben (2009), who found that lecturers in a Southern Africa university thought research and teaching should be separate, all the participants in this study thought research and teaching were inseparable and are of equal importance. Continuous and active research helped the participants update their professional knowledge and thus they were able to give the latest information to students. However, both Chinese students and lecturers acknowledged that each member of academic staff had different working and teaching experiences, and thus some lecturers were more experienced at teaching than research, and vice versa. Universities should find out these differences and give lecturers the proper support to develop a balanced profile of skills.

Although most Chinese lecturers were already familiar with the research culture of the university, becoming an independent researcher was seen as a new challenge for young lecturers:

While I was a student, my supervisors can give me suggestions on publishing research paper. Now I need to depend on myself. The depth of research is different now.

Luck's (2010) study also reflects the pressures that new lecturers are likely to encounter when learning to independently develop a successful research programme, and start teaching and acting as a tutor.

The majority of the Chinese lecturers thought that the research culture in UK HE institutes encouraged all academic staff to become active in research and to initiate research projects rather than having to listen to project leaders. Every academic staff member has an equal opportunity to apply for funding, conduct research projects, and publish papers, whereas the research culture in China is usually hierarchical. One Chinese lecturer stated:

In China, there is usually a figure head, a project leader, usually a senior professor, who do not necessarily have advanced or leading knowledge in the

research topic dominate the research group. Everyone has to listen to the leader. In the UK, as long as one has sufficient professional knowledge and can make good proposal, then everyone has the opportunity to get funding and conduct a research.

Similar findings were found by Jiang et al. (2010), in which one lecturer stated regarding the UK: “I have the freedom to do the research... in China you work for a senior professor” (p.7).

Another Chinese lecturer said:

Once I tried to apply for research funding when I was a teaching assistant in China, but my proposal was immediately rejected by a professor in our department. I didn't even have the chance to submit my proposal to the government. But later on when I became a lecturer, I was allowed to submit my proposal and I got the funding.

Similarly, Chinese students also considered the UK to have more academic resources, and thought that people were more open and supportive of academic research.

One Chinese student said:

Once I was doing a research in a mall in China by counting the numbers of customers, but the manager was unhappy and asked the safe guard to expel me. However, I did the same research in the UK and the manager was very supportive.

Nevertheless, one Chinese lecturer who had worked in a private industry in Korea for two years as a researcher stated that research in university is usually just to test theory but often cannot be industrialised or adapted for commercial use. Moreover, some Chinese lecturers thought that staff in industry and in Chinese universities preferred to do research as a team more than staff in UK universities. They felt academic staff in UK universities preferred to conduct research alone since the research product would belong to the individual researcher, whereas members usually work as a team in industry and in Chinese universities. This is a very useful example of the

predominant philosophy in China — working for the benefit of the team/community rather than for individual gain.

The nature of the discipline was also found to influence lecturers' teaching style. For instance, the discipline of architecture encouraged creativity and challenge, and hence lectures in the architecture school tended to be more discussion-based. Students and lecturers in 'hard applied' disciplines (e.g. architecture school, civil engineering) tended to have more interaction than those in other disciplines because they had to attend design studios every week or undertake experiments in laboratories together. In contrast, in 'soft' or 'soft applied' disciplines (e.g. business school), the teaching style tended to be didactic as the course content mainly discussed theoretical knowledge.

Data Analysis Part III – Sociocultural Adaptation

4.9 The stories of Chinese students

The majority of the Chinese students considered their UK experience to be positive. In terms of daily life, they had become more independent, mature, considerate, calm and open-minded. They enjoyed the relaxation, freedom, and slow pace of life in the UK, and had learned how to carry out many tasks on their own which they seldom had the chance to do in China (e.g. cook, cut hair, and plan trips to Europe). Some participants enjoyed walking along the lake and feeding the ducks and swans, while others joined student societies (e.g. hiking society) and learned skills such as how to live in the wild. Studying in the UK was a great opportunity for them to learn the thoughts, culture, and life style of British people.

The first semester was the most difficult time for the Chinese students. Coping with the culture shock dominated most of their time in the first semester. An ordinary, everyday issue was sometime difficult for them because they were in a new environment. Such issues ranged from the weather, food, lifestyle and culture, to politics and the law. It took them a period of time to adjust to these differences before they could actually focus on their studies. Yet these stressful feelings gradually decreased in the second semester. When they felt stressed and upset they would gather with their Chinese friends. They celebrated all festivals by cooking, eating, and playing cards together. These all were happy memories for them as the majority of them were single children in the family and seldom had the chance to live with peers of the same age.

They had also encountered safety issues and discrimination in the UK. One Chinese student said: “When I was walking down the street, a car passed by and the people in that car shouted at me and threw ketchup on me”. Other Chinese students also thought

that some local people discriminated against them. They were also afraid of badly behaved teenagers and drunken people on the street.

Although Chinese students had some unhappy experiences, they still thought it worthwhile studying in the UK. Through such unhappy experiences, they learned to cherish what they already had. However, after finally becoming familiar with everything in the UK, it was soon time for them to go back to their own country.

As the time of graduation approached, students felt more pressure than before. Things that worried them included finishing their dissertation on time, deciding whether to stay in the UK or go back to their home country, and deciding whether to find a job or continue with further studies. Many of them chose to go back to China because they thought the language barrier was still an obstacle to them finding a job in the UK. They had hoped that the university would provide better support for making job applications.

The data indicated that Chinese students needed at least four to six months to adapt themselves to the new environment, and their first Christmas in the UK appeared to be the most depressing time for them. In the second semester, they gradually got accustomed to things around them and their language skills and academic performance also improved significantly. While examining the Chinese students' UK experiences, it seemed their adaptation patterns were in accordance with the U-curve pattern (Lysgaard, 1955 and Adler, 1975) and the three-fold 'stress-adaptation-growth' process (Gill, 2007). However, it was uncertain whether they had established a multicultural identity and reached the independence (or biculturality) stage (Adler, 1975), as their length of staying in the UK was really too short.

4.10 The stories of Chinese lecturers

All of the Chinese lecturers in this study have been in the UK for at least six years. Their stories provided precious information for understanding the transition patterns of Chinese lecturers in the UK. By using the most widely discussed culture adaptation theories, the U-curve pattern (Lysgaard, 1955 and Adler, 1975) and W-curve pattern, it was found that the transition pattern of Chinese lecturers was non-linear and that they did not necessarily undergo every stage described in these two theories.

The majority of the Chinese lecturers, especially mature students, had no 'honeymoon stage' after arriving in the UK. Some of them had certain expectations of the UK before arrival, but they immediately encountered negative culture shock upon arrival and thought everything was 'miserable' in the new environment.

Similar to Chinese students' experiences, 'dislike of food' (Gu, 2008, p. 232) appeared to be one of the major concerns of Chinese lecturers, even those who had lived in the UK for many years. One Chinese lecturer, who had lived in the UK for eleven years, said:

Sometimes I go home and cook noodles for my lunch during lunchtime. I feel so energetic every time I eat a bowl of noodles. I have to eat noodles every day or I will feel lethargic. My wife often laughs at me about this. It is impossible to get a bowl of noodles in the university.

Cultural differences also appeared to be one of the most significant challenges facing Chinese lecturers in UK HE institutions, and were thought to influence their teaching behaviour. One lecturer mentioned,

I usually need to spend more time studying local communities and environment. Otherwise, I cannot explain it to my students during site visiting.

The same issue also occurred in the classroom, as Chinese lecturers usually had to spend more time explaining to international students. Some participants continuously made efforts to learn British culture, history and stories in their leisure time in order to communicate with British people more effectively and improve their teaching quality.

The recovery stage and adaptation stage appeared to be unconscious and ambiguous to most Chinese lecturers, and some even thought these two stages did not exist. When asked about how they adjusted to culture shock, most of the Chinese lecturers were not able to describe clearly their adjustment and assimilation process in the UK. One possible reason may be memory loss due to time.

Generally, newcomers felt more accustomed to the host environment after six months. However, it sometimes took longer than five years for an individual to adapt to the new environment. One Chinese lecturer felt he had not really integrated into the UK until he began work in an architectural practice. Another Chinese lecturer, who had been in the UK for fifteen years, felt he had never actually integrated into the UK. This indicates that the recovery and adaptation stages vary according to the individual.

Many of them mentioned the occurrence of re-entry/reverse culture shock when returning to their home country for holidays. Several Chinese lecturers even considered not moving back to China because they had gotten used to the living style in the UK. Some aspects of the reverse culture shock mentioned included the busy life in China, crowded streets and busy traffic, complicated rapport (e.g. frequent business dinners with clients or higher status leaders), more pressure to produce publications, and less freedom and equality in China.

Generally, the longer that the participants stayed in the UK, the more they felt comfortable in both Chinese and British cultures. They recognised that both cultures had their own merits; one was not superior to the other. This indicates that they had entered the interdependence stage (Adler, 1975), in which they were familiar with and felt comfortable in both cultures.

Two more stages were identified and classified by the researcher, the re-appreciation stage and the exchange of experience/knowledge stage. It is difficult to predict the time

when these two stages take place because as mentioned previously, the transitional process is non-linear and not all participants will go through every stage. However, the exchange of experience/knowledge stage usually occurs very late when international staff and students have adapted to the host environment and feel comfortable in both cultures.

A few of them learned to re-appreciate the virtue and norms of their original culture and country after coming to the UK. One Chinese lecturer became more interested in Chinese literature and culture, and began to study masterpieces written in ancient Chinese language (a written form of Chinese language which is difficult to understand). Another Chinese lecturer acknowledged the diligent virtue of Chinese people after coming to the UK.

The majority of Chinese lecturers mentioned the exchange of international experience and knowledge that took place between home and host countries. This stage is important for it indicates that Chinese lecturers had not only adapted to the culture and academic differences, but were also able to actively contribute to both cultures and institutions.

Transnational collaboration usually relied on the personal rapport of Chinese lecturers with their colleagues and teachers in their previous university in China. Strong connections between Chinese lecturers and their previous institutions effectively facilitated transnational collaboration. Many Chinese lecturers indicated that rapport was very important among Chinese people because people preferred to work with 'insiders' in a collective culture.

Cooperation and exchange of knowledge and experience between two countries was said to involve collaborative research programmes, joint laboratory work, live projects, and co-written books. The benefits of transnational collaborations were said to be

exchange of knowledge and culture, learning to see things from a different perspective, and drawing on the strength of each culture to offset the weakness of the other. As one participant said:

British have advanced theory and concept in eco-environment, but they don't have many opportunities to put the theory into practice. In contrast, China may not have done a lot of research in these theories but China has bigger markets that offer architects to put the theory into practice. When UK and China cooperate together, they both can benefit from it.

In this sense, the transition of knowledge was no longer a one-way 'colonised' or 'westernised' process, but was a real exchange of knowledge and experience between two countries. This also points out the major contributions Chinese lecturers make towards internationalising the university.

Further investigation of the challenges, roles, contributions, and shift of identities of Chinese lecturers in transnational collaborative activities are discussed and presented as two narrative stories in a later chapter.

Advice to new Chinese lecturers

The Chinese lecturers were asked to provide advice to new Chinese lecturers who would like to work in the UK HE context. The participants offered the following:

1. Positive personality, active participation, and continuously learning British culture and customs

An individual's personality was considered a key factor that influences the extent to which one integrates and adapts to the new environment. An outgoing person who participates and makes friends with local people actively tends to have fewer problems in adapting to the new culture and is less likely to feel lonely and alienated. Having close British friends also motivates international

staff and students to learn British culture. It can be a positive exchange whereby people with positive and outgoing personalities make friends easily with local people, and local people further help and motivate international staff and students to adapt to and learn the UK culture.

Some participants said they continuously learned British culture, customs, and history in their leisure time. They thought that it would help them to improve their English ability, communication skills, and teaching quality. The participants also thought that new lecturers should ask for support proactively rather than just wait for others to offer help:

If you ask for help or support proactively, then usually university will help you. But if you don't ask, you get nothing.

2. Communication with colleagues and students

The majority of the participants thought it important to communicate with colleagues and students. Establishing good relationships with colleagues helped new lecturers adapt to the new environment faster, as they were able to offer suggestions about teaching and research. One participant mentioned he often discussed how to give marks and how to apply for funding with colleagues. Some participants thought communication with students helped to clarify any possible misunderstanding caused by language barriers or cultural differences.

3. “Empty yourself and put yourself in others shoes”

One participant considered it important to “empty yourself and put yourself in other’s shoes” in intercultural communication. She said:

If a cup is full, then you cannot pour anything to it anymore. Similarly, only when you can empty yourself, you are able to absorb new things. Put yourself in others shoes also help you communicate with others more effectively.

This concept is similar to that mentioned by Hofstede (1986), who states that teachers should understand the fact that people learn in different ways in other societies. “This means taking one step back from one’s values and cherished beliefs, which is far from easy” (Hofstede, 1986, p.316). It is sometimes difficult for one to accept a new culture, especially when the new one is in conflict with the original one. This echoes the concept that stronger individuals identify with their own culture and less assertive individuals adapt and integrate better into new environments (Skinner, 2008; Jiang et al, 2010).

This suggestion offered by the participant could be interpreted as the need to develop an empathetic and open-minded attitude in intercultural communication. Studies found that Chinese students thought studying abroad helped them to develop an open-minded approach and positive attitude toward intercultural encounters (Wong, 2011; Gill, 2007). It has been argued that open-minded, positive and empathetic attitudes are important elements in intercultural communication.

4. “Don’t expect to become a ‘perfect’ teacher in your first year”

Many participants mentioned that they gradually adapted to their new role as a lecturer, and that their teaching skills and identity improved significantly in the second year. Through feedback from students and personal reflective thinking, as well as updating one’s own professional knowledge by doing research, attending conferences, and self-study, they gradually developed more confidence in their teaching roles. One participant said:

Don’t expect to become a ‘perfect’ teacher in your first year. Things would gradually improve in your second year.

Chapter 5

Two Narrative Stories

In order to further investigate the academic transition, identity shift, and transnational collaboration experiences of Chinese lecturers, two narrative stories are provided to supplement the other data.

5.1 Introduction

Every individual has his/her own personal story. Teachers walk into classrooms with their own experiences, cultures, and personalities, which shape their unique teaching beliefs, teaching styles, and professional teaching identities (White, Zion, and Kozleski, 2005). Narrative inquiry concerns the experience of an individual from three dimensions: temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin, Pushor, and Orr, 2007). The author has thus tried to examine the stories of two Chinese lecturers from these perspectives to understand their past and present experiences in both China and the United Kingdom. The two stories demonstrate how the lecturers' previous education, work experience, and ethnic and cultural backgrounds have shaped and reshaped their professional identities. Their stories provide real, in-depth examples of their transitional trajectories from students to university lecturers, and further detail how these experiences have influenced their behaviours and identities in their current teaching practices and transnational collaboration activities.

5.2 Story I

Background

The first interviewee was in his early thirties and had been in the UK for seven years. He received most of his education in China before coming to the UK to study for a master's degree and subsequently a PhD. He was recruited as a lecturer in 2008 after

completion of his PhD at a UK university. Before working at the university, he had worked in a private architectural practice for six months.

First time to the UK

He had never been abroad before. In 2004, he came to the UK for his master degree study. The UK university was not his first choice. He wanted to go to the USA but his visa application was rejected due to the tightening visa policy after the 9/11 attack. He then came to the UK for his master's degree but still planned to go to the USA for his doctoral study after finishing his master's study in the UK. Therefore, he considered himself as a sojourner in the UK; he thought he would only stay in the UK temporarily for one year and then he would go to the USA for his doctoral study. Hence, he never seriously tried to integrate himself into the UK culture and environment. He had low motivation to learn British culture and to socialise with British people. He considered himself to have low social status and low confidence in his first year in the UK.

His initial impression of the UK was, *'Everything is pricy.'* Due to the language barrier and unfamiliarity of the culture and environment, he felt alienated and insecure in his first year. He mostly stayed with other Chinese students. He described his life in his first year as, *'My life circle was limited to accommodation, classroom, and library. On weekends, I went to the supermarket'*. Although he considered his language ability to be not good enough, he did not attend any language course since his language proficiency score had passed the entry requirement of the programme.

In terms of academics, he knew very little about British academic conventions, e.g. plagiarism, referencing systems and assessment criteria.

'When I was an undergraduate student in China, I considered that writing an essay was just a matter of "copy and paste". I went to the library and borrowed ten books, and then copied and pasted sentences from the books to compose my

essay without any references. I didn't think this was an inappropriate behaviour at that time.'

However, the ideas of 'referencing' and 'plagiarism' were immediately introduced to students when he came to the UK to study for his master degree. He then gradually changed his 'beliefs' about writing essays:

'I gradually learned that writing essays was not just about copying and pasting, but also having to reference properly. Later, I learned that simply knowing how to reference was not enough; we have to compare and contrast between different studies and literature. Afterwards, I learned that simply comparing and contrasting was not enough. One has to build up one's own argument and create new things beyond the reviewed literature.'

As for group work, he intended to join a mixed group in the first semester in order to practise his English. However, he sometimes found it difficult to communicate with other international students in English. In terms of academic performance, he received only 40% for one subject in the first semester because the lecturer thought his work was too descriptive. In the second semester, he conducted an innovative experimental interdisciplinary research on the concept of 'space' in terms of architecture design and got 72%. It demonstrated that he had gradually become accustomed to the UK academic convention and had developed the abilities to think creatively and critically.

Academic adaptation

The interviewee said that academic adaptation was a very long and slow process. It took him more than six years to gradually grasp the tacit British educational and cultural traditions. The processes were so prolonged that he could not remember when the changes actually happened or was not aware of when they happened. When he went back to China for the collaborative programme, he acknowledged that his educational values might have changed.

His narrative illustrates his trajectory of apprehending the Western traditions little by little: from referencing properly to critical thinking, and then onto creativity and originality. However, he said that students – both the students in the Chinese group and the Chinese master degree students in the UK – usually did not have sufficient time to be able to comprehend gradually these implicit educational traditions, and thus clear guidance at the beginning was extremely important:

'Many UK or EU lecturers were not aware of the cultural and educational differences in the East and West. They assumed every student should have already known the Western pedagogies. Therefore, when students could not meet the Western standards, lecturers blamed students for being lazy. The thing is that international students usually do not know much about the Western educational traditions and expectations, and lecturers failed to give students clear guidance.'

Being a PhD student

He applied for the PhD programme in the USA but unfortunately his visa was rejected again. He felt very frustrated and had completely given up his 'American dream'. He stayed at the same university in the UK for his doctoral study (for which he had been offered scholarship). Since he would stay in the UK for a couple of years for his doctoral study, he began to seriously try to integrate himself into the British society and he then participated in many student activities. The most significant event during his first year PhD study was that he joined the campaign for the residential hall president in his university accommodation.

He won the competition and became the hall president for two executive years. After he became the hall president, he had more chances to communicate with local people and students. He had meetings with the hall committee every week and also needed to contact the Student Union, the Porter, the School Manager and other local communities to hold activities for the hall residents. It offered him lots of opportunities

to meet more staff (e.g. hall manager, wardens, and other academic staff) and it significantly broadened his social network. Staff and students also showed more respect to him due to his role as a hall manager. He considered that this role had raised his social status and he had moved from the lowest isolated foreign student level to a higher level. His voice represented the opinions of the hall residents so other people would listen to him more carefully and it helped to build up his confidence. He continued to be elected as the hall president in the following year.

Although he had been offered scholarship, he still had financial burdens. He tried to apply for the position of warden many times but was not successful. He also tried to apply for the position of urban designer in one architectural practice. Although he got the interview opportunity, the application was not successful. He considered his low English proficiency level failed him.

'The interviewers were really impressed by my design work. They said I have strong professional skills. If I got the job, then I could earn £1,200 pounds per month. But my English was really poor at that time. I had difficulty expressing my design concepts in English. I could not even understand the word "brochure". I didn't get the job.'

Therefore, he worked as a cleaner for 11 months and earned £340 pounds per month. Although the cleaning job was very tiring, he considered the cleaner job had helped him develop stronger personality.

'I became very strong psychologically. I have even cleaned public toilets. I am not afraid of losing face anymore.'

This job also helped boost his English.

'These old local female cleaners were very nice to me. They gossiped to me about everything. They knew my English was poor so they spoke very slowly and clearly to me. I chatted with them and they were very patient and tolerant of my poor English. I was encouraged, so my English improved a lot during that time.'

This experience also helped him learned more about British local culture. He considered that the British society was more equal than that in China.

‘British people treated everyone equally, even cleaners. Other staff and lecturers were also very nice to me and they often chatted with me. I then began to recognise that British people were friendly to foreigners but you needed to greet them first and be open-minded.’

Although he had great improvement in his language ability and intercultural relationship, he thought he had no significant academic progress. He read lots of literature in his first year of doctoral study but he was still indecisive about his research topic. At first, his supervisor assigned him a topic that he was not really interested in. After six months, he decided to change his research topic and added another supervisor. He considered that he had made no significant progress in his first year of PhD study.

The second year of PhD study

In the second year of his PhD study, he continued doing his literature review. However, he still had some difficulties in understanding academic writing so he read very slowly. His academic writing ability was also very poor and so his supervisor asked him to attend academic English writing classes. However, he only attended the class twice because he did not think it was helpful. He felt very bored of doing the literature review because most of the journal papers and books were too theoretical. Meanwhile, he still could not make a decision on his research topic and direction. Nevertheless, his supervisor thought he did well in doing the literature review.

In the second semester, one of the lecturers who had previously taught him in his master study, asked him to do a part-time design job in a very famous architect company. This working opportunity was a turning point for him and helped him a lot in seeking future work. He now had real experience of working in a British company, and

he considered his social status had moved to a higher level.

Became an office worker (the third year of PhD study)

In the third year of his PhD study, he got a full-time job in a local architect practice. The experience of working in a practice made him realise that the theories he had learned from his doctoral study were very helpful. It helped to raise his motivation in his study, and it determined his research direction. The training from his doctoral study also equipped him with better professional skills than the others, and it boosted his self-confidence and built a stronger identity. Moreover, in this job he needed to communicate with clients and make frequent presentations. As a result, his communication skills and presentation skills progressed significantly during this period. He also learned many dialects and jargons from his colleagues, which helped him integrate better into the local community. His spoken English had progressed significantly, and he was able to make jokes in English.

When he first came to the UK, his English was very poor and he even had difficulty in making a phone call to the customer service centre. However, after he began to do this job, he moved out from his university accommodation and rented a flat. He then learned to negotiate with estate agents, call landline services, TV broadband providers, plumbers and electricians, and so on. Moreover, after staying in the UK for so many years, he now could understand BBC News without extra efforts. In the past, he had to pay full attention to understand spoken English and BBC News. However, he now could understand BBC News without listening to it attentively, and could understand it unconsciously.

From the experience of working in the architect practice, he also learned that theory and practice were different. He once made a serious mistake when designing a project. He miscalculated the size of the plot but luckily he found the mistake before the

clients found it. These authentic working experiences helped him a lot in his future teaching jobs: he had a better CV, and he could also use these real examples to teach his students. Although he only had time to write his thesis in the evening or on weekends, this work experience helped him perceive the theories better.

This job also boosted his self-confidence. From working with other colleagues, he had the feeling that he was equal to other British people; he was not inferior to them. In contrast, he even had a greater professional knowledge than his co-workers because he had received a deeper and broader academic training from his PhD study. His identity as a white-collar office worker also helped him gain more respects from local people and community. He was no longer an ‘international student’ but a young professional and tax payer.

Nevertheless, he felt he had two identities. In the workplace, he felt he was a member of the British community; after work, he felt as if he was back in China. He sometimes went to a bar or played football with his colleagues after work but mostly he stayed with his Chinese wife and friends and they mostly watched Chinese TV programmes, browsed Chinese websites, and cooked Chinese food. He expressed that if he could have broken the connections with all of his Chinese friends at that time, then he might have integrated into the British community better.

Became a University Lecturer

After working in the private practice for six months, his university had a university lecturer job vacancy in his department. He tried to apply for it, and luckily he got the job offer. He thought his previous work experience (both the part-time and full-time job), were all meaningful and helpful in applying for his university lecturer position.

‘The interviewers asked me how we could improve our department. I told them that I worked as a part-time cleaner before and I was in charge of cleaning the

Geography department. When I was cleaning the floor, I sneaked a look at what the research students were doing. I found that their computer equipment and GIS software system were really advanced. I thought our department could use the same system and equipment as theirs to improve our facility and to assist teaching. The interviewers were satisfied with my answers and they all laughed. They said we should send more of our students to work as cleaners in other departments to spy on them.'

In first semester as a lecturer, and he only needed to attend the design studio for first year undergraduate students once a week. He had no previous teaching experience so he taught students in the way that he was taught. However, he felt his professional identity was threatened as he thought students liked to challenge his professional knowledge and preferred to seek help from British or European lecturers rather than him (as shown in 4.4.1).

Second year teaching experience

In September, he began to teach several modules and became very busy. He was very nervous before his first lesson. He spent almost half a day preparing for one lesson. He wrote down every sentence he planned to say in class on paper and then read it aloud many times before class to prepare for his lesson. At the beginning, he worried a lot about his English. However, when he actually taught in class, none of his students complained about his English. The thing he concerned the most was that there was no interaction between him and his students. He considered Chinese students were not as proactive as Indian students, so Indian students tended to dominate the classroom. He recalled that when he was a student, he also did not like to respond to lecturers' questions. He also recognised the issue that Chinese students' essay writing skills were below average standard for it usually lacked criticality and originality. Furthermore,

Chinese students in his programme tended to have lower English proficiency level than other international students. As a consequence, he sometimes spoke Mandarin to his Chinese students when there were no other international students around to enhance their understanding and to help them keep up with other students.

In the next semester, he no longer needed to write down every sentence he planned to teach on paper, but just had to review and read the teaching materials before entering the classroom in order to be able to teach confidently. He also had many chances to communicate with his colleagues because they taught several modules together. However, he still did not consider himself as an insider of the practising community. He thought everybody only minded their own business. He felt more included when working in private practice, whereas the relationship between colleagues was more alienated in the university setting. Unlike in the private architect office where many colleagues share one office, each university lecturer had their own office. He had fewer chances to talk with other colleagues unless they were in the same research group. Although his supervisor became his colleague, they seldom met each other since they were not in the same research group. Although being a university lecturer had higher social status, he had had a stronger feeling of self-fulfilment and achievement whilst working in a private practice.

Third year teaching experience

In his third year of teaching, he could walk into the classroom confidently but did not need to prepare lessons before class. He felt confident of both his English and professional knowledge. He also expected his students to challenge him and to discuss questions with him.

When he was a student, he did not understand why their lecturers gave them the reading list, and he never actually consulted the books on the reading list. When he

became a lecturer, he then realised the usefulness of a reading list. He gave students the reading list and asked them to find answers themselves by reading the suggested reading list.

He considered that his teaching style and beliefs had been influenced by both his Chinese and British educational experience and both educational experiences had shaped his teaching identity. He had interwoven the two educational cultures and traditions and adopted the middle way:

'I agree with the Western idea that teachers give students a reading list and allow students to explore more knowledge by themselves. However, I also thought teachers could do a little more beyond that. Western teachers can give more guidance and instructions to students, as Chinese teachers do, not merely a reading list.'

Teaching identity and educational beliefs

He regarded his work experience with one UK private architectural practice (before he joined the university teaching profession) as the key element in establishing his professional teaching identity. His experience in designing real projects and negotiating with clients helped him gain professional credibility and an identity in teaching. He felt very confident when using his real experiences to explain theoretical knowledge to students, and his students also found his words more persuasive. His teaching skills and teaching styles were sharpened by co-teaching with other lecturers. Knowing more colleagues had helped him to view things from different angles and to gain knowledge from them. In terms of professional subject knowledge, however, he thought his education in China had given him a more solid foundation than his UK education.

In terms of the teacher-student relationship, he thought teachers and students should be like friends. He mentioned that the teacher-student relationship in his undergraduate studies was very informal; students and teachers often made jokes and

usually ate out together. As a lecturer, his relationship with his students was also very casual. He did not think his beliefs about teacher-student relationships were entirely influenced by his former experience as a student; rather, he thought his personality played an important role. Thus, he thought the formation of a teaching identity and teaching beliefs varied from person to person.

When asked if he thought it important to teach university students moral values, as traditional Chinese teachers usually do, he said that moral values should be introduced earlier, before undergraduate study begins. Undergraduate and postgraduate students need more support in dealing with social problems and issues related to daily life. For instance, he had taught students to write complaint letters to fight for their rights when unreasonable things happened to them.

Future Plan

In terms of professional development, his university expected young lecturers to publish a journal paper every year. Therefore, he also set this requirement as his personal goal. In addition, he also planned to attend more conferences so that he could meet other people in his community of practice and know the latest trends in his field. His short-term goal was to be promoted to a senior lecturer.

In terms of personal planning, he planned to apply for a British citizenship because he thought the political situation in China was unstable. When he first came to the UK, he missed the food and entertainments in China. However, the longer he stayed in the UK, the stronger he wanted to settle permanently in the UK.

'At beginning, I did not really want to stay in the UK. I just wanted to obtain UK citizenship and then return to China immediately. However, the longer I stayed in the UK, the more I liked the UK and now I really want to stay here.'

As he became more accustomed to the UK environment, he encountered stronger re-entry culture shock and could not tolerate the environment in China anymore, e.g. the air pollution, crowded people and polluted food.

‘People do not like to queue in China. One time I went back to China, and I wanted to buy a meal in KFC. However, I could not reach the counter because people did not queue up. I have been in the UK for many years. I have forgotten how to cut in a queue. In addition, there is no toilet paper in the loo in China.’

Transnational collaboration

As a newly recruited lecturer, he was very eager to initiate transnational collaborative activities between his UK school and his former Chinese school. His undergraduate university is the top university in China and has collaborated with many other top universities in the world. His current UK architecture school had tried for many years to establish a collaborative relationship with the Chinese architecture school but had not been successful. As an alumnus of the Chinese university, he understood that the university preferred to work with ‘insiders’. He retained good relationships with his former university teachers, although he had graduated many years earlier. Thus, when he made contact with his former teachers to express his willingness to establish a collaborative programme, his university teachers accepted his proposal without hesitation. However, one of the major problems was finding funding for the collaborative programme. Luckily, they obtained funding from Research Centre UK in both 2008 and 2009.

Roles in the transnational collaboration

He thought of himself as an initiator, a middle man, and a mediator in the collaborative programmes. In a collective society, rapport is very important; Chinese people like to work with 'insiders' rather than complete strangers. Thus, the collaboration would not have been possible without the interviewee as a key insider:

'Rapport is very important among Chinese people. Sometimes having good rapport with higher status people is even more important than having professional knowledge and skills.'

He saw that international lecturers usually play key roles in transnational collaborative activities, especially in collaboration with one's own home country and institutions in the host country. He thought this was one of the main contributions that could be made by international academic staff. This indicates that international lecturers can internationalise their host university, not only by enriching its cultural diversity, but also by establishing connections with their home country's institutions.

Different research cultures

'In China, researchers and practitioners are usually not given enough time to conduct research or a project. They have the pressure to work and to finish a project under tight schedules.'

He thought it was unfair to stereotype the Chinese research and educational culture as having a lack of precision or as only being concerned on a superficial level. Besides this, he believed that different cultures had their own methods of completing a project or performing research, and people in different cultures perceived things from different angles and had different priorities in dealing with things. Thus, he thought it was

inappropriate to believe that one research culture was superior to another. He mentioned the following interesting example:

'When doing the design project, UK students spent a lot of time doing background research in the area, such as animal species that inhabited the area and identifying which animals were more active during the daytime and which were more active during night times. Chinese students, instead, began their design immediately without doing further research.'

Differences in research and working methods caused misunderstandings, and the two groups had serious quarrels and consequently refused to work together. The UK group thought the Chinese group was not serious about the project because they began the design without doing research, whereas the Chinese group thought the UK group was not as passionately devoted to the project because they spent time doing unnecessary things and avoided sharing the design workload.

When asked how this problem could be solved, he said it was a difficult situation for him. Fundamentally, he did not think the issue had a right or wrong answer, but rather there had been a misunderstanding caused by cultural and educational differences. As an ethnically Chinese person and an alumnus of the Chinese school, his ethnic and cultural identity told him that he should speak up for the Chinese group. However, as a representative of the UK school, his professional identity required him to approach the issue from both academic and professional viewpoints. In addition, after receiving six years of education at the UK university, he recognised the importance of in-depth research before beginning a design to provide rationales for the design concepts. Therefore, in terms of research and professional consideration, he finally made a decision on the issue, which was to ask the Chinese group to accommodate the UK group and to do background research of the area first. However, he also believed that academic staff in China sometimes conducted research just for promotion. He argued

that they were often more concerned about the quantity of studies produced than with the quality of the research:

'There was one chancellor of a university in Hebei, China, whose PhD thesis completely copied a Master's dissertation from another university. His thesis had five hundred pages but without a single reference, which meant the Master's dissertation also had no references at all. The example showed many Chinese people were not serious about research and do not care about plagiarism issues but just want to get a degree.'

He also believed that the building market in China did not allow architects the freedom to develop their own creative concepts:

'The brief for an architectural project is usually very detailed in China. It tells you what the clients need: from the numbers of rooms to the size of the rooms and the functions of the rooms. However, the brief does not tell you the rationales for building these buildings and rooms. Architects just need to do what the brief says without questioning. In contrast, the brief in the UK is usually very general. It only gives you the size and background of the area, and then asks architects to do research to design what buildings are needed in the area.'

These fundamental differences in pedagogical and market requirements led to different attitudes and methods in conducting research. As a result, the interviewee believed it was important to have an introduction to these differences before the collaborative activities began.

Benefits of transnational collaboration

Apart from cultural learning, he believed that the collaborative programme offered a good opportunity for both UK and Chinese groups to learn from each other in terms of academic knowledge and research attitudes. The UK is advanced in building technologies and theories, but it has less experience putting theory into practice, as its building market is comparatively smaller than that of China. By contrast, China's economy is growing extremely fast, and its building market is prosperous. Architects in

China thus have much practical experience in designing real projects, but they have less time to do further research and to develop building theories and concepts.

The market-driven atmosphere of China, however, usually limits the creativity and originality of architects and scholars. They usually just follow the requirements of the clients or authorities without questioning or doing further research. Therefore, the interviewee thought that UK theories and concepts could be tested and implemented in China through transnational collaborative activities. Without testing, people could not be sure whether the theories would actually work in real situations.

'Italian architects built an eco-house in China according to the latest architecture theories and technologies and claimed it would save a lot of energy. However, the theories were not practical. The eco-house actually wasted more energy than a normal house. It pointed out the importance of putting theories into practice through real projects.'

He believed both groups could learn from the collaborative programme: the Chinese group could learn the latest building theories and technologies from the UK group, and the UK group could test their theories in China.

He also believed that Chinese students got the opportunity to learn Western pedagogy through the collaborative programme, which required students to learn to identify problems, raise questions, and then solve problems. These aspects are usually absent from traditional Chinese education, as students are often required to do what the teacher says without questioning or thinking independently. Thus, collaborative programmes have helped Chinese students to develop other skills.

He thought that the conflicts in transnational collaboration caused by cultural and pedagogical differences were inevitable, but that each party should learn to respect differences. He said:

'No one culture is superior to the other. "Do as the Romans do," is always the best principle in intercultural communication and transnational collaboration.'

Identity shift and transition trajectories

Before the interview, he was not conscious of the shift in his identity in terms of culture, education, profession, and research practice in collaborative activities. The interview enabled him to reflect on his own experience. He suddenly saw that he had switched to another identity when that identity was more advantageous to him. For instance, when he tried to establish long-term relationships with Chinese administrators and institutions, he spontaneously 'switched off' his identity as a lecturer at a British university and 'switched on' his identity as an ethnically Chinese person because people in collective cultures prefer to work with 'insiders'. When he communicated with Chinese clients about their research designs, he learned that Chinese people would respect him more in his professional identity as a lecturer at a British university and would value the British design techniques and concepts he had learned. As a consequence, he automatically shifted in those situations to his British identity in terms of profession and pedagogy. He believed his ethnic and cultural identities were beyond his professional identity:

'When people are discussing the weaknesses of Chinese pedagogies and educational systems, I can discuss it with them from professional and objective perspectives. However, when I heard people say, "Chinese students are lazy students," my ethnic and cultural identity suddenly jumped out and perceived it as racism and bias. I could not agree with that statement.'

This illustrates that it might be more difficult to change one's ethnic and cultural identities than one's professional and research identities.

When he became an academic doctor and a university lecturer, he considered that others showed more respect to him.

'One time, I went to the sports centre in our university and wanted to apply for a sports card. The lady told me I could not apply for a sports card at the counter. She asked me to go home and fill in the application form online and then come back another day to pick up my card. However, when she knew I was a lecturer, she became very friendly and said she could fill in the form for me and she gave me my sports card right away'.

His self-confidence boosted little by little each time he shifted to a new role. When he worked as a cleaner, he felt that he had better integrated into the British society as he made friends with many local colleagues. These local cleaners showed an inclusive attitude toward him, and even the academic staff members were nice to him. It gave him the feeling that he was accepted by the community. When he became an urban designer in a private practice, he moved from a lower status blue-collar cleaner to a white-collar office worker. His professional abilities in urban design even outperformed other colleagues because of the training and knowledge he had learned from his doctoral study. As his role shifted to a university lecturer, his social-economic status became higher than average British people. Other people respected his professional knowledge and his occupation as a university lecturer. He also gradually got more accustomed to the British culture and the UK environment and planned to stay in the UK permanently. Having had studied and worked in the UK for so many years, his language abilities had improved significantly. Nevertheless, he also concerned that his Chinese had become worse but his English had not yet reached the native speaker level. He had forgotten how to write many Chinese words but has got used to having English input every day.

'I feel like something is missing if I have not watched English TV programmes for a period of time'.

5.3 Story II

Background

The second interviewee was also in her early thirties and had been in the UK for nine years. She received most of her education in China before coming to the UK to study for a master's degree. She was still studying for her doctoral degree when she was recruited as a lecturer by the UK university in 2009. Before working as a lecturer, she was a teaching assistant in a design studio, so teaching job was not completely new to her.

She came to the UK for her master's study instead of the USA because she did not want to take the GRE and TOEFL tests. However, she only got a conditional offer because her language proficiency score had not reached the entry requirements. Therefore, she attended the intensive language programmes for two terms. There were lots of assignments for the language centre courses. She had to attend eight hours of classes each day.

Like many other Chinese students, she also could not get used to the weather when she first came to the UK. Although many Chinese students complained about British food, she did not consider the food to be an issue. Her university residential hall offered meals every day and she could get used to Western food. Speaking English also did not appear to be an issue for her. She was able to communicate in English effectively immediately after arrival.

'When I came to the UK on the first day, I found my university accommodation was cancelled. I went to the accommodation office by myself and negotiated with them. I had my own accommodation the following day'.

However, the university did not have enough accommodation for research students and so she had to live in the undergraduate student accommodation. Although she had expected to live in a multicultural environment and practise her English, all of the

international students in her undergraduate student hall could speak Chinese as there were 21 university exchange students. In addition, she thought the undergraduate student accommodation was really noisy. '*Undergraduate students drank a lot and smoked grass.* Nevertheless, she soon met her boyfriend in the residential hall who was from Hong Kong and could not speak fluent Mandarin. Her boyfriend made her speak only English to help improve her English. Hence, she seldom spoke Chinese in her first two years in the UK. She spoke Chinese only when talking with her parents and friends in China on the phone.

After she finished the language courses and met the language requirement of her programme, she then continued to study for her master's degree in the university. She thought the most difficult academic challenge was to write her master's dissertation. As for the group work, she was in a naturally formed mixed group and the group functioned well. However, there was a group of Chinese students who mostly spoke Chinese during group discussion and the lecturer was very angry about this.

She had not encountered any discrimination issues but she had a female classmate from Taiwan who had been hit by local British people three times. She thought it was because the Taiwanese had said something impolite to the local people.

Part-time Work

She did a lot of part-time work during her master and doctoral study in the UK. In her first year in the UK, she worked part-time in a supermarket for one year and worked in the post office during the Christmas holiday. She had also worked on the counter in a Chinese take-away. She was a hall tutor in the university accommodation for seven months. Moreover, she was the president in the PGR (Postgraduate Research) Student Committee, and was in charge of reflecting feedback from students to the school manager.

Her rich working experience had developed her communication skills and enhanced her employability. In addition, she had a lot of teaching experience before she became a university lecturer. She had been an assistant teacher on many occasions since high school. In 2005, when she began her PhD study, she asked her supervisor if there were any teaching assistant opportunities. Her supervisor gave her an interview opportunity and then she successfully became a tutor in the design studio. She had been a tutor for five years in the undergraduate design studio from 2005 to 2010. She also did a lot of administrative work for her department from September 2008 to July 2010 (e.g. internship).

Life as a PhD student

At the beginning, she did not plan to study for the doctoral degree. Her interest was to become a zookeeper and she wanted to major in subjects such as astronomy, biology, and archaeology. However, her parents objected her studying those subjects on the ground that they would not help her find promising jobs and earn money in the future. Hence, she finally decided to study architecture. When she had almost finished her master's study, her supervisor thought that she had the abilities and skills to be a PhD student and encouraged her to stay in the department and to pursue her PhD degree. She also never planned to be a university lecturer, but all of her friends said her personality was suited to being a university lecturer. Due to her health condition, she also considered that being a university lecturer might be the best choice for her.

She chose to stay in the same university for her doctoral study because she was offered scholarship. Her doctoral study began in 2004 and she has not yet finished her doctoral study until the time of data collection (2011). Initially, she thought she could finish her doctoral study in 2008. Due to many unexpected accidents and events, she had to postpone her thesis submission date many times. In 2009, she was recruited as a

lecturer and was busy with her work and so did not have enough time to do her doctoral research. She was supposed to submit her thesis. At the end of 2010, she was busy preparing for her wedding and therefore she again applied for an 11 month extension of the submission date. In April 2011, she finally began to write up her thesis and planned to submit her thesis in June. She thought the reason why she was not so eager to finish her thesis was because she had already got the position as a university lecturer. She did not need to worry about visa issues and financial issues so she did not put a lot of effort into writing her thesis.

Similar to another participant, she also could not make a decision on her research topic in her first year of doctoral study. She had spent almost two years doing the literature review and deciding upon her research topic. During her PhD study, she had attended many conferences which she could add to her CV when applying for teaching jobs.

Becoming a lecturer

In 2009, she was recruited as a lecturer and officially began her teaching job in February 2010. At this point she was in the fourth year of her doctoral study.

In her first year as a lecturer, she prepared classes the evening before giving lectures. Students reflected that her classes were intensive. They had to do lots of preparation before the class.

In terms of relationships with other colleagues, she also had closer relationships with the same research group. She often gossiped with other administration staff (e.g. the secretaries) about what had happened in her department so she could always get the latest information in her department. It was one of her strategies to maintain a good relationship with other colleagues and to help her better integrate into her community of practice.

She had attended two collaborative programmes with her Chinese university in 2008 and 2009. In 2008, however, she had not yet been recruited as a lecturer and thus had not been officially involved in the organising and decision making of the first collaborative programme. The following year she joined the UK team and made contact with an undergraduate classmate, who is now a director at a private architectural company. Thus, besides the collaborative programme with the top university in China, another important thing for her to do was to establish a connection with the aforementioned company to find potential opportunities for designing real projects together with her friend, and to open up possibilities for student internships.

Research, education and pedagogy

She said that students in the UK had more freedom to choose their own research topics:

'In China, research students usually do projects for teachers but have less opportunity to do research about their interested areas. In the UK, students can do any topic that they are interested in as long as they can find appropriate supervisor(s).'

Her opinion supported the idea of a student-centred pedagogy in the UK, which was in contrast to the teacher-centred atmosphere found in China. However, she thought that despite the fact that the student-centred educational system in the UK allowed students greater freedom, students' achievements varied due to differences in their own efforts:

'Western pedagogy emphasises the development of individuals. Everyone has different talents and learning patterns and what teachers do is to assist their development.'

In contrast, she believed her education in China had given her profound subject knowledge, which was similar to the opinion of the other interviewee:

'I considered myself to have received a solid foundation of knowledge in China. Although the traditional Chinese pedagogies are usually criticised as spoon-feeding, it makes sure every student achieves the same level by repeating drills and practices.'

Moreover, she pointed out that students had different methods and different priorities in dealing with things, as was stated by the other interviewee:

'Chinese students tend to adopt a top-down approach, which means they begin at the highest conceptual level and then work down to the details. In contrast, UK students tend to work from the bottom to the top.'

When asked whether she supervised her students based on Western or Chinese pedagogies, she claimed she combined both pedagogies and adopted the Chinese 'middle way':

'When I supervise my students, I allow them the freedom to choose their own topics but I am very strict with their progress. From my own experience as a PhD student, I know doctoral students sometimes are not good at time management, and many of them could not meet the submission deadline. Hence, I always have regular meetings with students and make sure that they have continual and steady progress with their research projects.'

She indicated that her teaching beliefs about supervising students were based on her own experience as a doctoral student, as well as on a mixture of Chinese and Western pedagogies. Similar to the other interviewee, her teaching beliefs were shaped and re-shaped through the accumulation of experience; both her experiences in China and in the UK influenced her significantly.

During the interview, she repeatedly mentioned the Chinese philosophy of a middle way, and emphasised the importance of implementing this philosophy in every aspect of her life (e.g. in both her academic and daily life). In terms of her ideal educational system, she again mentioned the middle way philosophy and said:

'The mixture of the Chinese and Western pedagogies would be ideal pedagogies. Students can learn solid subject knowledge and also can develop their own interests and talents.'

The author interpreted this as recognition of her own cultural identity. Despite the fact that she appreciated the quality of Western academics and their ways of conducting research, she still highly valued her own traditional philosophy. The interviews with the two participants showed that both of them had a high level of acceptance of Western pedagogy, but that they both retained their Chinese identities in terms of culture and ethnicity.

Ideal teacher

In terms of her idea of an ideal teacher, the interviewee used many Chinese metaphors and old sayings to describe one:

'In my mind, an ideal teacher should be like a lighthouse, guiding students to the right path without too much interfering. My teaching belief is just as an old Chinese saying: "The master teaches the trade, but the apprentice's skill is self-made", similar to the concept, "You can lead a horse to the water but you cannot make him drink". There is another Chinese philosophy said by Confucius, which is "to teach students according to their aptitude". I try to achieve that realm.'

She tried to convey the belief that teachers should give direction to students but should not limit their development. Although she used old Chinese sayings to explain these concepts, she actually expressed the message of student-centred pedagogy. As for the teacher-student relationship, she said that:

'Teachers and students should keep reasonable distance. If teachers and students are too close, then students won't listen to the teacher. My housemate is also a

lecturer and she is from Canada. She is very close to her students and they often go to pubs together. Hence, her students don't take her words seriously.'

Chinese teachers are typically said to have good relationships with their students and these relationships can last for life. It was very interesting to note that this interviewee seemed to extend the concept of teacher authority, which is typically used to describe traditional Chinese teachers in class, to daily relationships with students.

The other interviewee, though also in his early thirties, never mentioned the necessity of maintaining teacher authority, and he kept very close relationships with his students, even after class. Hence, age and nationality do not seem to be significant factors in influencing the teacher-student relationship; one's personality and past experience may be more important.

Benefits of transnational collaboration

Similar to the first interviewee, this interviewee also thought China had more practical experience in architecture, whereas the UK was more advanced in theoretical knowledge:

'The synergy among industry, academics, and research has become a trend. The building market in China is booming and has great potential. In contrast, the UK building market has been very quiet in recent years. Therefore, architects have more opportunities to put what they have learned into practice in China.'

She also believed the university and research cultures in China did not really encourage academic staff to be active in research. The salaries of university lecturers in China are much lower than those of lecturers in the UK. Moreover, the budget and opportunities for funding are much less in China than in the UK. The research culture and atmosphere in the UK is more active. However, the UK has less real building projects, so their knowledge usually stays at the theoretical level.

The UK architectural school also established long-term collaboration with several private architectural companies in Beijing, Tianjin, and Shanghai for student internships and students taking a year off:

'The internships with Chinese companies and institutions were extremely successful. Many British students have been to China for a year out, and they expressed that the experience of working in another country was brilliant.'

She believed the benefits of transnational collaborative activities were twofold; both parties could benefit from the collaboration.

She did say, however, that there were some challenges and inconveniences related to transnational collaboration. Firstly, academic semesters in China were different to those in the UK. For instance, UK universities close for Christmas, whereas Chinese universities close for Chinese New Year (usually in late January or early February). Therefore, both parties needed to compromise to accommodate each other's schedule. If an academic staff member needed to go to China on university business during the term, then the other lecturers would have to work as substitutes. Secondly, participating members needed to travel frequently between China and the UK. The UK team travelled to China six times in 2010. The third challenge to intercultural communication was the language barrier; British participants could not understand the Chinese language and Chinese students spoke limited English.

Roles in transnational collaboration

The interviewee believed she had the roles of 'organiser, leader, and liaison officer' in the transitional collaboration programmes. She also mentioned that Chinese people tended to work with familiar people, which again pointed out the tendency of the Chinese to work with 'insiders' in their collective culture.

The interviewee thought the most difficult parts of the collaboration involved time and money. Academic staff who were involved in the collaborative programmes usually did not have enough time to deal with university teaching, research work, and transitional collaborative activities at the same time. She suggested that those staff members who wanted to engage in transnational collaborative activities should aim for small projects first, and then build on their experience step by step. She also mentioned the importance of appreciating differences:

'Don't look at others' drawbacks but learn and appreciate others' strengths. Be open-minded, flexible, and adaptable. Don't be too assertive and refuse to accept others' opinions.'

The establishment of trust between the parties was also seen as essential:

'Each party should be clear of the rules and regulations before actually conducting the collaborative activities.'

She again used an old Chinese saying to describe this, 'Talk about the worst situation at first', which means that each party should be well prepared for any possible challenges so that when any disagreement happens, members will know how to deal with it without argument.

Identity change and transition trajectories

Her case was a special case. Unlike the other participant who never had any teaching experience, she had lots of teaching experience before she was recruited as a university lecturer. Her transition from an international student to a university lecturer seemed smoother than the other participant due to the fact that she already had taught some modules and dealt with a lot of administration work in her department before she

was recruited as a university lecturer. Therefore she had lots of time to adjust and adapt to the role as a university lecturer gradually. In addition, she is also an international student at the same time. Since her roles and identities were a mixture of an international student and a university lecturer in one UK university, she had not felt significant identity shift issues.

She expressed she had not encountered apparent culture shock since she had no language barrier issue and food adaptation issue. She also held an open attitude of whether to stay in the UK or not. She said she might move to China, Hong Kong, the USA, or any other country in the world since she felt she could adapt well to any new country and culture. She suggested those international students who would like to be a university lecturer in the future, should build up their CV step by step, e.g. part-time job, teaching assistant, attending conferences, etc.

5.4 Similarities and differences of their transition patterns

Both of the interviewees were in their early thirties and were the only child in their family. They both grew up in Beijing and received most of their education in China (from primary school to undergraduate study). They obtained their master's degree in the UK and both of them were recruited as a university lecturer before they completed their doctoral study. Comparing their transition patterns from an international student to a university lecturer, many similarities were found. Both of them have rich part-time work experience before they became a university lecturer. Their part-time jobs were not necessarily directly related to their teaching jobs, but it had helped them to build up communication skills, learn local British culture, improve their English ability, and enhance their employability. They both had been the president of their community (hall president or the president of PGR student committee) and were responsible for representing and reflecting the students' voice to the authority. It developed their leadership and their sense of empathy toward the student groups, and which might be

very helpful in their future teaching job. They both had worked in typically considered lower social status jobs (e.g. cleaner, clerk). However, they both considered these experiences helped them learn local English accents and British culture. In addition, they both have submitted conference papers and presented in international conferences during their doctoral studies.

On the other hand, the male interviewee had no prior teaching experience but had worked in an architectural practice. He thought the experience of working in a real practice had helped him cultivate his professional knowledge and identity. In contrast, the female interviewee has many teaching experiences but has never worked in a real practice. She adapted to the role of a university lecturer very quickly since she has lots of teaching and administration related experience.

During the first few years of their doctoral study, they both had difficulty in deciding their research topic and felt frustrated. The male interviewee managed to submit his thesis in time, but the female interviewee had postponed her submission deadline many times due to a number of unpredictable incidents. They both felt lonely during the PhD journey. The male interviewee even thought about giving up his doctoral study. In terms of relationships with other colleagues, their networks were usually limited to those who were in the same research group. Typically, they usually work independently. The male interviewee expressed feeling alienated while working in the university setting. The female interviewee seemed to encounter less alienation issues since she often gossiped with other staff. Although they have international friends, they tend to stay with the same nationals after work and both of their partners were ethnic Chinese.

They were both involved in transnational collaboration programmes. Through the experience of working with both Chinese and British students and staff, they learned that the research culture, educational expectation, and the priority of conducting a

project were very different in the UK and China. They both retained their original Chinese cultural identity but they highly valued the British academic environment.

In terms of academic transition, the male interviewee expressed that it took him many years to get accustomed to UK educational conventions and to learn British academic writing. Although his language test score had met the language entry requirement, he still considered the language barrier as the major problem while in the UK. In contrast, even though the female interviewee had not met the language requirement and had attended language courses for two terms, she was quite confident of her English abilities.

5.5 Summary

The two in-depth narrative stories revealed the transition trajectories and identity shift issues of two Chinese lecturers from an international student to a university lecturer. An analysis of the data showed the similarities and differences between their transition patterns. The results indicated that both interviewees highly valued the UK pedagogy and research environment. Their appreciation of the academic excellence of the UK, however, had not influenced their recognition of their ethnic and cultural identities. The results also demonstrated that the establishment of their professional teaching identities and teaching beliefs had been influenced by many complex elements, including educational background, work experience, personality, and personal philosophy. These differences also influenced their perceptions of an ideal teacher and the ideal teacher-student relationship. In contrast, age, gender, and number of years teaching seemed to not significantly influence the formation of their professional teaching identities. Moreover, the interviews with the two participants revealed information about the roles and contributions of international lecturers in transnational collaborative activities. These results are in accordance with the results of interviews with other Chinese lecturers.

Chapter 6

Support for Chinese Students and Chinese Lecturers

Introduction

This chapter presents the Chinese students' and Chinese lecturers' perspectives on the support they have received in the university and compares them with the university's current policy and support service for international students and staff. The data obtained from Chinese students and lecturers has helped to show how they actually felt about the support provided by the university. A documentary analysis of the support information on the university's website has been adopted to compare students' and lecturers' opinions and make suggestions as to how the university can better improve its support.

6.1 Support for Chinese students

The university has a good reputation for providing support to students and lecturers. The Times Good University Guide 2009 says: "The University is the nearest Britain has to a truly global university". There were over 8,400 international students in 2009/2010 in the university, and students came from over 150 different countries.

6.1.1 Institutional support

Generally, Chinese students were satisfied with the support provided by the international office in the university. On the orientation day, senior colleagues and friends gave an introduction to the programme. In the first week, the police, NHS and staff from a bank came to the university to help them register with the police, open a bank account, and obtain necessary vaccines.

Analysis of the university's website indeed showed that the university offered a large amount of information for both students and lecturers. The web pages were even available in five different languages, giving an overall introduction to the university. There were also four official webpages of the university on Facebook and Twitter, and each had different purposes and functions: an official university page, the study abroad team, the students' union, and culture vulture. There was also useful information about culture shock and tips for transition. Two small quizzes were available to help students learn British culture, as well as local jargon and accents.

Presentations and workshops on different topics (e.g. visas, working in the UK, and inviting friends and parents to the UK) were available to students and the schedule could be downloaded from the website. The international office also held events and excursions for international students at least twice a month, and this schedule could also be downloaded from the website. Moreover, students could apply to live with a host family and meet local people. It not only offered information for international students who wanted to come to the UK to study, but also information for home students who wanted to study in another country.

The students' union also had its own website and Facebook page, with links to them on the university website. The students' union website had a list of recent events for students. It also had information and details of activities for new students called 'Week One', which included a campus tour, a pub quiz, a club night, and a salsa night, etc.

Chinese students were found to seldom participate in activities and events held by the international office. First, they thought the international office did not publicise their events very well and so students were unaware of them. Second, Chinese students preferred to go out with their own friends. Even if they participated in the events held by the international office, they still stayed within their own groups. Thirdly, although

they met other international students at the events, they later found out it was difficult to form a close relationship because of a lack of things in common (Spencer-Oatey and Xiong, 2006). This was previously referred to as “pragmatic failure” by Thomas (1983), who indicated that people fail to communicate with peers due to lack of a common linguistic or cultural background.

Chinese students mostly went to the international office to make enquiries about applying for or extending their visa, as well as finding part-time jobs. As for daily life issues and accommodation issues, they usually consulted experienced Chinese friends or Chinese lecturers rather than utilising the consultant service at the international office or the university’s accommodation office. Other studies (Kingston and Forland, 2008; Spencer-Oatey, and Xiong, 2006; Luck, 2010) have also found that students seldom utilise such institutional provision and support. Students are either unclear of what services are available and question the value of the services (Spencer-Oatey, and Xiong, 2006), or they are too busy with extra studying and lack the time needed to go to the counselling service (Kingston and Forland, 2008).

When Chinese students had academic problems, they usually asked friends or used Google first rather than ask their lecturers. Lecturers were the last people that they would seek help from. Although the university’s website has information on the one-to-one sessions and workshops available for assisting students to prepare for exams and writing dissertations, the website does not give details of when and where the workshops usually take place. Kingston and Forland’s (2008) study yielded similar results, finding that not only do Chinese students prefer to seek help from same nationals, but American students do as well. Some Chinese students attended religious groups and they thought that they offer much more support than the university.

Chinese students, therefore, tended to solve problems by themselves or seek help from same nationals. Seeking help from the official office or lecturers was the last choice. Sovic's (2008) study found that students thought no effort was made by home students or the institution to help international students integrate into the new environment, even though they had expected the institution to be able to foster a sense of belonging.

Analysis of the statements on the university's counselling website offered other possible explanations of why students seldom utilise the service:

1. The website states that there is high demand for appointments and sometimes people have to be put on a waiting list. Groups and workshops are recommended for those who do not like to wait. These facts may prevent people from seeking help at the counselling service centre, as they may have to wait and also their privacy may not be protected if they attend group counselling.
2. Of the topics on the websites, it seems the counselling service covers general issues that most students will encounter in their university life, but workshops specifically related to international students and staff are not offered. Issues related to studying and living abroad (e.g. alienation, discrimination, culture shock, homesickness, etc.) are not listed on the website.
3. The counselling service is in English. From the focus group data it appeared that the language barrier was a significant reason that prevented students from seeking help from their tutors and a counsellor.

Suggestions as to how the university can improve its counselling support are discussed in a later chapter.

6.1.2 Lecturers' support

The majority of lecturers showed sympathy toward international students, as half of them were once international students in the UK themselves, and the other half had experience of working and studying outside the UK. Lecturers generally thought it was beneficial to have international students as they: 1) bring financial income; 2) enrich diversity in culture and academic aspects of the university; 3) help lecturers to broaden their views through teaching international students; and 4) learn to respect other cultures. They also thought that different cultures and backgrounds made group work more interesting and enriched one's own context.

The majority of the lecturers considered it the responsibility of the university to provide support for international students, and they thought that the university had already provided sufficient support (e.g. counselling service, language centre, student societies and student union, and international office). Although lecturers did not think that helping international students would cause them extra workload, they stated that they were quite busy and had little time to provide support to students proactively. A study by Hockings et al. (2009) also showed that university lecturers felt it as the "insatiable demands of contemporary higher education" (Archer, 2008) and thus they had to sacrifice some aspects as a compromise, such as giving feedback to students. Moreover, some lecturers stated that they had to spend more time explaining things to international students due to language issues.

It is argued that international students come from different countries with different educational backgrounds and work experience. These students are mixed in one programme/course and thus it is difficult for lecturers to manage the class. Hockings et al. (2009) also showed the difficulties of teaching a large numbers of students in a class; lecturers have to focus more on managing the class rather than the actual teaching activities.

There is pressure sometimes to deliver the syllabus/learning outcomes etc. and not much time is given to the depth of the student learning experience. We have workload discussed every year (quantity) but little ever is said about how much the students learn (quality) or how they are taught. (Hockings et al., 2009, p.489)

In order to meet everyone's needs, lecturers may only teach basic and introductory knowledge to students and then encourage students to do further research. This perhaps explains why students felt lecturers in the UK only taught introductory knowledge but asked them to show in-depth reflections in their work. Furthermore, the ratio of teachers to students was imbalanced. In some programmes, there were two hundred students but only one lecturer without a teaching assistant, and thus the lecturer had no time to give students extra support or detailed written feedback.

Generally, Chinese students thought the university had provided them sufficient support but they expected their lecturers to give them more academic support. It appeared that: 1) lecturers and students had different perceptions on who should provide support for international students; 2) students could not understand the heavy workload of lecturers. The university could perhaps offer clearer guidance to specify the roles and responsibilities of lecturers and the international office. Besides this, teaching assistants should also be available to help lecturers with teaching activities or give marks.

6.1.3 Tailored language programmes

One Chinese lecturer was the language officer in her department and in charge of language issues of international students. She mentioned how the tailored programme was funded by the language centre of the university. Since international students were usually unfamiliar with professional terms used in English, the language centre cooperated with several departments to provide four-week tailored pre-sessional programmes for international students, and had done so since the summer of 2010. Over

60% of the content was related to the department's subject. It also involved training in presentation skills, time management skills, special English language courses for teaching technical terms, and also intensive speaking and listening courses.

The tailored programme was funded by the language centre of the university. The language centre would collect data from the tailored programme to do further research on how to better support international students. The programme would be taught by staff from both the department and the language centre. It was said that these kind of tailored programmes had already been implemented in other departments (e.g. business school) where there were many international students, but none of the Chinese students had ever attended or heard about the tailored programmes.

The university's website showed there were specific language courses for students in the following schools: law, engineering, Chinese studies, and modern languages. However, only one language course was for master degree students; two were for undergraduate students; and the other one was inapplicable. In this study, only two lecturers were aware of the existence of these tailored programmes. However, none of the Chinese students in this study had ever attended or heard of the programmes. This shows that the university may not widely promote the tailored programmes.

6.2 Support for Chinese lecturers

This section presents the interview data obtained from Chinese lecturers to understand what support has been provided to them by their university, and to understand how they wished their university might improve its current support service. Furthermore, their opinions are compared with the support service promised on the university's website to find out if there are any discrepancies.

6.2.1 Daily life support

Most of the Chinese lecturers had lived near the university for more than 5 years without moving to another area since they came to the UK. The only support regarding accommodation issues provided by the university was a relocation fee, which enabled new academic staff to cover moving costs. However, only one participant had applied for this benefit. Apart from the relocation fee, the university did not provide further support to new academic staff. One Chinese lecturer, who first came to the UK as a research fellow without any UK education background, stated that:

The information package of the university stated it offered free accommodation for newcomers but when I came here, I found there was no free accommodation. I had to ask friends to find accommodation urgently for me and my wife.

Most of the Chinese lecturers believed that if the university could offer more information on accommodation and daily life related issues (e.g. supermarkets, shops, restaurants), it may reduce the culture shock they face upon arrival:

When I first came here, I couldn't even know where to eat. I lived in a university hall but I don't have a kitchen. I felt very hungry and went out trying to get some food, but surprisingly found all stores were closed. Stores closed at 5:00 p.m. in the UK. Unlike in China, stores open until late night.

The university's website indicated that lecturers could apply for short-term accommodation on campus for a maximum of three months, and that the accommodation office can help to make temporary hotel reservations. However, many Chinese lecturers mentioned the free accommodation that is offered by universities for doctoral students and lecturers in China. Most of the Chinese lecturers thought that universities in China provided better support in this respect. Similarly, a survey (McNamara and Lewis, 2005) indicated 42% overseas trained teacher in the UK felt the support they received from their institutions in housing needs and financial advice was

poor. It indicated UK institutions may need to put great effort in improving their support in terms of housing and financial issues.

6.2.2 Academic support

The university's website states that it offers three levels of induction for new international students/staff: university level, school/department level, and personal level. In the personal level session, it gives a clear introduction to continuing professional development, and step-by-step guidance and real examples on how one can design a personal development plan. For those who are uncertain about their teaching role, they can consult the university's policy manual, Quality Manual and the Concordat, which states the responsibilities and roles of university teachers. However, all the Chinese lecturers mentioned that there was no formal induction provided by the university. Only a brief introduction of the department was made by experienced colleagues.

It was concluded from the interviews that the participants generally considered the support provided by the university to be ineffective in helping new lecturers to improve their professional knowledge and teaching skills. The academic support provided for international academic staff included workshops, seminars, and training courses. Newly recruited lecturers were required to take a PGCHE (Post-Graduate Certificate in Higher Education) course and complete a minimum of 30 credits in the first three years at the university. Besides this, lecturers also had to study policies and issues related to equality and diversity via the university's website, and complete a compulsory online test within one month.

Various training courses were available for selection, including Teaching Dialogue, Individual Pathway, Lecturing for Learning, Improving Student Learning Experience,

and Teaching in the UK as International Staff. Some courses were specifically designed for international staff, such as HE Teaching in the UK for International Staff. It aims to:

Explore UK approaches to learning and teaching;

Compare the UK approach to other international approaches;

Discuss different ways to adjust to UK approaches to learning and teaching

(University's website)

The modules were assessed either through an essay, portfolio or peer review. Although some of the Chinese lecturers learned university policies and regulations through the courses, most of them thought that they did not receive much practical help from the courses.

The majority of the participants already had teaching experience before they were recruited as a university lecturers in the UK— either as a university lecturer in China or as a teaching assistant while a doctoral student in the UK. For those individuals, they believed the PGCHE only enabled them to review the knowledge and teaching skills that they had already obtained during their teaching practice. Two participants who had more than 15 years teaching experience even considered the PGCHE to be a burden. The compulsory course gave them extra work load on top of their busy teaching and research activities. In addition, a lack of education-related background made the course even harder for them. One of the lecturers who had 15 years teaching experience in China and 10 years experience in the UK said:

At first I just wanted to pass the courses but later on I found the courses interesting. I'd really like to learn more about related educational knowledge but I have too many workloads and have no time to do further study. The research job is very heavy in our discipline, and I also need to take students to field trip several times a semester. I usually have to work until one o'clock or midnight.

Despite the fact that the majority of the participants considered the PGCHE to be unhelpful in improving teaching skills, one participant said:

It's a good opportunity to know lecturers in other disciplines and it helps to build up one's own social network.

The data suggests that most of the participating lecturers did not highly value the PGCHE course, particularly in relation to practical aspects. Three of the participants found co-teaching with their mentor or other experienced teachers was more helpful in improving their teaching skills. Moreover, many Chinese lecturers also hoped that the university would offer more British culture courses, as being proficient in a language is not simply having good vocabulary and grammar, rather it is also understanding the cultural connotations of the language.

Chinese lecturers have their individual pathways to develop their teaching skills and identities. Discussions on how they improve their teaching skills and establish teaching identities are discussed in earlier chapter (see Chapter 4 — 4.2.2).

6.2.3 Professional development

Documentary analysis of the university's website generally showed that the university offered an abundance of information for lecturers related to professional development. The website page 'Teaching at the university' covered a massive amount of material including the following themes: Teaching methods, Learning issues & Curriculum design, Teaching & Learning themes, and resources. There were also various FAQ videos that covered a wide range of issues, including: How to answer difficult questions during seminars?; How can you accommodate diversity in a large group?; The staff experience of learning from internationalisation; and Strategies to address a reluctance

to ask questions in lectures. In general, it covered every possible issue that lecturers may encounter while teaching at the university.

Online tools were also available. 'Assessment of teaching skills' enables international staff to evaluate their teaching abilities according to UK demands. If any weaknesses show up, online links direct staff to possible development activities so they can develop their teaching skills. 'Plagiarism Detection' enables students and lecturers to check the percentage of references and citations in their written work to see if it has the potential to be classed as plagiarism. Other information related to professional development includes:

Diversity

Funding

Induction

IT

Leadership & Management

Learning & Teaching

Personal Development

Mentoring Scheme

Qualifications

Women's' Development

The graduate centre is open 24 hours a day for both students and staff members, offering free refreshments and newspapers. The graduate school emails details of training programmes proactively to postgraduate students and staff members nearly every day. The emails state how many vacancies are still available and those who are interested can book a place online. After each training session, the graduate school gives

all participants a certificate. The certificates are useful when participants want to find a job. The training offered by the graduate school includes:

- 1) *Research training courses: these courses are open to all research students and research staff. Detailed information on the course content and course times are available online.*
- 2) *eLearning*
- 3) *Postgraduate welcome video*
- 4) *FAQ videos: six videos are available on the website that answer frequently asked questions (FAQ) by researchers.*
- 5) *Research innovation services*

Other information is available on the university's website and in general, the university's website covers a wide range of issues and information. Students and lecturers can find plenty of information on the university's website.

Although there is a lot of information online, it is doubtful whether lecturers have enough time to explore all of the information available. A formal but brief introduction to the information and support services that are available to lecturers and students should be provided at the beginning so that they know where they can find resources when they need them.

Summary

A documentary analysis of the university's web pages was conducted to understand if any discrepancies exist between the university support service and the opinions of students and lecturers. It was found that although the university provides various support services for international students and lecturers, international students and

lecturers tended not to utilise the formal institutional support service, rather they usually turned to same nationals for help. It is thus suggested that institutions should make its support service well known to all staff members (Turner and Robson, 2008), and also that multilingual counselling services and publications should be provided (Kingston and Forland, 2008).

Chapter 7

Discussion of Main Findings and Suggestions: Academic and Sociocultural Transition Pattern of Chinese Academics – From Students to Lecturers

Introduction

This chapter combines the narratives of both Chinese students and Chinese lecturers to build up a comprehensive understanding of the transitional pattern Chinese academics experience as they progress from being students to becoming lecturers. Unlike previous studies that only approach this issue from a single perspective, either that of students or lecturers, the present research has integrated the perspectives of both groups so as to map the transitional pattern taken by Chinese academics in the UK. Previous studies are constantly compared with the research results of this study and explanations of the differences are offered. Suggestions on how HE institutions can better support Chinese students and lecturers at different stages are provided. Presentation of the main findings is made in the order of the research questions discussed in previous chapters.

Research questions:

- 1) What are the challenges facing Chinese students and lecturers in UK HE institutions (from the perspective of Chinese students, UK and international lecturers, and Chinese lecturers)?
- 2) What are the academic and cultural transition processes of Chinese students and lecturers in the UK?
- 3) What are the university's current policy and support service for Chinese/international academics?
- 4) How can UK HE institutions better support Chinese/international academics in the UK and established an internationalised teaching, learning, and research environment?

What are the challenges facing Chinese students and lecturers in UK HE institutions?

The data have shown that Chinese students and lecturers face many similar challenges, as well as difficulties related to their roles (as illustrated in Table 7.1).

	Chinese students	Chinese academic staff
Academic support	Language support	
	Essay writing, exam preparation, group work, presentations	Professional training courses (PGCHE, seminars, workshops)
	Personal tutor	Mentor
	British culture courses	
	UK pedagogies and assessment system	
	Shift of identities	
Daily life support	Accommodation, local area (visas, banks, NHS, restaurants, etc.) induction, orientation	
	Dislike of food and weather appeared to be the most biggest issues	
Research & disciplinary culture	China: Hierarchical, competitive, and superficial. Research quantity is the focus. UK: Open, creative, critical. Research quality is more important.	
Relationships	‘Clique’ – stay with same nationals 1. Prefer to seek help from other Chinese students or Chinese lecturers	At work: 1. Avoid Chinese colleagues due to the competitive nature among Chinese people 2. Avoid Chinese students in order to establish authority 3. Have good relationships with colleagues who are in the same research group or with those who are next door
		After work: 1. Have both Chinese friends and other national friends
	2. Usually eat and celebrate Chinese festivals with other Chinese friends due to similar eating habits and cultural background	
	3. Have difficulty making friends with British people due to ‘lack of things in common’.	

Table 7.1: Comparison of challenges and support needed by Chinese students and Chinese academic staff

7.1 Differences

The most significant difference between Chinese students and lecturers is their attitude toward same nationals. In accordance with previous studies, Chinese students in the present study were also found to prefer to stay with same nationals. However, this study yielded very different results from previous studies with regard to the relationships between Chinese lecturers with students and colleagues. The research results showed that Chinese lecturers avoided other Chinese colleagues at work and also avoided close relationships with students so as to establish authority. These results contradict previous studies and are discussed in detail in the following sections.

7.1.1 Teacher-student relationships and the language of teaching

Previous studies mostly describe Chinese lecturers as having a tendency to develop close personal mentoring relationships with students, which last even after many years (Cua 1989; Chen 1994; Philo, 2007; Cheng 1994). However, the present research data indicate that some Chinese lecturers tend to avoid close relationships with Chinese students so as to establish authority. Moreover, older lecturers (above 40 years old) usually view Chinese students as their children, tend to give more moral lessons, and have higher expectations toward Chinese students than other national students. The results also show that the traditional Chinese teacher-student relationship still unconsciously influences Chinese lecturers even when they are teaching in the UK context. In addition, further interviews with two Chinese lecturers have indicated that age, gender, and number of years teaching do not necessarily influence lecturers' attitudes and beliefs toward teacher-student relationships, but previous educational and working experience and personality may play more important roles.

Many of them, despite their ages, mentioned that teaching is not only to deliver subject knowledge but also to teach moral education. It seems that many of them still unconsciously try to meet the expectations of an ideal teacher in Chinese culture, who usually plays the roles of an authority figure, a parent, a mentor, and a pastor, as well as a provider of moral guidance (Gao and Watkins, 2002; Watkins and Biggs, 2001; Lee, 1996). As mentioned by one participant:

I want to teach them not only academic knowledge but also good moral, and to guide them to develop good personality and character. Western teachers usually don't teach students this.

The differences between the expectations of a 'model teacher' in China and the UK have been discussed in Chapter 2. These different expectations and pedagogies have caused misunderstandings, as one Chinese lecturer explained how one of his students wrote a complaint letter to the school about his "demanding and threatening" language. These nuanced cultural differences in expectations of relationships and communication patterns usually make intercultural communication unsuccessful. UK HE institutions should consider giving training or information to all lecturers and students to advise them of the differences in teacher-student relationships and language of teaching used in different cultures so as to enhance their intercultural relationships and communication.

7.1.2 Chinese lecturers' relationships with other colleagues

Unlike the 'clique' phenomenon commonly found among Chinese students (Edwards and Ran, 2009), many Chinese lecturers, especially older ones (above 40 years old), stated in the present study that they generally had good relationships with colleagues but that they avoided other Chinese lecturers in their workplace on purpose because they considered relationships among Chinese people to usually be hierarchical and competitive. They thought that the virtue of trust among people was seriously threatened following the ten year Cultural Revolution in China. Young Chinese

lecturers (in their early 30s) tended not to have this consideration, as they had not experienced that period. Nevertheless, similar eating habits and traditional festivals still bound Chinese people together after work.

Studies by Jiang et al. (2010) and Luxon and Peelo (2009) suggest the existence of formal (academic life) and informal (social life) relationship channels among international academic staff. Jiang et al. (2010) found that Chinese academic staff believe that their social life can be separated from their academic life. In contrast to the present research results, their study supports the idea that international students keep social ties with same nationals (Kashima and Loh, 2006); Chinese academic staff in their study were found to restrict their life circle to other Chinese people due to the difficulty of making friends with British people. However, their study does not explain the relationship between Chinese academic staff and their UK or Chinese colleagues in academic life.

The present research results indicate that Chinese lecturers may indeed have different social patterns in academic life and daily life. At their workplace, they generally have good relationships with their colleagues, especially with those who are in the same research group or those whose offices are nearby. One possible explanation for the phenomenon may be: 1) people who are in the same 'community of practice' usually share the same language and common interests, and thus communication is easier; 2) they may have more time or more contact with people around them and thus their relationship tends to be close. Besides this, nearly all of the participants had obtained their master or doctorate degree at the university, and many of their colleagues were their teachers and so they had less difficulty establishing a relationship with them.

Similar to other studies (e.g. Luxon and Peelo, 2009; Anderson, 1988), the present research also shows how eating habits can influence intercultural relationships. Luxon and Peelo (2009) describe this as "cultural norms surrounding eating", and Anderson

(1988) indicates that eating is a significant ritual that allows one to find out about other people. An important aspect is that eating together offers the opportunity for informal teaching development (Haigh, 2005), which is similar to the idea of peripheral learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991) whereby learning is viewed as a process of social participation. International academic staff, however, may find it difficult to approach UK colleagues due to their different eating habits (Luxon and Peelo, 2009). UK HE institutions could therefore hold more informal social events (e.g. potluck, international food day) so that colleagues become familiar with each other in a relaxed atmosphere, enabling further situated learning.

The phenomenon of Chinese lecturers avoiding other Chinese colleagues has not yet been described in any other study. It is unclear whether this is a special case or whether it can be applied to other Chinese lecturers in the UK. Ouyang's (2006) study describes the *Danwei* in China, which is similar to the Western concept of 'community of practice'. It identifies how academic staff are assigned to different *Danwei* based on their subject area, and the relationship in a *Danwei* is hierarchical rather than being based on equality as it is in the West. This suggests that unequal and hierarchical relationships indeed exist among the Chinese academic community. It would thus be interesting for further research to investigate whether Chinese lecturers in other UK universities also experience this avoidance phenomenon. Further research might also explore if this phenomenon exists among other nationals or whether it is limited only to Chinese people.

7.1.3 Chinese students' relationships with host nationals

The data of this study supports the idea that Chinese students often have difficulties making friends with home students and tend to stay together (e.g. Kingston and Forland,

2008; Peacock and Harrison, 2008). This phenomenon exists not only in daily life but also in the academic setting. Chinese students indicated that home students do not like to work with international students; a self-selected group usually ended up with same nation members, which is a finding in accordance with Ippolito's study (2007). Other studies have also indicated that home students show an indifferent and inapproachable attitude toward international students (Brown, 2009), and may not think that they can benefit from working with other nationals (Higgins, 2006). In addition, home students may consider it a burden to work with international students, thinking that international students may bring down the marks of the group (Peacock and Harrison, 2008). Furthermore, home students may feel obliged to help the international students (Higgins, 2006).

Nevertheless, Chinese students in this study generally expressed a preference to work with other nationals and hoped that their lecturers would assign them to groups. A study by Higgins (2006) showed that Chinese students felt that being 'forced' to work with other nationals helped them with their English. However, lecturers also have their own concerns on this issue. Higgins' (2006) study showed that 28% of EU students complained about the international students whom they were 'forced' to work with. Some lecturers in the present study also worried that students would blame them if they assigned students to a group that did not work well.

It has been suggested that lecturers should facilitate multicultural communication. A study by Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern (2002) argued that home students who have higher exposure to international students appear significantly more comfortable in dealing with differences. Hence, a buddy system that is similar to the 'colleague parent' system used at Oxford University is suggested to facilitate intercultural communication, which involves pairing home and international students and encouraging them to exchange emails giving suggestions and enquiring about

information on accommodation, introductions, academic issues, and so on, before and after arrival (Philo, 2007; Partridge, 2008). Other support schemes, e.g. the Family Ambassador Scheme, was run by Nottingham University to help international students with families to settle in the UK more quickly (Partridge, 2008).

Philo (2007) also suggests that the British Council could establish an interactive website that lists all UK institutions and courses available and allows students to leave comments. This method may be particularly helpful for international students, since the Chinese students in the present study stated that they tended to find answers and solutions online first before seeking formal assistance. In fact, many Chinese students have already constructed such websites (e.g. *HelloUK* by students from Taiwan) that offer a platform for students to exchange information on academic issues, travel, accommodation, recipes, flea markets, and daily life issues. The website, however, is in Chinese and thus home students and other international students are not able to join the discussion. A more internationalised website could be established by universities for students and academic staff as a platform for socialising and discussing and exchanging information informally. Other technology-enhanced forms of communication (e.g. VLE and discussion forum, video calling by Skype or MSN, Facebook or other online social networks) may be helpful for new international students to build up connections with existing students in the host institutions before they arrive (Turner and Robson, 2008; Partridge, 2008).

7.2 Similarities

Both Chinese students and lecturers need flexible arrangements for language support. Academic training and workshops specifically related to their roles can be helpful. For instance, support for Chinese students could include essay writing, exam preparation, training in group work and presentations, tailored language programmes, personal tutorials, etc. More explicit induction into the expectations within UK pedagogies as

well as assessment systems and criteria in UK HE institutions and enhanced understanding of British culture may be helpful.

Similar to the cultural affiliation dilemma, the educational affiliation dilemma was observed in this study. It sometimes appeared to be a dilemma for Chinese lecturers to strike a balance between their own traditional teaching beliefs and UK educational expectations. Educational affiliations not only exist among different cultures, but also in different roles. One Chinese lecturer, who was a doctoral student at the university, mentioned the conflict between lecturers' expectations and students' expectations. As a Chinese lecturer in a UK university, he tried his best to adapt UK pedagogies and deliver UK context. However, his previous role as a Chinese student in a UK university made him aware of the different expectations of students.

Students may also encounter educational affiliation when undertaking an assignment or project; they do not know whether they should maintain their original educational values or accommodate the UK context. As discussed in an earlier chapter, students felt frustrated when their original cultural values and educational background was not valued by their UK lecturers, and thus they thought that lecturers should respect their original values.

Both Chinese students and lecturers in this study mentioned the absence of core textbooks in UK universities. Students complained that they were not able to preview teaching material and lecturers grumbled that they needed to spend more time preparing course material. This issue was again related to educational affiliation and expectations, as the existence of textbooks may indicate a less student-centred learning approach. As one Chinese lecturer mentioned, "*The education system in the UK is student-centred. Lecturers have to adjust syllabus and curriculum according to students' interests*". The use of textbooks may limit the flexibility and richness of the course content, and it provides less opportunity for students to become independent learners as they only need to read chapter by chapter.

On the other hand, the use of textbooks may make the course content more structured and organised. This appeared to be another educational affiliation issue for Chinese lecturers. Traditionally, the pedagogies and educational system in China are highly teacher-centred. Lecturers teach students whatever they think is important for students, whereas the UK educational system is student-centre and teachers adjust the syllabus according to student needs. Although Chinese lecturers may try to meet UK educational expectations, such as providing a student-centred learning environment, they may consider it more efficient to teach with a textbook rather than to design course material by themselves or provide students with a reading list.

As widely discussed in many studies, Chinese academic staff may encounter problems due to different educational pedagogies and expectations when teaching in a different cultural context. Studies indicate that university lecturers adopt approaches to teach that are in line with their beliefs about teaching (Prosser and Trigwell, 1999; Kember and Kwan, 1990). The Chinese lecturers in this study generally stated that they aimed to meet UK standards and expectations whilst teaching in UK universities. However, it was observed in this study that despite the fact that Chinese lecturers tried to adopt UK approaches to teaching, they consciously or unconsciously withheld their traditional cultural and educational values. As discussed earlier, many participants mentioned the importance of establishing teacher authority, offering moral guidance, and playing parental and pastoral roles for the benefit of students. These characteristics of traditional Chinese cultural values are in contradistinction to UK educational expectations. This contrasts with their own claims that: “*We should adopt UK pedagogies and educational expectations since we are teaching in the UK*”.

In daily life, dislike of local food and weather were the mostly frequently mentioned issues by participants. Both Chinese students and lecturers thought that the university could provide them with more support for finding accommodation, getting familiar with

the local area, opening a bank account, NHS issues, visa issues, and induction and orientation. Generally, Chinese students at the university were satisfied with the university's support in these aspects, whereas Chinese lecturers thought that the university had provided them with insufficient support, especially in the areas of accommodation and induction.

The majority of the Chinese lecturers mentioned the free accommodation offered by universities for lecturers and doctoral students in China. Many of them hoped UK universities would also offer them free or cheaper accommodation and support them in finding accommodation. Although the university provided a relocation fee for new lecturers who moved from another area or overseas to the university, the majority of the participants stayed in the same place since first coming to the UK, and only one lecturer had applied for the relocation fee. It seems the university needs to make more effort introducing local surroundings and assisting newcomers in finding accommodation.

Nevertheless, they all enjoyed the open, creative, and critical research environment in the UK, compared to the hierarchical, competitive, and superficial research traditions of China. Similar to other studies (Zhou and Todman, 2008; Saltmarsh and Swirski, 2010), this research found that most Chinese students and lecturers were positive about their UK experience, despite the fact that they had encountered culture shock and academic shock. This indicates that the academic quality and research atmosphere found in UK HE institutions is still an attraction to many international students and lecturers.

What are the academic and cultural transition processes of Chinese students and lecturers in the UK?

7.3 Sociocultural adaptation pattern

The adaptation patterns of Chinese students and lecturers are generally in accordance with the 'stress-adaptation-growth' (Gill, 2007) process or the U-curve pattern (Lysaggard, 1955), as discussed previously. The participants thought that their UK experience had offered them the opportunity for personal growth. The majority of the Chinese lecturers had reached the "independence (or biculturality) stage" (Adler, 1975) or "reflecting stage" (Green and Myatt, 2011), which means they were comfortable in both the British and Chinese culture, and may have established a multicultural/cosmopolitan identity.

Although their sociocultural adaptation pattern was generally in accordance with the U-curve pattern (Lysaggard, 1955) or the W-curve pattern (Gullahorn and Gullahorn, 1963), they did not necessarily go through every stage discussed earlier (e.g. Adler, 1975; Green and Myatt, 2011). Many participants stated that they had no honeymoon stage, and they were also unaware of their own adjustment/re-integration process. The present research results support that which has been suggested by Gu et al. (2010), that international students' intercultural adaptation process is complex and nonlinear. Moreover, two further adaptation stages have been identified by the researcher, which are the re-appreciation stage and the exchange of experience/knowledge stage.

The re-appreciation stage demonstrates that Chinese academic staff are not simply abandoning their original culture values and belief in order to "assimilate" into the new environment. They have not lost their own identities during the disoriented transition period but rather they became even more confident with their own cultural heritage. Their UK experience offers them the opportunity to re-examine and reflect upon the

values of their own culture. This critical reflective thinking process helps them to reconceptualize and reaffirms their cultural identity.

Although Green and Myatt (2011) have proposed the "generating phase" to describe the ambitions of international academic staff to change the host institution, the examples in their studies demonstrated unsuccessful attempt of international academic staff in "changing" the teaching atmosphere in their host university. In contrast, the exchange of experience/knowledge stage proposed by the researcher emphasizes the "exchange" of knowledge between the host and home institutions in terms of both teaching and research rather than one-way "change" from home to the host and vice versa. The exchange of experience/knowledge stage is important for it specifically points out the benefits of having international academic staff in the UK HE institutions. In this study, Chinese lecturers referred their active transnational collaboration to their previous professional networks and institutions in China. They played the roles of middle person, liaison, and mediator in such collaborative activities between China and the UK. They were also the key persons in establishing connections with home country institutions, as Chinese people have a strong inclination towards working with 'insiders'. Saltmarch and Swirski (2010) also refer to the importance of international academic staff maintaining networks in their original country, which can enhance their status and reputation as 'global players' (p.295).

Through transitional collaboration, the transfer of knowledge and experience is no longer a one-way and Westernised, rather the two sides can mutually benefit from it. Further interviews showed transnational collaboration: (1) helps to establish long-term collaboration between two institutions; (2) enables knowledge exchange; (3) increases experience of cultural differences; and (4) facilitates the learning of different methods of working and conducting research.

7.4 Academic transition framework: from international student to integrated academic

Through the data gathered by this study, it can be seen that students and lecturers may first have to develop an understanding of UK academic conventions and adjust to the pedagogical differences. Later on, they can move on to learn the disciplinary and research culture in the UK, and further develop their professional skills and teacher identity when they become a lecturer. A framework is proposed that demonstrates the academic transition from international student to integrated academic. The academic transition pattern of academic staff is illustrated in Figure 7.1:

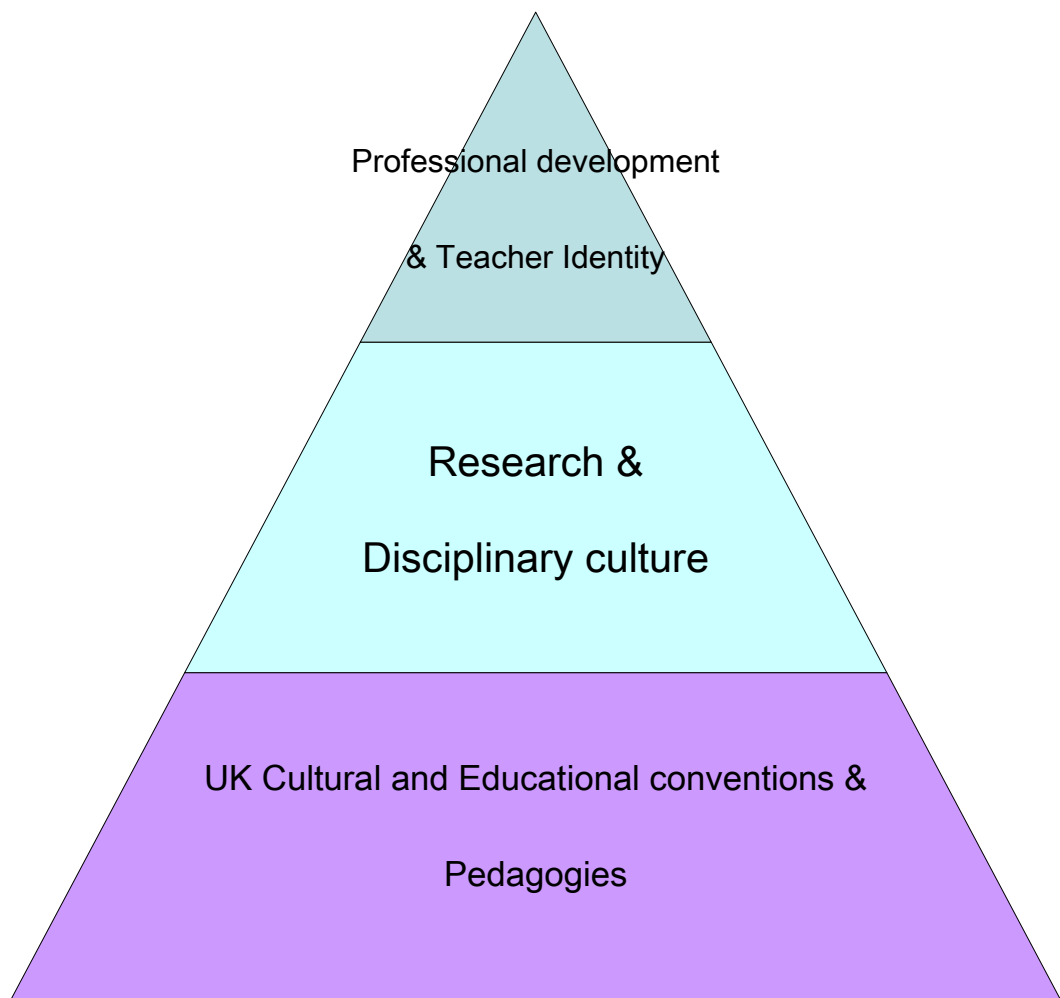


Figure 7.1: Academic transition framework

The three levels are: UK cultural and educational conventions and pedagogies, research and disciplinary culture and identity, and professional development and teacher identity.

When an international academic come to a new environment, they are likely to encounter different levels of "academic shock". The unfamiliarity of local cultural and educational conventions appeared to be the cause of their initial struggle (Gill, 2007; Saltmarsh and Swirski, 2010). Even experienced lecturers also need support to understand the cultural and pedagogical differences:

"...because people need to be told if the institutions is different, and the people need to be told what is pertinent to this institution and how things function in relation to many other areas for that institution, [rather] than to assume that maybe because you have been an academic or at another institution, you should be able to find out these things ..." (Saltmarsh and Swirski, 2010, p.296).

Hence, it is argued that the understanding of cultural and educational conventions and pedagogies is the foundation for further academic and professional development.

The understanding of the academic conventions provides a stepping stone for academics to further establish their disciplinary identity and reputation (Jiang et al., 2010). Having the ability to conduct research independently is viewed as an entry requirement to an academic position in most European Higher Education institutions. Many studies have also demonstrated the benefit of research-teaching nexus (Schapper, and Mayson, 2010; Jenkins, Healey, and Zetter, 2007; Brew, 2010; Hughes, 2005). Therefore, acquiring a research and disciplinary identity could contribute to professional and teacher development (Hussain and Bakar, 2010; Garcí'a and Roblin, 2008). Professionals then continuously enrich their knowledge in cultural and educational conventions, and research and disciplinary culture to develop their professionalism.

The academic transition framework can help institutions establish a proper support system that is in accordance with the adaptation trajectory of international students and academic staff to assist their academic transition. For instance, a newly recruited non-UK lecturer is not able to fully develop a professional and teacher identity unless

he/she has an understanding of UK educational and pedagogical conventions. This framework could also be utilised by institutions to examine their existing academic support and professional development programmes. For instance, using the academic transition framework to examine the PGCHE modules of the university being studied, it was found that there are many modules aimed at assisting novice lecturers in terms of professional development and teacher identity (e.g. Individual Pathway; Teaching Dialogue; Group Teaching; Individual Project). Experienced lecturers who gained degrees outside of the UK can attend modules in order to cultivate their understanding of UK cultural/educational conventions and pedagogies (e.g. Assessment, Learning and Higher Education; Improving the Student Learning Experience; Society and Higher Education; Teaching and Learning: Core Theory & Practice; Effective Learning and Assessment). However, there is one only module to help academic staff to understand the UK research culture and disciplinary identity (i.e. The Nature and Role of Pedagogic Research). Nevertheless, there are many short courses in research development offered by the Graduate School but which are not counted toward PGCHE credits. An examination of the academic support service of the university under consideration in terms of the academic transition framework demonstrated that overall it offers comprehensive academic support for its staff in the three aspects. Other institutions may also investigate their academic support service by using the framework.

A further discussion of the most common academic challenges faced by Chinese students and lecturers (data obtained from this study), and how these challenges fit into each level can be found in later sections. Detailed discussions on how the university might provide support in each stage of transition are also discussed in later sections (see **7.6**).

What are the university's current policy and support service for Chinese/international academics?

7.5 Institutional support service

Although the documentary analysis indicated the university generally provided sufficient support for international students and lecturers, the participants in the study seemed not to agree. The study identified three main issues related to the university's support service, which are:

- 1) lecturers and students have different perceptions of the support service for international students;
- 2) lecturers think that the university does not offer sufficient support to international academic staff;
- 3) students and lecturers tend not to utilise the support service;

The first issue concerning the discrepancies between lecturers and students toward who should provide support service for international students. Chinese students stated that the university had offered them a lot of support on an institutional level, and the documentary analysis of the university's website in terms of its support service for international students also indicated that the university offered comprehensive support in many aspects. Nevertheless, Chinese students considered lecturers had not provided them with sufficient support. Lecturers responded to this issue by stating that:

- 1) the university has provided enough support for students;
- 2) lecturers have large workloads and usually do not have extra time to help students.

Comparing the opinions of students and lecturers, it can be seen that lecturers and students have different perceptions as to who should provide support for students. Besides, it showed that students might not understand the heavy workloads of lecturers. As reported by the lecturers that they have large workloads related to teaching, research

and administration, and the ratio of lecturers to students is unbalanced with some courses having as many 200 students to one lecturer. Although some lecturers in this study had applied for teaching assistant to share their workload, their request had been rejected by the university due to lack of budget. UK government has announced university budget cuts since 2010, and thus it became more difficult to recruit formal members to assist teaching. It is suggested that UK HE institutions could encourage senior/experienced students to work as teaching assistant or mentor by offering them incentives:

- vouchers or tokens (eg book or record tokens, cinema vouchers)
- discounts (eg money off local services, free membership of local services, money off other institutional services)
- training or involvement in the mentoring scheme being accredited in some way (such as national accreditation as a volunteer)
- certificate of achievement or completion of the scheme
- eligibility for a prize or award

(Partridge, 2008, p.19)

As suggested by Zhou and Todman (2008) that such support can be approached on two levels: an individual level and an institutional level. The institutional level refers to support that institutions are able to offer (e.g. regular meetings and special courses for students), whereas the individual level means support from lecturers (e.g. by slowing down their rate of speaking, or adjusting their tutoring methods). In light of the findings from the present study, it is suggested that the university should specify clearer guidance on the responsibilities of each party. The university should make clear who is responsible for the support services provided by the institution, and which services the lecturers are supposed to provide to students. Moreover, lecturers should redirect students to responsible members (e.g. Student ambassador, international student advisor) or units (e.g. accommodation office) that can provide appropriate support for them.

Second, lecturers in this study stated that the support service provided to them by the university was insufficient. They were mostly unsatisfied with induction,

professional development programmes (e.g. PGCHE), and accommodation issues.

Lecturers in this study mentioned that they had never received any formal induction from the university, despite the fact that the university claims on its university's website that it offers three levels of induction. A lack of proper induction was also mentioned by Saltmarsh and Swirski (2010), who suggested universities should offer tailored induction programmes for international staff that are responsive to cultural difference. Although the university offers many information and training courses and workshops for lecturers, lecturers stated that the programmes were not helpful or practical and that they usually had no free time to study or attend such training. The author suggests that UK universities that aim to improve their support for international academic staff should:

- 1) evaluate the efficiency of their current professional training programme;
- 2) improve their current professional training programme for international academic staff;
- 3) provide tailored professional development programmes according to the different characteristics of lecturers (e.g. disciplines, number of years teaching).

There is a lack of research into the content and efficiency of professional training programmes for university lecturers, which indicates that this issue may often be overlooked by educators and educational bodies. Future research could further explore these issues.

Moreover, this study has showed that students and lecturers tend not to utilise the institution's support services. Rather, they tend to seek support from same nationals or find solutions on the Internet. Factors that contribute to this phenomenon may include the language barrier, cultural differences, and the fact that the services available are unknown to them. Due to the language barrier, Chinese/international students seldom seek support from UK or EU lecturers, or go to the counselling service. Some

international students cannot even understand university publications and introductions to services and support available (Kingston and Forland, 2008). Therefore, it is recommended that the university consider offering multi-language services and publications in both print or digital forms. Online counselling service through instant messaging, video calling, or discussion forum could be made available to students and staff since the participants in this study showed a preference of using internet resources.

Cultural differences may also influence people's perceptions toward the concept of counselling, as the study of Edwards and Ran (2006) has shown that counselling services are an 'alien concept' to Chinese people. A survey of 1,110 Chinese students in 15 universities across nine provinces in China showed that Chinese students prefer to turn to peers instead of teachers for counselling academic problems (Xie et al., 2005). The survey indicated that the tendency of Chinese students to seek help from peers not only happened when they are in a foreign context but also in their home country.

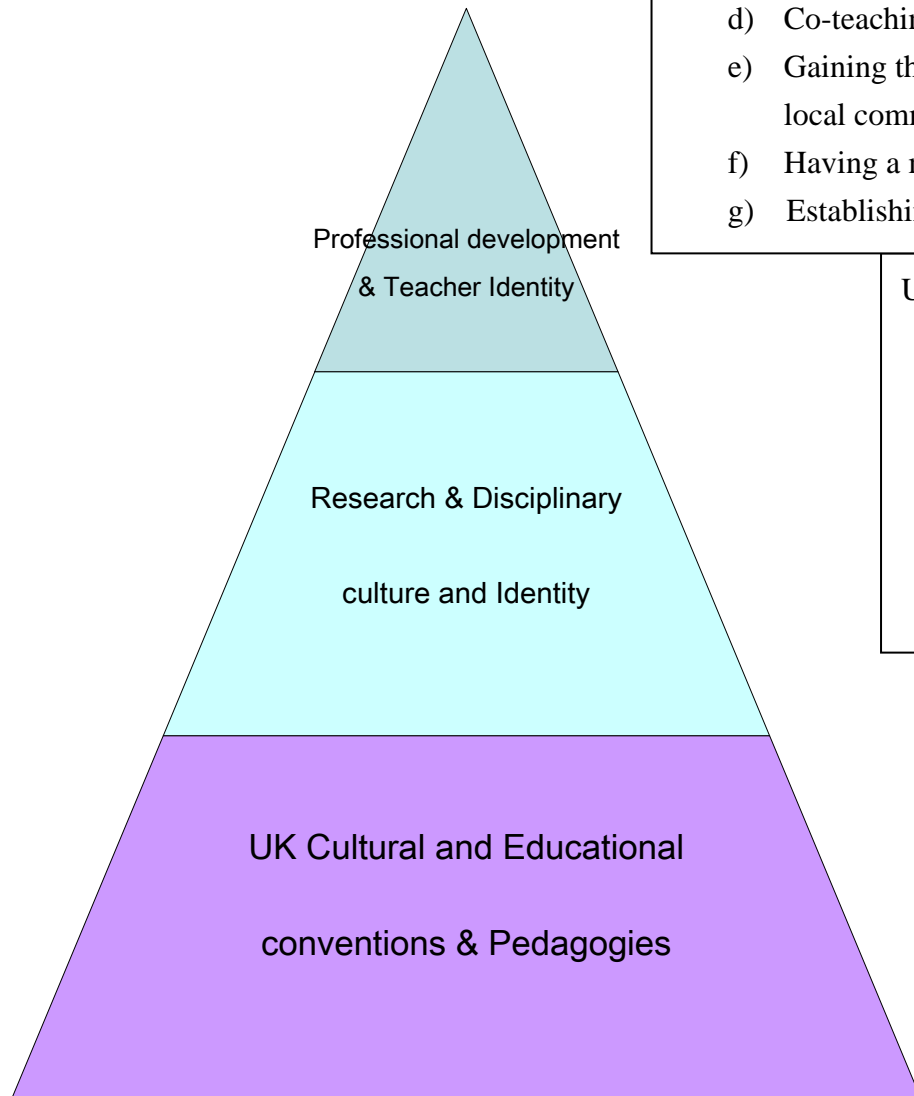
Furthermore, if students and lecturers are sometimes unaware of what support services are available to them, the university should provide such information from the very beginning (Sawir et al., 2008). Again, it is also important to provide an information brochure or online information in different languages.

How can UK HE institutions better support Chinese/international academics in the UK and establish an internationalised teaching, learning, and research environment?

7.6 Integrated support: from students to lecturers

Using the data obtained from the focus groups and interviews with Chinese students and lecturers, their transitional pattern in the UK is outlined. The transitional pattern helps to identify the different needs and key issues of Chinese academics at different stages in

the UK, and thus universities will be able to offer tailored support according to their specific needs. Based on the academic transition framework, the researcher then made suggestions on how institutions could provide support to Chinese academics starting at the master degree stage going through to the lecturer stage (see Figure 7.2).



Becoming an integrated academic — an ‘insider’ in the community of practice - through continuously:

1. Improving language abilities and learning host culture
2. Developing teaching and professional skills and identity:
 - a) Attending training programmes, seminars and workshops;
 - b) Obtaining feedback from students
 - c) Reflective thinking (past experience vs. present practice)
 - d) Co-teaching with a mentor/experienced teacher
 - e) Gaining the latest knowledge (via reading journal papers, doing research, and working with local communities of practice)
 - f) Having a model teacher
 - g) Establishing transnational collaboration

Understanding the concepts of:

1. Research quality (vs. research quantity)
2. An independent researcher (to initiate a research project, apply for research funding, etc.)
3. Obtaining a research and disciplinary identity (through publishing, attending conference and seminars, etc.)
4. Preparing for one’s future occupation (through being a teaching assistant, research assistant, laboratory demonstrator, etc.)

Understanding the concepts of:

1. A student-centred learning environment (vs. teacher-centered)
2. Critical thinking
3. Plagiarism
4. Presentation and group work
5. Assessment standards
6. Teaching materials (core textbooks vs. no textbooks; international vs. local content)

Figure 7.2: Academic transition framework and suggested support

Taught master degree students

1) First semester

Most participants felt that the first semester was their most difficult time, especially their first winter. They had not made many friends at that time and their homesickness became even more severe at Christmas time. Besides this, the submission dates for their assignments were also approaching. They also could not get accustomed to the wet and dark winter in the UK. Many participants felt depressed at this time.

2) Second semester

Most participants had gotten accustomed to the educational system, culture and living style in the UK by the second semester. Their English and academic performance had also improved. They had many good friends and usually cooked and celebrated festivals together. They recognised their own development in both intellectual and mental matters and had become more independent in their learning and daily life.

Suggested support

Although not all masters' students considered their UK experience positively, the majority of them agreed that their one-year journal had been helpful and led to personal growth (Gu, 2009; Gill, 2007; Philo, 2007). In terms of sociocultural aspects, many master students coming to study in the UK are leaving their home for the first time and thus many of them have difficulty in dealing with daily life issues. A comprehensive and tailored induction could help them to get familiar with the local surroundings more quickly. Moreover, emotional support (e.g. social activities and celebrations, international student advisor,) should be provided to help students to ease their culture

shock and the feelings of homesickness and loneliness. It is also suggested that more student ambassadors (or experienced senior students) from different nations be assigned, as students tend to seek help from same nationals.

In terms of academic perspective, language obstacles and unfamiliarity with UK academic conventions appeared to be the biggest issues at this stage. Hence, practical academic support (e.g. support doing assignments and preparing for exams) should be offered. Besides, it is also essential to introduce the concepts of: student-centred learning environment; critical thinking; plagiarism; presentation and group work; assessment standards and etc., as demonstrated in Figure 7.2.

Although most students gradually become more accustomed to British culture and academic conventions and are more independent in both academic and daily life matters, new challenges continuously appear in the second semester. Students face the issues of dissertation writing, finding a job or making an application for further study. Moreover, many of them are likely to encounter re-entry culture shock as they will return home after finishing their studies. Institutions should provide support services to help students to manage these challenges smoothly.

Doctorate students

Some participants continued with doctorate studies after completing their master degree in the UK, although some participants were new to the UK. Mature students, especially those who had come to the UK after the age of thirty, seemed to have fewer problems adapting to the lifestyle in the UK. Unlike master degree students, most mature doctorate students already had the ability to take good care of themselves and deal with daily life issues such as cooking and banking. They were also more mature mentally than master degree students and tended to have stronger psychological endurance.

Besides this, many mature students brought their family with them. Their family gave them good support and thus they were not lonely. Therefore, they were able to concentrate on their learning sooner upon arrival than master degree students.

Nevertheless, financial issues and family settlement became new issues for some of them. Some participants encountered re-entry shock at this stage, after having lived in the UK for more than one year.

Suggested support

Doctorate study has been viewed as a route that prepares future university teachers and researchers (Baker and Lattuca, 2010) assisting them to learn how to become integrated into the disciplinary and research culture of the Faculty (Jiang et al., 2010; Luxon and Peelo, 2009). Furthermore, doctoral study is also considered an important stage in the development of professional identity and establishment of social networks within the community of practice (Baker and Lattuca, 2010). However, doctoral programmes have been criticised for not necessarily preparing students with enough skills for their future academic career (Austin, 2002; Nyquist and Wulff, 2003). Hence, it is suggested that it is important to support doctorate students in the following aspects (as demonstrated in Figure 7.2):

1. Understanding the concept of research quality (vs. research quantity)
2. Becoming an independent researcher (to initiate a research project, apply for research funding, etc.)
3. Obtaining a research and disciplinary identity (through publishing, attending conference and seminars, etc.)
4. Preparing for their future occupation (through being a teaching assistant, research assistant, laboratory demonstrator, etc.)

Ongoing training and support in research skills and thesis writing are necessary. In order to help doctorate students develop disciplinary identity, they should be encouraged to attend more training related to getting work published and attending conferences to exchange research experience and ideas with other professionals and students. Having the ability to produce good publications and apply for research funding are viewed as crucial elements in developing disciplinary identity that could facilitate international academics' full entry into the new academic culture (Mauder et al., 2009). The following list could serve as a guideline for doctoral students to develop their academic skills and for institutions to offer appropriate support to doctoral students:

- 1) Build up a network of peers, informal mentors, colleagues
- 2) Practice and develop presentations skills
- 3) Get yourself known via conferences
- 4) Organise conferences, seminar papers
- 5) Get involved with academic associations or journals
- 6) Become a good communicator who is able to disseminate one's findings

(Nuernberg and Thompson, 2010, p.3)

Support to find sociocultural support, discounted family accommodation, financial advice, and Childcare should be offered. Institutions should provide more opportunities for doctorate students to work as teaching assistants, research assistants, and laboratory demonstrators to help them gain practical experience and earn extra income.

Information on how to apply for scholarships and funding is also necessary to ease the financial burden of doctoral students. Moreover, the length of a doctoral study (usually three years or longer) allows doctorate students to learn more about British culture and lifestyle, which could be helpful in their future teaching practice. It is thus suggested that the university could offer more British culture courses and activities in an integrated, long-term, and pressure-free environment.

University lecturers

Lecturers who had many years teaching experience in China usually compared and contrasted their past and current experience as a way of improving their professional skills. For those who had no formal teaching experience, the key issue was to establish their professional identity and credibility, as they were often questioned about their professionalism by students, especially lecturers who were in their early 30s. To familiarise with the institutional and pedagogical culture also appears to be an important issue for newly recruited lecturers, They have to strike a balance between the institutional expectations and personal teaching beliefs.

Although most participants considered language to no longer be the biggest issue for them, they continued to spend a significant amount of time preparing course material and rehearsing it. They felt there was a need to continuously improve their English and knowledge of British culture.

The majority of the participants had developed a multicultural identity and they felt comfortable in both cultures. Nevertheless, some of them still encountered re-entry culture shock when returning to their home country. Moreover, despite the fact that most participants tend to retain their traditional Chinese cultural and ethnic identities, they have shown high acceptance of British academic and research culture.

In addition, most of the respondents have built strong academic linkages between their home institution and host institution, and this collaboration has taken many forms (e.g. collaborative laboratory research, exchange programmes, co-authoring books). In this sense, transmission is no longer one-way from host to home but is two-way between host and home institutions.

Suggested support

As establishing professional identity and credibility is the priority for many new lecturers, professional training and support is essential at this stage. Although most

lecturers have a general understanding of British culture and UK educational policy, more training is needed as their roles have shifted from students to lecturers. In addition, it is also important to introduce the conventions and expectations of the host institution to international lecturers.

Moreover, the university should also encourage and help lecturers to establish transnational collaboration with other international institutions. In supporting transnational collaboration, institutions should provide more funding opportunities to encourage collaborative activities. Besides this, pedagogical and research differences between different cultures should be introduced before collaborative activities begin.

As current compulsory training courses are considered unhelpful, universities should consider offering tailored induction and training programmes according to the characteristics of different groups of lecturers. For instance, for those who previously have many years teaching experience in either their home or host country, the training course should emphasise discussion of the similarities and differences of teaching practices in the past and present settings. Such reflective thinking and teaching strategies (Gade, 2011; Epstein, 2011) may help lecturers to adjust to the new environment more smoothly and enable them to enrich the current setting with their previous experience.

It would be helpful if the handbook for academic staff not only covered the regulations and policies of the university, but also included more practical guidance such as how to evaluate students' work. Samples of students' essays could be provided with clear indication of the criteria for marking their work. Different disciplines could have their own handbooks that clearly introduce regulations and cultures. Universities should also ensure that international lecturers know where they can find information and support when they need it.

According to the research findings, participants thought that having a close relationship with a mentor and co-teaching with experienced teachers helped them learn

practical teaching skills and helped them establish their teacher identity in a shorter time. Studies have also shown the effectiveness of mentoring in helping a new faculty member to adjust in terms of teaching, research, and well-being (Zellers, Howard, and Barcic, 2008; Kamvounias, McGrath-Champ, and Yip, 2008). Therefore, universities should consider a ‘buddy’ support programme for international academic staff. Such mentor/buddy programmes (also known as ‘buddy system/ scheme’ or ‘peer monitoring’) are more usually provided for international students to help their social and academic transition into UK universities, and to enhance intercultural communication and culture exchange. Although many universities have assigned mentors for newly recruited lecturers, only one participant in the present study had interacted with his mentor frequently. It is suggested that UK universities should establish clear mentor and mentee guidance and regulations on how mentors can help their mentees. It is also important to encourage mentors and mentees to develop sustainable mentoring relationships (Kamvounias, McGrath-Champ, and Yip, 2008). Moreover, a compulsory co-teaching or "reciprocal peer learning" (Boud, 1999, p.5) scheme should be considered for lecturers with little teaching experience.

These suggestions are offered in order to assist international academic staff to become integrated academics — or ‘insiders’ in the community of practice— through continuously (see Figure 7.2):

1. Improving language abilities and learning about the host culture;
2. Developing teaching and professional skills and identity, by:
 - a) Attending training programmes, seminars and workshops;
 - b) Obtaining feedback from students
 - c) Reflective thinking (past experience vs. present practice)
 - d) Co-teaching with a mentor/experienced teacher
 - e) Gaining the latest knowledge (via reading journal papers, doing research, and working with local communities of practice)
 - f) Having a model teacher
 - g) Establishing transnational collaboration

Although international lecturers teach in the UK context, their original culture and educational experience should be appreciated. It is important to respect the cultural diversity and rich educational resources they bring to the institutions, rather than expect them to passively 'fit in' to the environment. In this way international academic staff can bring reciprocal cultural benefits to the new university, rather than just deliver a 'Westernised' style.

Chapter 8

Conclusions

Summary of key findings

This study has made several important findings, and Chapter 7 has demonstrated how the research findings answer each of the research questions. Here, a brief summary of the main findings is presented.

In terms of language, identity, and relationships, the study has revealed that a lack of language ability can be a challenge for both Chinese students and lecturers, but a more important obstacle to intercultural communication is a lack of background knowledge of the cultural connotations of English. The research results related to Chinese lecturers' relationships with colleagues and students also present very interesting findings that have never been discussed in other studies before. They include:

- 1) Chinese lecturers avoid close relationships with other Chinese colleagues at work due to the competitive and hierarchical relationships among Chinese people;
- 2) Some Chinese lecturers avoid close relationships in order to establish teacher authority.

These findings are in contrast to previous studies which have found that same nationals tend to stay together (e.g. Wray, 2008; Edward and Ran, 2009).

Moreover, the study has also showed that Chinese lecturers generally develop a multicultural (metropolitan) identity, which means they feel comfortable in both Chinese and British culture. However, development of a teacher's professional identity and credibility appear to be the biggest issues for new lecturers. The narrative stories of the two Chinese lecturers have shown that the formation of one's professional identity

and teaching belief are influenced by complex factors including educational background, work experience, personality, and personal philosophy. In contrast, age, gender, and number of years teaching have been shown to have no significant influence on one's teaching style and teacher-student relationships.

In terms of academic adjustment, the study has explored a wide range of issues, including:

- 1) Academic challenges faced by Chinese students (plagiarism, criticism and critical thinking, presentation and group work, issues on the master degree programmes, and curriculum);
- 2) Academic challenges of Chinese lecturers (teaching identity and professional credibility, techniques for developing professional identity, and teaching skills);
- 3) Issues in learning, teaching, and research (student-centred vs. teacher-centred; assessment standards; teaching materials: international context vs. local context; language of teaching; how past experience has influenced current teaching practice; and research and disciplinary culture).

A detailed comparison of the differences and similarities in the challenges faced by Chinese students and lectures has been discussed (see Table 7.1). An academic transition framework has further been proposed to demonstrate the academic transition and development process of Chinese students and lecturers in UK HE institutions.

In the process of their academic transition process, educational affiliation is observed. Similar to cultural affiliation, international staff and students sometimes find difficulties deciding whether they should adapt the knowledge and conventions of the host country or maintain their original values. It has been found in this study that Chinese lecturers consciously or unconsciously maintain their original values, as well as their original perceptions of a 'model' teacher and a 'good' student. They try to

maintain teacher authority and to play the role of a 'parent', as well as giving moral lessons to students, even though they are teaching in the UK context.

In terms of sociocultural adaptation, the study supports the idea that the adaptation pattern of international staff and students is complex and nonlinear (Gu, Schweisfurth, and Day, 2010). However, it generally follows the 'stress-adaptation-growth' process (Gill, 2007). Nearly all Chinese students and lecturers stated that they had learned a lot and achieved personal growth, despite the fact that their UK experiences were not all positive.

Furthermore, two important adaptation stages have been proposed and suggested, which are the re-appreciation stage and the exchange of experience/knowledge stage. Since the sociocultural adaptation process is nonlinear, it is hard to estimate when these two stages may occur. However, the exchange of experience/knowledge stage is extremely important in terms of internationalising the university. It is related to how international students and lecturers can benefit their host and home institutions by transferring knowledge and experience to both sides. Transnational collaboration enables a two-way exchange, rather than a one-way Westernised implantation.

Understanding the adaptation pattern may help international students and lecturers understand the possible stages that they may go through when in a new country. Institutions might consider designing brochures that describe the stages of culture shock and the adaptation process, with advice on how to deal with such feelings and where they can find support. International students and lecturers can then better understand their feelings of alienation, loneliness, anxiety, and anger, and realise that they are a normal part of the adjustment process, and know where they can seek help.

A documentary analysis of the university's web pages was conducted to understand if any discrepancies exist between the university support service and the opinions of students and lecturers. It was found that although the university provides various support services for international students and lecturers, international students

and lecturers tended not to utilise the formal institutional support service, rather they usually turned to same nationals for help. It is thus suggested that the university should make its support service well known to all staff members, and also that multilanguage counselling services and publications should be provided. Moreover, a careful examination and evaluation of the university's current support service and professional training programme is needed to investigate the efficiency of its current practice and policy.

Finally, the transition patterns of a Chinese student to a Chinese lecturer have been outlined, and the challenges at different stages are presented. Suggestions with regard to how institutions could support these transitions are made accordingly.

Implications of the study

As internationalisation has become a major trend in higher education in recent decades, much of the research has focused on how to improve educational quality and support services to enhance the experience of international students and attract more students. A review of existing educational literature, however, indicates that there are insufficient studies on the needs of international lecturers. This study has addressed the gap in the literature by first identifying the challenges faced by Chinese students and lecturers in a UK university and then by mapping the stages of their academic and sociocultural transitions.

The research findings from the present study on the challenges of Chinese lecturers working in the UK context are similar to those from Saltmarsh and Swirski's (2010) research on the transition of 12 non-Australian academics working at an Australian university in identifying that the main initial struggles for international academics were: (1) induction; (2) professional development activities; and (3) everyday activities (e.g. banking, local networks and community). This indicates that international lecturers

may encounter similar challenges while in a foreign context, despite their country of origin and the institutions they are working in. This study, however, has further explored original findings that could contribute to current educational literature, e.g. the academic transition pattern of Chinese academics; the relationship between Chinese lecturers and their colleagues and students; the identity shift between British academic identity and Chinese ethnic identity. It is suggested that the research findings, the two-ring framework, and the academic transition framework could be adopted by educators and institutions to support the integration of international academics.

Implications for theory

The in-depth literature review of the experiences and challenges faced by Chinese/international students and staff helped the researcher to develop the two-ring framework, which classifies the challenges faced by international staff and students into three main issues: academic adjustment, sociocultural adaptation, and language, identity and relationships. It is argued that the two-ring framework could better describe the adjustment process of international students and staff than Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943), since the factors affecting adaptation of international academics usually influence them at the same time rather than in the hierarchical order described in Maslow's model. The two-ring framework could help international students and staff understand that they may face challenges in terms of academic adjustment, sociocultural adaptation, and language, identity and relationships when in a new environment in order that they then can be well prepared for these challenges. The framework could also help institutions to examine and improve their current support for international students and staff from the three different perspectives.

In addition, the researcher has also proposed the academic transition framework to demonstrate the academic transition and development process of international students

and lecturers in UK HE institutions. It is suggested that institutions could provide tailored academic support to international academics according to their needs at different stages, as demonstrated in the academic transition framework. For instance, some Chinese lecturers in this study already have many practical teaching experiences in China before they come to the UK, and thus they are already equipped with sufficient skills in teaching, but they may lack an understanding of UK educational conventions and pedagogies. Teacher development programmes (e.g. PGCHE in the university under study) may thus provide these lecturers with opportunities to enhance cultural awareness and pedagogical knowledge. On the other hand, teaching theories and skills courses may be offered to novice lecturers to help them build up professional teaching skills and identities. In the main, international students and staff need to understand educational conventions and pedagogies before they can move on to explore the research and disciplinary culture of the host country and become integrated into academic and research communities. After obtaining the basic knowledge and skills described in the two lower levels of the framework, they can then develop a professional identity and skills.

Implications for practice

The study has also identified that Chinese students and lecturers often face similar challenges when coming to the UK, but has also argued that each group has different challenges that relate specifically to their roles. Bearing this in mind, the university could consider providing tailored support services according to these different roles. In terms of sociocultural adaptation, the study suggested that both international students and staff need support to help to ease the culture shock and the feeling of disorientation and alienation that may be experienced. In addition, the study also supports the idea that the adaptation pattern of international staff and students is complex and nonlinear (Gu,

Schweisfurth, and Day, 2010). Based on this study, factors that may influence their adaptation might involve cultural and educational background, personal experience, and personality. In terms of academic matters, students and lecturers often encounter different challenges. With regard to international academic staff, the emphasis is on supporting their development in professional identities and skills, whereas international students need support in academic training and preparation for future work or study. The two narrative stories of the two Chinese lecturers further remind the HE institutions to provide more support for PhD students to help them find their research interests and to choose their research topic. Doctoral students in the UK usually conduct their research independently and meet with their supervisor(s) regularly to discuss their research progress. As a result, doctoral students usually lack a supporting network to share their experiences and resources. Supervisor(s) may ask doctoral students to attend some training courses but it is not compulsory to do so. Hence, it is difficult for doctoral students to meet other PhD students and to discuss their progress with others. It is suggested that PhD students should be provided with more opportunities to meet regularly with other research students or academic staff to exchange their experiences, to support each other, and to build up a social network in their community of practice. It is also important to provide doctoral students with workshops on topics such as "How to manage your time and submit your thesis before the deadline?", "How to deal with unexpected incidents that may interfere your doctoral study?"

The research results have also indicated that Chinese lecturers might be more vulnerable than their western counterparts in terms of establishing a professional teacher identity due to their appearance and cultural tradition. In terms of language, identity, and relationships, the study has revealed that a lack of background knowledge of the cultural connotations associated with use of English language appear to be the main obstacle to intercultural communication impacting on professional or personal communication. The Chinese participants of this study also referred that they considered

private practice offer a more inclusive and integrated environment than the university environment did. It is thus suggested that UK HEIs could offer more activities to help international academic staff to be better included in their community of practice.

In addition, language test scores may not reflect the real language competence of the international academics. For instance, the narrative stories of the two Chinese lecturers indicated that although the male Chinese lecturers had passed the language entry requirement of his programme, his English speaking abilities was poor and he had no confidence in his English. In contrast, the female participant participants was very confident in her English abilities despite the fact that she had not met the language entry requirement and only received a conditional offer. Some universities (e.g. University of Newcastle upon Tyne) have managed to prevent this issue by asking all international students to take the language test hold by the university in addition to the official international language test (e.g. TOEFL, IELTS) when enrolling in the university. If students passed the official international language test but failed in the university's language test, they still have to attend compulsory language courses. By doing this, it gives international students another chance to test their language proficiency level and then the university could give them proper language support. Furthermore, supervisors and personal tutors also have the responsibilities to advise students to attend language courses according to students' needs.

Furthermore, an investigation of the existing support services of the university under study revealed that the participating students and staff tend not to utilise the services despite the fact that it has provided various kind of support. Rather, they tend to seek support from experienced same nationals or find answers from the Internet. Factors that prevent them from utilizing the services are: language barrier, cultural differences toward the concept of counselling, and unaware of support service. In terms of language barrier, the university under investigation has provided multilingual support service for non-native speakers (e.g. Multilingual introductory website, Chinese-speaking

international student advisor). However, many participants were not aware of the existence of the Chinese-speaking international student advisor until they actually went there for consultation. It is therefore essential to widely introduce its existing support service to students and staff and encourage them to take advantage of the services. Moreover, online social and academic support is encouraged since students and staff showed a preference of seeking help from the Internet. The benefits of online support is that students and staff can get access to information and potential support 24 hours a day and "make bridges between physical groupings using a virtual environment" (Thomson and Allan, 2010, p.427).

Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research

This study focused on the experience of one ethnic group (Chinese) and thus does not claim to represent the experiences of other international groups. However, the literature review of existing research on international staff and students indicates that they may encounter similar problems while in a foreign context (e.g. culture shock, accommodation, and integration), it is suggested that future research on the experience of other ethnic groups of international staff and students could be conducted to investigate whether different nationals face challenges that are specific to their own culture or to the context for their study or work.

The majority of the Chinese participants in this study are from mainland China. It is argued that ethnic Chinese who reside in different areas (e.g. Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia) will be influenced by their own historical background and educational system, and hence the research results of this study may not be applicable to all ethnic Chinese. For instance, some Chinese lecturers indicated that the 10 year Cultural Revolution in China had led them to lose trust among people and thus they tend to avoid other Chinese colleagues in their workplace. This avoidance phenomenon may

not be applied to younger or other ethnic Chinese people who reside in areas other than mainland China, as they do not have direct experience of that historical period. Future research might further explore the experience of ethnic Chinese people from different areas to understand how their histories and experiences may differ from those in mainland China (e.g. How did the British Colonisation influence Chinese students and lecturers from Hong Kong?).

Furthermore, the study only examined Chinese staff and students in the disciplines of architecture, business, and building technology. It could be argued that none of these disciplines heavily rely on excellent language ability in learning and teaching as opposed to the schools of language and literature, linguistics, and law. As a result, the Chinese lecturers in this study may encounter fewer challenges in terms of language issues than might be the case in the Humanities and thus only two out of six Chinese lecturers expressed language ability as an issue when teaching. Future studies may explore whether international lecturers in schools that require an extremely high English language proficiency level (e.g. School of English, Linguistics, Law, and History) would encounter different challenges related to their English abilities.

Future research possibilities include the use of different research methodology and data collection instruments to investigate the transitions of international staff. A mixed method approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative data is suggested to better represent the larger population, while also obtain in-depth information from the participants. Besides, other forms of data collection methods (e.g. asking the participants to keep diaries or learning logs) could be applied for a longitudinal study to enhance the reliability of a study. As the Chinese lecturers in this study have been in the UK for more than six years, the majority of them experienced difficulty in recalling their earlier years in the UK. Hence, diaries and learning logs could be reliable sources for the study of transition and adjustment processes of international staff and students.

Moreover, classroom observation could help researchers better understand the interaction between students and lecturers, or lecturers and their co-teaching mentors.

Although the study only explored the experience of a small cohort of Chinese staff and students in one UK university, it is presumably the case that other international academics from other backgrounds may face similar challenges. It is hoped that this study has provided rich data to raise the awareness of UK HE institutions about the transition challenges facing international staff and students. It is only through the provision of sufficient and appropriate support for international members that a real inclusive learning and teaching environment that can benefit all members and the community is likely to be created and maintained. UK HE institutions should also offer cultural awareness training to UK students and lecturers to broaden their global views and to promote understanding of the value of having international students and lecturers. (e.g. different educational traditions, values, and expectations). After all, an internationalised learning and teaching environment the development of intercultural competence and global awareness can benefit all students, staff members, and communities.

Concluding remarks: Reflection on personal development

Finally, I would like to conclude with my own reflection on what I have learned through this Ph.D. journey in the UK. I feel that the study not only reflects the experience of those participating Chinese students and lecturers, but also my own journey. As an ethnic Chinese, I can relate most of my experiences to those of the participants. My stories might not be exactly the same as theirs, but the plots are similar. I also encountered both culture shock and academic shock when I arrived in this new environment. My UK experience was not completely pleasant, but was indeed a

'stress-adaptation-growth' process (Gill 2007).

I would like to begin with an example of unsuccessful intercultural communication. It was at a student social event when I first came to the UK in 2005. A British girl sat next to me and tried to initiate a conversation.

‘Hey! You know *Narnia*? It will be in the cinema next week,” She said.

‘What is *Narnia*?’ I replied.

She explained what *Narnia* was to me, and then she tried to start a conversation about a new topic.

‘I am so glad *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* is coming to Newcastle. I'd really love to see the musical!’

‘What is *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*?’ I asked.

She again explained that to me, and then suggested, ‘Maybe we could go to the Bonfire Night together next week?’

Again I asked, ‘What is?’

I could understand every single word the British girl said, but I just could not make out what it meant—we had nothing in common. There was no real information exchange between us, but just a boring "question-explanation" pattern. Hence, I can completely understand the difficulty others have in establishing intercultural relationships with their British counterparts and can realize how lack of cultural intelligence could hinder communication.

In daily life, I have learned to deal with many things that I had not had the chance to do by myself in my own country (e.g., negotiating with a property agent, applying for a mortgage from a bank, writing a letter of complaint, etc.). Like other Chinese participants, I also took time to get accustomed to the weather, food, and lifestyle in the UK. After being in the UK for almost six years, I still cannot say I have reached the ‘interdependence stage’ (Adler 1975), which means feeling comfortable in both cultures, but I no longer encounter as many shocks as when I first came here.

When examining my own academic development, I learned that the academic transition framework explains not only the trajectory of the learning experience of my participants,

but also my own transition process. The first two-year modules in our integrated Ph.D. programmes have given me a basic understanding of British educational expectations and conventions. Yet my knowledge and abilities in criticality and originality did not develop until I began to conduct this research. This Ph.D. journey has helped me develop skills to become an independent researcher. I learned to identify problems and then to seek answers by collecting information or consulting the literature. In my previous educational experiences, teachers usually asked questions and then ‘taught’ answers to students. Hence, students do not have the chance to think independently and to question what they have learnt. In the UK setting, however, lecturers ask students to find answers themselves and to think critically and creatively. Students learn to develop their own thinking based on their existing knowledge and then to contribute to their field of study with their original thoughts and evidence, which is the most important thing I have learned in my doctoral study. Having the chance to make a presentation at an international conference with my supervisor also introduced me to more scholars in our community. I learned that I need to attend more conferences and publish more to establish my research and disciplinary identity so it can serve as a steppingstone for my next academic career.

It is really helpful to learn that my own academic transition experience is perfectly in accordance with the academic transition framework I developed in this study. Following the steps and suggestions made by other Chinese lecturers, I can prepare well for my next challenge and consequently can develop my professional and teacher identity. I learned a lot from conducting this research, and I will benefit from the research outcomes as well. I hope the research results have not only described the challenges faced by the Chinese participants and myself, but can also support other international academics who may use the academic transition framework as a guideline for their own academic development.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Permission Letter

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am conducting a research on how to better support Chinese learners in UK Higher Education Institutes. I'd like to interview some Chinese students in your school about their learning experience in the UK. Also, I will interview some staff about their experience in teaching international students. Any and all information obtained from the study will be confidential and will only be used for this research purpose. The participants' privacy will be protected at all times. The name of the participants and the name of the school will not be identified individually in any way. It is hoped that the research report may help educators and universities learn how to better support Chinese learners in UK Higher Education Institutes.

May I ask for your approval to conduct the research in your school. Could you please sign below if you agree with it?

Thank you.

Your Signature _____

Date _____

Your Name (printed)

Best wishes,

Hui-hua

IPhD in Educational and Applied Linguistics

University of Newcastle upon Tyne

hui-hua.hsieh@ncl.ac.uk

Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form for Students

Informed Consent Form

Thank you for participating in this research. The purpose of this study is to understand your learning and living experience in the UK. Please feel free to share your experience with us during the discussion, which would take up maximally 2 hours.

Any and all information obtained from you during the study will be confidential. Your privacy will be protected at all times. You will not be identified individually in any way as a result of your participation in this research.

In addition, the discussion will be recorded but will be kept private. Only the researcher will have access to the records and the data obtained will only be used for this research purpose.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. You are also free to withdraw at any time.

It is hoped that the research report may help educators and universities learn how to better support Chinese learners in UK Higher Education Institutes.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study and agree to be tape-recorded.

Your Signature _____

Date _____

Your Name (printed)

The researcher:
Hui-hua Hsieh

IPhD in Educational and Applied Linguistics
University of Newcastle upon Tyne

(The form is adapted from Cornell University, Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, Sample consent form, <http://www.irb.cornell.edu/forms/sample.htm>)

Appendix 3: Informed Consent Form for Lecturers

Informed Consent Form

Thank you for participating in this research. The purpose of this study is to understand your experience of teaching international students, specifically Chinese postgraduate students, in the UK. Please feel free to share your experience with us during the discussion, which would take up maximally 30 minutes.

Any and all information obtained from you during the study will be confidential. Your privacy will be protected at all times. You will not be identified individually in any way as a result of your participation in this research.

In addition, the discussion will be recorded but will be kept private. Only the researcher will have access to the records and the data obtained will only be used for this research purpose.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. You are also free to withdraw at any time.

It is hoped that the research report may help educators and universities learn how to better support Chinese learners in UK Higher Education Institutes.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study and agree to be tape-recorded.

Your Signature _____

Date _____

Your Name (printed)

The researcher:

Hui-hua Hsieh

IPhD in Educational and Applied Linguistics

University of Newcastle upon Tyne

(The form is adapted from Cornell University, Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, Sample consent form, <http://www.irb.cornell.edu/forms/sample.htm>)

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