

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**

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**An ethnographic study of the intercultural adaptation process  
between Chinese students and their British lecturers and fellow  
students in the UK**

**(Volume 1)**

by

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## Abstract

This ethnographic study aims to extend Kim's (1988, 2001) model of cross-cultural adaptation and Jin's (1992; Jin and Cortazzi, 1993) Cultural Synergy model by providing qualitative data to demonstrate the two-way intercultural adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers/students in a MBA programme at 'Weston University' (a pseudonym) in the UK, in both classroom and group communication contexts. The total population of this study is 228 (190 students and 38 academic staff) in 2003-2004.

A background introduction to traditional Chinese culture and academic culture is presented, since cultural distance and academic cultural distance are identified as two underlying factors that influence Chinese students' intercultural adaptation process. Intercultural adaptation is a process of self growth involving one's behavioural, cognitive and affective factors change over time (Kim, 1988, 2001; Ward, 1996), and a process of one's cultural identity adaptation from monocultural to intercultural (Kim, 2001). Meanwhile it is a process of one's intercultural sensitivity development, ranging from ethnocentric to ethnorelative (Bennett, 1986, 1993). This study aims to explore how both Chinese students and British lecturers/students meet each other's academic expectations and adapt to the intercultural academic identity (a mixture of Chinese and British cultures of learning) and how they cope with the dilemma of retaining their original academic identities (and co-national relationship) as well as developing new academic identities - intercultural academic identities (and inter-relationships), based on Berry *et al.*'s (1988, 1989) acculturation model and Jin's (1992, Jin and Cortazzi, 1993) cultural synergy model.

This study accepts an interpretive-qualitative paradigm and adopts ethnography as its research strategy, with an emphasis on the process of participants' intercultural adaptation in the particular cultural contexts. A mixed method or triangulation is adopted as the main data collection method, which involves participant observation, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and documentary analysis. Grounded theory is the main analysis strategy for generating the new concept and theoretical model. Several analysis methods are employed: episode analysis, transcript analysis, artificial 'dialogue', comparative analysis, and key sentence quote.

The research findings indicate that Chinese students and British lecturers/students underwent three-stage adaptation processes in both classroom and group communication contexts, from the initial unfamiliarity and frustration, relatively good relationship, via gradual adaptation but more frustration, less good relationship, to the final stage of gradual adaptation and relaxation (better communication and relationship between those adopting integration strategies, less good communication and relationship between those adopting separation strategies).

The research findings show that Chinese students and British lecturers/students tended to undergo different patterns of sociocultural and psychological adaptation. Their sociocultural adaptation tended to follow a positive learning curve – both sides tended to become more culturally sensitive, adopted integration strategies and made gradual progress in adapting to intercultural academic identity over time: Chinese students tended to be more questioning, challenging and independent in learning; British lecturers/students tended to adapt to and respond more sensitively to Chinese students' expectations.

However, the research findings show that Chinese students and British lecturers/students' psychological dimension (e.g. emotion and motivation) tended to fluctuate over time. Their psychological adaptation tended to follow a reverse U-curve: They experienced frustration and psychological struggles in the beginning of the adaptation process, then encountered more psychological struggles in the second stage, gradually to the final stage of relaxation and satisfaction.

Both the internal and external factors that influence the two-way intercultural adaptation process have been identified. The internal factors involve one's three intrapersonal dimensions: cognitive, affective and behavioural. The external factors entail cultural distance, academic cultural distance, legitimate pedagogical culture, native and non-native power relations and so on.

A model of two-way intercultural adaptation process and a concept of Intercultural Adaptation Competence (IAC) is developed from the research findings. The concept of IAC distinguishes three intrapersonal elements of ICC (cognitive, affective and behavioural) by recognizing the affective factor as the 'deep structure' among these elements, and it includes two other dimensions – intercultural communication and intercultural relationship, thus the concept of IAC is an extension of the concept of Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC), or Kim's (1988, 2001) Host Communication Competence (HCC). The sense of other-orientation and willingness to support are identified as the main components of IAC. The 'cultural go-between' is proposed to highlight the action of participants in intercultural adaptation process. The cultural go-between is the person who is not only aware of one's own and the other's academic cultures, good at balancing the relationship between retaining one's original and developing new academic cultural identities, but also willing to think from other's perspective and provide support in the intercultural adaptation process.

Two major recommendations are proposed by the study: to establish an unbiased pedagogical culture and assessment system; and to develop Chinese/international and host lecturers/students' IAC within higher education in the UK.

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In memory of Professor Christopher Brumfit who saw the best in me

He who teaches me for one day is my father for life.

---- Confucius

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## List of abbreviations

ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
ALU	Academic language use
BAAL	British Association of Applied Linguistics
C1	The first culture
C2	The second culture
CERC	Comparative Education Research Centre
CHC	Confucian Heritage Culture, Students from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea and Singapore are often called 'Asian students', who share the similar cultural backgrounds (Biggs, 1996; Watkins and Biggs, 2001: 3).
EMBA	Experience or executive master of business administration
EQ	Emotional quotient or intelligence
HCC	Host communication competence
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
IAC	Intercultural adaptation competence
IC	Intercultural communication
ICC	Intercultural communication competence
IDI	Intercultural development inventory
IELTS	International English language testing system
INSET	In-service teacher training
IQ	Intelligence quotient
IR	Intercultural relationship
ISS	Intercultural sensibility scale
L1	The first language
L2	The second language
MBA	Master of Business Administration
NHS	National Health Service
Ns	Native speaker
NNs	Non-native speaker
RMBA	Recent (graduate) master of business administration
SLA	Second language acquisition
TESOL	Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
TOEFL	Test of English as a foreign language
UKCOSA	The United Kingdom Council for Overseas Student Affairs

## List of figures and tables

### Figures

Figure 1.1 A framework of research design .....	19
Figure 1.2 The total student population.....	20
Figure 2.1 Three interrelated elements of host communication competence .....	25
Figure 2.2 The U-curve and W-curve adaptive change of sojourners .....	26
Figure 2.3 Forms of acculturation .....	27
Figure 2.4 Factors influencing cross-cultural adaptation: A structural model.....	28
Figure 2.6 The cultural synergy model of SLA and ALU .....	33
Figure 2.7 A model of intercultural learning adaptation .....	34
Figure 2.8 A theoretical framework for the intercultural adaptation process .....	37
Figure 3.1 Some characteristics of traditional Chinese culture .....	40
Figure 3.2 The position of individual in collectivist & individualist culture .....	44
Figure 3.3 Implications of traditional Chinese culture.....	45
Figure 3.4 The effect of traditional Chinese culture on Chinese academic culture.....	56
Figure 4.1 The relationship between theory and research.....	63
Figure 4.2 A sample from the questionnaire .....	82
Figure 5.1 Different strategies of seeking help .....	107
Figure 5.2 Views on a teacher's role .....	109
Figure 5.3 Views on a student's role .....	110
Figure 9.1 Three-stage adaptation processes between Cs and British lecturers/students.....	238
Figure 9.2 Sociocultural & psychological adaptation curves of Cs and British lecturers/students	239
Figure 9.3 The cultural go-between & IAC .....	246
Figure 9.4 IAC in intercultural adaptation process .....	257
Figure 9.5 A model of an individual's intercultural adaptation process .....	263
Figure 9.6 A model of two-way intergroup intercultural adaptation .....	265

### Tables

Table 4.1 A comparison of quantitative and qualitative research strategies .....	64
Table 4.2 Methods and data source .....	73
Table 4.3 The first-stage attitudes and strategies in classroom settings .....	90
Table 5.1 Classroom interaction in Course E session 071103.....	102
Table 5.2 Classroom interaction in Course E session 271103 (RMBA) .....	102
Table 6.1 Classroom interaction in Course E session 141103.....	129
Table 6.2 Course E presentation marks .....	141
Table 6.3 EMBA students' average marks of core modules.....	142
Table 6.4 RMBA students' average marks of core courses .....	142
Table 7.2 A comparison of competence- and empathy-oriented questions .....	159
Table 7.3 Regular contact with different groups of people .....	164
Table 8.1 The first-stage episodes and strategies .....	170
Table 8.2 The second-stage episodes and strategies.....	189
Table 8.3 The third-stage episodes and strategies .....	211
Table 8.4 Chinese students' willingness and real contacts with others .....	227

# Table of contents

<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>IV</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	<b>V</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES</b> .....	<b>VI</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>12</b>
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	12
1.2 A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO KEY CONCEPTS ADOPTED IN THIS STUDY .....	12
1.2.1 <i>The large culture and small culture approaches</i> .....	12
1.2.2 <i>Intercultural adaptation</i> .....	13
1.2.3 <i>Intercultural academic identity</i> .....	15
1.3 RESEARCH PURPOSES .....	16
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	18
1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY .....	18
1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS.....	20
<b>CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATION</b> .....	<b>22</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	22
2.2 APPROACHES AND A CRITIQUE OF INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATION RESEARCH.....	22
2.2.1 <i>Two approaches to intercultural adaptation research</i> .....	22
2.2.2 <i>A critique of intercultural adaptation research</i> .....	23
2.2.3 <i>Challenging the concept of ‘ICC’</i> .....	24
2.3 THEORIES OF INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATION .....	25
2.3.1 <i>U-curve and W-curve patterns of acculturation</i> .....	26
2.3.2 <i>Berry et al.’s acculturation model</i> .....	27
2.3.3 <i>Kim’s cross-cultural adaptation model</i> .....	28
2.3.4 <i>Ward’s acculturation model</i> .....	31
2.3.5 <i>Schumann’s acculturation model and Jin’s cultural synergy model</i> .....	32
2.3.6 <i>Lucas’ model of intercultural learning</i> .....	34
2.3.7 <i>Bochner et al.’s model of friendship network</i> .....	34
2.4 A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR AN EMPIRICAL RESEARCH .....	36
2.5 CONCLUSION.....	38
<b>CHAPTER 3 UNDERSTANDING TRADITIONAL CHINESE CULTURE AND CHINESE ACADEMIC CULTURE</b> .....	<b>39</b>
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	39
3.2 TRADITIONAL CHINESE CULTURE.....	39
3.2.1 <i>Characteristics of traditional Chinese culture</i> .....	40
3.2.1.1 <i>Harmony and diversity</i> .....	40
3.2.1.2 <i>Humanitarianism</i> .....	40
3.2.1.3 <i>Collectivist and high-context culture</i> .....	43
3.2.2 <i>Implication of Chinese Culture</i> .....	44
3.2.2.1 <i>Implication for Chinese academic culture</i> .....	45
3.2.2.2 <i>Implication for thinking style</i> .....	45
3.2.2.3 <i>Implication for communication style</i> .....	47
3.2.2.4 <i>Implications for interpersonal relationships</i> .....	48
3.3 CHINESE ACADEMIC CULTURE .....	48
3.3.1 <i>Chinese concept of teaching and learning</i> .....	48
3.3.2 <i>Main features of Confucian educational philosophy</i> .....	50
3.3.2.1 <i>The teacher-student relationship</i> .....	51
3.3.2.2 <i>The teacher/student roles</i> .....	51
3.3.2.3 <i>Confucius’ teaching methods</i> .....	52
3.3.3 <i>Evaluation of Confucian educational philosophy</i> .....	54
3.3.4 <i>Characteristics of Chinese academic culture</i> .....	56
3.3.4.1 <i>Educational philosophy and goals</i> .....	56
3.3.4.2 <i>Views on learning and teaching</i> .....	57
3.3.4.3 <i>Roles of students and teacher</i> .....	58
3.3.4.4 <i>Teacher-student relationship</i> .....	60
3.3.4.5 <i>Teaching/learning method</i> .....	60
3.3.4.6 <i>Examination system and assessment</i> .....	61



3.4 CONCLUSION .....	62
<b>CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGY AND METHOD .....</b>	<b>63</b>
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	63
4.2 A QUALITATIVE AND INTERPRETIVE PARADIGM .....	64
4.3 ETHNOGRAPHY AS A RESEARCH METHODOLOGY/STRATEGY .....	65
4.4 RESEARCH METHODS .....	66
4.4.1 <i>Research design</i> .....	66
4.4.2 <i>Strategies of choosing participants and episodes</i> .....	67
4.4.3 <i>Mixed method/triangulation</i> .....	68
4.4.3.1 Pilot study (June 2003-September 2003).....	69
4.4.3.2 Participant observation .....	70
4.4.3.3 Interview .....	76
4.4.3.4 Questionnaire .....	80
4.4.3.5 Documentary analysis .....	86
4.4.4 <i>Conclusion</i> .....	86
4.5 DATA ANALYSIS .....	87
4.5.1 <i>Constructivist grounded theory as a data analysis strategy</i> .....	87
4.5.2 <i>Data organization</i> .....	88
4.5.2.1 Organization of interviews .....	88
4.5.2.2 Organization of field notes .....	89
4.5.3 <i>Data analysis procedures</i> .....	89
4.5.4 <i>Analysis methods</i> .....	91
4.5.4.1 Episode analysis .....	91
4.5.4.2 Transcript analysis.....	92
4.5.4.3 Comparison methods.....	93
4.5.4.4 Artificial dialogue and key sentence analysis .....	93
4.6 REPRESENTATION.....	94
4.6.1 <i>Multi-identities of the researcher - intercultural researcher</i> .....	95
4.6.2 <i>Self reflections: Intercultural learning experience</i> .....	96
4.7 ETHICAL ISSUES .....	98
4.8 CONCLUSION.....	99
<b>CHAPTER 5 THE FIRST-STAGE ADAPTATION BETWEEN CHINESE STUDENTS AND BRITISH LECTURERS: UNFAMILIARITY AND FRUSTRATION.....</b>	<b>100</b>
5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	100
5.2 CHINESE STUDENTS WERE QUIET IN CLASS .....	101
5.3 ATTITUDES ADOPTED IN THE FIRST STAGE OF ADAPTATION PROCESS .....	103
5.3.1 <i>Adopting separation strategy</i> .....	104
5.3.2 <i>Adopting integration strategy</i> .....	105
5.4 STRATEGIES OF COPING WITH EXPECTATION GAPS AND ACADEMIC IDENTITY CONFLICTS IN CLASSROOM SETTINGS.....	106
5.4.1 <i>Introduction</i> .....	106
5.4.2 <i>Episode 1: 'The lecturer did not tell us what 'JIT' meant'</i> .....	107
5.4.3 <i>Episode 2: Why did Chinese students whisper in class?</i> .....	112
5.4.4 <i>Episode 3: Asking 'the single right answer' after class</i> .....	116
5.4.5 <i>Episode 4: 'I was interrupted'</i> .....	121
5.5 TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP IN THE EARLY STAGE .....	123
5.6 CONCLUSION OF THE FIRST STAGE.....	124
<b>CHAPTER 6 THE SECOND-STAGE ADAPTATION BETWEEN CHINESE STUDENTS AND BRITISH LECTURERS: GRADUAL ADAPTATION BUT MORE FRUSTRATION .</b>	<b>128</b>
6.1 INTRODUCTION.....	128
6.2 EPISODE 1 FOUR CHINESE STUDENTS WERE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN COURSE E CLASSROOM DISCUSSION .....	129
6.2.1 <i>Introduction</i> .....	129
6.2.2 <i>An analysis of the first part of the episode: C10 became the centre of the classroom talk</i> .....	129
6.2.3 <i>An analysis of the second part of the episode: 'I was not given an opportunity to speak more'..</i>	131
6.2.4 <i>Summary</i> .....	136
6.3 EPISODE 2 AN ORAL PRESENTATION MARKING INCIDENT: 'WE DON'T MARK EFFORT, WE MARK OUTPUTS'	136
6.3.1 <i>Introduction</i> .....	136
6.3.2 <i>Discussion</i> .....	137
6.3.2.1 Different views on the marking incident .....	137

6.3.2.2 Academic perspective: Aware of lecturers' dilemma situation and students' needs? .....	138
6.3.2.3 Pedagogical perspective: 'Marking outputs' or 'marking effort'? .....	139
6.3.2.4 Cultural perspectives: 'sympathize with the weakest' or 'survival of the fittest'? .....	144
6.3.2.5 Impact of Course E incident on Chinese students and British lecturers .....	147
6.3.3 <i>Summary</i> .....	149
6.4 TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP IN THE SECOND STAGE .....	151
6.5 CONCLUSION OF THE SECOND STAGE .....	151
<b>CHAPTER 7 THE THIRD-STAGE ADAPTATION BETWEEN CHINESE STUDENTS AND BRITISH LECTURERS: ADAPTATION AND RELAXATION .....</b>	<b>154</b>
7.1 INTRODUCTION .....	154
7.2 EPISODE 1: C13 BEGAN TO DOMINATE THE CLASSROOM TALK .....	155
7.3 EPISODE 2: C17 CHALLENGED THE LECTURER .....	156
7.4 LECTURERS' VIEWS ON CHINESE STUDENTS' CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR .....	156
7.5 EPISODE 3: WHY DID CHINESE STUDENTS HAVE DIFFERENT CLASSROOM BEHAVIOURS IN DIFFERENT SESSIONS? .....	157
7.5.1 <i>Introduction</i> .....	157
7.5.2 <i>Discussion</i> .....	158
7.5.3 <i>Summary</i> .....	163
7.6 TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP IN THE THIRD STAGE .....	163
7.7 CONCLUSION OF THE THIRD STAGE .....	164
7.8 CONCLUSIONS OF CHAPTERS 5-7 .....	166
<b>CHAPTER 8 CHINESE AND BRITISH STUDENTS' TWO-WAY INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATION IN THE GROUP COMMUNICATION CONTEXT .....</b>	<b>169</b>
8.1 INTRODUCTION .....	169
8.2 THE FIRST STAGE ADAPTATION: GROUP FORMING .....	170
8.2.1 <i>Introduction</i> .....	170
8.2.2 <i>Episode 1: Product line debate (C3 &amp; B4)</i> .....	170
8.2.2.1 <i>Introduction</i> .....	171
8.2.2.2 <i>Interpretation</i> .....	173
8.2.2.3 <i>Discussion</i> .....	174
8.2.2.4 <i>Summary</i> .....	176
8.2.3 <i>Episode 2: 'We are excluded from the discussion' (C12 &amp; B12)</i> .....	177
8.2.3.1 <i>Introduction</i> .....	177
8.2.3.2 <i>Discussion</i> .....	178
8.2.3.3 <i>Summary</i> .....	182
8.2.4 <i>Episode 3: 'They are taking control' (C15 &amp; B15)</i> .....	182
8.2.4.1 <i>Introduction</i> .....	182
8.2.4.2 <i>Discussion</i> .....	183
8.2.4.3 <i>Summary</i> .....	185
8.2.5 <i>Relationship development in the first stage</i> .....	186
8.2.6 <i>Conclusion</i> .....	186
8.3 THE SECOND STAGE – GROUP STORMING .....	188
8.3.1 <i>Introduction</i> .....	188
8.3.2 <i>Episode 1: B8 was criticized in public (C10 &amp; B8)</i> .....	189
8.3.2.1 <i>Introduction</i> .....	189
8.3.2.2 <i>Interpretation</i> .....	190
8.3.2.3 <i>Discussion</i> .....	191
8.3.2.4 <i>Summary</i> .....	193
8.3.3 <i>Episode 2: 'They did not ask our opinion' (C13 &amp; B2)</i> .....	194
8.3.3.1 <i>Introduction</i> .....	194
8.3.3.2 <i>Discussion</i> .....	195
8.3.3.3 <i>Summary</i> .....	197
8.3.4 <i>Episode 3: 'How to tell him our disagreement' (C9 &amp; B5)</i> .....	197
8.3.4.1 <i>Introduction</i> .....	198
8.3.4.2 <i>Discussion</i> .....	198
8.3.4.3 <i>Summary</i> .....	201
8.3.5 <i>Episode 4: 'We vote for the presenter' (C6 &amp; I4)</i> .....	201
8.3.5.1 <i>Introduction</i> .....	201
8.3.5.2 <i>Discussion</i> .....	202
8.3.5.3 <i>Summary</i> .....	203
8.3.6 <i>Relationship development in the second stage</i> .....	203
8.3.7 <i>Conclusion of the second stage</i> .....	209
8.4 THE THIRD STAGE – GROUP NORMING AND PERFORMING .....	210

8.4.1 Introduction.....	210
8.4.2 Episode 1: 'I enjoyed the email communication' (C10 & B9).....	211
8.4.2.1 Introduction.....	212
8.4.2.2 Discussion.....	214
8.4.2.3 Summary.....	217
8.4.3 Episode 2: 'As long as it is good for the group' (C6 & B1).....	217
8.4.3.1 Introduction.....	217
8.4.3.2 Discussion.....	218
8.4.3.3 Summary.....	221
8.4.4 Episode 3: 'I was quieter in this group' (C9 & B3).....	222
8.4.4.1 Introduction.....	222
8.4.4.2 Discussion.....	222
8.4.4.3 Summary.....	223
8.4.5 Episode 4: 'I did try, but I failed' (C23 & B6).....	224
8.4.5.1 Introduction.....	224
8.4.5.2 Discussion.....	224
8.4.5.3 Summary.....	226
8.4.6 Relationship development in the third stage.....	227
8.4.7 Summary of the third-stage group adaptation.....	228
8.5 CONCLUSIONS OF THE WHOLE CHAPTER.....	228
<b>CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>237</b>
9.1 INTRODUCTION.....	237
9.2 A SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS IN THIS STUDY.....	237
9.2.1 Sociocultural and psychological adaptation patterns.....	237
9.2.2 Intercultural sensitivity and intercultural academic identity development.....	240
9.2.2.1 Chinese students' intercultural sensitivity and identity development.....	241
9.2.2.2 British students' intercultural sensitivity and identity development.....	242
9.2.2.3 British lecturers' intercultural sensitivity and identity development.....	242
9.2.2.4 Cultural go-between and IAC.....	245
9.2.3 Key factors influencing two-way intercultural adaptation.....	247
9.2.3.1 External factors.....	247
9.2.3.2 Internal factors.....	250
9.2.3.3 Predisposition factors.....	253
9.3 AN INTEGRATED MODEL OF TWO-WAY INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATION.....	255
9.3.1 Introduction.....	255
9.3.2 Developing the concept of IAC.....	255
9.3.2.1 Affective factor as the deep structure of IAC.....	255
9.3.2.2 IAC and deep structure of culture and academic culture.....	256
9.3.2.3 IC and IR as two aspects of IAC.....	258
9.3.2.4 Other orientation and mutual support as domain of IAC.....	259
9.3.2.5 An evaluation of IAC.....	261
9.3.4 An integrated model of intercultural adaptation.....	262
9.3.5 A two-way intergroup intercultural adaptation model.....	265
9.4 IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH.....	266
9.4.1 How to provide support to international students?.....	267
9.4.1.1 Establishing unbiased pedagogical culture and assessment system.....	267
9.4.1.2 Recognizing international students' previous experiences as teaching resources.....	268
9.4.1.3 Accommodating teaching methods to international students.....	268
9.4.1.4 Supporting international students in different stages.....	269
9.4.2 How to develop British lecturers' and their students' IAC?.....	271
9.5 EVALUATION OF THIS STUDY.....	275
9.5.1 An evaluation of methodology.....	275
9.5.2 Strength and limitation of the study.....	276
9.5.3 Suggestions for further research.....	279
9.6 CONCLUSIONS.....	279
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>281</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1 THE CHANGE OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS IN CHINESE HISTORY.....</b>	<b>308</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2 OBSERVATIONS OF TWO BRITISH PRIMARY SCHOOLS.....</b>	<b>309</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3 A FORMAL ACCESS LETTER TO THE MBA PROGRAM DIRECTOR.....</b>	<b>310</b>
<b>APPENDIX 4 ETHICAL PROTOCOLS OF THIS RESEARCH.....</b>	<b>312</b>
<b>APPENDIX 5 INTERVIEW TIME AND TRANSCRIPTION DETAILS.....</b>	<b>313</b>

APPENDIX 6 OBSERVATION TIME AND TRANSCRIPTION DETAILS .....	318
APPENDIX 7 OBSERVATION CHECKLIST AND CATEGORIES .....	320
APPENDIX 8 AN OBSERVER'S DILEMMA AND PARADOX.....	322
APPENDIX 9 SAMPLES OF RESEARCH JOURNALS.....	323
APPENDIX 10 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE AND QUESTIONS.....	325
APPENDIX 11 A COMPARISON OF QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW.....	327
APPENDIX 12 EMBA AND RMBA CLASSROOM SEATING .....	328
APPENDIX 13 FIELD NOTE OF COURSE E CLASSROOM INTERACTION 141103.....	330
APPENDIX 14 THE FINAL DIPLOMA MARK ANALYSIS.....	332
APPENDIX 15 TWO FIELD NOTES OF NUMERACY-RELATED SESSIONS .....	336
APPENDIX 16 FIELD NOTE OF COURSE E 071103.....	338
APPENDIX 17 FIELD NOTE OF COURSE E 271103 FOR RMBA STUDENTS.....	339
APPENDIX 18 EPISODE LISTS.....	340
APPENDIX 19 DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF MBA TERMINOLOGIES.....	341
APPENDIX 20 A SUMMARY OF RESPONSES OF FOUR QUESTIONNAIRES .....	343
APPENDIX 21 TRANSCRIPTION OF COURSE E DISCUSSION 141103.....	360
APPENDIX 22 C7'S DILEMMA OF EXPRESSING POSITIVE SELF-ASSESSMENT .....	363
APPENDIX 23 KEY SKILLS OF THE MBA PROGRAMMES .....	364
APPENDIX 24 TWO TAIWAN STUDENTS WERE QUIET IN A MIXED GROUP .....	365
APPENDIX 25 TRANSCRIPTION OF COURSE E PRESENTATION INTERACTION.....	367
APPENDIX 26 B2'S FIRST MIXED GROUP WORK EXPERIENCE .....	370
APPENDIX 27 A CASE STUDY OF C8'S REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK .....	371
APPENDIX 28 FIELD NOTE OF COURSE F 110304 .....	372
APPENDIX 29 SAMPLES OF QUESTIONNAIRES .....	374

## Chapter 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

This introductory chapter first clarifies some basic concepts adopted in this study; then research purposes, research questions, research design and methodology for this study are discussed; finally a summary of each chapter is provided.

With the globalization and internationalization of higher education, the number of international students coming to the UK for higher education is predicted to treble in the next fifteen years (Report of the UKCOSA Survey, 2004), and one in six overseas students in the UK is from China (Blair, 2005). Therefore, it is crucial and beneficial to British Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), to increase an awareness of how Chinese students adapt to the new academic identity (questioning, challenging, and independent in learning), and how British lecturers/students respond to Chinese students' expectations and needs, and how both sides adapt to the intercultural academic identities. This study aims to provide a rich description of the two-way intercultural adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers/students in their intercultural encounters: in classroom and group communication contexts.

### 1.2 A brief introduction to key concepts adopted in this study

The key concepts adopted in this study are introduced: the large culture and small culture approaches, intercultural adaptation, and intercultural academic identity.

#### 1.2.1 The large culture and small culture approaches

There are generally two approaches to defining culture: large culture and small culture. A large culture approach sees culture as a geographically and (often nationally) distinct entity, relatively unchanging and homogeneous (Clark & Gieve, 2006; Holliday, 1999), such as 'national culture' (Hofstede, 1980) or 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1991), which emphasises the general characteristics of a culture. e.g. individualism-collectivism cultural dimensions. The large culture is also defined as a system of behaviour, knowledge, beliefs and values - the so-called 'what culture is' (Street, 1993: 23). However, a large culture approach tends to view culture as a fixed, stable and homogeneous entity and thus leads to cultural stereotypes and prejudice (e.g. Paxman, 1999).

This study attempts to adopt an alternative approach – a 'small culture' or ethnographic approach (Byram *et al.*, 1994; Samovar *et al.*, 1998). Small culture is defined as, 'the sum total of all the processes, happenings, or activities in which a given set or several sets of people habitually engage' (Holliday, 1999). Culture is individual and subjective (Triandis, 1972), 'the software of the mind' (Hofstede, 1991: 237), unconscious (Hall, 1966; Hall and

Hall, 1990; Samovar *et al.*, 1998: 39), situated and dynamic. Culture is ‘a verb’ - the so-called ‘what culture does’ (Street, 1993: 23). A small culture approach stresses an individual’s personal cultural practices and experience and interpretations in a particular cultural context (Byram *et al.*, 1994). Stephens (1997: 119) defines culture as ‘an area of contested discourse rather than a reified construct’, with an emphasis on the process of constructing and contesting meanings through interaction with others in the particular cultural context. Therefore, this study is based on a small culture or ethnographic notion of culture, emphasising Chinese students’ personal experience and subjective interpretation and reflections on their intercultural adaptation process, and explores how they adapt to the new learning environment, and how both Chinese students and host lecturers/students develop their intercultural academic identities in the particular cultural contexts – a British university’s intercultural classroom and group communication contexts.

### 1.2.2 Intercultural adaptation

Intercultural adaptation research has been conducted by researchers from different fields, such as anthropology (Hall, 1959, 1976), sociology (Simmel, 1950/1908), psychology (Berry, 1990; Brislin, 1981; Hofstede, 1980, 1991; Triandis, 1988), communication (Gudykunst, 1988, 1993; Kim, 1988, 2001), and linguistics and applied linguistics (Byram, 1989, 2001, 2003; Hymes, 1979; Jin, 1992; Jin and Cortazzi, 1993; Sapir, 1921; Schumann, 1978; Whorf, 1956).

Due to the interdisciplinary, diverse and complex nature of research on intercultural adaptation, researchers from various fields tend to employ different concepts to describe the intercultural adaptation process, such as acculturation (a process of acquisition of learning of the host culture) (Kim, 2001; Schumann, 1978), psychological acculturation (Berry, 1980, 1990); coping and adjustment (emphasise psychological responses to adaptation) (Kim, 2001; Ward, 1996); assimilation (emphasise the process in which immigrants are ‘absorbed’ in the host culture) (Kim, 2001), integration (social participation in the host culture), cross-cultural adaptation (Asante & Gudykunst, 1989; Gudykunst, 1988; Gudykunst and Kim, 1997; Kim, 1988); cultural learning (Bochner, 1982; Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Irwin, 1996); cultural synergy (Jin, 1992) and identity negotiation (Ting-Toomey, 1993, 1994).

Intercultural adaptation is one aspect of intercultural communication (Samovar and Porter, 1994). ‘Intercultural communication’ or ‘intercultural adaptation’ is adopted instead of ‘cross-cultural communication’ or ‘cross-cultural adaptation’ in this study for two reasons. Firstly, ‘cross-cultural’ communication stresses a comparison between two cultures, whereas ‘intercultural’ communication emphasises the process of communication between people from different cultures (Asante and Gudykunst, 1989). This study aims to explore the two-way communication and adaptation process between host nationals (British lecturers/students) and sojourners (Kim, 1998) (Chinese/international students in this study, with 28 nationalities). Therefore the broader term ‘intercultural communication’ and ‘intercultural adaptation’ (Lucas, 2003: 308; Ting-Toomey, 1999: 233) were used

throughout this study.

Secondly, Kim (1988, 2001: 56) defines ‘cross-cultural adaptation’ as a ‘process through which individual strangers gradually transform themselves from ‘outsiders’ ultimately to fully functioning ‘insiders’ (Kim, 2001: 38). However, this definition only emphasises one-way adaptation: a sojourner’s adaptation to the host culture. This study attempts to extend Kim’s cross-cultural adaptation model by exploring a two-way intercultural adaptation process between Chinese/international students and the host lecturers/students. Two-way intercultural adaptation means both Chinese students and British lecturers/students respond to and meet each other’s academic expectations, and develop a new intercultural academic identity – a mixture of Chinese and British academic identities and values.

Thirdly, this study aims to explore how Chinese students and British lecturers/students cope with the tension between retaining one’s original cultural and academic cultural identities (and relationships) and developing intercultural academic identities (and relationships), based on Berry *et al.*’s (1988, 1989) two dimensions of acculturation (one’s home cultural identity and host cultural identity) and two of modes of acculturation (integration and separation), Casmir’s (1999) third culture construction model and Jin’s (1992; Jin & Cortazzi)’s model of cultural synergy. This study aims to provide a rich description of how both sides become more culturally sensitive by adopting more integration strategies, and more other-oriented and supportive to culturally different others.

Furthermore, intercultural adaptation refers to one’s cultural sensitivity development over time. This relates to how to develop one’s intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1986, 1993), from ethnocentrism (‘the worldview of one’s own culture is central to all reality’ (Bennett, 1986, 1993: 30) to ethnorelativism (‘culture is relative to one another within a cultural context’, *ibid.*: 46) in the intercultural communication process. This study aims to explore how both British lecturers/students and Chinese students increase their intercultural sensitivity over time. Ethnorelativism is regarded as the most important component of intercultural sensitivity, together with other components such as self-esteem, empathy and open-mindedness (Bennett, 1986, 1993). This study attempts to explore other dimensions of cultural sensitivity influencing British lecturers/students and Chinese students’ adaptation process, from a Chinese cultural perspective (e.g. other-orientation and support, see Section 9.3.2).

This study is based on Kim’s (1988, 2001) model of cross-cultural adaptation. It aims to explore Chinese students and British lecturers/students two-way adaptation process, to explore how both sides adapt to each other’s academic expectations, and develop a new academic identity - intercultural academic identity, which can be a mixture of both Chinese and British academic identities and values, or an intercultural academic identities and values (see Section 1.2.3).

### 1.2.3 Intercultural academic identity

Identity is a multiple and multifaceted concept (Bourdieu, 1977; Cortazzi and Jin, 2002; Peirce, 1995). An individual tends to have ‘multiple identities’ (Martin and Nakayama, 2000: 111), such as social identity and personal identity (Turner, 1987), ethnic and cultural identities (Collier, 1994; Hall, 1992; Leong and Ward, 2000; Ward and Searle, 1991) and educational identities (Cortazzi and Jin, 2002). Identity tends to be situated and ‘movable’ (Hall, 1992: 274) depending on the contexts and communication events. One’s cultural identity is socially negotiated and constructed through communication and relations with others (Collier & Thomas, 1988).

This study will focus on ‘academic’ identity adaptation rather than the general term ‘cultural’ identity construction (Kim, 1988, 2001), since this study is mainly based on the Chinese students and British lecturers/students’ intercultural communication and relationship development in the classroom and group communication contexts in a British university. Thus ‘Intercultural academic identity’ adaptation is proposed in this study. It is based on Casmir’s (1993) model of third culture building, which suggests that both the first language (L1) learners and the second language (L2) learners establish their cultural identities within and across cultural groups in the intercultural communication process. Intercultural academic identity adaptation is also based on Jin’s (1992) model of cultural synergy, which emphasises two-way intercultural identity adaptation process between Chinese/international students and host lecturers/students - retaining their original cultural identities and developing new cultural identities.

The concept of ‘intercultural academic identity is also based on Kim’s ‘Intercultural identity transformation’, one of the outcomes of the intercultural adaptation process. Kim and Ruben (1988: 313-314) regard intercultural adaptation as a process of an individual’s identity development from monocultural to intercultural.

*The process of becoming intercultural – of personal transformation from cultural to intercultural – is a process of growth beyond one’s original cultural conditioning. One consequence of extensive communication experiences and the subsequent internal transformation is the development of a cultural identity that is far from being ‘frozen’. An intercultural person’s cultural identity is characteristically open to further transformation and growth (Kim and Ruben, 1988: 313-314).*

This study aims to explore and demonstrate how Chinese students and British lecturers/students cope with the tension between retaining their original academic identity (and co-national relationships) as well as developing an intercultural academic identities (and inter-relationships) (Berry *et al.*, 1988, 1989) in intercultural classroom settings. By ‘intercultural academic identity’, I mean it can be a mixture of two academic identities and values, or multicultural or intercultural academic identities and values; both Chinese students and British lecturers/students develop from the monocultural academic identity to multi-cultural or intercultural academic identities.



In sum, I have discussed some basic concepts in the field of intercultural adaptation and how they relate to this study. The next section is about research purposes.

### 1.3 Research purposes

There are two contradictory arguments on characteristics of ‘Chinese learners’ in literature: being passive and quiet in class, lacking in critical thinking, adopting rote learning or surface learning strategies (Atkinson, 1997; Ballard & Clanchy, 1991; Carson, 1992; Flowerdew, 1998; Ho, 2001; Jin and Cortazzi, 1993; Liu, 1998), as opposed to being active, critical and adopting multiple and deep learning strategies (Chan, 1997; Cheng, 2002; Jin and Cortazzi, 2006; Jones, 1999; Kember and Gow, 1991; Lee, 1996; Littlewood, 2000; Shi, 2006; Watkins and Biggs, 2001). Confucianism or Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) is often attributed as the explanation for Chinese students’ negative characteristics (Flowerdew, 1998; Hu, 2002; Nelson, 1995; Oxford, 1995) as well as positive features (Jin and Cortazzi, 2006; Shi, 2006; Watkins and Biggs, 2001). Students from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea and Singapore share similar cultural backgrounds (CHC) (Biggs, 1996; Watkins and Biggs, 2001: 3).

I will argue that the term ‘Chinese learners’ tend to be problematic, for the following reasons. First, it tends to see Chinese students as a fixed and homogenous group, and ignores the diversity of Chinese students. Second, the influence of Chinese cultural values or CHC on Chinese learners tends to be over-generalized and over emphasised. It needs to consider the dynamics of cultural change and the ‘situated contexts’ (Clark and Gieve, 2006: 63) that influence Chinese learners’ changes of learning strategies, student roles and identities. Recent research shows that ‘the complex variety of collectivist and individualist values is endorsed by Chinese students’ (Renshaw, 1999: 67). Littlewood (2000: 33) argues that ‘if Asian students do indeed adopt the passive classroom attitudes that are often claimed, this is more likely to be a consequence of the educational contexts that have been or are now provided for them, than of any inherent dispositions of the students themselves’. For example, ‘surface assessment demands’ is regarded as one of reasons for students’ adoption of a surface approach (Kember and Gow, 1991: 125).

Third, little research has been conducted concerning Chinese students’ intercultural adaptation process in the new learning environment over time (Hall, 1976; Volet and Renshaw, 1995). The main concern of the present study is not whether Chinese students are active, challenging and independent learners (the argument on Chinese learners tends to be static and stereotyped), but how they adapt to the new academic identities (to be more active, challenging and independent learners) during their one-year adaptation period in the UK, in response to the interactive approach rather than transmission approach which generally dominates in Chinese education. Therefore this study focuses on exploring Chinese students’ adaptation process and experiences in the UK.

Fourth, this study will go one step further and consider the interplay of many factors by exploring not only cultural and academic cultural reasons, but also the contextual and

personal factors that influence the two-way intercultural adaptation, rather than aim to generalize or define what Chinese students are. Contextual factors entail host conformity pressure, host attitudes towards international students (Kim, 1988, 2001), social distance and power relations between native lecturers/students and non-native students, legitimate pedagogical culture. Personal factors involve individual's intercultural sensitivity, and three intrapersonal factors (cognition, affect and behaviour) change.

Fifth, previous research tends to lack integrated models and theories in the intercultural adaptation field, and little research is based on qualitative/interpretative research data, emphasising both contextual and personal factors that influence intercultural adaptation process (Kim, 1988). Kim's (1988, 2001) model of cross-cultural adaptation is an integrated model, however, it lacks qualitative research evidence. Therefore, this study aims to develop an integrated theoretical model, based on qualitative/interpretive empirical research.

Sixth, this study aims to develop a two-way intercultural adaptation model, based on a rich description of how Chinese students and British lecturers/students cope with a tension between retaining their original cultural values (Kim, 1988, 2001; Ting-Toomey, 1993) and academic identities (and co-national relationships), and adapting to the new cultural values and academic identities (and intercultural relationships) during their intercultural encounters, and how both sides changed from being ethnocentric to ethnorelative (Bennett, 1986, 1993), from being monocultural to intercultural (Kim, 2001), from the person who adopts separation to integration strategies (Berry *et al.*, 1988, 1989). The previous research tends to focus on non-native students or sojourners' one-way adaptation to the target culture and ignores the native lecturers/students' adaptation to the non-native students during the intercultural encounters. It should be noted that some models (e.g. Bennett's cultural sensitivity model, 1986, 1993; Berry *et al.*'s cultural pluralism; 1988, 1989; Casmir's third culture building model, 1999; Jin's cultural synergy model, 1992; Jin and Cortazzi, 1993; Kim, 1988, 2001) did emphasise two dimensions of intercultural adaptation - retaining one's original cultural and academic identities/relationships and developing one's new cultural and academic identities/relationships. However, they (e.g. Berry *et al.* and Kim) tend to focus on sojourners' cultural identity adaptation conflict only, rather than on native speakers' conflicts as well. Though Jin and Casmir have addressed both native and sojourners' two-way cultural identity adaptation process, however their models tend to lack evidence of ethnographic/qualitative research on the process of how both sides adapt to each other and develop intercultural academic identities in intercultural encounters over time.

Lastly, this study aims to explore the interrelationship between three intrapersonal factors and develop a concept of IAC in which attitude is emphasised as the deep structure. Many previous researchers have emphasised three intrapersonal factors (knowledge, attitude and behaviour) as the most influential variables of ICC – the ultimate goal of intercultural communication (Chen and Starosta, 1998; Kim, 1988; 1991, 2001). However, they tend to regard these factors equally (e.g. Kim, 1988, see Figure 2.1 in Section 2.2.3).

The ultimate goal of this study is to increase intercultural awareness and sensitivity of both British lecturers/students and Chinese students, develop their intercultural communication competence and intercultural adaptation competence, and enhance Chinese/international students' intercultural experience and British higher education (e.g. pedagogical improvement).

#### **1.4 Research questions**

Based on the above purposes, the general research question of this study is developed as follows: How do Chinese students and British lecturers/students undertake a two-way intercultural adaptation process in classroom and group communication contexts? It is divided into the following research sub-questions:

- How do Chinese students and British lecturers undertake a two-way intercultural adaptation process in the classroom communication context?
  - What are the expectation gaps and academic cultural identity conflicts between Chinese and British lecturers in their classroom interaction?
  - What attitudes and strategies do Chinese and British students adopt to cope with expectation gaps and academic cultural identity conflicts?
  
- How do Chinese and British students undergo a two-way intercultural adaptation process in the group communication context?
  - What expectation gaps and academic cultural identity conflicts do Chinese and British students encounter?
  - What attitudes and strategies do Chinese and British students adopt to cope with expectation gaps and academic cultural identity conflicts?
  
- What factors influence the Chinese students' and British lecturers'/students' intercultural adaptation process?
- What two-way intercultural adaptation model and a concept of intercultural adaptation can be developed from the findings?
- What are the implications of the research findings?

#### **1.5 Research design and methodology**

I have designed a research framework to set out an empirical study (see Figure 1.1). This research design framework is based on my research strategies and research questions. I will take a qualitative and interpretive paradigm as my philosophical framework, and ethnography as a research strategy, in order to provide an in-depth description of British lecturers/students and Chinese students' intercultural adaptation experiences in 'naturally occurring situations' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1993) and particular cultural contexts.

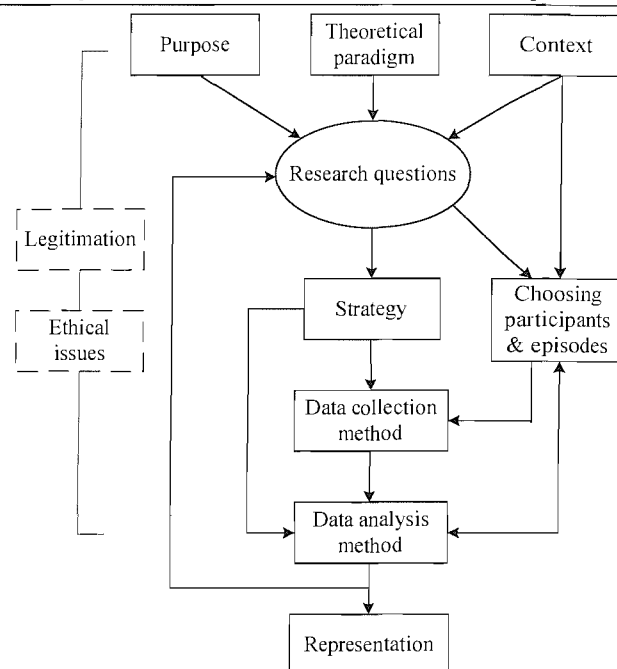


Figure 1.1 A framework of research design  
(adapted from Denzin & Lincoln, 2000)

I chose the Management School of Weston University (a pseudonym) as my field site, and its MBA staff and students as research subjects. The total population of this study is 228; including 184 students (average age 32) and 44 staff (32 lecturers, 12 administrative staff). Several main reasons for choosing the field and subjects are: (i) large numbers of Chinese students (27%) and CHC students (45%) (see Figure 1.2); (ii) multicultural and diverse participants (28 nationalities in this study) provide me with an opportunity to compare different cultural perspectives for triangulation; (iii) the university's MBA programmes involved many intercultural classroom and group discussions, so I could explore expectation gaps and intercultural academic identity conflicts between native lecturers/students and Chinese students, and examine their two-way intercultural adaptation process over time; (iv) the MBA Chinese students were chosen as participants because they were content learners rather than simply language learners in the language programmes that most previous research focuses on. For example, Schumann's (1978, 1986) and Byram's (1989) research only focuses on English language learners, rather than subject learners. This study emphasises Chinese students' 'academic language use' (ALU) (Jin, 1992: 170) in a natural intercultural context, in order to explore how host lecturers/students and Chinese students adapt to each other in intercultural encounters.

There are two streams of MBA students in this study: EMBA and RMBA students. EMBA students are Experienced or Executive managers who have at least 5-year work experience, with 34% of British students in the EMBA class. RMBA students are Recent graduates who have little work experience, with 12% of British students in the RMBA class. In this study, I spent much time in the EMBA class, since they were experienced and had many mixed group discussions between British and Chinese students. All the episodes and

interview quotes refer to EMBA students when there is no particular reference. I point out ‘it is from the RMBA class or students’ each time when I choose RMBA episodes or participants’ quotes in the writing. For the reasons for a comparison of EMBA and RMBA classes see Section 5.2.

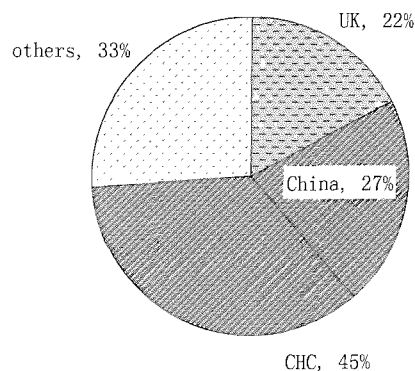


Figure 1.2 The total student population

I used mixed methods for triangulation for this study, because this can add ‘rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry’ (Flick, 1998: 231), and thus enhance the validity and reliability of the research. Considering the subtlety and complexity of my research topic, I conducted ethnographic participant observation and interviews first; then based on these rich and interpretive qualitative research data, I designed a questionnaire as a complementary instrument, to crosscheck the validity and reliability of the data; followed with another complementary method – documentary analysis of student participants’ individual assignments and final exam marks. The research strategy is based on grounded theory which is generally used in investigation of new concepts and theory. Finally ethical issues have been considered throughout the research process.

## 1.6 Structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of eight interconnected chapters. Chapter 1 is a general introduction to the whole thesis; basic concepts of this study are introduced, the research purposes and questions are examined, the research design and methodology of this study are discussed.

Chapter 2 examines the theoretical basis of intercultural communication research especially intercultural adaptation theories and models. Firstly, a general evaluation of approaches and theories in the field of intercultural adaptation is provided; then main theories and models of intercultural adaptation are examined; finally an integrated framework for empirical research on intercultural adaptation is presented.

Chapter 3 is a background introduction to traditional Chinese culture and academic culture, based on a literature review of both Chinese original classics and Western views on traditional Chinese culture and academic culture. It aims to provide some underlying reasons for any cultural conflicts and expectation gaps occurred between British

lecturers/students and Chinese students. Three main features of traditional Chinese culture are examined and evaluated: harmony/diversity, humanitarianism and collectivism and high-context. The implications of traditional Chinese culture are discussed in terms of academic culture, thinking style, communication style and interpersonal relationship. The Chinese concept of teaching and learning and the main features of Confucian educational philosophy are discussed. Characteristics of Chinese academic culture are examined and evaluated, and compared with British academic culture, in terms of educational philosophy/goals, the concept of learning and knowledge, roles of teacher/students, teaching/learning methods, the relationship between teacher and students, and assessment systems.

Chapter 4 concerns methodology and methods adopted in this study. Firstly, the interpretive/qualitative paradigm adopted in this study is discussed; secondly, ethnography as the research strategy adopted in this study is explored; thirdly research design and mixed data collection methods (e.g. ethnographic participant observation, interview, questionnaire and documentary analysis) are examined; fourthly, grounded theory as an analysis strategy in this study is discussed; fifthly, interpretations/representations and ethical issues of the research are addressed.

Chapters 5-8 are analysis chapters. Chapters 5-7 focus on two-way intercultural adaptation, between Chinese students and British lecturers. Chinese students and British lecturers/students tended to undergo a three-stage classroom communication and relationship development: from the initial unfamiliarity/uncertainty stage, via a confrontation and frustration stage, to the final familiarity and satisfaction stage. Three attitudes and four strategies are identified, both external and internal factors are identified.

Chapter 8 emphasises two-way intercultural adaptation between Chinese and British students. Three-stage group communication and relationship development are identified: from the initial forming stage (more communication and conflicts), via storming stage (less communication, more conflicts); to the final performing/outperforming stage (better communication and relationship between part-time British students and Chinese students, and between Chinese students and other international students, little communication/relationship between full-time British students and Chinese/international students). Five strategies adopted by British and Chinese students are examined, and both external and internal factors are identified.

Chapter 9 contains a synthesis of main findings in this study. A concept of Intercultural Adaptation Competence (IAC) and an integrated theoretical model of intercultural adaptation are proposed and their implications are discussed. A proposal is made to increase both host lecturers/students' and international students' intercultural sensitivity and to develop IAC. Finally, an evaluation of this study and some suggestions for further research are provided. Since research is an iterative and cyclical process, each chapter is interrelated. The next chapter forms a literature review of research on intercultural adaptation.

## Chapter 2 Review of literature on intercultural adaptation

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter is a literature review of intercultural adaptation theories with special reference to research on Chinese students' adaptation process in UK HEIs. Two approaches and a critique of intercultural adaptation research are first discussed. The main theories on intercultural adaptation relevant to this study are then examined in terms of their domains of inquiry, methods and findings. A theoretical framework for an empirical research study on two-way intercultural adaptation is presented at the end of the chapter.

### 2.2 Approaches and a critique of intercultural adaptation research

#### 2.2.1 Two approaches to intercultural adaptation research

There are two different approaches to intercultural communication and adaptation research: etic and emic. The etic approach is also called a culture-general approach, which is objective in nature. Etic researchers (e.g. Berry, 1990; Hofstede, 1980) tend to view adaptation as a linear progression or a state which is influenced by some independent or dependent predetermined categories/variables. However, these variables tend to only reflect fragments or parts of the reality and fail to capture the complex and processual nature of communication, since intercultural communication is context-bound, negotiated, and influenced by many unexpected and unpredicted factors. By contrast, the emic approach is also called a culture-specific approach, which is subjective in nature. The emic researchers (e.g. Asante & Gudykunst, 1989; Gudykunst & Kim, 1997; Kim, 1988) tend to view adaptation as a dynamic and multidimensional communication process and emphasise a 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) of how and why particular participants adapt their academic cultural identity and relationship in particular ways in particular contexts, and to what degree an individual's cognitive, affective and behavioural components of acculturation change over time (Ward, 1996).

The etic approach tends to explore universal rules and generalize the research results and instrument. However, it is criticized that it can never be really generalized, since instruments tend to differ in content from culture to culture (Collier, 1989). The instrument construction tends to be biased by the researcher's own cultural background and influenced by the settings where research is conducted as well. For example, some measurement scales, e.g. Intercultural development inventory (IDI) (Hammer and Bennett, 1998; Hammer *et al.*, 2003) and Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) (Chen and Starosta, 2000) have been devised to measure the intercultural sensitivity model. It is controversial about this model's generalization and application as well as its measurement tools, for example, Burnett's (2004) research shows that some variables are not suitable for Chinese students. Furthermore, some scales/indicators have not been adequately tested by empirical evidence adequately in intercultural contexts (Lee and Chen, 2000; Martin and Anderson, 1998).

Some research results on intercultural communication tend to be inconsistent and contradictory (Ward *et al.*, 2001), due to the interdisciplinary nature of intercultural communication and different theoretical orientation and methods adopted.

The quantitative/etic approach has generally dominated intercultural communication studies, whereas the qualitative/interpretive approach is not adequately adopted in the intercultural communication field (Chen and Starosta, 1998: 19), especially intercultural adaptation studies, though qualitative/interpretive studies have emerged in the 1990s. Some researchers have attempted to integrate etic and emic approaches in their studies (Gudykunst and Nishida, 1989; Hubbert *et al.*, 1999; Kim, 1988, 2001; Kim *et al.*, 1998; Triandis, 1972; Ward, 1996). This study is one step towards rectifying the current situation, by devising an integrated intercultural adaptation model, based on qualitative/interpretive empirical research.

### 2.2.2 A critique of intercultural adaptation research

Mainstream theories in the field of intercultural communication and adaptation tend to be Western-oriented, and few non-Western theories have been developed. Therefore, the conceptualization and empirical indicators used for the measurement of intercultural communication competence tend to strongly reflect a Western cultural bias (Chen, 1993). As Chen and Starosta (1998) argue, communication is between human beings, therefore, the person rather than categories should be the focus of intercultural communication. This study attempts to develop a concept and model of intercultural adaptation from a Chinese perspective, to emphasise supporting the culturally different 'others' in intercultural encounters. The key concept of traditional Chinese culture Ren (benevolence) stresses the notion of other-orientation and mutual support (see Section 3.2.1 and Section 9.3).

Some definitions of intercultural adaptation research tend to be biased. For example, adaptation is defined as 'the process whereby immigrants change their behavior and attitudes toward those of the host society' (Rogler *et al.*, 1991: 585). This definition only emphasises sojourners' one-way adaptation to the target culture, rather than two-way adaptation between hosts and sojourners (Casmir, 1999). Studies on how the hosts adapt their attitudes, behaviour and identities towards international students tend to be neglected. For example, Kim's model of cross-cultural adaptation (see Section 2.3.3). This study emphasises pluralist dimensions of adaptation (e.g. Berry, 1980, 1990).

Intercultural adaptation research is also found to lack an integration of internal/personal and external/contextual factors, since most intercultural adaptation research is conducted by an etic approach, which tends only to present a 'unidimensional, bipolar conceptualization of acculturation' (Ward, 1996: 133), and neglect the multidimensional nature of intercultural adaptation research. For example, most intercultural communication studies focus on an individual's three intrapersonal factors (behavioural, cognitive and affective) that influence the intercultural adaptation process, whereas the contextual factor/environment (e.g. the host conformity pressure, the legitimate pedagogical culture)



tends to be neglected. This study will consider both internal and external factors and aims to develop an integrated model of intercultural adaptation, in order to achieve an ‘integrative pluralism’ and explore alternative realities.

A further issue concerning intercultural communication and adaptation research is confusion in terminology and definition. Researchers tend to have different interpretations of intercultural communication concepts (e.g. human being, individualism) based on their own cultural experiences and frame of reference. One example is the terminological confusion in studies of Chinese culture. There are different versions of translations and interpretations of Confucian and Taoist works/canons. For example, the word *Wuwei* (doing nothing), has different interpretations even among Chinese researchers. Therefore, the background introduction to traditional Chinese culture and Chinese academic culture in Chapter 3 is based on literatures of both Western and Chinese researchers.

### **2.2.3 Challenging the concept of ‘ICC’**

One particular aim of this study is to challenge the existing concept ‘Intercultural Communication Competence’ (ICC) - the ultimate goal of intercultural communication (Wiseman, 1989), and a combination of three interrelated dimensions – cognitive (knowledge), affective (motivation and emotion/attitude) and behavioural factors (behaviour, skills).

Many researchers in the intercultural communication field have discussed the above three factors that influence intercultural communication or intercultural relationship development. For example, Gudykunst’s (1993) anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM) theory consists of both cognitive and affective dimensions: uncertainty (a cognitive process, inability to predict and explain one’s own and other’s behaviour) and anxiety (an affective process, the feeling of being uneasy, tense, worried, or apprehensive about what might happen). Gardner and Lambert (1972) found students who have high motivation and positive attitude towards the target culture are more likely to be successful in language study. Schumann’s (1978) acculturation theory emphasises two causal variables to the degree of acculturation: social distance and psychological distance. Jin and Cortazzi’s (1996) Cultural Synergy model includes social, psychological and academic variables. Byram’s (2001) model of intercultural communicative competence includes three dimensions of attitudes, knowledge and skills.

However, none of the above researchers have mentioned how the three variables interrelate to each other, how these three variables change over time, how to measure these variables, and how the variables affect the rate of intercultural adaptation processes. For example, Kim’s (1988, 2001) host communication competence model regards these three elements as balanced and interrelated equally (see Figure 2.1 below). However, it is less likely for the sojourners to be equally capable of all the three factors as described; in fact, the research finding shows that three factors actually played unequal and imbalanced roles in

the real intercultural communication and adaptation process. Therefore, it is significant to identify the interrelationship of these three factors. This study attempts to distinguish these three elements and propose some suggestions of managing these dimensions in intercultural communication and relationship development processes.

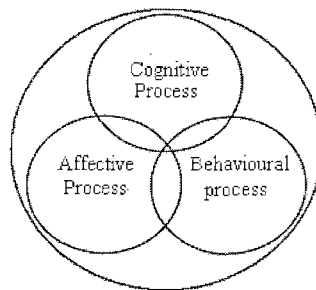


Figure 2.1 Three interrelated elements of host communication competence  
(Source: Kim, 1988: 87)

Meanwhile, ICC tends to emphasise the non-native speaker's communication competence in the target culture. For example, Kim (1988: 86, 2001) proposed 'Host Communication Competence' (HCC) in her model of cross-cultural adaptation (see Figure 2.4). It emphasises the second language learners or sojourners' 'ability to be in accordance with the host communication system' (Kim, 2001: 62). I attempt to develop a concept of 'intercultural adaptation competence' (IAC), which emphasises both hosts' (British lecturers and students) and sojourners' (Chinese/international students) adaptation competence and identify new dimensions of intercultural competence (e.g. other-orientation and mutual support are identified as two domains of this competence, see Section 9.3).

Furthermore, ICC tends to be regarded as the outcome or ultimate goal of intercultural communication, rather than the process of intercultural communication and intercultural adaptation. This study will develop the concept of intercultural adaptation competence, based on the qualitative empirical research findings on the two-way adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers/students.

Last, the previous studies tend to emphasise one aspect of ICC: intercultural communication (IC) or intercultural relationship (IR). For example, Kim's (1988, 2001) model of cross-cultural adaptation focuses on the sojourner's IC aspect (see Figure 2.4); Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) emphasise the IR aspect and refer to ICC as 'interpersonal communication competence'. This study attempts to examine these two aspects (IC and IR) together in the intercultural adaptation process (see Figure 2.8 in Section 2.4).

### 2.3 Theories of intercultural adaptation

Since this study aims to explore a two-way intercultural adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers/students, this section will discuss and evaluate several intercultural adaptation theories and models, in order to propose a theoretical

framework for the empirical research. The following intercultural adaptation theories/models are discussed: Lysgaard's (1955) U-curve pattern; Berry's (1990) acculturation model; Kim's (1988, 2001) cross-cultural adaptation model; Ward's (1996) acculturation model; Schumann's (1978) acculturation model; Jin's (1992) cultural synergy model; Lucas' (2003) intercultural learning model; and Bochner *et al.*'s (1977) model of friendship network.

### 2.3.1 U-curve and W-curve patterns of acculturation

The U-curve pattern (Lysgaard, 1955) and the W-curve pattern (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963) are two popular models used to describe the developmental stages of intercultural adaptation. There are four stages of the U-curve pattern: (i) honeymoon period (Oberg, 1960), characterized by excitement and optimism; (ii) a time of distress and frustration, characterized by negative attitudes towards host society and increased association with fellow sojourners; (iii) a time of recovery and improvement, characterized by adaptation and increased understanding of the host language and culture; and (iv) a time of worry-free biculturalism, characterized by full understanding of host culture and feelings of confidence and satisfaction. At the final stage, the individual has passed through 'culture shock' (Oberg, 1960: 177) and become a truly intercultural person who can mediate between cultures. The W-curve pattern includes a re-entry shock or reverse culture shock phase, during which sojourners or learners emotionally and psychologically readjust to their original culture (See Figure 2.2 below). One common sign of reverse culture shock is being highly critical of one's own culture (Samovar *et al.*, 1998).

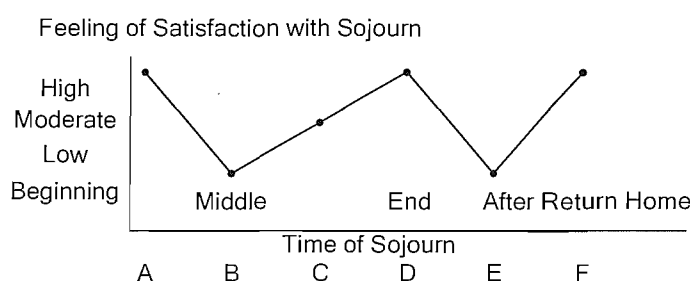


Figure 2.2 The U-curve and W-curve adaptive change of sojourners  
(Source from Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963)

There are two controversial views on culture shock: problem-based and learning/growth-oriented. The traditional researchers (often psychologists) view culture shock as 'an occupational disease' which requires therapy and counselling (Bochner, 1982; Oberg, 1960: 177; Pederson, 1976). By contrast, contemporary researchers view culture shock as something natural and positive. It can be a learning opportunity for self-awareness and personal growth (e.g. Adler, 1987; Gupta, 2003; Kim, 1988; Paige, 1993: 2; Sun & Chen, 1997), and 'a movement from a state of low self- and cultural awareness to a state of high self- and cultural awareness' (Adler, 1987: 29). However, not everyone necessarily suffers from culture shock or undergoes U-curve or W-curve in their acculturation process.

Individual differences have to be identified (Lustig and Koester, 1996).

The U-curve theory is criticized as ‘weak, inconclusive and overgeneralized’ (Church, 1982: 542), simply ‘based on retrospective, cross-sectional data’ and ‘largely anecdotal’ (Ward *et al.*, 1998: 279). Meanwhile, its initial honeymoon stage of culture shock has been challenged by some empirical research results. For example, Ward and Kennedy’s (1996) findings that Malaysian and Singaporean students in New Zealand experienced the greatest psychological adjustment problems and sociocultural adaptation problems within the first month of arrival. Students’ depression dropped significantly after 6 months in the country. Similarly, Zheng and Berry’s (1991) longitudinal research on Chinese scholars in Canada also shows opposite results to the U-curve hypothesis. The sojourners experienced higher levels of psychological problems within the first four months of arrival. One of aims of this study is to explore Chinese students’ sociocultural and psychological adaptation patterns with ethnographic evidence.

### 2.3.2 Berry *et al.*’s acculturation model

Berry *et al.* (1988, 1989) identify two dimensions of acculturation: the degree to which sojourners maintain their original cultural identity; the extent to which sojourners maintain relationships with other groups. They identify four modes of acculturation: assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation. Assimilation refers to valuing intergroup relations but not valuing one’s original cultural identity maintenance. Integration refers to valuing both cultural identity and intergroup relations. Separation means to value one’s original cultural identity, but not value intergroup relations. Marginalisation involves valuing neither original cultural identity nor intergroup relations.

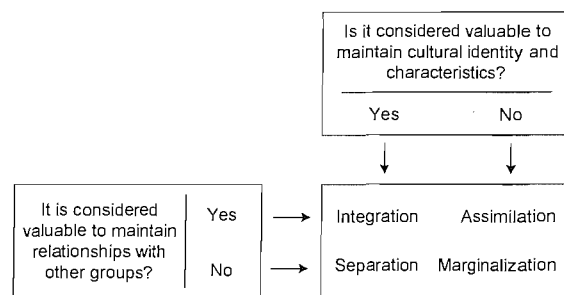


Figure 2.3 Forms of acculturation

(from Berry *et al.*, 1988: 62-89; Lustig and Koester, 1996: 342)

Berry *et al.*’s model is significant since it represents a pluralist perspective emphasising individuals’ own choices to identify their home cultural identity and host cultural identity and relationship (e.g. integration modes suggests maintaining both home and host cultural identities and relationships).

Berry *et al.*’s model of acculturation is extended by Ward and Kennedy (1994), who combine Berry’s two dimensions (one’s home cultural identity and host cultural identity)

and four modes of acculturation (integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization) with their own research on the degree of sociocultural and psychological adjustment of New Zealand sojourners. Their study demonstrates that people who adopt an integration strategy tend to have less psychological and sociocultural problems.

However, Berry *et al.*'s (1988, 1989) model only emphasise sojourners' adaptation to the new learning environment, rather than both hosts' and sojourners' adaptation experiences; meanwhile, this model does not consider intrapersonal identity conflict and factors that influence participants' cultural identity conflicts (Kim, 2001). This study will extend Berry *et al.*'s (1988, 1989) model by exploring how both Chinese/international students and British lecturers and students adopt different adaptation strategies and attitudes to cope with identity conflicts in their intercultural encounters and explore both contextual and personal factors that influence their adaptation process based on Kim's cross-cultural adaptation model.

### 2.3.3 Kim's cross-cultural adaptation model

Kim (1994: 393; 2001: 56) extends the U-curve pattern and Berry *et al.*'s model by emphasising the intercultural adaptation process as a spiral, cyclic 'draw-back-to-leap' process of 'stress-adaptation-growth' in which an individual undergoes a gradual 'internal transformation' (Kim, 2001: 54) process in the host culture, in which his/her 'cognitive, affective and behavioural responses will undergo adaptive transformation' (*ibid.*: 58) and his/her stress will reduce gradually though it often fluctuates.

Meanwhile 'internal transformation' involves an intrapersonal identity conflict between constructing a new identity and retaining one's original identity in the host culture. She identifies three environmental conditions as well as three personal conditions, in her integrative model (1988: 37; 2001: 87) (see Figure 2.4 below).

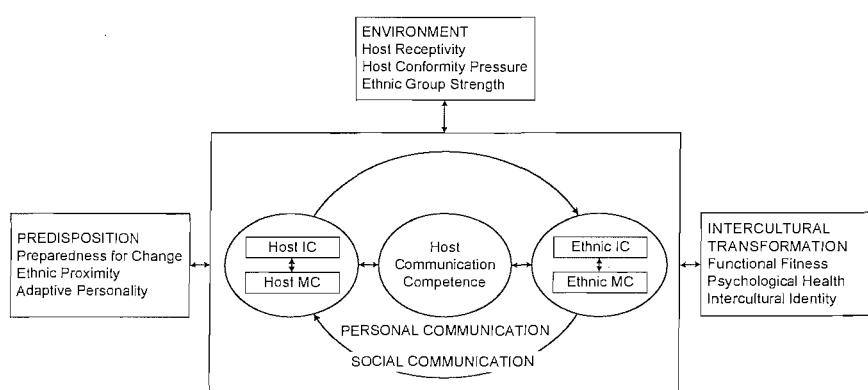


Figure 2.4 Factors influencing cross-cultural adaptation: A structural model

(Source: Kim, 2001: 87)

IC: interpersonal communication MC: mass communication.

Kim's model develops the U-curve, because it sees adaptation as a dynamic and cyclical

process, and emphasises the sojourner's two-way identity conflict (maintaining both original and new culture identities), rather than one-way state (from stress to assimilation). Identity transformation (from monocultural to intercultural) is supposed to be the adaptation outcome. However, Kim only emphasises the sojourner's identity change in the target culture, yet fails to consider the host national's change during this acculturation process. Thus this present study aims to extend Kim's model by emphasising both host and sojourners' intrapersonal identity conflict in their intercultural encounters, especially their affective dimension change.

Meanwhile, Kim's (1988, 2001) model indicates the concept of 'host communication competence' (see Figure 2.4), which emphasises developing the sojourner's communication competence in the host culture. This study will go one step further, to explore the broader competence – intercultural adaptation competence which both host and sojourners need to develop and examine the components of intercultural adaptation competence.

Since this study is mainly based on Kim's (ibid.: 145) structure model of adaptation, it is necessary to discuss key factors that facilitate or impede the adaptation process in this model: (intra)personal, interpersonal, mass communication, the new environment and the individual's own background. This model includes three predisposition factors, three host environmental factors and three adaptation outcomes.

i) **Three predisposition factors.** Three predispositional factors set out by Kim (1988, 2001) are preparedness for change, ethnic proximity, and adaptive personality. The preparedness for change involves sojourner's language ability, cultural knowledge of the target culture, and intercultural experience and idealistic expectations prior to the sojourner's going abroad.

Language fluency is related to the sojourner's psychological and sociological adjustment. Paige (1993: 7) argues that 'the less language the sojourner possesses, the greater will be the psychological intensity of the experience'. Chinese students tend to have high scores on English proficiency tests, but low communicative competence (Cheng, 2000; Cortazzi and Jin, 1996). Language inefficiency has been regarded as one of the main reasons for Chinese students' quietness in class (Jones, 1999; Tsui, 1996).

Realistic expectations will significantly influence the adaptation process. Research shows that overly optimistic expectations about intercultural transitions are frequently associated with greater psychological adjustment problems (Kim, 1988; Landis & Brislin, 1983; Searle and Ward, 1990). Positive but realistic (or slightly negative) expectations prior to the sojourning may facilitate more satisfying acculturation experience and diminish expectation-experience discrepancies (Martin *et al.*, 1995).

International students' previous intercultural experience will affect their post-arrival adaptation. Some research shows that East Asian students who had less experience of

other cultures tend to experience greater adjustment problems (Church, 1982; Paige, 1993).

Ethnic proximity is about how language and cultural distance influences one's intercultural adaptation in a new culture. It requires one's ability to identify similarities and differences between the host culture and home culture.

Adaptive personality includes openness, strength and positivity. A person who is open, strong, confident and positive is more likely to take risks under challenging situations in the host environment.

ii) **Three host environmental factors.** The host environment often shapes the nature of the adaptation process of sojourners. Kim (1994, 2001) identifies three key environmental factors: host receptivity, host conformity pressure, and ethnic group strength.

Host receptivity refers to the degree to which the host culture expects sojourners to conform to cultural norms of the host culture. It involves 'attitude present in the host environment that shows openness and acceptance toward strangers' (Gudykunst and Kim, 1997: 349). It includes opportunities offered to sojourners to participate in the host culture.

Host conformity pressure refers to the degree to which sojourners are forced by the host culture/institution to conform to its norms, e.g. the Western educational approach and practice. It involves two aspects: the attitudes of the host lecturers/students towards international students may promote or hinder the international students' adaptation process; the university's support, e.g. how they provide cultural orientation and other support programme to help international students to adapt to the new culture. Kim (1988, 1994) indicates that the positive attitude of host members is related to the sojourner's psychological well-being.

Ethnic group strength refers to how the socio-economic status of ethnic group/community influences the sojourner's adaptation process in the host culture. Meanwhile, it may facilitate an individual's adaptation; it may also exert pressure on the sojourner to conform to ethnic norms (Kim, 2001). This study involves a large number of Chinese students as a cohort, the ethnic group strength may affect Chinese students' adaptation process.

iii) **Three adaptation outcomes.** Kim (1988) summarized three adaptation outcomes: functional fitness; psychological health; and intercultural identity.

Functional fitness refers to how the sojourners 'achieve increased host communication competence – the ability to be in accordance with the host communication system' (Kim, 2001: 62) and well adapt to the host culture. Psychological health refers to how the sojourner's initial stress and culture shock has been replaced by the increased communication competence and satisfaction. Intercultural identity entails individuals' transformation from monocultural to intercultural.

Kim's (1988, 2001) structure model emphasises the multidimensional nature of adaptation. Both contextual and personal factors are integrated in this model. This present study is based on Kim's structure model to explore how both contextual and personal factors influence both host lecturers/students and Chinese students' intercultural adaptation and identity construction process, rather than the sojourner's adaptation only.

Kim's structure model is predictive, established based on reasoning and logical deduction as well as secondary empirical data of personal testimonials and anecdotes (Kim, 2001: 203). There are 23 theorems, and it tends to lack longitudinal studies to test the established categories. This study provides an ethnographic evidence to extend her model.

### **2.3.4 Ward's acculturation model**

Ward's (1996) acculturation model (see Figure 2.5) identifies two adjustment outcomes - sociocultural and psychological. Sociocultural adjustment involves the sojourner's behavioural change and ability to 'fit in' (Black, 1990). Psychological adjustment involves the sojourner's affective responses, psychological well-being or emotional satisfaction. Ward finds that these two adjustments follow different patterns of change over time. For example, Ward *et al.*'s (1998) research (a longitudinal investigation of Japanese college students in New Zealand, at four time periods - the entry point, 4 months, 6 months and 12 months) shows that both psychological and sociocultural adjustment problems are greatest at the early stage of transition and decreased over time. However sociocultural and psychological adjustments have slightly different patterns of change. Sociocultural adjustment tends to follow a learning curve, with adaptation problems decreasing steadily over the first 4-6 months, then stabilising afterwards to the end of the first year; whereas changes in psychological adjustment tend to be variable over time. Therefore, a person's psychological factor is more complicated and difficult to manage than behavioural aspects in the adaptation process.

Ward's (1996) model is significant, since it distinguishes sociocultural and psychological adjustments as two adaptation outcomes. These distinctions imply new measures to quantify culture shock, 'leading to a much more rigorous metric than that which was deployed in the past' (Ward *et al.*, 2001: 40). Similar to Kim's (1988, 2001) cross-cultural adaptation model, this model also demonstrates a multidimensional nature of adaptation, since it integrates contextual factors (both original and host cultural variables) and personal factors (e.g. one's personality and attitude) that influence adaptation. The present study will explore Chinese students' sociocultural and psychological adaptation patterns over time, based on an ethnographic research. However, compared with Kim's (1988, 2001) model, Ward's model fails to consider an individual's cultural identity conflict and identity transformation which is regarded as one of significant adaptation outcomes in Kim's model. Therefore, this study is mainly based on Kim's cross-cultural adaptation model, but one step further - to explore both Chinese students' and British lecturers/students' intercultural academic identity adaptation.



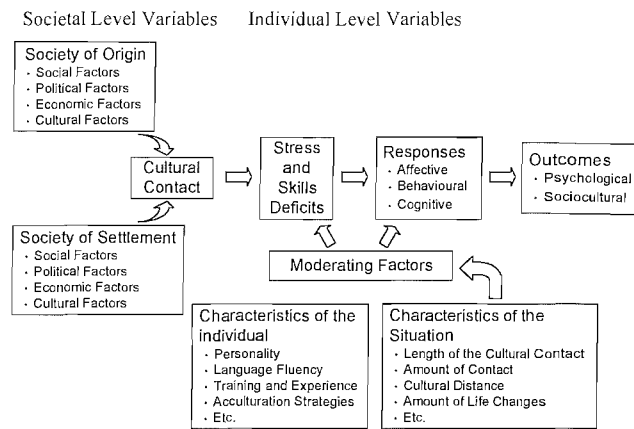


Figure 2.5 A model of acculturation process  
(Source: Ward, 1996: 129)

### 2.3.5 Schumann's acculturation model and Jin's cultural synergy model

Schumann (1978) views adaptation as the requisite factor that facilitates Second Language Acquisition (SLA). 'The learner will acquire the second language only to the degree that he acculturates' (Schumann, 1986: 379; 1978: 29). Schumann's acculturation model identifies two important variables that influence the acculturation process: social and psychological. However, his model has several weaknesses: firstly, it only presents second language learner's one-way flow to the host culture, rather than a two-way movement between both host and learners in the acculturation process. Secondly, there is no indication of how the variables relate to each other, and how these variables change over time. Thirdly, there is no mention of any valid and reliable measurement tool to measure these variables (Jin, 1992: 173; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991: 258-265; McLaughlin, 1987: 125-127). Fourthly, this model is limited to SLA theory only.

Jin (1992; Jin & Cortazzi, 1993) extends Schumann's acculturation model by adding a third variable – academic distance (see Figure 2.6). Jin's Cultural Synergy model of SLA and academic language use (ALU) also emphasises a two-way or bidirectional process of adaptation between both second language learners and target language speakers. This two-way process of adaptation emphasises both international students and host nationals' 'attitude of being willing to learn, understand and appreciate the other's culture without loss of their own status, role or cultural identity' (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996: 201; Jin, 1992: 386).

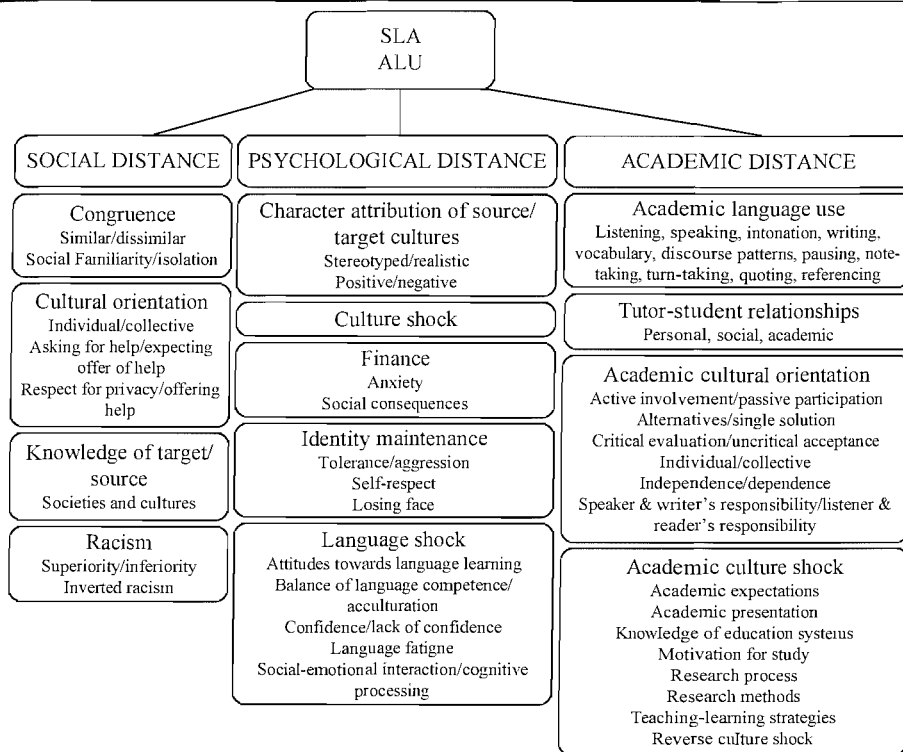


Figure 2.6 The cultural synergy model of SLA and ALU  
 (Source: Jin, 1992: 395; Jin & Cortazzi, 1998: 115).

Jin's cultural synergy model is significant in the intercultural adaptation field. Firstly, she identifies academic distance as the key variable that influences the adaptation process, which provides an important measurement tool to explain and assess the adaptation process and intercultural communication competence. Secondly, this model emphasises a two-way adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers/students, who might encounter cultural identity conflicts: remaining one's original cultural identity as well as developing one's new cultural identity.

However, this model is mainly developed from a questionnaire survey and follow-up interviews. It lacks a rich description of the real interactions and cultural identity conflicts of Chinese students and British lecturers/students in an intercultural adaptation context. It is argued that it tends to over emphasise the cultural and academic cultural factors, yet ignore the particular contextual factors that influence intercultural communication and adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers/students (Stephens, 1997). Therefore, this study aims to provide qualitative and interpretive evidence to extend this model in four aspects: i) to explore Chinese students' intercultural adaptation process, by using a one-year ethnographic study (e.g. interview conducted in different stages); ii) to examine how both Chinese students and British lecturers/students manage to adapt to their new identities – intercultural academic identity during their two-way communication and adaptation process in the particular cultural contexts - their classroom and group communication encounters; iii) to identify the particular contextual and personal factors that influence Chinese students' and British lecturers/students' intercultural academic conflicts and expectation gaps in addition to cultural and academic cultural factors; iv) to

develop a model of intercultural adaptation, with emphasis of three personal factors.

### 2.3.6 Lucas' model of intercultural learning

Lucas' (2003) model of intercultural learning demonstrates that intercultural adaptation takes place in a predictable series of stages, similar to Kolb's (1984) cycle of experiential learning (see Figure 2.7). The inner circle of the model is Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning, which is a cyclical pattern of learning and growth: learners will start with concrete experience, through reflection and conceptualization to the final stage of experimentation (testing theories). The outer circle indicates an individual student's four stages of intercultural learning and adaptation process: arrival period, uncertainty and anxiety, gradual adjustment, and re-entry stage (sojourners are back to original culture). This model is important since it demonstrates the dynamic and cyclical process of the sojourner's adaptation. This model is considered as part of the empirical framework of this present study (see Section 2.4), since this model reflects a small culture approach – it regards adaptation as a cyclical, dynamic and personal experiential process.

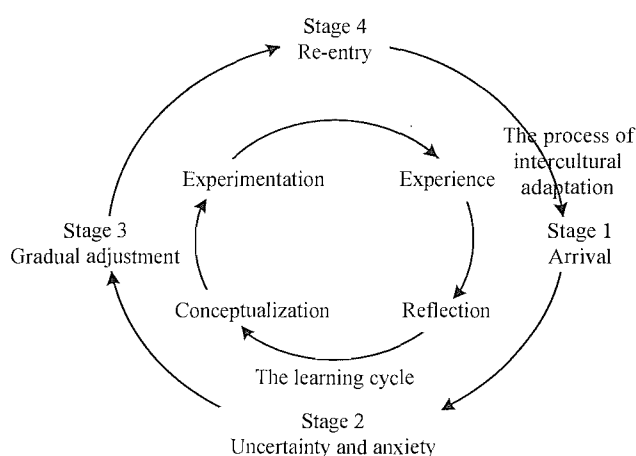


Figure 2.7 A model of intercultural learning adaptation  
(Source: Lucas, 2003: 308)

So far, I have discussed several intercultural adaptation models which involve individuals' intercultural adaptation process. The next model emphasises the interpersonal relationship development among sojourners, host nationals and other international students. Since the adaptation process involves both intercultural communication and interpersonal relationships, therefore, Bochner's model of friendship network below will be regarded as part of the framework of this study, in order to examine both British lecturers/students' and Chinese students' intercultural communication, relationship development during their intercultural encounters.

### 2.3.7 Bochner *et al.*'s model of friendship network

The model of friendship network (Bochner *et al.*, 1977: 292; Furnham and Bochner, 1982:

173) demonstrates that overseas students tend to have three friendship and social networks during their sojourning period: monocultural, bicultural and multicultural relationships:

- (i) a primary, monocultural network consisting of close friendships with other sojourning compatriots;
- (ii) a secondary, bicultural network, consisting of bonds between sojourners and significant host nationals such as academics, landlords, student advisers and government officials;
- (iii) a third network is the foreign students' multicultural circle of friends and acquaintances.

The functional model developed by Bochner *et al.* (1977) shows that international students have different patterns of friendship with co-nationals, other international students and host students. These patterns tend to have different psychological functions. The monocultural relations with fellow nationals function as maintaining their original cultural values and identities, companionship and emotional support. The function of bicultural relationship with host nationals is quite instrumental – to facilitate academic and professional aims (e.g. information support, language and academic support). The third network, the multicultural relationships with other international students, functions as social support and recreational purposes (Bochner *et al.*, 1977; Ward & Searle, 1991). This study will examine the intercultural relationship development between Chinese and British students and other international students in their adaptation process. By 'intercultural relationship', I mean relationship (e.g. friendship) development between culturally different groups.

Much literature on international student experiences shows that the host-international student social relationship has been limited, superficial and unsatisfactory (Volet and Ang, 1998; Ward *et al.*, 2001: 166). For example, only 18 percent of the respondents (a survey of 150 international students) thought they had a good relationship with the host members, compared with 39 percent with co-nationals and 38 percent with other international students (Furnham and Bochner, 1982). 'Only 15% of Chinese students said they had any UK friends' (UKCOSA, 2004: 67). Some research shows that increased contacts with host nationals can enhance international students' sociocultural adjustment, and reduce psychological stress and increase adaptation and satisfaction (Berry *et al.*, 1987; Church, 1982; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Redmond and Bunyi, 1993; Seale and Ward, 1990; Ward and Kennedy, 1993).

However, other researchers indicate that more contacts with host nationals may produce greater psychological stress and identity conflict (e.g. Leong & Ward, 2000). This study aims to explore intercultural relationship between Chinese students and British lecturers/students and other international students.

## 2.4 A theoretical framework for an empirical research

Considering the research purposes and research questions of this study, based on the above literature review of several intercultural adaptation theories and models, a theoretical framework for the empirical study is thus proposed (See Figure 2.8 below). This integrated framework is mainly based on Kim's (1988, 2001) cross-cultural adaptation model, Gullahorn & Gullahorn's (1963) U-curve hypothesis, Ward's (1996) acculturation model, Jin's (1992, Jin and Cortazzi, 1993) Cultural Synergy model, Lucas' (2003) intercultural learning model, and Bochner *et al.*'s (1977) model of friendship network.

This framework draws one aspect or several extensions to each model discussed above. Before I explain the theoretical framework, it is necessary to provide a summary of extensions of each model and how they relate to my theoretical framework.

Predisposition factors:

- Intercultural experience -Kim's (1988, 2001) cross-cultural adaptation model
- Realistic expectation – Kim's (1988, 2001) cross-cultural adaptation model
- Adaptive personality – Kim's (1988, 2001) cross-cultural adaptation model

External factors:

- Cultural distance – Ward's (1996) acculturation model, Jin's (1992, Jin & Cortazzi, 1993) Cultural Synergy model.
- Academic distance - Jin's (1992; Jin & Cortazzi, 1993) Cultural Synergy model
- Host conformity pressure – Kim's (1988, 2001) cross-cultural adaptation model
- Host attitude – Kim's (1988, 2001) cross-cultural adaptation model

Internal factors:

- Behavioural, cognitive & affective factor – Kim's (1988, 2001) cross-cultural adaptation model, Ward's (1996) acculturation model

Adaptation outcomes:

- Sociocultural adaptation – Ward's (1996) acculturation model
- Psychological adaptation – The U-curve hypothesis and Ward's (1996) acculturation model
- Intercultural academic identity adaptation – Berry *et al.*'s (1988) forms of acculturation, Kim's (1988, 2001) cross-cultural adaptation model, Jin's (1992; Jin & Cortazzi, 1993) cultural synergy model.

Adaptation process:

- Two components of adaptation process:
  - Intercultural communication – Kim's (1988, 2001) cross-cultural adaptation model
  - Intercultural relationship - Bochner *et al.*'s (1977) model of friendship network

• Four-stage cyclical process of adaptation – Lucas' (2003) intercultural learning model

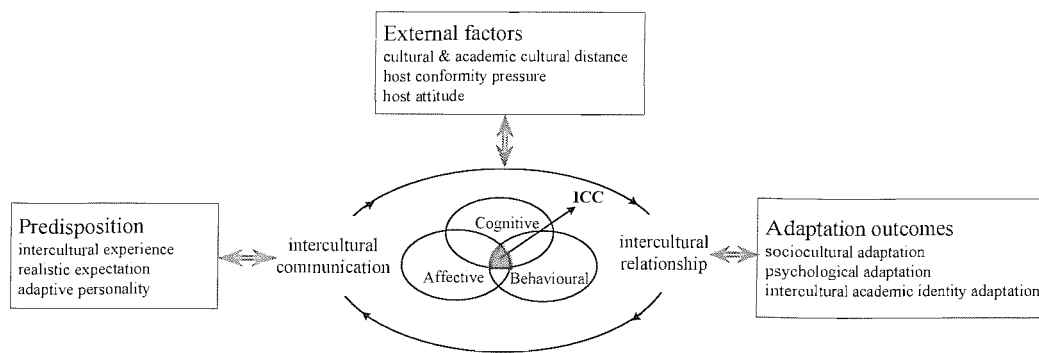


Figure 2.8 A theoretical framework for the intercultural adaptation process  
(Note) ICC: Intercultural Communication Competence

Figure 2.8 presents an individual's (whether a host national or sojourner) intercultural adaptation process, a movement from the predisposition stage (left rectangle), via adaptation process (the middle big oval), to the adaptation outcomes (right rectangle), and back to the adaptation process (see double arrows between the big oval and the right rectangle).

This theoretical framework indicates that the adaptation process is influenced by both external and internal factors. The external factors (the top rectangle) include cultural and academic cultural distance, host conformity pressure, and host attitude, which are also based on the above literature review of Jin's (1992; Jin and Cortazzi, 1993) Cultural Synergy model and Kim's (1988, 2001) cross-cultural adaptation model.

Predisposition factors include one's previous language and intercultural experience, expectation, and adaptive personality. The adaptation outcomes include sociocultural adaptation, psychological adaptation, and intercultural academic identity adaptation. Based on Jin's (1992; Jin & Cortazzi, 1993) model of Cultural Synergy, this study will emphasise the participants' intercultural academic identity (and cultural identity) adaptation in their communication and adaptation contexts. These variables are based on Kim's (1988, 2001) cross-cultural model and Ward's (1996) Acculturation model. This study aims to explore these variables through an ethnographic study and identify other potential variables.

Since intercultural adaptation involves an individual's dynamic self-growth process, and cultural sensitivity change (from ethnocentric to ethnorelative), three internal factors are included in this framework (three small ovals inside the big middle oval). They are cognitive, affective and behavioural factors. These three intrapersonal factors constitute three important components of intercultural communication competence - the ultimate goal of intercultural communication. This study aims to explore the interrelationship between these three intrapersonal factors and how they influence an individual person's intercultural adaptation process.

The middle oval indicates the adaptation process in the intercultural contexts, this process is influenced by several variables, such as the predisposition factors, the external factors, and adaptation outcomes. Meanwhile, the adaptation process has an impact on these variables change as well (see double arrow between predisposition and process, between external factors and process, and between adaptation outcomes and process).

Based on Lucas' (2003) model of intercultural learning as discussed in Section 2.3.6, an individual's intercultural adaptation is a dynamic and cyclical self-growth process, through the following four stages: the initial uncertainty and anxiety stage, gradual adaptation stage, the final familiarity and satisfaction stage, and re-entry stage (.e.g. reverse culture shock for international students) (see four arrows around the middle big oval). This study only explores the first three stages of an individual's (either a host or sojourner) adaptation experience, considering the limited time and funding in this study.

Since intercultural relationship is part of the adaptation process, and is based on Bochner *et al.*'s (1977) model of friendship network, both intercultural communication and relationship are included in the adaptation process in this framework. Using this theoretical framework, I can analyse a two-way communication and adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers/students, in two areas - intercultural communication and intercultural relationship, and in different contexts: classroom and group work communication contexts.

In sum, an integrated theoretical framework for this study has been proposed, based on a number of intercultural adaptation theories and models discussed in the preceding sections.

## 2.5 Conclusion

This chapter reviews the literature on intercultural adaptation theories. Approaches and a critique of intercultural adaptation research have been first presented. Some influential intercultural adaptation theories and models relevant to this study have then been discussed. Finally, an integrated and multidimensional theoretical framework for this study has been presented and is to be tested in this empirical study. Methodology and methods of conducting this empirical work will be presented in Chapter 4. The next chapter is a literature review of Chinese culture and academic culture, which are two important underlying factors that influence Chinese students' intercultural behaviours and adaptation experiences, though this study pays more attention to the contextual and personal reasons for the Chinese students' adaptation process.

## **Chapter 3 Understanding traditional Chinese culture and Chinese academic culture**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a general background introduction to traditional Chinese culture and academic culture, based on original Chinese classics such as *Analects* and *Tao Te Jing*, as well as Western literature on traditional Chinese culture and academic culture, from a ‘large culture’ perspective (see Section 1.2.1), in order to explore how some characteristics of traditional Chinese culture and academic culture influence Chinese students’ intercultural communication behaviour and adaptation process.

This study adopts a ‘small culture’ approach, to explore Chinese students’ and British lecturers/students’ subjective interpretations and personal experiences of their intercultural adaptation process. However, it is necessary to provide a cultural background introduction in this section, to explore the underlying reasons for explaining the potential expectation gaps and cultural conflicts between Chinese students and British lecturers/students and their intercultural adaptation process. Therefore, this chapter tends to present a ‘stereotype’ of traditional Chinese culture and academic culture, based on a ‘large culture’ approach (see Section 1.2.1), which emphasises the general characteristics of a culture, such as ‘national culture’ (Hofstede, 1980), it tends to see culture as fixed and single entity rather than a fluid and diverse process or practice (Street, 1993) or personal experience (Samovar *et al.*, 1998).

Firstly, three main characteristics of traditional Chinese culture (harmony, humanitarianism, and collectivism/high-context culture) are examined and evaluated; then four implications of Chinese culture (Chinese academic culture, thinking style, communication style, and interpersonal relationship) are discussed. Furthermore, the main characteristics of Confucian educational philosophy are explored. Finally features of Chinese academic culture are discussed in comparison with British academic culture, in terms of educational goals, views on knowledge, teacher/student roles, teacher-student relationship, teaching/learning methods and assessment. It is argued that each culture has its own unique features; it is necessary to examine it in a particular and specific context, so as to avoid the pitfall of generalization or absolutism.

### **3.2 Traditional Chinese culture**

Characteristics of traditional Chinese culture are first introduced, then implications of traditional Chinese culture are discussed in this section.



### 3.2.1 Characteristics of traditional Chinese culture

In this section I will mainly discuss three main characteristics of traditional Chinese culture: harmony (Li *et al.*, 1996; Yu, 1996), humanitarianism (Jin, 1992; Liu, 1997) or humanism (Lin, 1935/2005: 100), and collectivism and high-context (Hall and Hall, 1990; Hofstede, 1980). Harmony and diversity concerns the unification of three main traditional Chinese philosophies: Confucianism, Taoism and Chinese Buddhism. Humanitarianism involves Chinese philosophers' beliefs that the universe is 'man-centred' (Feng, 1961; Lin, 1935/2005). An individual's internal moral cultivation and external relationship with others are two main aspects of humanitarianism. The last feature (collectivism and high-context) entails the concept of the self in the society (see Figure 3.1 below).

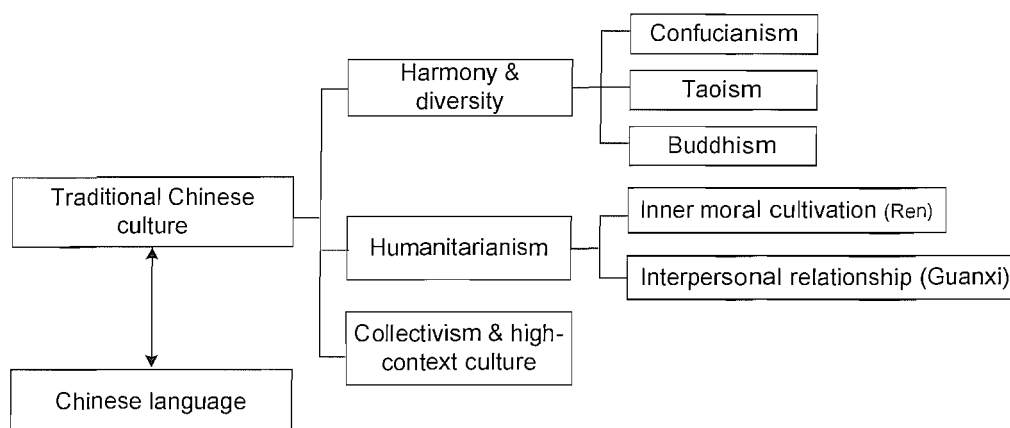


Figure 3.1 Some characteristics of traditional Chinese culture

#### 3.2.1.1 Harmony and diversity

The traditional Chinese culture is pluralistic and all-embracing. A combination of Confucianism, Taoism and Chinese Buddhism has been established since the Tang (618-907AD) and Song (960-1127 AD) dynasties, based on the principle of 'Unity of three religions' (Li *et al.*, 1996). The founder of Confucianism is Confucius (551- 479 BC), his dialogues with his students were collected in the Analects. The founder of Taoism is Lao Tzu (604 BC), his written work is the Tao Te Ching.

The unity of three philosophical schools is a typical characteristic of traditional Chinese culture. It tolerates the difference of beliefs and ideologies and serves the ultimate goal together - to achieve a harmony between Man and Nature and establish a harmonious society. It has played an important role in forming Chinese people's mindset and maintained solidarity of the Chinese society (Li *et al.*, 1996; Qian, 1930/2004).

#### 3.2.1.2 Humanitarianism

Humanitarianism or humanism (Huang, 1997) is the most important characteristic of traditional Chinese culture, which is moral and ethics-oriented, and takes priority of issues of man over those of spirits (Liu, 1997). For example, when Confucius' student Tzu-Lu

asks about serving spirits, Confucius replies: 'if one cannot yet serve men, how can he serve the spirits?' (Analects, *Xian Jin 11.12*). He advocates to, 'respect spirits and keep far from them' (Analects, *Yongye, 6.22*); Similarly, Taoist representative Chuangtzu states, 'do not mention spirits beyond the world though it exists' (*Zhuangzi, Qiwu Lun*). As Smith comments, 'His (Confucius) concern was the behaviour and thinking during a person's life time. His (Confucian) philosophy was purely concerned with humanity and human relationships' (1985: 62).

The Chinese tend to be more interested in philosophy than religion (Feng, 1961). Philosophy has been part of Chinese lives. People are educated with Confucian philosophy (as the main textbook) when they go to school. For example, when children can read, they are required to read the Three Character Primer (a Confucian book, composed in 960 AD, three characters long in each line, musical and easy to memorize). The first sentence of The Three Character Primer is Mencius' basic philosophical concept: 'Man, by nature, is good' (*ren zi chu, xing ben shan*) (Scollon and Scollon, 1995: 125). The man-centred humanitarianism promotes science development, for it emphasises real life issues, rather than supernatural nature of religion and superstition. The ancient Chinese have realized the importance of 'man's awareness' since the 3<sup>rd</sup> century before Christ, which is 500 years earlier than the ancient Greeks and 1,700 years earlier than the Renaissance in Europe.

The basic hypothesis of Chinese philosophy is 'nature and man become one' (*tian ren he yi*) (Tang, 1988: 45). All three Chinese philosophies emphasise harmony between Man and Nature. Both Confucians and Taoists advocate cultivating one's inner *Ren* (benevolence) or *Te* (moral) - two basic principles of Confucianism and Taoism, as the way to reach Tao (the way, and achieve the goal of harmony between Man and Nature. Mencius said, 'he who exerts his mind to the utmost knows his nature. He who knows nature knows Heaven' (Legge, 1985; Mencius, 7.1). Traditional Confucians regard heaven as supreme and transcendent; heaven endows the human with Nature (*Xing*), whose essential content is humanitarianism (*Ren*) (Shi, 1997). Therefore, self-perfection and self-development is the way to discover one's nature and the Heavenly principle, and finally achieve unity of man and nature. Thus Chinese humanitarianism in nature puts 'human being' in the highest position, aiming to pursue the perfect man, to 'replace religion with virtue' (Liang Shuming). 'From the Son of Heaven down to the common people, all must regard cultivation of the personal life as the root or foundation' (The Great Learning).

Chinese humanitarianism emphasises not only an individuals' inner moral cultivation, but also the interrelationship between people in society in order to achieve unity between man and nature. Confucianism's main concepts all deal with relationships between people and reflect the notion of other-orientation. *Ren* is the greatest of all virtues. It is translated as humanity (Huang, 1997) or benevolence (Nivison, 1996). *Ren* includes Five Virtues (benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and fidelity, in Chinese *ren yi li zhi xin*) and other virtues, such as filial piety, fraternity, the Middle Way. Four aspects of Five Virtues (except Wisdom) deal with social relationships, with an emphasis on a cooperative and warm human relationship and group harmony.

Chinese culture tends to be featured as an other-oriented culture (McLaren, 1998). *Ren*'s basic meaning is to love others (*renzhe air en*). *Ren*'s two important aspects: *Zhong* (loyalty or conscientiousness) and *Shu* (reciprocity or altruism) all deal with relationship with others: to put oneself into the position of others. *Zhong* emphasizes 'if you want to do, do it for others; if you want to get, get it for others' (*ji yu li er li ren, ji yu da er da ren*) (The Analects, Yongye, Ch. 6.30); *Shu* means 'do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire' (*ji suo bu yu, wu shi yu ren*) (The Analects, Weilinggong, Ch. 15.24). These two aspects are summarized by Zhu Xi as *Keji* (self cultivation) and *Ai ren* (love others) (Zhang, 1984: 37). The former refers to 'doing one's best', the latter concerns 'love others just like yourself'. Therefore, *Ren* emphasises harmonious relationships and mutual support between people. The central doctrine of Confucianism *Zhongyong* also reflects the notion of harmony and other-orientation. *Zhongyong* means 'the middle way' (Luo, 1985: 51) or 'the Doctrine of the Golden Mean' (Lin, 1935/2005: 107), which means to avoid extremes and remain harmonious with others. Therefore, the Chinese tend to be concerned with harmonious relationships with others. However, people tend to express themselves implicitly and indirectly, in order to avoid conflicts and extremes (further discussions see Section 3.2.2.3).

Secondly, *Wulun Guanxi* (Five Relations) constitutes four vertical pairs (ruler and subjects, father and son, husband and wife, elder brother and younger brother) and one horizontal pair (friend and friend). In ancient China, the vertical social relationships take priority over horizontal ones, and there exist hierarchical relations within each vertical pairs. *Xiao* (filial piety) is one of the most essential concepts of Confucianism and basic spirit of Chinese culture (Qian, 1930/2004; Xiao, 2000). 'It includes obedience, obligations, patience, reverence and sacrifice' (Cortazzi & Shen, 2001: 129). The written form of character *Xiao* (孝) consists of two parts: the upper part is *lao* (the elderly); the bottom radical is *zi* (children). It indicates an interdependent and hierarchical relationship between parents and children: the children are supposed to show filial piety to their parents. Among the five relationships, the most important one is the father and son, which results in *xiao* (Gabrenya & Hwang, 1996). The vertical relations can be extended as guides to other relationships, such as relations between teacher and students, seniors and youngsters. For example, a student is supposed to be filial and obedient to his/her teacher.

As to horizontal relationships, friends are expected to trust and treat one another like brothers, these equal relationships can be also extended to neighbours and colleagues, who are supposed to treat each other like family members. Colleagues and neighbours are often called brothers/sisters or uncles/aunties. The working unit (or an employer) is like a parent in the family, who cares about all the employees' personal and social affairs; employees are like children, who have to be loyal and obedient to the employer. This kind of family-oriented and relationship-based social structure is a unique Chinese phenomenon.

Confucian Five Relations regulate people's position in society. According to Confucius, a 'good society' should be orderly and harmonious, within an hierarchical class structure from scholar-gentry, farmers, artisans, merchants, warriors, to 'mean' people (outcasts) (*shi*,

*neng, gong, shang, bing & liu*). Confucian scholar officials are regarded as the first-class citizen, based on Confucius' idea that 'the scholar controls others, the worker is controlled' (*laoxinzhe zhiren, laolizhe zhiyuren*). Based on the notion of filial piety and Confucian Five Relations (*wulun*), everyone is supposed to know his/her position in the society, by following the regulations of Five Relations, the harmonious human relations is thus established. However the Confucian filial piety concept and Five Relations tradition imply an unequal interpersonal relationship and hierarchical/vertical social structure (Yao, 2000), this conforms to Hofstede (1980)'s categorization of Chinese culture as a high-power-distance culture, in which people tend to respect authority, whilst the individual's initiative and self expression is constrained (Yum, 1994).

In summary, humanitarianism-oriented Chinese culture emphasises cultivation of one's inner quality as well as external harmonious relations between nature and people and between people themselves. On the one hand, it helps to support and create social stability, and it focuses on man rather than religion; on the other hand, it overemphasizes a person's responsibility and ignore an individual's freedom, creativity and independence.

### 3.2.1.3 Collectivist and high-context culture

The third characteristic of traditional Chinese culture is a collectivist and high-context culture. Firstly, Chinese philosophers tend to have different notions of self from Western philosophers. An individual in China is regarded as a social being, rather than a single entity, and self is defined in relation to others. For example, the structure of the Chinese character 'human being' (人) consists of two intersectional strokes, which refer to an interdependent relationship between the self and the other. Therefore, self is viewed as 'interdependent self' (Gao, 1996: 84), and individuals are interdependent and bound together into a group (Triandis, 1995: 143). Since a person's life is believed to be given by one's parents, an individual has to serve one's parents and family, and family is the essence and centre of Chinese society, an individual has to circle around the family (see Figure 3.2). Mencius says, 'the root of universe is nation; the root of nation is family'. The general principle of Confucianism is 'to cultivate one's own moral character, put family affairs in order, administer state affairs well and pacify the whole world' (*xiushen, qijia, zhiguo, pingtianxia, Li Ji, Da Xue*). An individual is supposed to cultivate his/her personal character and devote him/herself to achieve the goal of serving family, state and the world. Like a pebble dropped into water, an individual's responsibility spreads from the small circle (family), to the intermediate circle (state) and finally to the large circle (world) (Lin, 1988; Zuo, 2001).

The notion of collectivism is reflected in the Chinese written language. The Chinese character for 'nation or country' (国家) is a compound word consisting of nation (国) and family/home (家). Family is the basis of the nation; nation is the extension of home. The Chinese socio-political system and structure also reflect this notion.

By contrast, Western philosophers view individuals as ‘independent entities, different and distant from groups’ (Triandis, 1995: 143). They see the self as ‘independent self’ (Gao, 1996: 84), and the individual’s natural role is more emphasised in a society. Based on the Christian belief that man’s life is given by God, an individual is regarded as the basic unit of the society, thus an individual’s rights, independence and freedom are more emphasised (Yum, 1994). Figure 3.2 demonstrates that an individual is in the centre of the universe and society, family takes the second place, which circles around an individual’s interest. Therefore, Western individualist culture stresses self-awareness, self-reliance and self-expression (Javidi and Javidi, 1994).

Therefore, the Chinese family-centred, relationship-oriented and collective concept of self conforms to Hofstede’s category of collectivist cultural dimension (Bond, 1986, 1991; Hofstede, 1980, 1991; Triandis, 1995; Triandis *et al.*, 1998; Zuo, 2001).

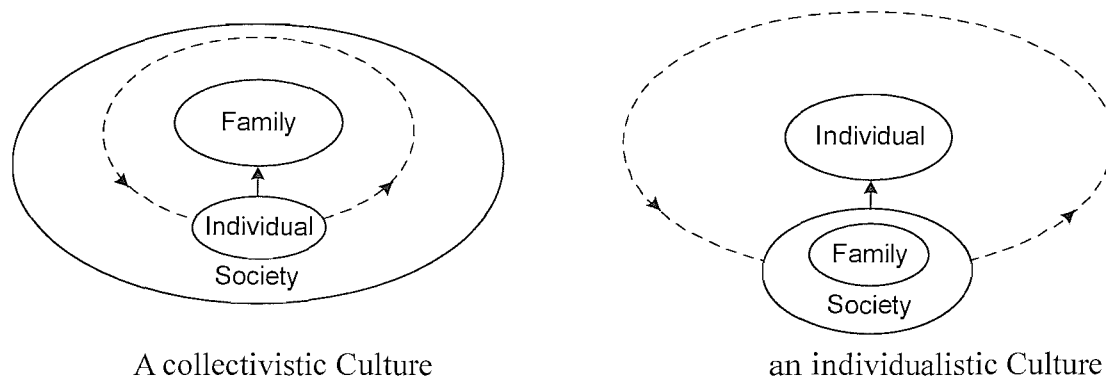


Figure 3.2 The position of individual in collectivist & individualist culture

The collectivist dimension of traditional Chinese culture conforms to Hall’s (1976) category of the high-context culture as well. ‘All cultures Hall labels as low-context are individualistic..., and all of the cultures Hall labels as high-context are collectivistic in Hofstede’s scheme’ (Gudykunst *et al.*, 1988: 44). In sum, Chinese culture tends to be collectivism- and relationship-oriented, people’s harmonious relationship and mutual support is emphasised; however an individual’s independence, freedom and self-expression tend to be neglected, based on Five Relations.

### 3.2.2 Implication of Chinese Culture

In this section, I will discuss the implications of the unique traditional Chinese culture in the following four aspects: humanitarian education, thinking style, communication style, and interpersonal relationship (see Figure 3.3 below).

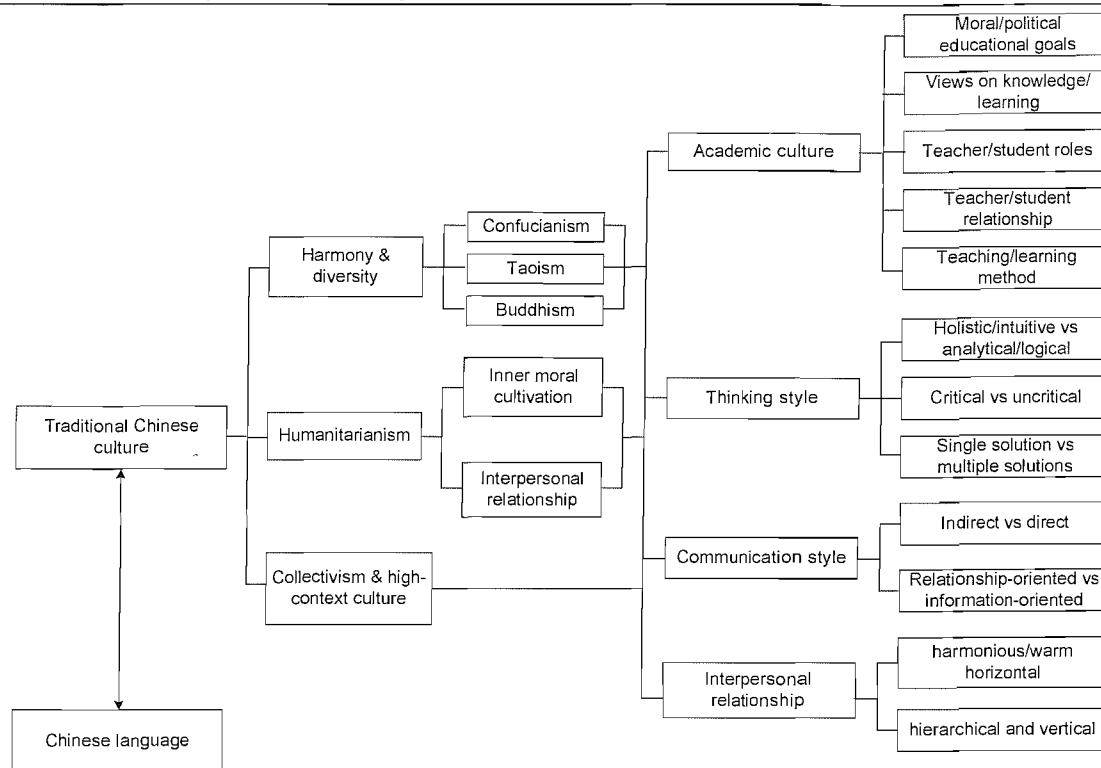


Figure 3.3 Implications of traditional Chinese culture

### 3.2.2.1 Implication for Chinese academic culture

Humanitarianism-, harmony- and collectivism-oriented traditional Chinese culture has strong influence on the Chinese academic culture system, which is moral- and collectivism-oriented (for detailed discussions see Section 3.3).

### 3.2.2.2 Implication for thinking style

Chinese philosophies tend to adopt a holistic, circular and dynamic world view and see the universe as a harmonious organism, and man as part of nature, due to their emphasis on harmony between man and nature. For example, Taoists see life as a circle which starts from nature and returns to it. As a part of Nature, man has to follow the rules of natural laws, since one's life has been decided by Tao (the way) (Lau, 1963). Nature includes four seasons and five basic elements (metal, wood, water, fire and earth) in the universe, which keep changing cyclically and continuously. Similarly, Chinese Buddhists adopt a holistic world view, based on Buddhist law of cause and effect; they see life as a cycle consisting of past, present and future; the past and present behaviour will determine one's future life.

By contrast, Western culture adopts a linear world view. This can be traced back to the propositions of ancient Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle, and later Descartes and Hegel. They advocate that the Universe is divided into two opposites: man and nature, subject and object, mind and matter, the divine and the secular; however, these opposites are regarded not as necessarily harmonious but sometimes incompatible and conflicting. Westerners tend to believe that the universe was initially created and externally controlled

by a divine power (Needham, 1953). Man considers Nature as his opposite; 'give me but one firm spot which to stand, and I will move the earth' (Archimedes, 212 BC). Therefore, westerners aim to explore and transform nature, and thus develop science and technology to some extent (Zuo, 2001).

Based on their holistic world view and the 'doctrine of the golden mean', Chinese people tend to think synthetically and holistically/dualistically (Lin, 1935/2005; Needham, 1953; Zuo, 2001). According to Chuangtzu (369-286 BC), human beings are controlled by such conceptual dualism or dichotomy as sun/moon(日月), blackness/whiteness (黑白), beauty/ugliness (美丑), virtue and evil (善恶), day/night & misfortune/fortune (旦夕祸福). These contraries seem hostile and incompatible on the surface, but on a deeper level, they are inter-dependent and mutually complementary in reality and can be replaced and converted to each other (Liu, 1997; Wright, 1953). According to Lao Tzu (Chapter 58) when one good thing goes to the extreme, it will turn out to be a bad thing, 'good fortune lieth within bad, bad fortune lurketh within good'. Many Chinese idioms convey this dualistic concept, such as 'the highest happiness can be transferred to sadness' (*leji shengbei*), 'long separateness will result unity, long unity will lead separateness' (*fenjiu bihe, hejiu bifen*). Wing (1967: 54) states that 'The tendency to combine different and even opposing elements into a synthetic whole is a characteristic of Chinese thought'.

This dialectic or dualistic thinking style is reflected in a very popular Taoist story - 'Mr Weng Lost his Horse'. A farmer lost his valuable horse one day, the neighbours came to comfort him. The farmer shrugged his shoulders and said, 'You never know what will happen.' Two days later the horse returned with a pack of wild horses. The farmer said, 'You never know what will happen'. A few days later, the farmer's son broke both legs in a fall off one of the wild horses. The farmer said, 'you never know what will happen'. Finally, a group of the Emperor's soldiers rode through the town taking every fit young man and they were all killed in the war field. The farmer's son was allowed to stay at home and was saved. The concept of the conversion of misfortune and fortune is reflected in this story.

Meanwhile, due to the Confucian notion of *Zhongyong* or 'doctrine of golden mean' and the notion of harmony, Chinese thinking style tends to be concrete and intuitive and full of 'common sense' (Lin, 1935/2005: 79) - thinking is featured as 'reasonableness' rather than 'reasoning'. The reasonableness has two meanings: the Chinese tend to think more intuitively rather than logical thinking; and they are more 'in accord with human nature' - more flexible and keeping balance. 'The synthetic mode of thinking is closely associated with intuition and thinking in terms of image' (Zuo, 2001: 7). Chinese Buddhists tend to emphasise views or intuitions received from 'sudden enlightenment'.

The Chinese synthetic and intuitive thinking style has its advantages and disadvantages, compared with the Western analytic thinking style. On the one hand, the Chinese synthetic thinking style, 'focuses on holistic observation and interpretation, emphasizing the

inter-relationship between things and aims to achieve harmony and unity of these things' (Zuo, 2001: 7). On the other hand, Taoists synthetic thinking style 'lacks logical, analytic and rational dialectics' and 'ignores logical order between things, not interested in the abstract theories, neglect the specific and detailed analysis and comparison' (ibid.). Both Taoism and Buddhism tend to emphasize developing experimental-intuitive knowledge derived from everyday experiences, and its practical effects upon human beings, rather than speculative and abstract theories, generated from reasoning and logics (Koller, 1985).

The Chinese circular and holistic world view and synthetic and intuitive mode of thinking imply that Chinese people tend to emphasize the interrelationships between things, and pursue harmony and unity of different ideas to reach a common understanding and a compromising solution. However, this may restrict people's critical thinking ability and lead to one single solution, rather than multiple solutions to the issue. Chinese students in this study will be examined on this point.

### 3.2.2.3 Implication for communication style

The unique Chinese culture has the following impact on Chinese communication patterns. Firstly, the Chinese communication style tends to be relationship-oriented and other-oriented. Since Confucianism emphasises considering others and developing proper relationships with others (e.g. key concepts such as *Ren* and *Xiao*) in particular contexts, thus communication is perceived as a process of promoting interpersonal relationships. As Chen (1993) argues, communication is a cyclic process in which the person, instead of the message or other elements, is the focus of communication. It is in contrast with a Western communication style which tends to stress the outcome of communication or information exchange. This may be based on Western individualist culture emphasising the individual's autonomy and self-fulfilment.

Secondly, as discussed, Chinese culture is characterized as a relationship-oriented and high-context culture (Hall, 1976). It is influenced by the Chinese synthetic and intuitive way of thinking. The Chinese communication style tends to be implicit, indirect and ambiguous (Zuo, 2001), and more dependent on the context and non-verbal cues - the hidden dimension of culture (Hall, 1966). Furthermore, the Chinese writing style tends to emphasise inductive modes of expression and a delay of the main point to the end of the writing (Scollon and Scollon, 1995). By contrast, low-context cultures may emphasise explicit and direct communication style and stress verbal expression (Ting-Toomey, 1985). Chinese students' academic writing and oral presentation might be regarded as not clear and ambiguous by British lecturers. I will explore this further in my empirical research (see Section 6.3.2.3).

Thirdly, due to Chinese relationship-oriented collectivist culture, Chinese people tend to have different styles of managing miscommunication/conflicts. They are more likely to focus on 'we' identity, adopt a compromising and avoiding strategy, and 'possess a nonconfrontational, indirect attitude toward conflicts' (Ting-Toomey, 1985: 79), and



emphasise ‘face maintenance’ (concern both self-face and mutual-face maintenance) and group harmony. By contrast, people from individualistic cultures are more likely to practice ‘I’ identity, ‘possess a confrontational, direct attitude toward conflicts’ (Ting-Toomey, 1985: 79; 1988; 1994), and adopt dominating strategy by solving conflict more openly and directly. This point will be explored in intercultural group work discussion.

#### **3.2.2.4 Implications for interpersonal relationships**

Since Chinese relationship-oriented collectivist culture emphasises *Ren* (benevolence) – showing love and support to others, an interdependent and harmonious relationship is expected, mutual support and other-orientation is emphasised, and the group maintenance and mutual faithfulness is stressed (Gudykunst and Kim, 1997), so are long-term relationships between people (Yum, 1994). However, based on the notion of filial piety and Five Relations, Chinese people tend to emphasise the hierarchical relationship between people, authority tends to be respected, e.g. the teacher-student relationship tends to be formal and hierarchical in class.

In summary, this section is a background introduction to Chinese culture. The main characteristics and implications of traditional Chinese culture have been discussed. The next section continues to discuss one of implications of traditional Chinese culture: academic culture.

### **3.3 Chinese Academic culture**

Due to different academic cultural backgrounds, an unseen ‘expectation gap’ between British lecturers and Chinese students may exist. This section is intended to provide some background information on Chinese academic culture in order to facilitate both British lecturers/students and Chinese students with a good understanding of both British and Chinese academic cultures and achieve better intercultural adaptation outcomes.

Educational systems differ from culture to culture and are influenced by the local, historical, economic, cultural and social factors of a particular context (Sadler, 1900). First of all, a brief background introduction to Chinese concepts of teaching and learning is provided; then Confucian educational philosophy is examined and evaluated; finally the main characteristics of academic culture in terms of educational philosophies and goals, the concept of learning and knowledge, roles of teachers/students, relationship between teacher and students, teaching/learning methods and assessment system is discussed.

#### **3.3.1 Chinese concept of teaching and learning**

In this section, I will discuss how Chinese characters reflect the basic concepts of Chinese academic culture, such as education, teaching and learning.

Academic concepts vary culturally. The Chinese character for ‘teaching’ (教) has two tones with different meanings. The first meaning is ‘demonstration above, imitation below’ (*jiao, shang suo shi, xia suo xiao ye*, Xushen’s dictionary ‘*Shuo Wen Jie Zi*’- interpreting words and analysing characters). It refers that the teacher gives instruction and presentation above, students imitate and learn from teachers below. This implies a hierarchical relationship between teacher and students. The other meaning of teaching is ‘transferring’ (Xinhua dictionary), the teacher transfers knowledge to students. And knowledge is mainly based on textbooks. Teaching(教) is often used together with book, (书), which means ‘teaching books’. And the teacher is called the person who teaches books (教书先生).

There is another interpretation of teaching(教), from the structure of the character of teaching (教), whose left part is 孝 (*Xiao*, filial piety), the right part is an imperative radical, it turns into the word 教 (*Jiao*, teaching), meaning ‘to make someone *Xiao*’ (filial piety 孝), thus teaching means to make someone filial piety (Lin, 1988). Therefore, teaching is based on Confucian conception of filial piety.

The Chinese word for ‘education’ is a compound word ‘*Jiao Yu*’ (教育 teach and nurture). It is often extended to four characters 教书育人, meaning ‘teaching the book and cultivating people’. This implies teacher’s dual role: to teach knowledge as well as cultivate students’ mind.

The Chinese term for ‘learning’ is a compound word ‘学习’, which is a mixture of *xue* (the original written form is 斆 or 學, to learn) and *xi* (习, to practice or review). *Xue* (to learn) means enlightenment, its upper radical means enlightenment and apperception (觉悟), its bottom radical is 子, means son or student. This implies that learning is to be enlightened, alert and fully aware, learning mainly depends on the learner’s own awareness and perception. *Xi* (习) has two meanings: ‘reviewing/exercising’ (复习/练习) and ‘practising/applying’ (实习). The former implies that learning is a process of repetition and exercise. The latter refers to practical training and application, putting knowledge into practice. Furthermore, the Chinese word for learning or knowledge can be another compound word 学问, which consists of ‘learning and asking’, it implies the other aspect of learning, by asking one can acquire knowledge. There is a Chinese saying ‘qinxue haowen’ (a good student should), ‘study hard and always be ready to ask questions’. This means that a spirit of enquiry is central to the quest for knowledge in China (Cheng, 2000; Liu and Littlewood, 1997).

The other expression of learning/study is ‘reading books’ (读书), compared with ‘teaching books’ (教书). ‘Go to school’ is often used together with ‘reading books’. This shows that the student’s role at school is to read books, the teacher’s role is to teach books. This reflects that reading aloud and repetition as the main learning/teaching method and the textbook as the main resource of learning/teaching.

The Chinese word for ‘teacher’ is either the ‘person who is born early’(先生), or ‘senior master’ (老师) literally, therefore, a teacher is supposed to be senior in age or status, more experienced, knowledgeable and skilful than others.

The student/learner in Chinese character is ‘学生’/ ‘学子’, *Xue* (learning, 学)’s bottom radical is 子(son), that means a student/learner is like a son, to be humble and filial to his teacher, this is related to the concept of filial piety. This implies a hierarchical relationship between teacher and students. And this is associated with the notion of filial piety, the essence of Confucianism.

Therefore, from the above we can have a general knowledge about the concept of ‘teaching’ and ‘learning’ and how their meanings are rooted in Chinese culture and reflected in Chinese language. In summary, teaching means to give instruction, transfer knowledge, enlighten wisdom and develop students’ moral quality – filial piety. Learning refers to be enlightened and aware, to read books, review, inquire and use acquired knowledge. And the relationship between teacher and student is hierarchical, the teacher is expected to be knowledgeable, experienced and caring for student, the student is supposed to be humble, obedient and filial to the teacher. Chinese education aims at ‘teaching knowledge’ as well as ‘cultivating mind’.

The relationship between teaching and learning is mutual and interdependent, ‘teaching and learning improve mutually’ (*jiaoxue xing zhang*, ‘Xue Ji’). Both teacher and student are expected to be hardworking and willing to learn from each other equally, students are supposed to challenge teachers in front of knowledge; on the other hand, the student is required to be obedient and filial to the teacher.

Chinese academic culture is underpinned by traditional Chinese culture, especially Confucian philosophy and its educational philosophy. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce Confucian educational philosophy in the next section, in order to better understand Chinese academic culture.

### **3.3.2 Main features of Confucian educational philosophy**

Education has been emphasised in China since ancient times. The Chinese proverb ‘Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime’ clearly states the importance of education to the Chinese. Confucian educational philosophy has influenced Chinese academic culture for more than two thousand years, due to its status as official orthodoxy in China; and the Confucian classics (e.g. Four Books, Five Classics) have been the main sources for Chinese education (Chen, 1990). I will discuss the main features of Confucius’ educational philosophy in terms of teacher-student relationship, teacher/student roles, and teaching methods in this section.

### 3.3.2.1 The teacher-student relationship

According to Confucian filial piety-focused *Wulen* (five relations), the relationship between teacher and students is supposed to be hierarchical, ‘If you have been my teacher for one day I will treat you as my father for ever’ (Guan Hanqing, a Yuan dynastic playwright, *Yu Jing Tai*). Confucius once said, ‘Hui (Yanhui, his best student), treats me as to his father’ (The Analects, Xian Jin, Ch. 11.11). This shows a formal and hierarchical teacher-student relationship. Meanwhile, the teacher is supposed to care for the student like a father for the son, therefore, the teacher’s social and moral commitment to the student is emphasised. This also shows that the teacher-student relationship continues throughout life (McLaren, 1998).

On the other hand, Confucius thinks everyone is equal in front of knowledge and moral, he encourages students to challenge the teacher, ‘Challenge your teacher in front of *Ren* (benevolence)’ (*dang ren bu rang yu shi*, ‘Wei Ling Gong’). *Xunzi* (an important Confucian) expresses a similar idea, ‘Colour blue is from indigo, but much brighter blue than indigo; ice is made from water, but colder than water’ (Xun Zi, *Quan Xue*). It implies that students are expected to be better than their teachers. According to *Han Yu*, a Confucian and litterateur in the Tang dynasty, ‘the teacher is not necessarily to be better than his/her student, and the student is not necessarily to be less capable than his teacher’ (Han Yu: *Shi Shuo*).

The above classical quotations show that teacher-student relationship has two meanings, on the one hand, it is hierarchical, the teacher is regarded as a parent-like person who transfers knowledge and moral to students; on the other hand, it is equal, students are encouraged to challenge and exceed the teacher.

### 3.3.2.2 The teacher/student roles

Firstly, to be knowledgeable is the basic role for a teacher. A Chinese saying explains the relationship between knowledge and teaching, ‘only a person who possesses a bucket of water can easily offer a spoon of water to others’. Such a capacity of knowledge is the guarantee for the success of teaching. Therefore, both teacher and students are expected to be highly-motivated, hardworking and perseverant in learning and teaching. ‘To learn without flagging and teach without growing weary’. Many old sayings illustrate this. ‘The iron stick can be grinded into a pin’; ‘3-feet thick ice can not be frozen within one cold day’; ‘diligence is the way to the book mountain; perseverance is the boat on the learning sea’.

Secondly, to be a moral example is expected as a teacher’s important role. As discussed, cultivating one’s mind and transmitting knowledge is the dual role of a teacher; since Confucian education emphasises moral education, teachers are expected to cultivate students’ moral characters.

Thirdly, both teacher and students are expected to be humble, modest and honest towards knowledge and teaching/learning. For example, Confucius once says, ‘to learn from others who are better than oneself’, ‘the holy man has no regular tutor’ (Han Yu: ‘Shi Shuo’). Confucius expects the teacher and students to be honest with themselves, ‘to say you know when you know, and to say you do not when you do not, that is knowledge’ (The Analects, Wei Zheng, Ch. 2.17). Zhu Xi (a well-known neo-Confucian and educationist in Song dynasty) regards the teacher as ‘a guide, a witness, with whom to discuss together when the student has some questions’.

As to student’s further roles, firstly, students are supposed “to be alert and inquisitive, never to be embarrassed to ask, even to the person who is inferior to you” (The Analects, Gong Ye Chang, Ch 5.15). Confucius encourages his students to ask questions. ‘If a man does not ask – ‘How is it? How is it? I can indeed do nothing with him!’ (The Analects, Wei Ling Gong, Ch 15.16). He sets a good example of being inquiring, ‘the Master, when he entered the grand temple, asked about everything’ (The Analects, Ba Yi, Ch 3.15). Confucius encourages his students to ‘inquire accurately’ (The Doctrine of the Mean, Ch. 20.19).

Secondly, students are expected to be critical and independent. Confucius asks his students ‘Confronting an act of humanity (Ren), do not yield the precedence even to your teacher’ (*dang ren bu rang yu shi*)(Huang, 1997: 158; The Analects, Wei Ling Gong, Ch. 15.36). Mencius also encourages students to challenge books and think critically, ‘if you believe in the book completely, it is better without book’ (Mencius, Jin Xin).

Thirdly, Confucianism encourages students to develop independent thinking and reflective learning by adopting the following five-step learning method, ‘study extensively, inquire accurately, think carefully, discriminate clearly, and practice earnestly’ (The Doctrine of the Mean, 20, 19-20). The neo-Confucian representative *Zhu Xi* expects students to be autonomous and independent in learning, ‘to think by himself, to examine by himself and to cultivate by himself’ (*zi qu lihui, ziqu ticha, ziqu hangyang*, ‘Zhu Zi Yu Lu’).

In summary, students are expected to be hardworking, modest, questioning, independent and critical; the teacher is supposed to be knowledgeable, set a good moral example (e.g. hardworking, modest and honest). Confucian educational philosophy and method is often criticized as the main attributes to Chinese students’ tendency of lack of questioning, critical and independent thinking, I will argue that it is not true, based on the above evidence. Next, Confucius’ teaching methods will be discussed.

### 3.3.2.3 Confucius’ teaching methods

In this section, I will discuss Confucius’ teaching methods such as unity of learning and practising, unity of learning and thinking, enlightenment and critical thinking.

**Unity of learning and practice:** Confucius regards learning as the reconstruction of

experiences and practices, he emphasises the importance of application of knowledge. ‘The essence of knowledge is to have it and apply it’, ‘the aim of learning is to apply it’ (*xue yi zhi yong*). He encourages his students to put knowledge into action and practice, to ‘practise earnestly’ (The Doctrine of the Mean, Ch 20.19).

‘To learn and practise (Xi) regularly, isn’t an enjoyable thing?’ (*xue er shi xi zhi, buyi lehu*) (The Analects, Xue Er, Ch. 1.1), is a famous Confucian quotation that illustrates his idea of learning and practising. As discussed in the previous section, there are two meanings of Xi – reviewing and practising/applying. There are different interpretations of this sentence. Some researchers emphasise Confucius’ teaching/learning style as repetition, they tend to use the word ‘review’ and attribute rote learning method to Confucius’ educational ideas; other researchers focus on Confucius’ practical idea, by using the word ‘practising/applying’. Since the Analects are only a record of conversation between Confucius and his students, and there is no illustrated interpretation on each sentence, the meaning tends to be ambiguous. *Zhu Xi*’s interpretation is generally regarded as a standard version, but still faces many criticisms. Considering Confucius’ educational goal – ‘to cultivate one’s own moral character, put family affairs in order, administer state affairs well and pacify the whole world’ (*The Analects, Li Ji, Da Xue*). I think the second meaning ‘practise/applying’ is more suitable here, to show his emphasis on the importance of combination of learning and practising, and it also shows that learning is a cyclical process of studying, practising and studying.

**Unity of learning and thinking:** Confucius regards both learning and thinking as indispensable. There is a well-known saying in the Analects, ‘if one learns but does not think, one will be bewildered. If, on the other hand, one thinks but does not learn, one will be in peril’ (The Analects, Wei Zheng, 2.15). This quote shows that Confucius encourages his students to ‘think carefully’ (The Doctrine of the Mean, Ch 20.19) when they study, rather than simply memorize the knowledge.

Meanwhile, Confucius encourages his students to explore truth by themselves and make their own decisions. ‘Although everyone says a person is good, investigate into it; though everyone says a person is bad, investigate into it’ (The Analects, Wei Ling Gong, Ch 15.28).

He also encourages his students to critically examine what has been learned and create new meanings, rather than review it repeatedly, ‘reviewing old knowledge creates new knowledge’ (The Analects, Wei Zheng, Ch. 2.11). For instance he often encourages his students to create new interpretations on one old saying:

*Zigong said, “Poor without being obsequious, wealthy without being arrogant”, what do you think of this saying?’*

*The master said, ‘That will do, but better still ‘Poor yet delighting in the Way, wealthy yet observant of the rites’ (The Analects, Xue Er, Ch 1.15; Lau, 1979: 49).*

This quotation demonstrates how Confucius proposes an improved version of the precept. The precept cited by Zigong (his best student) concerns the meaning of being a moral character, Confucius deepens its meaning by adding his essential moral principle- pursuing the Way and rites as one's goal, no matter he/she is poor or rich.

**Enlightenment and critical thinking:** Confucius emphasises developing students' critical thinking and problem-solving ability. Confucius says, 'If a crude man asked me a question in all candour, I would tap its two extremes, doing my best (to solve the problem)' (The Analects, Zi Han, Ch 9.8, <http://www.confucius.org/lunyu/ed0907.htm>). Confucius likes to answer in retort first, tries to help students find two contradictory points of their thought, elicit them step by step, lead them to draw conclusions by themselves, in order to train students' thinking and problem-solving ability.

Elicitation/enlightenment strategy and training students' thinking ability are the most important of Confucius' teaching methods and principles. This concerns how the teacher facilitates learning, rather than just give instructions. Confucius emphasises, 'I do not open up the truth to one who is not eager (to get knowledge), not help out any one who is not anxious to explain himself (or ask questions). When I have presented one corner of a subject to any one, and he cannot learn the other three from it, I do not repeat my lesson' (The Analects, Shu Er, Ch. 7.8). This strategy entails under what condition and to what kind of students the teacher needs to facilitate learning, rather than simply transfer knowledge.

Confucius' elicitation/enlightenment method is similar to Socrates' midwifery method, the teacher is described as like a midwife to support the baby-bearing (Jowett, 1990: 515). The student is supposed to be the active learner, while the teacher as the facilitator of teaching/learning.

The above discussion demonstrates that Confucius encourages students to ask and to be critical, rather than merely repeat and memorize what the teacher says. Therefore, people tend to have some misunderstandings of Confucian educational philosophy and his teaching methods, and it is not accurate to attribute rote-learning methods to the Confucian teaching approach. I will discuss this in the next section.

### 3.3.3 Evaluation of Confucian educational philosophy

Firstly, Confucian educational philosophy and goals tend to be political/moral-oriented. He encourages his students to serve in the government, in order to achieve the goal of being a superior man with a character of 'inner holiness and outer kingliness', 'the student, having completed his learning, should apply himself to be an scholar official' (The Analects, Zi Zhang, Ch. 19.13). This reflects the collective nature of Chinese culture and education.

Secondly, the most influential educational principle of Confucius is that, 'no distinctions should be made in dispensing education' (*youjiao wulei*) (The Analects, Wei Ling Gong,

Ch. 15.39). This principle has provided an equal opportunity to all the people without distinction of class, sex, or nationality. This democratic idea is very significant, he is the first person to address the equality issue of education in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. His educational principle reflects his main concept of *Ren* (benevolence) – to cultivate oneself and love others and the collective nature of his educational philosophy.

Confucius has been one of the greatest educationists in China, his teaching philosophy and methodology have been highly valued by the Chinese. However, some people tend to criticize his philosophical ideology together with his teaching methodologies, and some even attribute rote-learning and spoon-feeding (teacher-centred) teaching/learning method to him, which is not accurate. Confucius' educational philosophies and especially views on teaching/learning methods should be distinguished from those of neo-Confucians, the latter has been distorted by imperial exam-oriented educational systems and practice.

It is necessary to discuss the reasons for the use of rote-learning and spoon-feeding teaching/learning methods. Firstly it is due to an exam-oriented educational system. Since the Han Dynasty, Confucianism had been regarded as dogma (*jingxue*), with other philosophic schools banned, students began to read Confucian classics without critical thinking; 'ancientness-worship, superstition, pedantry' (*dugu, mixiu, yuqu*) are the main weaknesses of Confucians of the Han and Tang Dynasty (Li *et al.*, 1996; Zhu, 1992). Until the Song and Ming Dynasty, neo-Confucians began to criticize Confucianism and open a new academic way and give new explanations to Confucianism, thus Zhuxi's neo-Confucianism was established. But since the Ming and Qing dynasties, the academic system and imperial examination systems began to get worse; the rote learning method was emphasised, and learning without critical thinking prevailed (Zhu, 1992). The contents of imperial exams are mainly based on the Four books and Five Classics of Confucianism. Students were required to recite them and write 'eight legged essays' in a strictly rigorous and dogmatic style, consequently students' thinking ability was extremely restricted.

Rote learning has been criticized by Western and Chinese researchers, because it tends to impede students' independent and creative thinking ability. However, every coin has two sides, the rote learning method has its advantages as well, it can consolidate knowledge and deepen understanding (Biggs, 1996), and can help students build confidence to use language. Because it leads to accuracy, with the accuracy in the student's mind, the confidence for interaction builds up. Today memorization is still considered as an important method of learning especially in English language teaching, where students are required to recite large amount of vocabulary, due to the Chinese exam-oriented system. Reading aloud and reciting repeatedly is encouraged in Chinese schools and regarded as a good learning habit (Yu, 1984). However, Chinese students tend to be less confident in using English in impromptu situations and especially weak at intercultural communication competence in the real situation.



### 3.3.4 Characteristics of Chinese academic culture

Based on the above discussion on Chinese concepts of teaching and learning and Confucius' educational philosophy and practices, I will now discuss and summarize characteristics of Chinese academic culture, in terms of the following aspects: educational goals, views on knowledge, roles of teacher/students, the teacher-student relationship, and teaching/learning method and assessment, in comparison with those elements of British academic culture. I will indicate how traditional Chinese culture influences the formation of Chinese academic culture (see Figure 3.4).

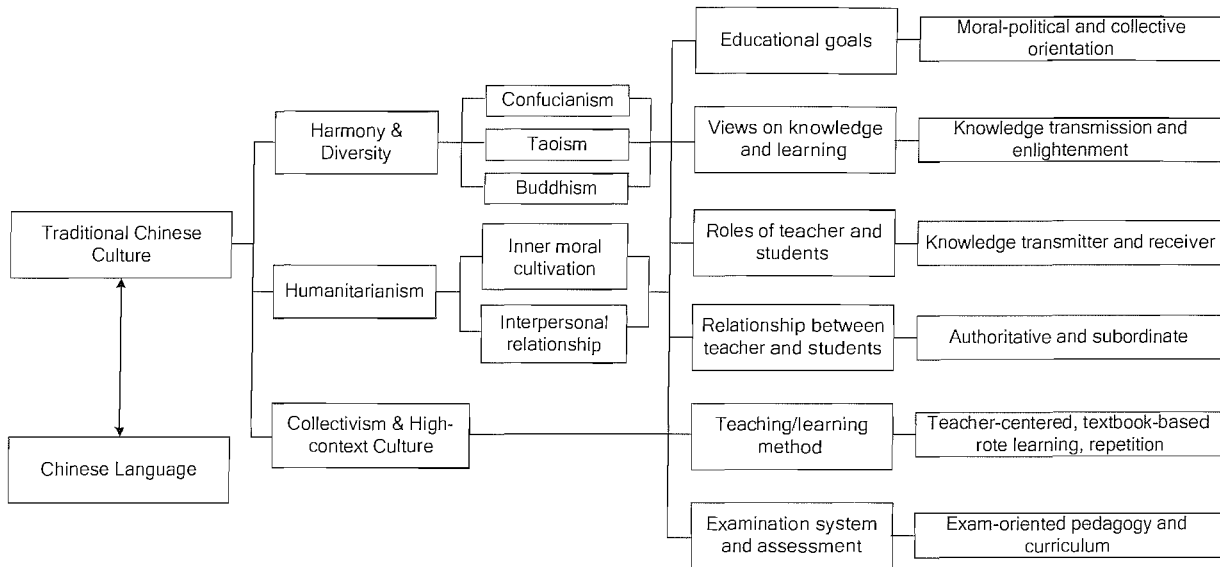


Figure 3.4 The effect of traditional Chinese culture on Chinese academic culture

#### 3.3.4.1 Educational philosophy and goals

As discussed, based on the Confucian equality principle, 'no distinctions should be made in dispensing education' (The Analects, Wei Ling Gong, Ch. 15.39) and Confucius' educational goal was, 'to cultivate one's own moral character, put family affairs in order, administer state affairs well and pacify the whole world' (Li Ji, Da Xue). Chinese educational goals have been political-moral oriented and collectivism-oriented since ancient time, though it varies slightly in different historical periods, from 'loyalty to the emperor, worship of Confucius, and the advocacy of patriotism, martialism, and pragmatism' (China Education Year Book, 1934: 1) in the ancient China period (3<sup>rd</sup> Century BC to 1911), to 'education is to help the educated to develop his ability, perfect his character and contribute for the human society' (Cai, 1984: 177) in the Republic period (1911-1949), to 'enable everyone who gets an education to develop morally, intellectually and physically and become a cultured, socialist-minded worker' (Lu, 1958: 16-17) in the Mao period (1949-1976); to 'observe discipline strictly and will work wholeheartedly and actively for the people' (Deng, 1978: 9) and 'foster builders and successors with all-round development - morally, intellectually, physically and aesthetically--for the socialist cause' (Chen, 1981) in the Deng and present period (1976- present) (see Appendix 1).

One of the implications of this moral-political and collectivist educational goal is that the Chinese education system tends to be centralized and it has adopted an equal policy rather than differentiation. Schools have been expected to provide the same curriculum and pedagogy to all students. Textbooks are regulated by the central government. All students are expected to maintain the same level of achievement. Classes wait for the slowest to catch up (Jin, 1992), children are expected to be highly disciplined and diligent.

The centralized educational system may be traced back to ancient China. The national imperial examination system had been the main selection tool since the Tang dynasty until it was abolished in 1905. Today, the annual national college examination is still the dominating tool for university recruitment. For example, all the non-English subject undergraduates are supposed to study College English and pass the national English examinations Band 4 and Band 6 for their undergraduate degree and postgraduate degree respectively.

By contrast, the British educational goal is to develop individual independence, individuality and self-expression (Jin and Cortazzi, 1993), due to its individualism-oriented cultural value system. This may be based on the European theories of man, knowledge and society from the time of Plato; and Kant's philosophy which concerns individual independence and freedom, as well as Christian belief and British cultural values, that every child is unique and given by God, teaching should be essentially 'meeting the needs of the child' and catering for the 'whole child' (Broadfoot *et al.*, 2000: 41). In sum, Chinese educational goal is moral- and collectivism-oriented, whereas British education is individualism-oriented.

#### 3.3.4.2 Views on learning and teaching

In China, learning is viewed as a process of acquiring and accumulating knowledge. Teaching involves transmitting knowledge, since the Chinese regard past experience as elite, the textbook as an embodiment of wisdom and truth, thus a teacher-centred transmission approach and rote-learning method are emphasised (Rao, 1996). On the contrary, learning is viewed as a process of exploring and developing knowledge in the UK, thus developing students' thinking and problem-solving skills is emphasised, and an interactive method is focused on. Chinese students tend to 'see knowledge as something to be transmitted by the teacher rather than discovered by the learners' (Littlewood, 1999: 85).

Secondly, based on views of learning as an accumulating process, students are expected to learn gradually (*xunxu jianjin*) and it tends to take a longer time to reflect before reaching the enlightenment stage, it is described as a long-term mortgage learning process (Jin, 1992). By contrast, based on the views of learning as a developing process, students are expected to learn a bit, give feedback and apply knowledge immediately, thus it takes a short time to achieve the academic goal, the so-called short-term mortgage learning process (Jin, 1992).

### 3.3.4.3 Roles of students and teacher

Due to different educational philosophies and goals, there are different expectations concerning the roles of students between China and UK. Firstly, based on the Chinese collectivism- and moral-oriented educational philosophy and holistic view of teaching – to educate the whole person in cognitive, affective and moral aspects and emphasise students' role in society – to behave in 'socially acceptable ways' (Cortazzi and Jin, 2001: 282). Chinese students are expected to be hardworking, attentive, thoughtful and disciplined; whereas interruption and self-expression, and challenging teachers are discouraged, partly due to the large sized classes in China (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996b; Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998), partly due to the fact that the teacher is regarded as 'an authority figure' (Littlewood, 1999: 85; Ho, 2001) and a moral example (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996a, 1997; Louie, 1984; Shen, 1994), students are supposed to be 'ratified hearer' (Scollon, 1999: 26). On the contrary, due to British individualism-oriented educational philosophy, British students are encouraged to ask questions, express their own opinions, and challenge teachers (Osborn *et al.*, 2003). 'Students and teachers often engage in the co-construction of knowledge through confrontation and conflict' (Holmes, 2005: 293).

Secondly, learning is generally regarded as a process of knowledge accumulation in China, and rote learning and repetition are encouraged. One of the main roles of the Chinese students is to be hard-working to understand and memorize large quantities of knowledge (e.g. facts, information, theories by rote learning and repetition), rather than develop critical thinking ability. As discussed, Confucian educational philosophy encourages students to be critical and the Chinese word 'learning' (enlightenment) also requires students to take responsibility of their own learning, in order to achieve enlightenment. However, due to various social and historical reasons, especially the big impact of imperial examination systems and the current exam-oriented educational system, Chinese students' critical and independent ability are said to be underdeveloped. They were said to prefer 'to be filled with knowledge' (Hou, 1987), rather than criticize theories or disagree with others. By contrast, since British culture of learning emphasises learning as a process of knowledge exploration, developing students' thinking skill and problem-solving skills are emphasised and regarded as a strength of the British system (Broadfoot *et al.*, 2000; Holt *et al.*, 2002: 144).

The teacher's role in China is 'to transfer values, provide knowledge, explain puzzlement' (Han Yu). It is similar to 'teach the book', and 'cultivate a person' (*jiaoshu yuren*). 'Teach the book' refers to passing on knowledge is the basic professional role of a teacher. A teacher is expected to be an expert in a content area and experienced in the knowledge and skill to be taught (Pratt, 1992). The teacher is regarded as an authority figure in class and held in great respect, thus Chinese students are less likely to express their opinions and challenge teachers/knowledge in class (Ho, 2001; Jin and Cortazzi, 1998), since this would be considered rude and disrespectful (Louie, 1984). On the other hand, the teacher's authority in the classroom can keep the large-sized class (50-60 students in average) under control and facilitate the teaching and learning process (Cortazzi & Jin, 2001; Ho, 2001).

This reflects the Confucian concept of Five Relations.

Cultivating a person refers to developing students' morals and positive attitudes towards society, which is the second role of a teacher in China. Teachers are 'expected to be moral and social leaders...like a parent, the teacher should care for students academically and socially' (Jin and Cortazzi, 1993: 86). Teachers tend to play, 'pastoral as well as instructive role' (Ho, 2001: 100). Thus a teacher has a dual role: to pass on knowledge as well as provide moral guidance and support, show 'heart' to students, based on the Confucian concept of '*Ren*' (benevolence).

By contrast, teachers in the UK are expected to be facilitators and 'co-communicators rather than directors' (Byram, 1989), to facilitate learning, arrange various classroom activities, and adopt differentiation method to meet individual students' needs. Meanwhile they have considerable freedom to decide what should be taught in class as well (the so-called 'secret garden') (Mckenzie, 2001: 222).

More emphasis tends to be put on the research, publication and managerial role of university teachers in the UK. British university teachers have triple roles – 'research and publications, management and teaching' (Elsay, 1990: 57). The research and publication is the main role of a lecturer alongside teaching, because a lecturer's research quality is one of the main factors to determine the size of block grants, provided by the University Grants Committee (UGC), through the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), which is administered by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) on behalf of all the UK funding bodies, carried out every four or five years. The quality of research and the number of students are two main factors for an individual university to bid for a grant. Therefore, universities tend to aim at increasing the quality of research as well as student numbers. Consequently, 'university lecturers are under greater pressure to publish in order to boost research ratings. They are also teaching larger numbers of students in order to maintain existing funding levels' (Brennan & Shah, 1993: 314). This is so-called 'publish or perish' syndrome evolved in the British higher education sector (Mok 2000).

However, Chinese students tend to be generally unaware of the triple roles of British lecturers. They tend to see lecturers as those who should be available to meet their needs. Thus misunderstandings may arise. Furthermore, the 'friend-and-parent' dimension (Watkins and Biggs, 2001: 278) of the Chinese view of a teacher's role can be rarely found in the British teacher's role. The British teacher's role tends to be more professional in nature, closely associated with good instruction and organisation of activities, and tends to be only contained inside the classroom (Ho, 2001; Jones and Jones, 1995), rather than parent-and-friend dimension of teacher's role, due to British individualism-oriented culture. Thus Chinese students might feel disappointed about lack of socio-moral support from the British lecturers. I will explore this further in the empirical research.

In sum, the teacher is regarded as a moral example, an authority and a 'parent' and a friend in China, compared with the British view of the teacher as a facilitator, organiser and

friendly critic.

#### 3.3.4.4 Teacher-student relationship

As discussed in Chapter 4.3.3, based on the teacher's dual role (teach the book and cultivate a person), the teacher-student relationship in China tends to be formal in class and informal after class. 'In the Chinese classroom teacher authority characterises the teacher-student relationship, but after class there are opportunities for establishing a warm and affectionate relationship through informal activities' (Ho, 2001: 109). The reason for the teacher-student formal relationship implies an authority position of a teacher in class due to the Confucian notion of Five Relations - hierarchical and vertical relationship between teacher and students. Therefore, Chinese students are less likely to challenge teachers in class.

The reason for the informal and warm teacher-student relationship after class is due to the Confucian notion of *Ren* (benevolence) – showing empathy and support to others, a kind of parent-and-friend relationship – teachers are expected to provide moral support and care to students (Cortazzi and Jin, 2001).

By contrast, the teacher-student relationship in the UK tends to be more informal and equal in class, based on the British philosophical emphasis on values of individualism. Students are encouraged to ask questions, challenge theories/lecturers, and assert their own ideas in class. However, there seems to be no further personal relationship between teacher and students after class in the UK.

#### 3.3.4.5 Teaching/learning method

In China, the whole-class teaching method is dominant, teachers tend to give more formal and structured instruction (so-called 'spoon-feeding' style, Hayhoe, 1984), and students are expected to give more structured responses in class. Students generally adopt a repetition and rote-learning approach in China.

By contrast, the interactive approach is dominant in the UK, since knowledge is seen to be explored. Differentiation method (Holt *et al.*, 2002: 151) and a variety of activities are expected in class (e.g. pair work, group work), and a more autonomous and individualistic style of learning among students is promoted (Sharpe, 1992). Learners in the same class may do different activities, use different materials, or work at different rates according to their interests and achievements (based on my own observation in several British secondary and primary schools, see Appendix 2). Students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills are much more emphasised in British classrooms. Authentic materials tend to be used more, in order to meet individual student' needs. Students tend to be more creative, self-expressive, determined to achieve personal goals. However, students tend to show less respect to teachers, indiscipline inside and outside school, and less commitment to society and nation (Broadfoot *et al.*, 2000).

### 3.3.4.6 Examination system and assessment

Firstly, China is known as the first country to develop an examination system, and examination as a method of selection has lasted for more than 2000 years in China (Cleverley, 1985; Zhong and Hayhoe, 2001). Chinese education tends to be exam-oriented. The university entrance examination is the largest examination involving more than 1.5 million candidates each year. ‘University entrance is a crucial allocator of life chances’, ‘it is also a critical determinant of pedagogical practice and learning styles in the higher reaches of the school system’ (Lewin and Wang, 1990: 153).

Filling in the blanks, multiple choice (55% of the marks of entrance exam paper of 1980, Lewin & Wang, 1990: 161) and short-answer are the main exam question format. Filling in the blanks and short-answer questions are heavily dependent on short-term memory and recall. The exam and assessment system (especially the exam format) has an adverse effect on academic learning in China. Firstly, the exam-based assessment may encourage students to adopt the surface learning strategy (Biggs, 1996) and their analytical and critical thinking ability development tends to be neglected, due to ‘pre-exam memorization without understanding’ (Elliott, 1985: 108), since students have to memorize vast quantities of ‘facts’, thus rote-learning and recall of ‘facts’ are emphasized, rather than critical and creative thinking ability. It is more emphasised on the single-right answer rather than diverse perspectives. Therefore, Chinese students tend to be ‘high in score, low in ability’, especially before educational reforms in the 1990s.

The second adverse effect is that Chinese students’ communication ability is influenced, due to examination-oriented pedagogy and examination formats. There is no oral exam in the two most influential examinations for Chinese students, including the provincial examinations for students transfer from junior to senior and national college examinations. So both teachers and students’ real communication skills tend to be underdeveloped. Consequently, these students are more likely to encounter communication problems when they are in an English-speaking country.

The third adverse effect is the choice of teaching method. ‘Teachers concentrate on that which is examined and ignore the rest and students are closely oriented to the demands of the exams’ (Lewin *et al.*, 1988). Traditional methods such as rote-learning, whole-class teaching and grammar-translation method are normally used; interactive approach and differentiation method tends to be neglected, because the exam-driven educational system makes conventional teaching logical, almost inevitable and limit change in teaching practice (Paine, 1992).

The Chinese education system has gone through many changes in recent years. ‘Chinese education reform shifts from exam system to evaluation system, trying to reform and cancel college entrance examination system, shifts from compulsory education to life-long education system; from classifying by age to by grading by ability’ (Yuan, 1987: 202).

In summary, this section has discussed and evaluated the main features of Confucian educational philosophy; then the key features of Chinese academic culture are examined and compared with those of British academic culture. Chinese academic culture has the following features. Firstly, Chinese academic culture is collectivism-oriented, Chinese students are expected to be hard-working, disciplined and motivated to achieve good academic performance and to have strong sense of commitment to society and nation. Secondly, Chinese students are expected to be attentive, respectful rather than questioning and challenging the teacher. Teachers are expected to transfer knowledge as well as cultivate students' morals. Thirdly, the relationship between teacher and students tend to be hierarchical in class but informal after class. Fourthly, a teacher-centred transmission approach and rote-learning is the main teaching and learning method, rather than the interactive approach, due to the collectivism-oriented educational philosophy and exam-oriented educational system in China.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a brief introduction to traditional Chinese culture and academic culture. Firstly three characteristics of traditional Chinese culture - harmony and diversity, humanitarianism, and collectivism and high-context culture – have been examined. Secondly, implications of traditional Chinese culture for Chinese academic culture, thinking style, communication style and interpersonal relationship have been discussed. Thirdly, concepts of teaching and learning and Confucian educational philosophy have been examined and evaluated. Finally the main features of Chinese academic culture have been explored in comparison with British academic culture, in terms of educational goals, views on knowledge, teacher/student roles, the relationship between teacher and student, teaching/learning methods and assessment.

In summary, Chinese culture and academic culture tends to emphasise equality and collectivism, whereas British culture and academic culture focuses on competition and individuality. It is argued that each culture and academic culture has its own characteristics, suited to its particular contexts; both Chinese and British models are successful in their own contexts and have made a great contribution to academia and other fields in the world, though they differ in values, processes and practices. I wish to argue that both Chinese and British counterparts need to increase an awareness of the differences in culture and academic culture, bridging the expectation gap between each other by integrating some aspects of two cultures and academic cultures effectively, in order to benefit both parties. The next chapter will discuss the methodology and methods adopted in this study.

## Chapter 4 Methodology and method

### 4.1 Introduction

Any research entails underlying epistemological and ontological assumptions, which will determine the specific methods and procedures to be adopted (Bryman, 2001). This chapter will discuss the methodology and methods adopted in this study.

Firstly, a qualitative-interpretive paradigm and ethnography as the research strategy in this study will be explored; then, research design and mixed methods (participant observation, interview, questionnaire, documentary analysis) will be examined; thirdly, grounded theory as a strategy for data analysis and several analysis methods such as episode analysis, transcript analysis, dialogue format, key-sentence analysis (interview quotes) will be discussed; fourthly, the representation and ethical issues of this study will be addressed. These issues will be continuously reviewed in the other chapters as well, since research is an iterative and cyclical process.

Before discussing the underlying paradigm issue, it is necessary to clarify some key concepts in this chapter: methodology, method, theory and their relationships. Methodology refers to the overall approach to the research process, from the theoretical underpinning to the collection and analysis of the data. Method refers to various means by which data can be collected and analyzed (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). ‘Methods are central to research practice because they lay down the procedural rules to follow for obtaining certifiably objective and reliable knowledge’ (Brewer, 2000: 2). For Brewer, the purpose of adopting methodology and methods is to generate knowledge and theories. The flow of causation of three aspects can be illustrated as follows:

Methodology → procedure rules = method → knowledge/theories

As to the relationship between theory and research, quantitative and qualitative researchers tend to adopt different views. The quantitative approach tends to be deductive, theory precedes and guides research, research is conducted to test theory. The qualitative approach tends to be inductive, theory is supposed to be an outcome of research, research is conducted to generate theory, in other words, theory emerges out of the research findings (see Figure 4.1 below).

Quantitative approach:	Theory → Research	(theory testing)
Qualitative approach:	Research → theory	(theory generating)
Grounded theory:	Research ↔ Theory	(theory generating + theory testing)

Figure 4.1 The relationship between theory and research



However, knowledge/theory is not purely generated by an inductive or deductive approach, and theory and research is not simply a linear and causal relationship. In fact, research and theory/knowledge generation is an iterative and circular process (Silverman, 2001). For example, grounded theory emphasises a weaving back and forth process between research and theory; the theory is generated from research, then theory is tested through research. This iterative strategy links theory and research, inductive and deductive approaches together. Therefore, grounded theory is regarded as the main analysis and theory/model generation strategy in this study (details see Section 4.5.1).

## 4.2 A qualitative and interpretive paradigm

A paradigm is a ‘basic set of beliefs that guides action’ (Guba, 1990: 17). Bryman explains this further; a paradigm is ‘a cluster of beliefs and dictates which for scientists in a particular discipline influence what should be studied, how research should be done, (and) how results should be interpreted’ (1988: 4). Therefore, to take an appropriate paradigm is very important for a researcher, since a paradigm structures and influences research questions, procedures and interpretations.

Qualitative and quantitative paradigms are generally regarded as two important research strategies and the most distinctive difference between these two research strategies is not on the surface level of distinctions between ‘numbers’ and ‘words’, but more on the deep level concerning epistemological and ontological considerations (Bryman, 2001). Bryman compares three aspects: the connection between theory and research, epistemological assumptions, and ontological considerations (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 A comparison of quantitative and qualitative research strategies

(Source: Bryman, 2001: 20)

Categories	Quantitative	Qualitative
Principal orientation to the role of theory in relation to research	Deductive; testing of theory	Inductive; generation of theory
Epistemological orientation	Natural science model, in particular positivism	Interpretivism
Ontological orientation	Objectivism	Constructionism

The interpretivist epistemological orientation emphasises that knowledge is value-bound and knowledge generation is an iterative and circular process; whereas positivist epistemological orientation focuses the testing of knowledge.

The constructionist ontological assumption is that social phenomena and meanings are constructed in and through interactions and are in a constant state of change. It highlights the situated and contextual nature of ‘reality’. In contrast, objectivism emphasises that social phenomena and meanings are pre-given and pre-existing. Meanings need to be discovered rather than created.

However, quantitative and qualitative paradigms are not exclusively incompatible, to some

extent they are complementary, overlapping and can be synthesized. As Denzin and Lincoln argue 'researchers 'work' between and within competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms' (2000: 6). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie suggest 'mixed methods research' (2004: 15) as the third paradigm, in a continuum of research paradigms, between quantitative and qualitative research, since mixed methods/triangulation provides the researcher with different perspectives, a better understanding of the phenomenon in question, and helps the researcher to crosscheck the data, thus extending the validity and reliability of research (Bryman, 2001; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

The choice of any theoretical paradigm and research strategy needs to consider the nature of the topic/research questions, and the context and the people being investigated. Since the interpretivist and constructivist assumptions' emphasise the individual's subjective interpretation of the world and multiple realities co-constructed by participants and the researcher (e.g. interview), and considering the nature of my research topic – two-way intercultural adaptation and role/identity construction process between British lecturers/students and Chinese students in a new culture, I firstly took a qualitative/interpretive paradigm as my theoretical framework; secondly, I adopted both quantitative and qualitative research strategies/methods in this study - ethnographic participant observation and interviews were adopted first in order to obtain the first-hand data; then based on these rich and interpretive qualitative research data, a questionnaire as a complementary instrument was designed, so as to crosscheck the validity and reliability of the data; finally grounded theory was employed as the analysis strategy, with an attempt to generate/develop a new concept/theory, based on both quantitative and qualitative data in the empirical research.

### **4.3 Ethnography as a research methodology/strategy**

Research strategy refers to a general orientation to the conduct of social research, and it links the theoretical paradigm and specific methods of data collection and analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 22). This section will discuss the ethnographic strategy adopted in this study and evaluate ethnography from two aspects: validity - 'accuracy of measurement', (Hammersley, 1990: 55) and reliability - 'consistency of measurement' (ibid.).

Firstly, considering the complexity and subtlety of my research topic, I chose ethnography as a research strategy, since the qualitative/ethnography approach involves a prolonged participation within a culture and provides a rich description and in-depth interpretation of the situation from an emic or insider's perspective. Therefore, this qualitative/ethnographic research has an advantage in enhancing internal validity (Bryman 2001). Secondly, since this study is exploratory and interpretative in nature, it is hoped the theoretical model may emerge from an ethnographic analysis process.

However, a qualitative/ethnographic strategy is weak on external validity, which entails the degree to which findings can be generalized across social settings. Ethnographic research is often criticized for its lack of generalization, due to small sample size. But Hammersley

(1990: 9) argues that ethnography usually emphasises ‘depth’ rather than ‘breadth’ of research, and it is more concerned with the contextual uniqueness and significance of the social reality being studied. Mitchell (1983) and Yin (1984) argue that case study researchers and ethnographers aim at how well they can generate theory out of the findings, rather than generalize their findings to larger populations, thus it is not necessary for the case studied to be ‘representative’.

Ethnography can also be criticized for its low reliability, because replication is difficult in ethnographic research, re-studies of the same setting are sometimes carried out from different perspectives, using different strategies. However, replication is not the only means by which scientists assess one another’s work, and replication is not always possible in natural science as well (Hammersley, 1990: 10). Therefore, it is argued that the current criteria for evaluating qualitative research should emphasise the situated, relational, and textual structures of the ethnographic experience, and are ‘applied to actual practice and can be modified given time and place’ (Smith and Deemer, 2000: 894).

Qualitative/ethnographic research is also criticized as being subjective, and it tends to depend too much on researchers’ and participants’ subjective views, and lacks rigour and systematicity (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Thus to counter this criticism, a mixed method/triangulation technique (which compares data from different sources) is adopted in this study, in order to extend the validity and reliability of the research. For example, questionnaire is used as a supplementary instrument to enhance reliability and external validity – to extend the whole population of MBA programmes at Weston University.

In sum, ethnography as a research strategy was adopted in this study. The next section will discuss the research design and mixed methods employed in this study.

## **4.4 Research Methods**

A research method can be defined as ‘tactics of enquiry’ (Robson 2002: 92) and is theory-driven (May, 2001); the selection of data collection method is normally driven by research questions and theoretical perspectives. Firstly, the overall research design and strategies of choosing participants and episodes will be presented, then each method adopted in this study will be discussed. I will highlight the limitations of these choices and the strategies I used and how I overcame them during the research process.

### **4.4.1 Research design**

Research design is an overall research framework linking theoretical paradigms, methodology/strategies of inquiry, and methods of data collection and analysis (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Therefore, a research design was devised prior to the empirical work in this study (see Figure 1.1).

This research design links research questions, theoretical paradigm, methodology/strategy,

methods (collection & analysis), representation, legitimation and ethical issues. Firstly, the research question is in the centre of the framework, since ‘the research strategy, or strategies, and the methods or techniques employed, must be appropriate for the questions you want to answer’ (Robson, 2002: 79). Secondly, the context is emphasised in this research design, since the context will influence the data collection and findings of research. I will argue that a research design should be flexible and ready to change according to the contexts in different phases of the research process.

#### 4.4.2 Strategies of choosing participants and episodes

The selection of the participants and episodes is one important aspect of research design. It is conceptually driven by the theoretical framework underpinning the research from the start (Bryman, 2001).

**Choosing episodes or critical incidents:** It is impossible to record all that I observed, therefore, I chose some critical incidents and episodes (both positive and negative), which are significant and relevant to research questions (e.g. any episode that involves expectation gaps and identity conflicts). Through pilot study, I learnt that there might be some critical incidents and episodes, which involve some expectation gaps and cultural conflicts between lecturers and Chinese students, in some particular sessions as Course E. Meanwhile, I previewed the course pack and case studies before attending lectures, in order to be prepared for some critical incidents which might happen.

**Choosing participants:** Basically I adopted a ‘snowball’ strategy (Bryman, 2001) as the main data collection method, according to different episodes and culturally different participants involved, since this enabled different national voices being heard in the same episode and avoided being misled by one informant from one particular culture. The collection procedure follows the order below for the episode/group work which I observed. Firstly, I observed the classroom/group interactions; if I found some episodes (involving some expectation gaps and cultural conflicts) interesting, I interviewed the relevant participants (who are from different cultural backgrounds) in the episode; then I collected these people’s individual assignments in which their further reflections on their own and other’s behaviours were included; finally a questionnaire response/reflection and participants’ final exam marks were collected for triangulation when necessary. For example, I observed C10 and B8 group’s presentation (see Section 7.3.2) and found two group members criticized the British presenter during their group’s question time in class. Then I interviewed five out of six members of this group (four nationalities) for their opinions on their own and other members’ behaviours or cultural conflicts during group communication. Finally I collected three individual assignments from this group’s members.

For the episodes/group work which I did not observe, I interviewed one group member first, and based on this person’s description of a particular episode, I asked this member to recommend another group member (normally different nationals) to be the next

interviewee, to compare their perceptions on the same episode.

Generally speaking, I have three types of key informants in this study: spontaneous key informants, regular key informants; and intentionally chosen key informants.

Many participants were spontaneous key informants. For example, when participants had a debate on a controversial issue during classroom/group discussion or informal chat during break time, I would approach relevant students involved in the conversation later, and asked for the possibility of interviewing them for further information.

I had several regular key informants, both British and Chinese, with whom I regularly met or contacted via email. Most of them were outspoken and extrovert. They continued to provide me with some valuable information, even after fieldwork. The Chinese key informants were mostly from the same group. When they did the first group assignment, I joined their group and helped them with information research and contributed some ideas to their first group assignment. After that we built a good trust and relationship, we had lunch together when they had whole day lectures (normally every Thursday and Friday), especially during the first term (23 September 2003- 12 December 2003). I formally and informally interviewed these key informants in different stages of my research, e.g. initial interview at the beginning of the term, interim interview in the middle stage of their study, and final interview before they left the field (the MBA programme), in order to see patterns of change over time.

Furthermore, I chose some key informants intentionally in order to balance the research sample I chose, e.g. equivalent numbers of male and female students/staff, high mark and low mark students, active and quiet students, RMBA and EMBA students, British and Chinese and non-British and non-Chinese students, in order to hear different voices. Meanwhile, I chose some students with strong personalities, and they often had different ideas. Last but not least, choosing episodes and participants is an iterative and circular process, which was conducted throughout this research, together with data collection, analysis and theory generation.

#### **4.4.3 Mixed method/triangulation**

A mixed method/triangulation strategy was adopted to collect data, as it provided multiple avenues to pursue multiple truths. The methods I used for data collection are participant observation, interview, questionnaire, and documentary analysis.

In this section, I will examine reasons and strategies I adopted for each method, then I will justify these methods; finally ethical issues concerned with each method will be discussed separately. I will argue that no matter what method the researcher adopts, it has to be based on theoretical assumptions, research objectives and research questions.

Before I move to participant observation as the main research method in this research

project, I will discuss the pilot study I conducted during June to September in 2003, prior to the main fieldwork starting from the end of September of 2003.

#### 4.4.3.1 Pilot study (June 2003-September 2003)

As introduced in Section 1.5, this study is a full year ethnographic study (from September 2003 – September 2004) of the MBA staff and students at Weston University. The total population was 228, from 28 nationalities. In order to test the effectiveness of the research instruments to be used, and get more information about the field site and participants, I did a pilot study before conducting the real research project. I designed and piloted a questionnaire and interviewed several MBA students of 2002-2003 during their dissertation-writing period between June and September 2003, because the samples for the pilot study had similar characteristics to those of the population to be studied (Bryman, 2001).

Five Chinese students piloted the questionnaire and were interviewed, and two international students and one lecturer were interviewed in the pilot study. The pilot participants provided me with some very important suggestions on questionnaire and interview techniques, e.g. the questions need to be more specific and clear, questions need to be well-organized; the best time for sending questionnaire should be after the first exam or before students completed their studies.

Meanwhile, the pilot informants provided me with much information about the MBA programmes. For example, one informant told me which course might involve many interactions and which lecturer might be easy to approach and so on. The pilot informants' information increased my awareness of some critical incidents which might happen in the field. For example, some courses (e.g. Course E, Course I) tended to involve more subjective opinions and might involve many cultural conflict during discussions. Therefore, I would pay more attention to the case discussions in these courses. Furthermore, pilot informants provided me with some advice on proceeding with the field work as well. For example, one EMBA Chinese pilot informant advised me to listen more, observe more and ask more 'whys' during research. The general pilot findings are as follows:

- Teaching quality and lecturer's attitude. The pilot participants were generally dissatisfied with the School's teaching support and administration, and they complained about some lecturers' teaching quality and attitudes toward students.
- There were different degrees of involvement in group discussion. One international student was not satisfied with some Chinese students' low contribution to the group work; whereas one Chinese student was not happy with local students' less friendly attitude towards Chinese students. Some informants said both British/European and Chinese students complained about the large numbers of Chinese students, and the relationship between British and Chinese students were generally not good.
- Learning outcomes. Most participants thought their communication skills, self-awareness and self-management skills had improved over time. They became

more flexible in solving the problems from different perspectives after they had many intercultural group discussions during their MBA studies.

- Diversity of students. There was a diversity of MBA students, who were from different cultural, professional and educational backgrounds. Some informants reminded me about considering students' individual differences (e.g. strong personality).

I listed the following concerns after the pilot study:

i) This study will explore Chinese students' intrapersonal adaptation experience (e.g. communication behaviour, academic improvement) as well as the interpersonal relationship between different cultural groups (e.g. Chinese students, British students, and non-Chinese and non-British students). ii) This study will include multiple voices and opinions of different cultural groups, in order to increase validity and credibility of the study. Therefore, Chinese, British and non-Chinese and non-British students were interviewed. iii) Two groups of MBA students (experienced and recent graduates) would be observed and compared for triangulation, since the younger Chinese MBA students might adapt to the new situation quickly.

In sum, the pilot study was very useful to help me test the research instrument (interview/questionnaire) technique, and have a general impression and 'feeling' about the field, build confidence to make initial contacts with the participants in the field. I wrote a formal letter with my supervisor's signature to the MBA programme director two months before I entered the field site (July, 2003) (see Appendix 3). I received an email letter from the MBA programme coordinator who allowed me to 'sit in' on the courses but not 'take part in any discussions' and 'should always confirm with the lecturer that he/she is happy for you to 'sit in'' (see Appendix 3). An ethical protocol for the research was designed prior to the empirical research (see Appendix 4).

#### **4.4.3.2 Participant observation**

This section will discuss the following aspects concerning participant observation: strategies and justification for conducting participant observation, and the data sources I collected.

##### **a) The time spent in the field (from 23 September 2003 to 30 September 2004)**

I joined the MBA programme on 23 September 2003 (Induction day) and left the field in the end of September 2004. I spent nine months regularly attending the main MBA's lectures and seminars, and three more months occasionally interviewing people or attending their social activities during their dissertation writing period in the field.

Considering the subjects' activities might vary over time in the field, I had relatively prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field, in order to experience the full-range of participants' activities in the field (see Section 5.4.2 and Appendix 6 for the time I spent in the field) and develop a better understanding of the field and establish a

good rapport with participants. I attended most of sessions of the core modules and some sessions of option courses. For example, one core module will normally take 6-7 weeks, I spent 5-6 weeks in the field, and most of the time I spent the whole day with participants, including lunch time and evening group discussions. I also attended participants' social activities like dinner parties, the pub crawl and so on.

There are two purposes of the participant observation for this study: to observe Chinese students' classroom/group communication and relationship development in different stages of their one-year MBA study; to observe any expectation gaps and academic cultural identity conflicts between British lecturers/students and Chinese students during their classroom/group interactions.

There are four stages of participants' study: the first term (October to Christmas), the second term (Christmas to Easter), the third term (Easter to mid May) and the dissertation writing period (mid May to September). The one-year MBA study include two semesters, semester 1 (6 October 2003- 31 January 2004) and semester 2 (2 February 2004 – 18 June 2004).

A typical EMBA time schedule for a one-day lecture is as follows (the daytime sessions from 9am to 4:30pm, the evening sessions between 6pm and 9pm):

9:00 -11:00am first session  
 11:00-11:20 break  
 11:20-12:30pm the second session  
 12:30-1:45pm lunch time  
 1:45-3:00pm the third session  
 3:00-3:20pm break  
 3:20 – 4:30 the fourth session

EMBA students are required to complete 5 core modules (one module includes three similar core units) and 3 options for the first semester; 1 core module and 15 options for the second semester. RMBA students are required to complete 7 core units and 8 options for the first semester; 7 core units and 15 options for the second semester.

#### **b) Strategies and justification for participant observation**

As discussed, I adopted participant observation as the main data collection method since it has many advantages, such as 'getting close to the insider', 'giving an insider's account', provides 'thick description' and 'deeply rich' data (Brewer, 2000: 39), and 'being true to the natural phenomena' (since the research can record the context and participants' behaviour directly without having to rely on the retrospective or anticipatory accounts of others, therefore, the information tends to be more true than interview and questionnaire). There are many weaknesses as well. I will now discuss how I dealt with these potential problems during my fieldwork.



I adopted mixed observation methods to capture both quantitative and qualitative data in the classroom/group interactions. On the one hand, I designed an observation checklist (e.g. length/duration and frequency of talk, types of talk, see Appendix 7), in order to examine Chinese students' classroom behaviour and student identity change over time, whether they become more active, challenging and independent in thinking. On the other hand, I also attempted to capture the expectation gaps and identity conflicts between British lecturers/students and Chinese students and how they adapted to each other.

I always tried to be aware of the particular context and people's non-verbal communication during observations, to overcome the weakness of the audio-recording, in order to increase accuracy of transcription and validity of interpretation. For example, one lecturer in Course E was found to stand most of the time in the left side of the classroom (near several British full-time students), rather than in the front middle of the class during a classroom discussion (see Section 6.3.2).

Since the observational interpretation is likely to be influenced by the researcher's personal biases, I always tried to write down my feelings and comments together with the observations in my field notes and followed up with unstructured/semi-structured interviews as much as I could by asking people's real intentions and motivation behind their behaviours in episodes, in order to crosscheck my observations and minimize any misunderstandings and researcher's subjective assumptions/bias on the episodes.

Participant observation is very time-consuming and costly, compared with other collection methods such as interview and questionnaire. Meanwhile, observation tends to generate many bits of data, which are more likely unstructured. I tried to analyse and generate some themes while I collected the data.

The last strategy is dealing with 'social desirability' (Bryman, 2001: 132) in the observations/interviews. Since the participants tend to answer questions according to their perception of whether it is socially desirable, I had to consider whether people changed their behaviour because they knew they were being observed and how much it would influence the validity of the research. However, as time went on, participants tended to get used to the presence of the researcher, thus it tended to reduce the likelihood that the researcher influenced the situation and participants' behaviour.

### **c) Data source**

I collected a range of data source in the field, such as field notes, research diaries, tape-recordings and transcripts, and documents (see Table 4.2 below). I will discuss how I collected them in this section.

Below is some information on the data resources collected from this study:

- The total population is 228, including 184 students and 44 academic staff. 91 participants were interviewed, including 36 Chinese, 18 British, 13 international students and 24 lecturers. There are 152 interviews altogether (see Appendix 5 for

number of interviews with each participant. Most Chinese students were interviewed 2-3 times at different stages). The total transcription of interview is 274,712 words. The audio recording of interviews is 120.49 hours. 49 interviews were tape recorded with the consent of the respondents. All interview recordings were transcribed. Interviews lasted from 20 minutes to three hours.

- The audio recorded classroom and group observation is 32.08 hours (see Appendix 6). There are 50,981 words of field notes of classroom/group observations. 68 x A4 pages of handwritten field notes. Field notes include both formal classroom/group discussion and informal chats in various situations (e.g. dinner parties in the student hall) over one-year period of the study. There are 11,494 words of research diary and 23 x A4 pages of handwritten research diary notes.
- I collected 39 students' assignments (25 individual assignments and 14 group assignments) and 5 dissertations. Meanwhile, I collected 6 individual assignments for pilot study as well.

Table 4.2 Methods and data source

Methods	Source	Detailed information
Participant observation	observation checklists, field work schedules, field notes, research diaries, research journal	There were 58 observations. The total recording time of classroom and group observation is 32.08 hours. Transcription is 50,981 words. 68x A4 pages of handwritten field notes. 11,494 words of research diary. 23x A4 pages of handwritten research diary.
Interview	tape-recordings, transcripts	91 participants were interviewed (36 Chinese, 18 British, 13 international, 24 lecturers). There are 152 interviews. The transcription word is 274,712.
Questionnaire	questionnaire responses	Total population is 228 (184 students, 44 academic staff). 66 returned responses (55 is regarded as viable responses). Response rate is 29%
Documentary analysis	participants' written assignments, presentation slides, course pack & handouts, assignment sheets, exam papers/exam marks, assessment sheets, personal diaries/letters, emails/msn messages, photos, letters/emails between the School and students, School's pamphlets & documents i.e. student handbook.	39 assignments (25 individual, 14 group). 5 dissertations. 6 pilot individual assignments

### ● Field notes

Field notes are important data in this study. Since note-taking is not very noticeable and less disruptive than tape-recording or video-recording. I found that my strategies for observation, tape-recording and note-taking varied according to the specific context and situation. Especially for note-taking, I usually had three kinds of notes, full field notes, jotted/scratch notes and mental notes (Bryman 2001).

During lectures, it seemed entirely natural and appropriate to sit among the participants and write down anything I thought useful including my initial reflections, they were mostly detailed and full field notes.

During some group discussions or interviews, I jotted down some brief notes very quickly (e.g. short phrases, quotes and key words). They were normally jotted notes.

During some casual conversations (e.g. coffee break chat), I did not take notes but tried to record in my mind as much as I could and then jotted down some key words of conversations as soon as possible. On the whole, whenever possible, I attempted to make rough notes and jot down anything I thought useful in the field. Then I tried to make full notes based on bits of rough notes and memory later in the evening when I returned to my office or home. As Fetterman reminds, 'ethnographic work is exhausting and the fieldworker will be tempted to postpone typing the day's hieroglyphics each night. Memory fades quickly' (1998: 114). I tried to keep notes/diaries regularly.

#### ● Research diaries and research journals

I kept a separate research diary from the field notes, to record my feelings and reflections on the research, since 'this will be the basis of the later reflexivity which ethnographers use to contextualize the research' (Burgess, 1982: 192). I found it very useful to let my thoughts and feelings flow in the diary, especially some dilemmas I encountered as a researcher (see Appendix 8). Since this study aims to pursue individual's sociocultural and psychological adaptation changes over time, therefore, I kept a separate research journal for each key informant from the second stage of the research, to summarize their role/identity change over time, mainly based on field notes, interviews and individual assignments. For example, an individual's case study was provided when necessary at the end of the episode analysis as extra evidence of an individual's personal change over time (see Appendix 9).

#### ● Tape-recordings

Tape-recording provides the researcher with the exact words and the researcher can play and replay the tape, to get better understanding of the activity or a conversation, and this can increase effectiveness of the research. Therefore, I tried to audio-record the classroom/group discussion as much as possible.

I used a small portable ordinary tape recorder, a mini dictating machine and a digital tape-recorder. I often took two of them, to avoid running out of batteries, since they were often whole-day sessions, followed with evening sessions or evening group discussions. I recorded the lessons in whole or in part, depending on the nature of the lesson or handout. For example, Course E had a lot of interactions and discussions, which I often recorded fully. For some other courses, but if I found some handouts/slides would be very technical or not relevant to my observation, I would set the tape-recorder to 'pause' position, if there

were case discussions, I would get it back to 'play' position immediately, in order to capture some critical incidents of expectation gaps and intercultural academic identity conflicts between Chinese students and British lecturers/students.

One weakness of using tape-recording is that it is more obtrusive than taking notes. Some participants would feel offended being recorded, though I asked participants' consent first. One British male student answered me, 'I would rather not be tape-recorded, when I am in front of this, I have no idea about what I am doing'. So I had to avoid using it whenever he was around. This brought me some difficulties in recording some group conversations. I had to keep jotting down their conversation as much as possible, but was still less accurate than tape-recording.

#### **d) Transcripts**

'A transcription is supposed to be a full and faithful written/graphic representation of spoken material' (Cameron, 2001: 32), and it is 'the first stage of analysis and interpretation' (ibid.: 59). I adopted the following transcription strategies in this study.

Firstly, all interview recordings were transcribed and translated, except some parts that participants did not want to be disclosed or some sensitive topics for ethical considerations. For the telephone interviews, as soon as the interview ended, I tried to make a full interview transcript based on jotted notes. I wrote them in Chinese first, then translated them into English; for the recorded interviews, I transcribed them in Chinese first, then translated them into English. I put all the Chinese and English versions of interviews in separate files, in order to retrieve the original ones easily.

Secondly, the recordings of classroom/group discussions were transcribed selectively, based on the significance and relevance to the research questions, e.g. whether they reflected some expectation gaps and role/identity conflicts between participants.

Thirdly, the transcription (classroom/group discussion and interview) in this study contains some features of 'spontaneous casual conversations' (Cameron, 2001: 34), such as some hesitations and fillers, such as: well, you know, and overlapping talk (when people speak simultaneously) when necessary, because these characteristics reflect the nature of talk, and present a 'full and faithful' picture and help the reader to understand the classroom/group interaction and participants well, thus increasing validity of the research. Meanwhile, non-verbal interactions, such as laughter, pauses are included, because they are part of discourse and reflect participants' inner thoughts and relationships. Furthermore, I always attempted to take contexts into account when I did observation and transcription, e.g. physical descriptions of the settings and background information were included in notes and transcriptions (see Section 6.3.2.2).

Fourthly, for some certain chunks of talk which were unrecognized, for various reasons (e.g. bad quality of recording, noisy background, technical vocabulary/theories), I first asked some participants to clarify the meaning for me, then used a bracket [ ] indicating

unrecognized talk. I tried to minimize this problem by attending as many lectures as I could, so as to know participants background knowledge, establish relationship with my informants. Some conventions of transcription adopted in this study are as follows (see Appendix 21):

- (xx) = someone's name is mentioned in the talk.
- (0.2) = pause, about 2 seconds.
- (.) = short pause
- // // = overlapping
- [ ] = a word or a chunk is not recognized
- ( ) = describe people's behaviours and context, eg. (whispering)

Finally I found transcribing was immensely time consuming, but it was worthwhile, since it helped me understand better what was happening in the field.

#### 4.4.3.3 Interview

This section will discuss and justify the second main method adopted in this study – interview: the researcher's reflections on adopting this method will be examined as well. Semi-structured interview was adopted in this study, since it emphasises 'depth, complexity and roundedness' of data by understanding interviewees' experiences (Mason 1996: 41), and hopefully enhances an in-depth understanding of participants' intercultural experiences, considering this study's focus on participants' subjective perceptions/reflections on their own and others' classroom/group communication behaviour/experience.

I prepared an interview schedule and interview questions based on research questions (see Appendix 10). The interview questions generally cover four aspects, language/academic difficulties, role/identity conflicts, factors they perceived, and strategies they used in their intercultural communication settings. The interview questions tend to vary in different stages/phases of research. For example, the interview questions in the first stage focus on adaptation difficulties Chinese students experienced. The questions in the second and third stages focus on participants' adaptation change (in communication and relationship development). The questions in the final stage are mainly reflections on their whole year experience (e.g. personal achievement, relationship change, any suggestions for the new MBA students and the School).

I normally approached relevant persons during break time, explained my purpose and asked the possibility of conducting an interview at an agreed time. The interview normally took 30 minutes to 1 hour. Majority of interviews were conducted individually. Some interviews were conducted with a pair or groups of participants. The interviews took place in various locations, depending on specific occasions, most of the time in the Management School's classroom or separate discussion room when the respondent finished his/her lecture or group discussion. Sometimes they happened in the library, office, the university's

restaurant, the nearby pub, or students' hall of residence.

### **a) Interview strategies**

Since interview is a social interaction and an art, to adopt appropriate strategies and techniques will enhance the effectiveness using this method, I adopted the following strategies in conducting interviews. Firstly, I tried to start the interviews with an open-ended question, 'tell me something about your recent group work experience', in order to give the interviewee more opportunities to 'structure their own accounts' (Silverman, 2005: 20), with minimal influence from the interviewer, so as to avoid leading questions and interview bias, and ensure that the answer was not directed by the interviewer but respondent's own thinking.

Secondly, I used prompting (e.g. repeating questions) and probing (following questions, such as 'what do you mean by...') techniques to encourage more elaboration from the interviewees. However, sometimes I would challenge a respondent's ideas, when I found the respondent's reply inconsistent or contradictory, depending on the respondent's personality and relationship established between the researcher and respondent. One of the greatest concerns for me was the challenge of 'intercultural listening' (Chen and Starosta, 1998: 191). I tried to listen and interpret each interview with a sensitive and open mind, and avoid the researcher's bias.

Thirdly, I adopted different interview methods in different periods of this study. The majority of interviews were conducted by semi-structured face-to-face interviews. Semi-structured interviews have a fairly open framework that allow for focused, conversational, two-way communication (May, 2001). Burgess (1982: 102) calls them, 'conversations with a purpose'. One advantage of face-to-face interview is that it allows the researcher to capture the participant's non-verbal reactions and elaborate deeper thoughts of participants when the researcher and participants chatted over coffee/tea in more relaxed settings.

I conducted many telephone interviews with Chinese students in the first semester for the participants' convenience. Since some participants would like to go home directly when they finished their whole-day lectures, the interviews were thus conducted during their relaxing time - after dinner at their house/flat. Furthermore, they might feel easier and less embarrassed to talk about some personal or sensitive things without seeing each other. This was a very good way to communicate with some male informants, who spoke very frankly on the telephone.

The weakness of telephone interview is that it lacks some non-verbal observation such as eye-contact, facial expressions. It was also expensive if they left me a mobile number which was not the same network as mine. The respondent might feel tired if they spoke longer over the phone; I couldn't record conversations, I took notes very quickly during conversation and tried to retrieve the original words immediately when the interview was completed. Furthermore, there would be some disturbance from their family members

sometimes, e.g. some informants' children might speak to them during the interview. But this sometimes turned into a good point, as our topic moved naturally to their family life, which gave me some new perspectives.

Email, MSN (messenger which facilitates chat online ) and QQ (a kind of messenger in Chinese) interviews were also adopted in this study. Some participants preferred to email their responses, rather than having a face-to-face interview, especially during their dissertation writing period and after they returned to their home countries. E-mail interviews tend to have two advantages: they are the interviewee's original written words, therefore, it saves researcher's transcription time and avoids translation bias (most of them wrote in English); the email interview allows the interviewees sufficient time to reflect on the issues I raised, thus their responses tended to be more in-depth. However it took longer to obtain their responses, and lacked spontaneous response as well.

MSN/QQ was also used as an interview method in this study. They have the similar functions as face-to-face and telephone interviews. The respondents and the researcher talked with each other almost simultaneously on the screen in word or talked directly online, and it did not need to be transcribed. However, they have the same disadvantage as the telephone interview – the researcher is not able to catch the respondents' non-verbal expressions; secondly, it needs editing by the researcher, e.g. one way of editing is to use...between sentences, since MSN/QQ talks are often structured by phrases, and the participants used many symbols, abbreviations and their talks often contained many spelling/grammar mistakes. For example (C9: a Chinese student; R: the researcher):

*C9: if I spoke out what we discussed*

*C9: they would thought it was not contributin of myself, but I spoke all the them*

*R: i c*

*C9: they would feel bad ☹*

*R: so u girls discussed 2gether before meeting*

*C9: but they could not express well and choose not to say*

*C9: yea, we discuss a lot. hehe (Chinese meaning of 'smile').*

*R: i c*

*C9: before meeting (C9's interview conversation through msn, original copy).*

I deleted the repetition and symbols, corrected grammar and spelling mistakes, and used ... to link the sentences together. But I tried to use as many of the participants' own expressions as possible. Finally, I cited C9's above quotes in the following way in the analysis chapter (see Section 8.3.4.2):

*C9: ...If I spoke out what we discussed, they would thought it was not contribution of myself, but I spoke all for them. They would feel bad...But they could not express well and they chose not to say...(C9, 250106, msn).*

All oral interviews (e.g. face-to-face, telephone interview) with Chinese students were conducted in Chinese, in agreement with the participants, who said that they could express their feelings and thoughts in depth and with ease in their mother tongue. However this

could cause translation and transcription bias. In order to overcome this problem, I tried to translate and transcribe the interviews as soon as possible and went back to interviewees for their confirmation.

### **b) Dealing with ethical and sensitive issues**

Firstly, I paid attention to the ethical dimension of interviews, ensuring that the participants knew about the research and its purposes, and that their answers would be treated confidentially (Bryman, 2001).

Secondly, I tried to arrange interview questions in some order, by asking simple questions at the beginning, such as their educational and professional background/experiences; then moved to the main parts, mixing with some sensitive questions, when I felt the respondent would be comfortable enough to answer these kind of questions; finally I asked some exploratory questions before I ended the interview.

### **c) Researcher's reflection on conducting ethnographic interviews**

A challenging intercultural experience: culturally sensitive attitude: Since this study explores participants' sociocultural and psychological adaptation, many interviews involve cultural assumptions and emotional change, therefore, it requires the researcher's high interview skills to elaborate more personal stories from interviewees, as well as a more culturally sensitive attitude (e.g. empathy, openness), to share feelings and thoughts with interviewees. For example, one Chinese student C23, had a long personal narrative about his/her psychological breakdown and deep reflections on an external project working with several British students (see Section 7.4.5). The researcher did not tape-record the conversation, in order to keep a natural flow of the interviewee's thoughts and feelings. This kind of conversation is built on great rapport and trust between the researcher and the interviewee over a long period of field work interaction. Most interviews in the final stage involve interviewees' deeper cultural reflections on their intercultural experience.

Interview as a two-way conversation and researcher as a cultural go-between: The first few interviews in this study seemed one-way rather than two-way communication, the researcher kept on asking, the interviewees tried to answer. Sometimes, the researcher tended to interrupt the interviewees and ignored their curiosity of knowing the researcher's views on Chinese students and Chinese culture. When I listened to the tape and did the transcription, I realized these points. For example (B14: a British student, R: the researcher).

*R: Ah, I see, it is very vivid.*

*B14: Anyway, tell me something gossip //about//*

*R: //What// do you think of European students, sorry we will finish soon. How about II?  
(B14, 141103)*

I was in a dilemma situation. On the one hand, I wanted to obtain as much as I could, because the interview time was limited, and I wanted to keep a researcher's neutral stance;



on the other hand, I should provide respondents with some information and opinions, otherwise participants would think it was not fair, at least not an equal contribution to the conversation.

However, as research progressed, more trust and rapport built between the researcher and participants, the interview became more like a conversation between close friends, and I was much privileged by the free and open opinions of the interviewees, and they also benefited from the information and cultural reflections from the researcher. One significant example is the change of attitude of B1, who asked the researcher many questions about China, either during face-to-face conversation or via emails. He/she once told me, our conversations through the year (and two years already) helped him/her to change his/her previous views on China, and his/her interest in China increased, so that finally he/she started a new life in China from July 2006.

In sum, the interview process often involves the researcher's own values, attitudes and cultural identity, and a good interview should be an interactive, two-way conversation, rather than a simply one-way asking and taking. Through two-way interactions with intercultural participants, the researcher's cultural sensitivity increased, since I had an opportunity of hearing multiple voices from culturally different participants. The researcher sometimes acted as a cultural go-between, or a 'cultural buffer' that helped to reduce culture shock of some Chinese participants and decrease cultural conflicts/misunderstandings between British and Chinese/international participants.

#### **d) Justifying interviews:**

On the one hand, interviews will enhance the validity of data because this method permits interviewers to explore respondents' real and deep understanding of the situation (especially in in-depth interviews); on the other hand, interview will decrease the reliability of research, due to 'interviewer bias' and 'interviewer variability' during interaction between interviewer and interviewee (Wilson, 1996: 97). Furthermore, due to the interview's rich and interpretive nature, it is very time-consuming to transcribe.

Since any research method has its strengths and weaknesses, using mixed methods can help establish trustworthiness in data collection. Therefore, I used a questionnaire as a complementary tool to crosscheck the qualitative data obtained from observation and interviews, for triangulation (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984), in order to increase reliability. I made a comparison between interview and questionnaire in terms of their advantages and disadvantages (see Appendix 11).

#### **4.4.3.4 Questionnaire**

A questionnaire was conducted in this study for several reasons. First of all, it can reduce bias, because the questionnaire reached all of the MBA staff and students through the MBA's central mailing list, thus provided an extension to the observation and interviews.

Meanwhile, questionnaire tends to be more reliable, for it contains more highly-structured questions, and each respondent receives the same questionnaire with the same questions in the same order; besides, because the questionnaire is anonymous, it encourages honesty and decrease respondents' 'social-desirability' (Bryman, 2001: 123) in face-to-face interview.

Furthermore, it is hoped the follow-up questionnaire after observation and interview can provide more generalized information about participants, including factual questions, attitudes/perceptions on their own and others' behaviour and relationships.

### **a) Designing the web-based questionnaires**

I adopted the following strategies and techniques in the web-questionnaire design:

#### *Format of a questionnaire*

I designed four questionnaires for four groups of people: MBA staff, Chinese students, British students, and non-Chinese and non-British students, in order to include all participants' voices (Denzin and Lincoln 2000) and make comparisons of their responses and thus increase validity and reliability. Each questionnaire consists of the following: background information (10-14 questions); language use in academic and daily life (5-7 questions); academic study (5 questions); social contact with different groups of people (8-12 questions). The number of questions differ for different groups, the Chinese students had the longest questionnaire, 38 questions altogether, excluding the twin questions in one question (otherwise 43 questions). The questions were all based on my research questions. I adopted a five-point Likert scale, which is one of the most frequently adopted formats for measuring participants' attitudes, which is very much related to my research purposes. Participants were asked to click on one of the following links (for details see Appendix 29):

For students from mainland China and Taiwan: [www.mbachinese.cosmicquake.net](http://www.mbachinese.cosmicquake.net).

For British students: [www.mbabritish.cosmicquake.net](http://www.mbabritish.cosmicquake.net).

For international students: [www.mbainternational.cosmicquake.net](http://www.mbainternational.cosmicquake.net).

For MBA staff: [www.mbastaff.cosmicquake.net](http://www.mbastaff.cosmicquake.net).

The questionnaire format included a covering letter on the first page, indicating who the researcher is, the purpose of the survey, the time it will take, confidentiality of the respondents, and the gratefulness from the researcher, together with the researcher's contact details in the end of the letter. Then clear instructions were given consistently in each section, from the beginning to the end of the questionnaire. There were some linking sentences to encourage respondents to finish the questionnaire, such as 'Section I has been successfully submitted! Please move to Section II'. There were four separate sections in each questionnaire, and the respondents were required to click the button at the bottom to submit each section (for the purpose of getting as much response as I can, and so that I can check how many respondents give up half-way, which may provide me with information

and explanation on non-responses and non-complete responses). And on the right top, there was a ‘home’ button, for those who were enthusiastic enough to go back to the home page of the questionnaire. A note of thanks expressing appreciation for the cooperation and help was given at the end of the questionnaire, together with my email address.

### *The appearance and layout of the questionnaire*

Considering an attractive appearance and layout might improve response rates, I designed a colourful, well-spaced questionnaire. This was also one of the reasons why I chose to use a web questionnaire. It looks neat and simple. I highlighted some key words by using different fonts and colours in instructions and questions, to enhance understanding. Since my research topic and research questions tend to be complicated and exploratory, my original word-format questionnaire seemed very long and untidy. Therefore I decided to design a web questionnaire which could make it shorter by using separate sections, hidden options in the column, reduced margins, relatively narrow space between questions, ‘twin’ Likert scale contained within the same question and so on (see Figure 4.2 or click <http://www.mbachinese.cosmicquake.net/Chinese3.htm>). Shorter questions tend to achieve better response rates than longer ones and avoid ‘respondent fatigue’; but I will argue that it depends on the salience of the topic of the research and the nature of the respondents. I found Chinese and non-Chinese & non-British students’ response rates were much higher than those of British students. One of the reasons might be their interest in the topic, and they seemed to be more tolerant of the length and complexity of the questions in the questionnaires.

**2. Please rate the criteria of a good assignment and a good presentation for the postgraduate study in the UK.**

	not at all	Assignment					absolutely	not at all	Presentation					absolutely
2.1 good understanding of the subject/topic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.2 good analysis and application	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3 critical evaluation of theory and concepts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.4 good use of examples to support analysis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.5 good speaking/writing skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.6 good structure and coherence of ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.7 innovation and creative ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.8 good decisions and recommendations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.9 appropriate reference to relevant literature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.10 good visual layout (diagram/table)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.11 other <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure 4.2 A sample from the questionnaire

### *Designing questions*

This section will discuss how I dealt with types, wording and sequence of questions, since a well-designed questionnaire can reduce subjective bias and increase the validity and reliability of the research.

**Types of questions.** I used two types of questions: closed questions and open questions. Most were closed questions, which tend to be respondent-friendly for its easy access and reply (just click the choice) and it is easy for the researcher to process it to analysis software. Some open questions were also designed in the questionnaire, e.g. an extra response category ‘other’ was included in some questions, which provided the respondent with opportunities to elaborate their ideas (see Figure 4.2) and minimize disadvantages of closed questions in terms of ‘a loss of spontaneity in respondents’ answers’ (Bryman, 2001: 145). In order to obtain more information, I prepared two open-ended questions and free comments in the end of the questionnaire, e.g. ‘if you would like to comment on any other aspect of the issue, please write here’.

I also paid attention to avoiding memory questions, when I designed the questionnaire, because these questions will stretch people’s memories to the extent that the answers are likely to be inaccurate. But due to my delay in locating questionnaires on the web and the School’s delay in sending them, the questionnaires reached the respondents three months after they finished their MBA study, thus it really caused memory problems.

**Wording of questions.** The questionnaires were designed in English, considering Chinese and other international students had all completed MBA courses and passed their exams in English. The other reason is that I aimed to treat four groups of informants equally, e.g. one of the questionnaires was for non-Chinese & non-British, who were also non-native English speakers. Therefore I paid much attention to the accuracy of wording of the questionnaire and tried to use clear, simple and consistent instructions and questions, to ensure that the respondents share the same meaning with the researcher and avoid any misunderstanding. Meanwhile, I tried to avoid using jargon or technical terms, e.g. ‘language skills’ is used instead of ‘communicative competence’. I also tried to make questions accurate and precise, e.g. avoid overlapping or gap between the range of time and ages, for example, one question concerning their age, the choices were ‘<= 25, 26-30, 31-35, 36-40, 41-46, >=46’.

Furthermore, in order to avoid using ambiguous terms (e.g. ‘often’) in questions, I asked about actual frequency, e.g. ‘how frequently do you usually do...’, and let the respondent choose from predetermined variables, ‘once a week, twice a week...’ (see Appendix 29, Questionnaire, Section IV).

**Sequence of questions.** I put the simple, easy questions and ‘non-threatening questions’ (Gilbert, 2001: 98) at the beginning of the questionnaires, e.g. their factual background information, language use in academic and daily life and so on, in order to increase the response rate and maintain the respondent’s interest. Then I put the difficult and sensitive questions in the middle or latter part of the questionnaire, e.g. assessment of assignment, relationship between tutors/students, personal views on cultural issues and so forth. The last point is added, the sequence of questions should be flexible to meet the needs of research questions and overall questionnaire design.

**b) Piloting questionnaire**

In order to ensure that the questionnaire functions well and increases the validity and reliability of the research, I asked 12 MBA staff and students to pilot it: 4 Chinese, 3 British, 2 non-British and non-Chinese students, 2 lecturers and 1 administrative staff in the Management School. After filling out the questionnaires, the pilot respondents gave me their opinions immediately on the layout, question wording and design, and any difficulties they experienced in piloting, then I made some changes accordingly. The feedback from piloting is as follows:

First, accuracy of wording and questions of the questionnaire. One British student not only corrected some wording of the questionnaire, but also gave me valuable feedback on the design of questions. One pilot respondent misread the rating scale and put 1 as the most important, it reminded me to tell the respondents clearly which end is the lowest rate, and which end is the highest.

Second, sensitive issues. For example, one of the questions was about respondent's position in the workplace. The original question was: 'What is the highest position have you ever been in your previous job or current job?'. The first predetermined indicator was 'low level'. One British pilot student told me, 'you can't say this! Call it 'junior manager'', which was a very valuable reminder.

Three, question design. One lecturer suggested that questions should be more specific and precise, e.g. to provide predetermined options such as 'Never, <1 year, 1.1-2 years, 2.1 – 5 years, 5.1 – 10 years, >10 years, no comment' to the question 'how long did you work with them? \_\_\_\_\_', rather than asking a bracket-filling question.

**c) Conducting questionnaire survey**

The target population of questionnaires was all MBA staff and students of 2003-2004 in Weston University. In order to ensure that questionnaires can reach all the students/staff and increase response rate, I sent my request letter to the MBA secretary of the Management School on 12 Dec 2004, asking him/her to send my questionnaire to all MBA staff and students of 2003-2004. An email concerning questionnaires was sent out to all the MBA staff and students on 20 December 2004. It contained the secretary's introductory remarks, attached with my request letter to the secretary and an instruction letter to my informants, which included research and questionnaire purposes, instructions for accessing and completing the questionnaire for different groups, the concern for respondent's confidentiality, and my gratitude and seasons greetings to them.

The director of the MBA programme kindly suggested asking the staff/lecturers individually who did not reply to the questionnaire. Since I could not identify the non-respondents, for the purpose of confidentiality, I asked the School to send follow-up letters to all the population after the Christmas holiday, on 13 January 2005. The second-round questionnaire was sent out on 21 February 2005. However, the response rate (29%) was not high, due to the following possible reasons:

Firstly, the submission of the questionnaire was three months after participants finished their MBA study and returned to their home country (international students). This may influence response rate, for they might think the relevant questions were not important for them anymore, or they may be very busy with their job or other commitments at the time when they received the questionnaire. This may decrease the validity of the questionnaire, for most of the questions were answered depending on respondents' memory and reflection.

Secondly, the time of questionnaire submission was not suitable. The submission time was before and after Christmas, when participants might easily ignore and delete them together with season's greetings. Thirdly, 6 non-complete questionnaires (4 did not submit the last section) may be due to the long list of questions in the questionnaire, so some participants might lose their patience to finish.

Fourthly, technical reasons - internet search engine problems (one lecturer sent me an email telling me that he could not access the questionnaire due to his firefox research engine. I then sent this lecturer my word-format questionnaire, because the content is the same with the web-based questionnaire; however I did not receive the response. There were some other reasons (e.g. some part-time lecturers could not be contacted).

Fifthly, the salience of the questionnaire to the respondents. As I discussed in the preceding section, British students' and staff's response rates were much lower than Chinese and other international students, perhaps because the issues involved in research and questionnaire were not as significant as to the international students. There are cultural and personal reasons as well, such that most Chinese respondents were more willing to support the researcher with this project.

#### **d) Justifying validity and reliability of questionnaire**

I will mainly justify the advantages and disadvantages of the web-based questionnaire adopted in this study. There are many advantages of web-based questionnaire, e.g. it is easy and convenient to access (just click the link) and it can be accessed any time and many times. It is more economic than mail questionnaires. The replies can be put into a predetermined coding format and can be easily put into the SPSS software package and be analyzed. All the questions have been pre-coded. Pre-codes will be shown automatically on the reply sheet sent to the researcher, when the respondent clicks 'submit'.

Confidentiality is guaranteed, and the respondent's name and email address will not appear when they submit their replies, though the computer serial number can be shown on the reply sheet. Thus it has two advantages: first, I can recognize that the same respondent fills in the questionnaire for the second time thus avoiding repetition; second, I can also easily recognize which four emails (four separate sections) come from one respondent, if several response emails come together.

Though questionnaire as a data collection method has many advantages as discussed at the beginning of this section, it has potential problems as well - low validity, because there is little interaction between the researcher and respondents due to the limited format and content of the questionnaire, thus the respondents' answers will be not enough or accurate. Therefore, it is better to use other methods together with questionnaire, in order to enhance validity and reliability.

The covering letter explained the confidentiality issues in the questionnaire. The web questionnaire avoids the appearance of the respondent's email address, thus protecting the respondent's privacy.

#### **4.4.3.5 Documentary analysis**

I collected students' individual assignments and final exam marks and other documents (e.g. University/School pamphlets, student handbook, course pack (including case studies), presentation slides, assessment sheets, dissertations, diaries, email/msn messages, photos) as part of the data, in order to provide more evidence of participants' studies and lives. For example, some photographs were collected in order to capture some visual aspects of the field and participants' interaction and relationships in both academic and social settings. It was very interesting that the students tended to sit on the same seats during their nine-month MBA course study. EMBA and RMBA students had different lecture rooms (see photos in Appendix 12). There was a tendency in both MBA classes that the same nationals sat together. For example, in EMBA class, the Chinese students tended to sit in the front and middle part of the lecture room, British full-time students tended to sit in the back right corner, the part-time British students in the back left side; the non-British and non-Chinese tended to sit in the back of the lecture room or scatter around. For RMBA students, majority of the Chinese and CHC students tended to sit in the front left and middle of the lecture room, and the British students moved from the back right-hand side to the front right-hand side in the second term (B27 & I14, 190504). The non-British and non-Chinese tended to sit in the back of the lecture room.

More importantly, I adopted documentary analysis as an important research method for triangulation. For example, I collected many students' individual assignments for two purposes. First to examine different writing styles between Chinese and British students; second to provide a personal account of participants' experiences and an insight into their inner reflection on their own and other's communication behaviours (see Section 6.2.3.1). Furthermore, I collected EMBA and RMBA students' diploma marks for triangulation as well, to examine Chinese students' academic performance change and compare Chinese students' general performance with other students.

#### **4.4.4 Conclusion**

This section has discussed the mixed methods employed in this study, the reasons and strategies and justification of each method were discussed separately.

Since the purpose of this study is to explore Chinese students' subjective perceptions and reflections on their intercultural experiences, two main qualitative methods were employed (ethnographic observations and semi-structured interviews, with a rich description of the context. Meanwhile, two quantitative methods were adopted - questionnaire survey and documentary analysis – individual students' assignment and exam mark analysis.

Since social research is complicated and multi-faceted, there is no single best way of doing research. Each research method has its advantages and disadvantages, for example, interview can help obtain rich and in-depth data, with high validity but low reliability; questionnaire tends to be more reliable but with low validity. Participant observation as a research method has a number of advantages over interviews and questionnaires, since it enables the researcher to have an extended period with participants, and get involved in the reality. Observational data thus tends to be more real and rich, but it has to be complemented by other methods as well, in order to cross-check the researcher's observation and judgement. Researchers should develop competence and strategies to combine both qualitative and quantitative methods in research projects, in order to maximize the validity and reliability of the research.

## **4.5 Data analysis**

In this section, analysis strategy, data organization, analysis procedures, and several analysis methods will be examined. First I will discuss grounded theory as an analysis strategy.

### **4.5.1 Constructivist grounded theory as a data analysis strategy**

'Grounded theory is a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 273). I adopted constructivist grounded theory as an analysis strategy in this study because it emphasises seeking attitudes and beliefs of both respondents and researchers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Since this study takes a qualitative and interpretive paradigm and aims to explore participants' subjective interpretation and intercultural academic identity conflicts in intercultural encounters, grounded theory can facilitate to achieve this goal.

Meanwhile, grounded theory emphasises an iterative and cyclic process between the research question, sampling (choosing participants and episodes), data collection, coding, categorizing and generating/testing theory. As Strauss and Corbin state, 'data collection, analysis, and eventual theory stand in close relationship to one another' (1998: 12). Since this study aims to develop an intercultural adaptation concept and model from empirical research, constructivist grounded theory can be a very suitable analysis strategy in this study.

One of analysis strategies of this study is the emphasis of the connection between data



collection, analysis and theme/theory generation. For example, when I analysed an episode of classroom interaction between C2 and T11 (Section 6.3.2.3), one part of the recording of the conversation was not very clear. Therefore, I contacted C2 and T11 for clarification and consent to use this specific episode in the analysis. C2 sent an email confirming, ‘please feel free to put the whole thing into your work, all fine for me’ (C2, 260606, email); then replied to my specific questions and provided further thoughts and reflections on this episode. Therefore, I experienced and benefited from the cyclic process of collecting, analysing and writing/representing, and enjoyed the rapport built with my participants. And the participants’ updated and further reflection made the research more reflective and legitimate.

I kept on asking myself: On what basis would I choose which data to use, which issues to focus on, which stories to tell? One strategy of selecting data for analysis is to follow Silverman’s suggestion of doing ‘deviant case analysis’ (2001: 83) by selecting not only cases that fit original suppositions but also including those that do not fit. Therefore, both negative and positive episodes and views of participants were selected and analysed in this study. For example, the first episode in each stage of group communication in Chapter 7 is a successful story/episode (Section 7.2.3), followed with several unhappy/unsuccessful ones (Section 7.2.4). The other strategy of selecting data for analysis is based on significance of extracts of the field note/interview to the research question and the particular situation. The third strategy of selecting extract is to consider the impact of the researcher’s own identity and cultural values on the judgement and discretion of the analysis (Denscombe, 2003) (see the researcher’s reflexivity in Section 5.6.1 and 5.6.2)

#### **4.5.2 Data organization**

I had accumulated hundreds of pages of data after one year of active data collection. The next task was to organize these data in a way that would help the researcher to understand the Chinese students’ intercultural adaptation experiences. As Wolcott (1994) suggests, a major challenge for qualitative researchers is not how to obtain data, but how to decide what to do with the data they obtained. ‘Organizing data is a theoretical task’ (Norton, 2000). Firstly, I made systematic comparisons among the data, then I tried to explain data in a ‘conceptually coherent way’ (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 69). I established five separate files for different sources of data collected for this study: interview transcripts, field notes, individual assignments, exam marks and questionnaire responses. Since there were large numbers of interview transcripts from different participant groups, and field note from different courses, I will mainly discuss how I organize interview and field notes in this section.

##### **4.5.2.1 Organization of interviews**

Firstly, I established four files for four cultural groups: Chinese students, British students, International students, and Teachers. Four letters were used to stand for each group, C, B, I and T respectively. An individual

person's interview file was named by letter, code number and date. For example, the British student 1 interviewed on 23 March 2004 has interview file name 'B1, 230304'. The researcher kept a name list with each person's real name, the code number and other personal details (e.g. gender, age, job, email/phone contact). For the pair or group interviews, I named participants in alphabetical order, e.g. 'C1, C3, C4, C9, 190404' or 'B27 & I14, 190504'. Since the majority of Chinese students were interviewed two or three times in different periods. I organized these interviews by letter, code number and date. For example, C9 was interviewed four times, his/her interviews were named C9, 231003; C9, 220304; C9, 270804; and C9, 250106.

#### **4.5.2.2 Organization of field notes**

The observation field notes were organized according to different course names. Field notes were named by course name, date, lecturer name (since the core module was normally taught by three or four lecturers). Each course had a separate file, including field notes, course pack, assignment sheet, exam questions, case studies. For example, a field note for Course D session on 23 Oct 2003, taught by lecturer or Teacher 2, was: Course D, 231003, T2. Each field note has a standard format as well (e.g. date/time, unit/session name, venue, number of participants and teaching facilities) (see Appendix 13).

Field notes on group observation were also organized by course names and names of two key group numbers. For example, there were three Chinese-British groups for Course F (as the main file), therefore, three groups were named: C6 & B1; C9 & B3; C10 & B9. Any information about each group was put in the same file (including field notes, emails between group members and between the researcher and group members, presentation slides, individual/group assignments, course pack, case studies). The field note for group work was named in the similar order as classroom observation. For example, a field note from C13 and B2 group on 25 Nov 2003 was named: Field note, C13 & B2, 251103, group work for Course C.

#### **4.5.3 Data analysis procedures**

This study emphasises Chinese students' intercultural adaptation process. Since 'process involves analysing changes over time', and 'changes can be analysed through phases, key incidents or the complex interplay of factors' (Dey, 1993: 39), I analysed data on an ongoing or recursive basis and tried to make connections between coding, categorizing and generating themes. Therefore, looking for patterns or themes is a form of analysis (Fetterman, 1998). 'Ethnographers look for patterns of thought and behaviour. Patterns are a form of ethnographic reliability. Ethnographers see patterns of thought action repeat in various situations and with various players' (ibid.: 96). Analysis in this study is a systematic and repeatable process, which involves the following three phases:

Phase 1 Four cultural groups of participants' interviews were firstly processed into computer-assisted software (NVivo 2.0) for initial line-by-line coding and categorizing

(five of each group), since it helps specify and ‘sharpen the use of sensitizing concepts’ (Charmaz, 2000: 515). However, I found it tends to lead the researcher to fragment data, and lacks a sense of context and narrative flow (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Moreover, since there is a variety of data sources supplementary to each other in this study, for the purpose of triangulation, I found it was very time-consuming and impossible to put them all in the analysis software, therefore, after the initial coding and categorising of the interview data, I used a manual method to cross-check and compare data from different sources, since manual analysis helps the researcher have a holistic view and a closer feeling about the data.

Secondly, I mainly adopted an episode method to analyse mixed data. For example, four critical incidents/episodes were chosen from the vast field notes and interviews of Chinese students and British lecturers in the first stage (end of September to mid November 2003). Each episode presents a typical strategy adopted by Chinese students in the classroom discussion (see Table 4.3 and Appendix 18 for details). After comparing four episodes during this stage, two categories were identified: language inefficiency (subcategory: vocabulary, listening, speaking) and unfamiliarity and uncertainty with the target socio-academic culture and new student role/identity (subcategory - asking, challenging, independent learning). Then I continued to find these categories in the other interviews until it was saturated. Then the main theme emerged in the first stage: unfamiliarity and uncertainty – Chinese students had initial language/academic difficulties, many of them encountered culture shock and academic identity conflict. Meanwhile, lecturers’ strategies adopted to cope with Chinese students’ different classroom communication behaviours were also examined, in order to demonstrate two-way adaptation process in the early stage.

Table 4.3 The first-stage attitudes and strategies in classroom settings

Stage 1	Theme	Participants	Strategy (Cs/Ts)
Episode 1	‘The lecturer did not tell us what ‘JIT’ meant’	C28 & T15; C16 & T14; C6 & T14	Asking co-nationals after class/not providing explicit instructions (separation/separation)
Episode 2	Why Chinese students whispered in class?	C9 & T2; T11; C22 & T17; C34 & T39	Asking co-nationals in class by whispering/frustration (separation/separation)
Episode 3	Asking ‘the single right answer’ after class	T1; T30; C9 & T2	Asking lecturers after class/frustration (separation/mixed)
Episode 4	‘I was interrupted’	C6 & T4; C12 & T34	Asking lecturers in class/not providing enough time and space (integration/mixed)

Phase 2 The field notes and interviews of the second and third stage were examined and compared in the same way as I did in the first stage. The themes of the second and third stage were identified: confrontation and frustration stage, and integration and satisfaction stage. By comparing these three themes, I found a three-stage pattern of Chinese students’ classroom communication behaviour and academic identity adaptation: from unfamiliarity/uncertainty stage, via gradual adaptation/frustration stage, to the final integration and satisfaction stage.

Thirdly, after identifying three themes from field notes/interviews, I examined supplementary evidence: questionnaire and exam marks to see if I could find similar/opposite results for triangulation.

Phase 3 I continuously went back to the field and did more observation and interviews, in order to test the generated categories, themes and patterns, and refine and modify categories (Bryman, 2001). More data showed similar themes and patterns, until they were saturated; then I made connections between the literature and themes emerging from the data, to conceptualize and refine research questions and try to develop a conceptual model and framework in the third phase of analysis; finally I tried to answer the research questions raised in the beginning of the chapter and drew a conclusion for the whole chapter.

#### **4.5.4 Analysis methods**

Generally speaking, I adopted several methods for analysis: episode analysis, transcript analysis (in both classroom and group interactions, see Section 5.4.2; Section 8.2.2), comparison method, artificial dialogue (see Section 5.4.2), key sentence/quote analysis (see Section 5.4.2), and email correspondence (between group members) analysis (see Section 8.4.2). I will mainly discuss the first four analysis methods in this section.

##### **4.5.4.1 Episode analysis**

‘Key events’ (Fetherman, 1998: 98) or critical incidents can be used to analyse an entire culture or situation, since key events or critical incidents provide ‘a lens through which to view a culture’ (ibid.: 99). There are different ‘key events’ and crucial incidents of intercultural interaction between Chinese students and British lecturers/students in each stage of the two-way adaptation process. I adopted episode analysis method to highlight key events and represent how Chinese students and British lecturers/students coped with expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts in the particular context. ‘Episode’ in this study refers to one incident or more than one incident. Some episodes may consist of one key incident, supplemented by several similar incidents, which share the same theme, for the sake of triangulation and generalization of the analysis and findings, thus consequently strengthening the validity and reliability of the research. The title of the episode is the theme of each episode. For example, whispering to help each other in class is one typical Chinese students’ ‘trait’ (T2, 281003) in the initial stage of classroom adaptation. I chose Course D (C9 & T2) extract as the key episode, Course E, A and K extracts as the supplementary data, since they all shared the same theme: Chinese students whispered in class, British lecturers tended to feel frustrated about Chinese students’ whispering (Extract 1 & 2) and the reasons for Chinese students’ whispering (Extract 3 & 4) (see Section 5.4.3, Episode 2, ‘Why did Chinese students whisper in class?’).

Most episodes were based on observation field notes, together with follow-up interviews of relevant participants involved in the same episode (or in the same group), based on a snowball sampling strategy, as discussed in Section 4.4.2.

Each episode consists of three parts:

- i) Introduction – a brief background introduction, extracts of field notes and interview quotes;
- ii) Discussion – alternative interpretations of the episode, presented by subtitles as generated questions sometimes, and followed with further interview quotes when necessary, then an artificial dialogue will be developed and demonstrated, as theoretical theme of each episode;
- iii) Summary – a brief conclusion of the episode, related to the literature review.

Some episodes were followed with a mini case study of a particular participant involved in the episode for further information on the individual's adaptation change (Section 8.4.3.2).

#### 4.5.4.2 Transcript analysis

Since this study is an ethnographic study, I tried to provide a detailed description of what participants did in 'naturally occurring' situations (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1993), with a particular emphasis on the expectation gaps and role conflicts between British lecturers/students and Chinese students in the particular contexts and episodes. Meanwhile, it aims to explore both external and internal factors that influence Chinese students' classroom/group communication behaviour and relationship with British lecturers and students during their intercultural interactions, therefore, transcript analysis was adopted, and non-verbal language and classroom environment was also considered in the analysis process. For example:

*T11: Yeah (T11 spoke in a low voice, B12 cleared his throat, C7 raised his hand).  
 C7: Sometimes, we send emails just because my boss forward to others, you can copy to others//  
 T11: //Yeah, but it's to do with the task...I thought it was just like 'Hi, how are you', a sort of personal thing when you send it to the person next to you  
 I6: Anyway talking about something personal should not use company's facility.  
 T11: No, you shouldn't (some people applauded and laughed) very good (T11 spoke in a high pitch). Yeah, B12 (B12 raised his hand) (Field note and analysis, 141103, Course E, see section 6.2.3).*

In this extract, firstly, I analysed the verbal interaction between the lecturer and students, especially how the lecturer T11 repeatedly emphasised the personal view of the classroom argument, rather than a task-based aspect on which two Chinese students focused. I highlighted the word 'but' and underlined two key sentences in the extract, to emphasise the lecturer's attitudes and views. Secondly, I analysed participants' non-verbal language, to demonstrate how British lecturers/students and Chinese/international students responded to the classroom interactions. For example, T11 turned his/her voice from a high pitch to a low pitch when two Chinese students interrupted T11, then he/she shifted to a high pitch voice again when the European student I6 made a compromising comment. B12 cleared his/her throat after the lecturer told the first Chinese student C2 that his/her argument was not relevant. Chinese students kept silent in the subsequent discussions.

Furthermore, the underlined key sentence or phrase in field notes and interviews had another important function – indicating a theme generated from the quotes. For example, the quote ‘we don’t mark efforts, we mark outputs’ (T2, 281003) was drawn directly into the artificial ‘dialogue’ (see Dialogue 6.2 in Section 6.3.2.3) indicating an expectation gap between Chinese students and British lecturers on the issue of empathy and competence (see Section 6.3.3.3).

#### **4.5.4.3 Comparison methods**

I adopted a comparison method as one of my data analysis strategies, in order to achieve more valid and reliable interpretations. Firstly, I compared Chinese individual participants’ classroom/group communication behaviour and role/identity change over time by comparing their interviews and research journals in different stages. For example, I compared C9’s different group work behaviour in his/her three mixed group activities in three stages, and concluded that his/her group behaviour did not change over time, it was more dependent on the particular context and group members’ cultural sensitivity.

Secondly, I compared culturally different participants’ interpretations of the same incident, to explore the underlying reasons for the cultural conflicts. Thirdly, I compared group communication and relationship development between native speakers and Chinese students and between international students and Chinese students, to examine the underlying reasons for Chinese students’ difficulties in developing communication/relationships with British students. Fourthly, I made a comparison between two streams of MBA students (experienced executive managers and recent graduate students), to explore how different assessment criteria/requirements influenced their final performance. Fifthly, I did comparisons between field notes and episodes. For example, in section 6.4.5.2, I compared two lecturers’ question styles in two different episodes (section 6.4.2 and 6.4.5), to explore two different teaching philosophies and strategies and how they influenced Chinese students’ classroom behaviour and learning outcomes. A specific example of how I used comparison method doing student participants’ final mark analysis is given in Appendix 14.

#### **4.5.4.4 Artificial dialogue and key sentence analysis**

An artificial ‘dialogue’ (Jin, 1992) is another representation method adopted in this study. In each episode, I put both British lecturers’/students’ and Chinese students’ interview quotes together, to form an artificial dialogue, in order to highlight the expectation gaps and cultural conflicts between two sides. In this study, two sides in one episode tended to have little interaction between each other, as a third person I presented their perspectives through these artificial dialogues. It is hoped that these dialogues can bridge both sides an increasing awareness of each other’s thoughts and feelings, and enhance the effectiveness of representation as well, since each dialogue represents a theoretical theme derived from analysis of each episode.

Furthermore, I also adopted key sentence analysis method, by quoting interview extracts in the analysis and representation. For example, in Section 5.4.2, lecturers and Chinese students' interviews show that they had different views on teachers' roles and students' roles. I put some key phrases and sentences of interview quotes together to represent a central theme; Chinese students tend to emphasise teacher's role as 'transmitting knowledge', 'having rich knowledge', 'having cutting edge knowledge' (C12, 080704), 'giving clear instructions' (C22, 111003), 'teach us more (C23, 161003). By contrast, lecturers thought the student's role was to 'ask' (T6, 201004), 'actively participate' (T2, 282003), 'disagree' (T1, 251103), 'challenge theories' and lecturers (T5, 121004), and 'take responsibility' on their own learning (T4, 240504), and 'have their own ideas' (T26, 050505).

Finally, email analysis was also adopted in this study (see section 8.4.2). This method helped me to represent key views from as many participants as possible, it can highlight the theme (show expectation gaps and cultural identity conflicts) and save writing space, since I had large quantities of data from different groups of participants. One of the advantages of email correspondence analysis is the specific time of sending email provides another evidence of Chinese students' academic life: they were hardworking – most emails were sent after midnight and they had generally good attitudes towards group work – they gave quick responses to the emails from British members.

## 4.6 Representation

I will discuss and justify strategies I used in representation in this section. As discussed in research design, representation is a crucial stage of the whole process of research (see Figure 1.3). Two representation strategies adopted in this study will be discussed below: multiple voice and reflexivity (Bryman, 2001: 22).

Firstly, this qualitative/ethnographic study emphasises participants' voices being heard, thus I tried to represent the exact wording of participants in the text. I used many 'concrete examples' (Cameron, 2001: 188) and extracts of field notes and interviews in the analysis chapters, especially the classroom/group interactions, in order to allow readers to evaluate the inferences drawn from data and the interpretations made of them (Brewer, 2001). It is hoped the researcher has presented a truthful picture and a rich description of Chinese students' intercultural adaptation experience in this study.

Secondly, this study emphasises multiple voices of different cultural groups of participants (Chinese, British, non-Chinese & non-British students and MBA staff), throughout the data collection, analysis and representation process. I adopted triangulation as my writing/representation strategy, by telling the same story from different perspectives, in order to present the multiple and refracted realities (Richardson, 2000) and increase plausibility of the research. Interviews, questionnaire and individual assignment data were all from four cultural groups, in order to cross-check how different nationals perceived each other, so as to avoid researcher's cultural bias and enhance the research result.

Thirdly, I adopted reflexivity as a presentation strategy. As a qualitative/ethnographic researcher, I believe that any research is value-laden or value bound, thus the researcher's personal 'voice' and 'reflexivity' (Bryman, 2001: 22) is emphasised and reflected in the study, e.g. I used the first person form 'I' in the representation; meanwhile I am aware that the researcher should be open about his/her own personal bias in the representation to readers. Therefore, I always attempted to seek different factors that might influence data interpretation in writing, such as location of the setting, sensitivity of the topic, power relations in the field and the nature of the social interaction between the researcher and the researched, and I tried to be more reflective to the process how I extracted knowledge/theory from observations and interviews with participants and how I transmitted knowledge/theory and the implications of the research to the reader. In sum, I tried to frequently justify myself and adopt a critical attitude towards how and why I collected, analysed, represented and legitimated data throughout the research process.

Fourthly, though this study tended to emphasise the expectation gaps and cultural conflicts between different cultural groups, I have been always aware of the uniqueness of each individual in the research process. Therefore, I considered how the participants' previous experience and personal traits influenced their intercultural adaptation process and learning outcome (see section 8.2.3.2).

#### **4.6.1 Multi-identities of the researcher - intercultural researcher**

Since researcher identities (e.g. age, gender, social status, ethnicity and religion) will influence research practice and relations with participants (Brewer, 2000), I tried to ensure that the researcher's own identity and values in the analysis and representation have been acknowledged.

To some extent, I was equally an insider of both groups. I have the advantage of being accepted as an 'insider' by the Chinese community/cohort quickly, due to my common backgrounds with the participants (the same linguistic, cultural and educational background, previous business experience in China). Therefore, the good rapport built between the researcher and the Chinese participants helped me to explore Chinese participants' inner thoughts and conflicts deeply. Meanwhile, I completed my MA course in the UK one year before the participants studied their MBA courses, thus the familiarity with both educational systems helped me to interpret both British and Chinese participants' situation well.

I was also concerned to what extent my interpretation and representation was influenced by a Chinese researcher's bias towards a study on culturally different people's intercultural adaptation experiences. Realizing this, I tried to take an open, dynamic and critical attitude towards what happened and what participants said, by negotiating and constructing meanings during interactions with participants; and by comparing different voices from cultural groups of participants, rather than one single voice from Chinese students only, in



order to reconstruct and represent a more reliable and unbiased pictures and realities of participants' lives. For example, I represented both negative and positive episodes from different cultural groups in the writing, in order to enhance the validity and reliability of the research.

As a Chinese researcher, one concern for me is whether the British and other international participants provided me with their true perceptions on Chinese students' communication behaviour and views on their relationship development. For example, when I asked a British student's opinion on Chinese members' behaviour in his/her group work, he/she hesitated and smiled, 'forgive me to say this...'. Another British student said 'Well, it's hard to say...'. Bearing this in mind, I always tried to explain that I am a researcher, aiming to unravel a truthful story about what was happening and what the people were thinking during their intercultural encounters, in order to diminish their expectation gaps and cultural conflicts and ultimately improve the current situation.

#### **4.6.2 Self reflections: Intercultural learning experience**

I found research itself is a valuable personal intercultural learning experience and a process of self awareness and cultural awareness. My intercultural sensitivity changed from initial ethnocentric to a final ethno-relative perspective, during continuous interactions with different cultural groups in this learning process. This study is an intercultural research exploring participants' subjective reflections on their own and others' intercultural communication behaviours and relationship, and interview interactions involve some degrees of cultural sensitivity of both the researcher and interviewees. At the beginning, my interest was in a comparison of two cultural groups of Chinese and British students' opinions. As the research progressed, I found other international students' opinions on Chinese and British groups tended to be more neutral and reliable due to their third-party position.

For example, the interview interactions between a RMBA British student, a Greek and the researcher below can reflect this point. This pair interview was conducted in a natural way, during a break time waiting for a postponed session in the corridor. I was initially more interested in B27's opinions on Chinese students, due to my research focus on Chinese and British students' cultural conflicts. When I listened to the tape repeatedly, I found the British student B27 and I often interrupted I14, and B27 tended to dominate the interview (his frequency and length of talk were much more than the Greek interviewee I14). I was surprised at how my personal preference and attitudes influenced the interviewees' participation in the pair/group interview. There exists a power relation between the researcher and participants, and between the native and non-native participants during interview interactions (another reason is that I14's accent and pace of speaking made the researcher find it difficult to follow). But fortunately, the interview transcription shows that I (and B27) gradually realized this and involved I14 more in the interactions. For example, I had a pair interview with B27 and I14. After a long conversation with B27, I turned to I14 for his/her opinions on the reasons why people tend to stick to their own national group

(This is one of advantages of group interview – to get cross-referenced information from the interviewees).

*B27: ...I noticed a separation, I don't know why, people tend to stick to the same cultural group.*

*R: Why, can you give me some reasons? (Turned to I14 for his/her opinions)*

*I14: I think it is the same way.*

*R: Do you speak to your own group, I mean ten Greek people in class?*

*I14: First of all, about Greeks.*

*B27: Sorry (to I14).*

*I14: It's ok, that's all right. I can see 50 percent of Greeks stick to a Greek community, it is a very very tight community, and I think it is natural as human being. I consider I belong to the other 50 percent, who want an interaction with other cultures (B27 & I14 190504).*

Firstly, it is interesting to notice that B27 said 'sorry' to I14, it may be partly because B27 thought that his/her opinion on 'people tried to stick to the same cultural group' might offend I14, or because he/she thought he/she had talked too much and did not give I14 an opportunity to speak. This interview experience made me realize it is difficult to get two culturally different persons equally involved in the same conversation.

Secondly, I found I was very much inspired by I14's opinions on his/her own cultural group – '50 percent of Greeks stick to a Greek community', since this quote reminds the researcher of another avenue to seek the research issue: Greek students as the second biggest non-native group (13%) in the MBA programme, tend to have some similar or different patterns with Chinese students (20%) in their intercultural adaptation process. It can be a comparative study for future work, by comparing other cultural groups' adaptation patterns in the target culture (e.g. 12% of Taiwan students, 9% of Indian and 6% of Thai students in RMBA class).

Thirdly, more importantly, I found I14's opinions on Chinese students were more empathetic than British students. For example, when talking about the reasons for quietness of Chinese students, B27 emphasised Chinese students' lack of English proficiency; whereas I14 disagreed and defended Chinese students by emphasising two points: the effort Chinese students made in their MBA study; and Chinese students' language and academic cultural distances that influenced their involvement in classroom discussions.

*I14: //First of all, I don't know how much effort everybody putting in learning English, because Greek is more close than Eastern Chinese, if I spent the same effort learning English maybe I speak better English, because such similar language, I don't have to learn English; Chinese have to learn. Second, they are not used to expressing some points in class, that style of communication, they are not comfortable to do it. I don't have problem speaking in class, they may feel that they are not confident (B27 & I14 190504).*

I14's above quotes show that non-British and non-Chinese students, who have the similar

language and culture adaptation experience tend to take more empathetic attitudes towards Chinese students. Therefore the third party's views are presented in the analysis to enhance validity of the research.

The research has provided me with an opportunity to reflect on my previous cultural assumptions and values during the research process. I constantly reflected whether my understanding and interpretation of different cultural groups of participants was influenced by my own ethnocentrism or stereotypes. This is a fundamental and inevitable change. I felt that I was standing between the two cultures, since I contacted both sides and was accepted by both sides. The role of an intercultural researcher has enabled me to have a better understanding of my own position and more importantly the theme of this study, thus hopefully enhanced the trustworthiness of the research.

#### **4.7 Ethical Issues**

All research is influenced by the values and beliefs of the researcher (Weber, 1946; Denscombe, 2003). Therefore, the researcher's own values and responsibilities to those being studied need to be considered through the process of the research.

Firstly, I was aware of ethical issues from the beginning of my research. I foresaw some problems and issues that might arise during the research process and asked some questions such as 'Is it a morally sensitive topic?', 'Will I harm my subjects?', 'How to deal with stereotyping?'. Therefore, I made an ethical protocol related to this study, and highlighted different issues in different stages of my research (see Appendix 4).

For example, during the research question formulation period, I realized my research topic and research questions might be sensitive and biased to my subjects, then I made some modifications. Originally my research questions focused on the language and culture shock that Chinese MBA students have encountered, and misunderstanding and miscommunication existed between British lecturers/students and Chinese students. My supervisor suggested not using these kinds of negative words, since they tended to be a bias against those who would not or had not encountered these problems. I adopted the word 'adaptation experience' and 'expectation gaps' instead of 'culture shock', 'misunderstanding' and 'miscommunication'. Gradually my research questions focused on both Chinese students' and British lecturers/students' academic cultural identity adaptation process, in which culture and academic cultural distance are considered as two of the main factors.

Secondly, I always attempted to ensure that the participants had been carefully and truthfully informed about this research. I tried to ask consent from the participants in each stage of the research. For example, I chose overt participant observation, informing participants about my research purposes at the very beginning of the fieldwork. I asked participants' consent before I tape recorded classroom/group discussions. During the analysis and writing-up stage, I contacted some participants for their consent to use their

interview quotes in the analysis, invited them to check over transcripts and the initial analysis when necessary, and showed my appreciation for their understanding and help with my study.

Thirdly, I have been always aware of protecting the participants' privacy and confidentiality. Some Chinese participants regarded the interviews as an opportunity to make their voices heard, therefore, they provided me with lots of valuable opinions and advice. I tried to ensure that all the information participants provided has been treated with strict confidentiality, since it is the researcher's responsibility to protect participants. For example, I tried to anonymize the participants by using pseudonyms in order to protect the identity of the subjects. The university I studied is pseudo-named 'Weston University' and each informant was given a pseudonym, e.g. Chinese students were labelled C1, C2..., British students were called B1, B2... and so on. In order to protect the lecturers, I adopted 'he/she' to avoid recognition of the particular lecturer in the classroom interaction, meanwhile, I named the courses as 'Course A', 'Course B'... for the same ethical reason.

## 4.8 Conclusion

In sum, in this methodology and method chapter, I have discussed the theoretical paradigm, research strategy, and mixed method/triangulation collection methods, analysis method, strategies of representation and relevant ethical issues in this research. These issues all relate to my research purpose and research questions.

Firstly, a qualitative and interpretive paradigm as a philosophical framework, ethnography as a research strategy was explored; secondly, mixed method/triangulation (e.g. observation, interview, questionnaire, documentary analysis) as a data collection strategy was examined; thirdly, grounded theory as a data analysis strategy and several specific analysis methods (episode, transcript analysis, dialogue, key sentence analysis, comparison methods) was discussed and justified. I support the views on blurring the boundaries of quantitative and qualitative paradigms and mixing these two strategies together in one research study (e.g. the use of mixed methods or triangulation), in order to maximize the validity and reliability of the research. There exist some problems in using the mixed method strategy, e.g. it is time-consuming, the researcher needs more training, some results are contradictory and so on. But this does not deny the future potential to use mixed method strategy in the research.

The next four chapters are analysis and findings of the empirical research, based on vast mixed data collected throughout the research. Chapters 5-7 are British lecturers and Chinese students' two-way intercultural adaptation process in the classroom communication context. Chapter 8 is British students and Chinese students' two-way adaptation process in the group communication context.

## **Chapter 5 The first-stage adaptation between Chinese students and British lecturers: Unfamiliarity and frustration**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Chapters 5-7 are analysis chapters about the two-way intercultural adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers in the classroom communication context. Chapters 5-7 aim to present the findings on how Chinese students adapted to the new academic identities – questioning, challenging and independent learning, as expected in the new learning environment; how British lecturers responded to Chinese students' expectations, and how both sides coped with the tension between retaining their original academic values and identities, and developing new intercultural academic values and identities in the classroom interactions. As argued in Chapter 1, the analysis of Chapters 5-7 focus on exploring not only cultural and academic cultural distances that influence the two-way adaptation process, but also on identifying some other factors: contextual factors (e.g. legitimate pedagogical culture) and personal factors (e.g. degree of intercultural sensitivity).

The general research question in Chapters 5-7 is:

- How do Chinese students and British lecturers undertake a two-way intercultural adaptation process in the classroom communication context?

Sub questions are as follows:

- What are the expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts between Chinese students and British lecturers in each stage of adaptation over one year?
- What attitudes and strategies have Chinese students and British lecturers adopted to respond to intercultural adaptation?
- What factors influence both Chinese students' and British lecturers' intercultural adaptation process?

A three-stage intercultural adaptation process in the classroom context is identified, based on the course schedule, classroom interaction performance, field notes, interview and questionnaire responses.

- The first stage: 'unfamiliarity and frustration' stage (from the end of September 2003 – mid November 2003). Core courses are Course A and B (and some initial sessions of Course D and E). Four episodes were chosen to represent some expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts between Chinese students and British lecturers. Strategies adopted by Chinese students and British lecturers were examined. The key question is: 'Why were Chinese students quiet and less challenging than British students in the early stage?'

- The second stage: ‘gradual adaptation and frustration’ stage (from mid November 2003 – end of January 2004). Core courses are Course C, D and E. Two episodes (Course E classroom interaction and Course E presentation marking incident) were chosen to explore the key question ‘Why did Chinese students complain that they were disadvantaged in classroom debate and oral presentation?’
- The third stage: ‘adaptation and satisfaction’ stage (from early February to end of September 2004). The core course is Course F. A dissertation writing period (end of May to the end of September 2004) was included in this stage. Three episodes were chosen to represent Chinese students’ classroom behaviour change and explore the underlying factors that influence Chinese students’ and British lecturers’ classroom interaction and two-way adaptation process. The key question is: ‘why did Chinese students’ classroom behaviour differ in different sessions?’.

This chapter presents findings of the first-stage intercultural adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers: unfamiliarity and frustration. Two extracts of field notes are first presented to show Chinese students’ initial quiet classroom behaviour. Then Chinese students’ and British lecturers’ attitudes towards their initial adaptation experience are examined. Furthermore, strategies in response to expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts are explored, in which some expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts between Chinese students and British lecturers are elaborated, the underlying factors that influence these gaps and conflicts are identified and discussed. Finally, the first-stage relationship between Chinese students and British lecturers is examined.

## **5.2 Chinese students were quiet in class**

During this early stage (end of September 2003 – mid November 2003), a large number of field notes, interviews and questionnaire responses show that Chinese students were generally quiet and less challenging in the classroom discussion especially in the first few sessions, in both EMBA and RMBA classes. Some active Chinese students’ questions were generally for clarification rather than for challenging knowledge and lecturers. They did not meet the expectations of the new students’ role and academic identities - questioning, challenging and independent in learning in the classroom settings. Moreover, they encountered some initial academic problems – lack of communication skills (e.g. turn-taking and presentation skills) and unfamiliarity with the subject knowledge, academic knowledge and socio-cultural knowledge of the host society. Many of them tended to adopt separation strategies by retaining their previous academic cultural values and identities) in coping with the new academic cultural identities in the first stage.

Two extracts of field notes on the same subject area (Course E) for both EMBA and RMBA students are shown below. These show the main pattern of Chinese students’ classroom behaviour – less questioning and challenging in the initial stage of their study (six to eight weeks after starting the MBA courses). These two extracts were chosen from many similar field notes on different subject areas, though Chinese students tended to be

rather active in numeracy-based subjects like Course C and D (see Appendix 15). This may be because numeracy-based subjects require less high English language skills, and involve less Western philosophy and values than some literacy-based subjects, such as Course E and Course I.

<Extract 1> (Field note, 071103, Course E).

*Chinese students were generally quiet and less challenging in this selected session. British students took 26 turns in class, whereas Chinese students took 10 in total. Many of Chinese students' turns were solicited talk - by answering the questions rather than raising questions or arguing. And their talk was mainly during the brainstorming activity, maybe because this activity required short answers from the students.*

*The nature of Chinese students' classroom talk in this session was mainly for clarification and understanding, their questions were 'which company?', 'what does it mean by...?'. There was no disagreement or challenge from Chinese students in this selected session (Field note, 071103, Course E, see Appendix 16 for details).*

Table 5.1 Classroom interaction in Course E session 071103

	Total turns	Initiated talk	Solicited talk
Chinese students	10	2	8
British students	26	2	24

(Based on Edwards and Westgate (1994: 85)'s Verbal Interaction Category System).

The next extract from field notes shows that RMBA Chinese students had similar classroom behaviour – quiet and less challenging in the early stage of their study in the UK.

<Extract 2>

*T11 taught Course E in both streams, at nearly the same time with similar contents, but with different teaching methods. I noticed that T11 asked more factual and information-related questions in the RMBA class, e.g. 'who are internals', 'who are type A?', 'Anyone can give examples of value change?' During break time, T11 told me, 'it is quite different, in the EMBA class, you can't stop them; but here you have to push them. I have to adjust my teaching style to accommodate them by asking direct questions'*

*There was only one verbal communication from Chinese students during a 55 minute selected session. Four Chinese students raised their hands silently in response to the lecturer's question 'who are internals' or 'who are type A?' (Field note, RMBA, 271103, Course E, details see Appendix 17).*

Table 5.2 Classroom interaction in Course E session 271103 (RMBA)

	Total talk	Initiated talk	Solicited talk	Non-verbal
Chinese students	5	0	1	4
British students	17	4	8	5

The above two field note extracts show that both EMBA and RMBA Chinese students were

generally quiet and less challenging in the above two sessions. Their talk was normally for clarification and information, rather than expressing their own opinions or challenging lecturers.

The reason for comparing these two groups of Chinese students is to see a whole picture of Chinese MBA students' classroom behaviour in the initial stage. RMBA's average age is 23-25, they were much younger than EMBA students and many of them were straight from their first degree; most of them were born after 1980, in which the one-child policy began to operate in China. They are normally called 'new generation', who tend to be the centre of the family, with better learning facilities (computer-based learning) and family support. They were born after China's economic reform and open-door policy (1978), they are thus regarded to be more influenced by Western individualistic ideas through the media and less influenced by traditional Chinese culture. They attended university after 1997, when the Chinese higher education reform started; there are more foreign language teachers on campus, I assumed they might have better English skills and better classroom performance. Unexpectedly, I found that these RMBA students were quieter than the EMBA Chinese students, for similar reasons as EMBA students – an exam-oriented transmission approach, 'face' issues, the language barrier and other reasons (e.g. they were less confident about themselves and the subject; their class is bigger than the EMBA class - 80 in EMBA and 110 in RMBA classes).

In summary, Chinese students had a similar pattern in their classroom behaviour in both EMBA and RMBA programmes. They were less active and challenging than British students in the classroom discussion.

### **5.3 Attitudes adopted in the first stage of adaptation process**

This section discusses Chinese students' and British lecturers' attitudes and strategies adopted in the initial stage of adaptation process (For Chinese students' and British lecturers'/students' further attitudes and strategies in other stages of intercultural adaptation process see Section 6.3.3 and 8.5 respectively).

Based on Berry *et al.*'s (1988, 1989) four adaptation modes or attitudes – assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation (see Section 2.3.2), this study has identified two general attitudes and strategies that are mostly adopted by both Chinese students and British lecturers/students in their intercultural encounters: integration and separation. Since MBA students only studied their course and stayed in the UK for one year, few adopted assimilation and marginalisation attitudes and strategy.

Separation means participants tended to be culturally insensitive and retain their original academic cultural identities, values and relationships; integration infers that participants tended to be culturally sensitive and develop new academic identities (intercultural academic identity) values and relationships.



In the early stage of the intercultural adaptation process, most Chinese students and British lecturers tended to adopt separation strategies. There were many expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts between them. Both sides tended to feel frustrated.

### 5.3.1 Adopting separation strategy

The majority of Chinese students adopted separation strategy in the early stage of adaptation. Actually these Chinese students encountered psychological struggles and academic identity conflicts. The early stage interviews show that the majority of Chinese students encountered language and culture difficulties from the beginning of the MBA study and they were very anxious and frustrated about their quiet behaviour in class. Many of them encountered ‘language shock’, ‘culture shock’ and ‘academic identity conflict’ – they felt frustrated about the role shift, from their previous role as a good student and competent manager (Chinese EMBA students’ average work experience was 9 years, 53% of them were lower-intermediate managers in their workplaces in China), to the current role as academically incompetent and language-disadvantaged international students. They used terms such as ‘frustrated’, ‘stressed’, ‘impatient’, ‘concerned’, ‘worried’, ‘depressed’, ‘lost my confidence’, ‘guilty’, ‘upset’, ‘totally lost’, ‘afraid’ to describe their uncertainty and anxiety. These students tended to be less confident to speak in class, and they tended to adopt their original academic identity – to be quiet most of the time in classroom discussion.

For example, C4 used to work as an intermediate manager in a joint venture company, he/she felt very upset about his/her performance in classroom and group work discussion.

*C4: I feel very upset.... I feel guilty when I haven't contributed much to my group...I can only understand 60-70 percent of lectures...I feel totally lost. I was a competent manager in my company before, but now I am nobody, I am not even a competent student (C4, 121003).*

C4 wrote his/her feelings/reflections of role change in his/her individual assignment:

*'I was going through another change and a new learning curve. I am trying to adapt to a new environment and a new life style – a student life, as opposed to the life of a middle manager...which proved to be not as easy as it may seem, especially in the beginning' (C4, 281003, assignment for Course A).*

Many Chinese students did not prepare for this psychological adaptation prior to their studying abroad.

*C1: I did not expect to have met with such a frustrated feeling that my communication ability prevented me from involving in classroom and group discussion! I did prepare for the language and subjects before I came to the UK. I felt very worried when I realized that I could not improve myself quickly within short time (C1, 171003).*

However, many interviews with these students in the second and third stage show that

these students became more confident and active in classroom/group discussions (see Section 6.2.2, 7.2 and 7.3).

Some other Chinese students who adopted separation strategy tend to have a negative attitude towards British students' active participation, but positive views on Chinese students' silent behaviour. They used the expressions 'aggressive', 'spoke too much', 'self-centred', 'proud of themselves', 'dominated', 'showing off' to describe British students, and 'modest and polite' to Chinese students.

*C29: Sometimes they (British students) seem to speak too much and not relevant. Some of them like to show off, always try to tell you they know a lot (C29, 051203).*

*C26: I think Chinese students are more polite and modest. They are more willing to learn from others and listen to others' opinions (C17, 101003).*

The reasons for these Chinese students' positive views on Chinese students' silence may be associated with Chinese traditional value on silence ('silence is gold', talking too much is regarded as 'showing off') and modesty ('to be modest and humble in front of knowledge and learning', see Section 3.3.2.2). It may be also based on their views of the student's role as a good 'listener' rather than the one who is 'challenging' and 'enquiring', which might be interpreted as 'showing off' and less 'modest' by these Chinese students.

Though these Chinese students might be very confident and competent in the subject, they emphasised that they did not have the habit of speaking in class, due to their previous learning experience. They preferred to keep silent in class or 'work out by myself' (C1, 171003). '*This may be related to our learning habit, some of us may know the answer, but we prefer to keep quiet, like we do in China*' (C3, 261003). These students tended to be more willing to adopt their original academic identities.

Similarly, those lecturers who adopted separation strategies are also identified. Some lecturers tended to give lectures without explicit explanations (e.g. T2, T8, T11), adopted UK-based materials, did not involve Chinese/international students' experiences in class, did not ask for clarification and they tended to keep fast-paced teaching (e.g. T4, T14). More examples see Section 5.4.

### **5.3.2 Adopting integration strategy**

A small number of Chinese students were active and motivated to adopt the new academic identity of asking and challenging in the early stage of adaptation process. They were more confident about their English and themselves, and they participated in classroom and group discussions very actively. These students regarded asking in class as an effective learning strategy and an opportunity to adapt to the new academic identities and improve themselves.

C10: *My English is a little bit better than others... it is a good chance to learn the new style of learning. So I tried to participate in class and group discussion as much as I can* (C10, 091003).

However, these active Chinese students encountered some difficulties in their early stage of adaptation. They seemed in a dilemma: on the one hand, they were motivated to adapt to the new academic identity and tried to contribute to the classroom talk; on the other hand, they felt disadvantaged in the classroom talk due to many reasons (e.g. lack of communication skills, British lecturers/students' attitudes, see section 5.4.5 & 6.2.3).

Meanwhile, those British lecturers who adopted integration strategies were identified. They tended to give more explicit instructions, kept relatively slow-paced classroom discussions, and adopted more international case studies (e.g. T1, T5, T16, T34).

In sum, Chinese students tended to have different attitudes towards their new academic identities in the new learning environment. The next section will discuss how Chinese students adopted different strategies in response to the new academic identities in the early stage.

## **5.4 Strategies of coping with expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts in classroom settings**

### **5.4.1 Introduction**

This section will present Chinese students' and British lecturers' strategies adopted in their early stage of two-way adaptation process. Four episodes were chosen to demonstrate how Chinese students adapted to the new academic identities and how British lecturers responded to these students' different classroom communication behaviours. The research findings show that both sides tended to retain their original academic identities in the early stage of adaptation process (see Table 4.3 and Appendix 18 for details). Some expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts between Chinese students and British lecturers are discussed, the underlying factors are explored.

Based on field notes, interview transcripts and the subsequent questionnaire responses, I identified four strategies most often adopted by Chinese students during classroom discussions in the early stage: i) asking co-nationals after class; ii) asking co-nationals in class; iii) asking lecturers after class; iv) asking lecturers in class.

The questionnaire shows that Chinese respondents adopted various strategies in classroom participation. Their top three strategies are asking co-nationals after class (56%), 'asking co-nationals in class (44%), and 'asking lecturers after class'. Only 22% of Chinese respondents chose the last strategy 'asking the lecturer in class', which is expected in the new learning environment (see Figure 5.1 below, or Q1, Section 3, Questionnaire analysis,

Appendix 20).

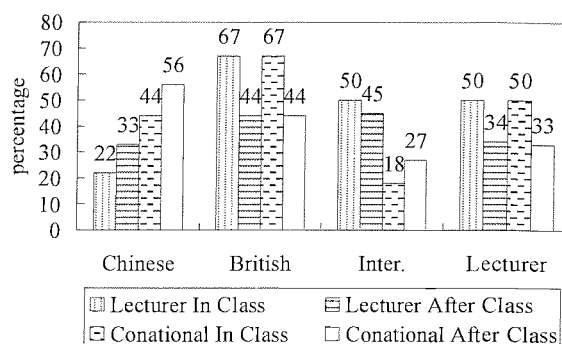


Figure 5.1 Different strategies of seeking help

By contrast, lecturers were found to have different strategies to respond to Chinese students' different classroom behaviours. Episode 1 & 2 present most lecturers tended to adopt separation strategies, Episode 3 & 4 show that most lecturers tended to adopt mixed strategies (separation and integration).

#### 5.4.2 Episode 1: 'The lecturer did not tell us what 'JIT' meant'

##### Introduction

Episode 1 indicates three similar incidents (Extract 1, 2 & 3) which share the same theme: Chinese students did not ask lecturers questions directly in class, instead they delayed their questions and asked co-nationals after class (Extract 1). By contrast, some lecturers did not provide adequate explanations of some acronyms (e.g. JIT in Extract 1), culture-specific terminology (e.g. white knight in Extract 2), and sociocultural background knowledge of case study (e.g. ice-cream company, Gordon Brown in Extract 3) in class.

##### <Extract 1>

*During break time, C28 pointed to the sentence in the handout and asked C7, '...I have no idea of JIT, what does it mean?'. C7 said, 'it means 'Just In Time''. Some Chinese students gathered around C7, 'Oh, JIT - just in time, I see'....I asked C26 who sat beside me if he knew the meaning of JIT and why he did not ask. He said, 'I thought the lecturer would explain later' (Field note, 241103, Course C, T15).*

Similar incidents were found in the field notes and interviews. Below is another extract from the field note of Course F. Here, four idioms/metaphors were used in the handout without particular explanation.

##### <Extract 2>

*I found that there are four metaphors/idioms under the question title 'Why do mergers occur?' on T14's handout: 'death wish' was used concerning the target company factors; 'white knights' in defence strategies; 'Halo' effects in methodological problems; 'riding herd' in practical issues. Chinese students might feel confused about*

*these terms. No one asked questions about these terms during this session, the lecturer did not give particular explanations of them either. I asked C16 who sat beside me, 'do you know what 'white knights' means?', she said 'no'. 'Why not ask?', 'don't want to look silly' (Field note, 110304, Course F, T14).*

Another example can be found in a British student's interview excerpt, which shows that Chinese students were not familiar with the socio-economic and cultural contexts of the case studies, yet they did not ask in class, nor did the lecturer explain.

<Extract 3>

*B1: T4 talked about a case of a German ice-cream company. Most of Chinese students didn't know about this case...The lecturers should give a little bit information about the case...In the Course D module, T14 once referenced Gordon Brown, this is what Gordon Brown said, this is what Gordon Brown said, at the end of his lecture, C6 asked me, 'who's Gordon Brown?' (B1, 230904).*

### Discussion

Firstly, this episode demonstrates Chinese students' initial academic difficulties in the first stage. They could not follow lectures completely, since they tended to lack familiarity with some 'new' Western business terminology and theories (e.g. JIT, motivation, reward system, leadership, delegation, trade union, core-competence), and they tended to have different interpretations of such 'old' concepts as Finance and accounting, due to different socio-economic systems (see Appendix 19 for detailed data). Furthermore, they tended to lack familiarity with British/European business theories and practice and socio-cultural knowledge of the target culture.

Secondly, the underlying reason for this episode is identified: academic cultural distance especially culture of learning (Jin, 1992; Jin & Cortazzi, 1993) in terms of the roles of a teacher and a student. There is an expectation gap between Chinese students and British lecturers on the teacher's role as a knowledge transmitter or a learning facilitator. C26's quote 'I thought the lecturer would explain later' (in Extract 1) shows that he/she tended to think it is the lecturer's responsibility to explain well to students, and 'predict the students' difficulties' (C3, 261003).

Many interviews show that Chinese students emphasised the teacher's role as 'transmitting knowledge and giving clear instructions' (C22, 111003), 'having cutting-edge knowledge' (C12, 080704) and 'teach us more' (C23, 161003). 'Having rich subject knowledge' is regarded as the top teacher's role (94%) by questionnaire respondents (see Figure 5.2, or Q4, Section 4, Questionnaire and analysis, see Appendix 20 & 29); whereas classroom organization is only the sixth most important role (56%).

By contrast, lecturers' interviews and questionnaire responses show that lecturers emphasised the role of a teacher as a 'facilitator' (T5, 121004), who arranges classroom

activities (e.g. group discussion) and encourages/challenges students to discuss by themselves, rather than a lecturer who teaches and tells everything. 83% of lecturers thought subject knowledge and classroom organization are the second most important, compared with four other top teacher's roles (e.g. challenging students) (100%) (see Figure 5.2 and Q4, Section 3, see Appendix 20 & 29).

This episode shows an expectation gap between Chinese students and British lecturers on the social aspect of the teacher's role – to be sensitive and caring to students' concerns and to provide social/moral support. Questionnaire responses show that 78% of Chinese respondents regarded 'empathy' as an important teacher's role; whereas only 17% of lecturers thought it important (see Figure 5.2, or Q4, Section 3, Questionnaire, Appendix 20 & 29). Many Chinese students felt disappointed about some lecturers' lack of awareness of their language/academic difficulties, and they thought lecturers 'did not care' (C36, 111004) about 'slow' international students, since they kept 'fast-paced and less-structured discussions' (C12, 0807004), 'not giving handout' (I6, 090604), not showing much 'empathy and care' (C16, 011103), not providing students with 'more opportunities' (C14, 271203) and support to involve international students in classroom discussions. Some students complained that many lecturers did not use international materials and 'international students' experiences' (C14, 271203) in class, instead they tended to use more UK- or European-based cases studies.

C16: *Some lecturers like T8 spoke so fast during lectures...The lecturers seemed not aware of our difficulties. They should show some empathy and care to international students (C16, 011103).*

C14: *Some lecturers seemed more interested in exchanging ideas with the local students, rather than listening to international students' experience...I hope they can give us more opportunities to involve in the classroom conversation (C14, 271203).*

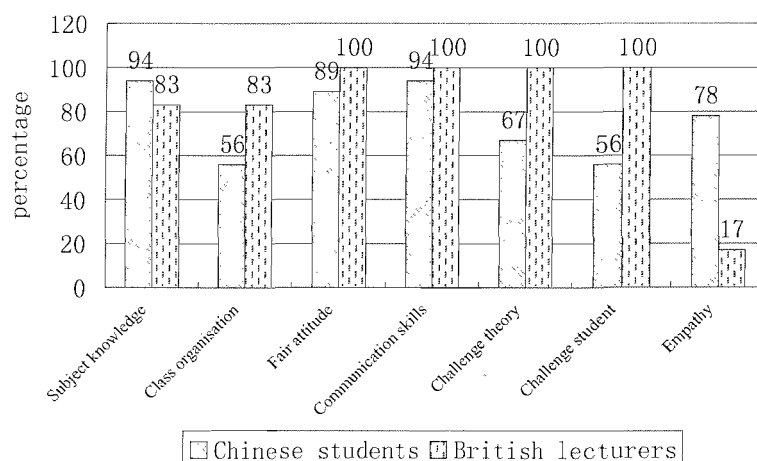


Figure 5.2 Views on a teacher's role

This episode shows an expectation gap between Chinese students and British lecturers on the role of a student. Interviews and questionnaire show that Chinese students tended to

regard a ‘good listener’ as the top student role (83%) together with two other top roles (preparation and communication skills) (see Figure 5.3 below, or Q3, Section 3, Questionnaire and analysis, Appendix 20 & 29). By contrast, lecturers thought the student’s role was to ‘ask’, ‘actively participate’ (T2, 281003), ‘disagree’ (T1, 251103), ‘challenge’ (T5, 121004) and ‘take responsibility’ on their own learning (T4, 240504). ‘Good listener’ (84%) is the fourth important role of a student, after the top three roles (subject knowledge, challenging theories and challenging lecturer) (see Q4, Section 2, Questionnaire and analysis, Appendix 20 & 29).

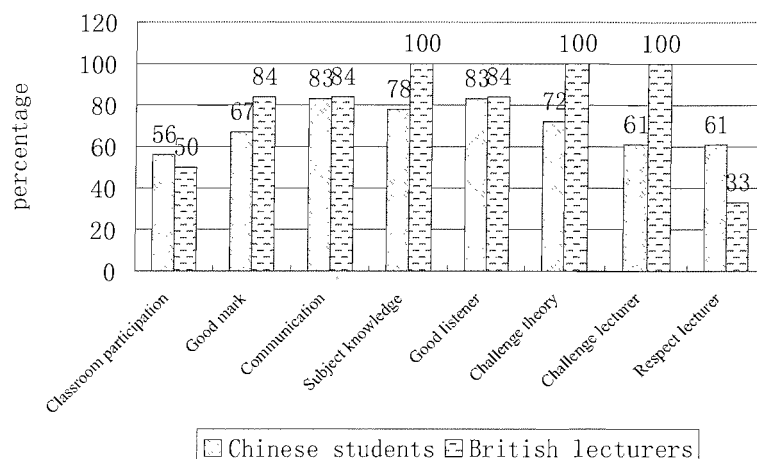


Figure 5.3 Views on a student’s role

This episode and many interviews show that British lecturers were generally dissatisfied with Chinese students’ classroom behaviour in this stage; they thought Chinese students were ‘quieter’ (T11, Field note, Course E, 271103) and ‘difficult to teach’ (T29, 150306), and they ‘had to explain, it is tedious’ (T1, 251103), ‘it’s hard work’ (T4, 240504), ‘you can’t do anything about it’ (T29, 150306) (especially in the RMBA programme, where 88% of students were non-British, whereas 54% of students were non-British in the EMBA programme).

*T29: They are lovely, they are very easy to teach in a way, or superficially very easy to teach, they listen to what you are saying, but on the other hand, they are difficult to teach, because you don’t know how much they understood, because even though you say ‘is that all right’ or ‘do you understand’, they are so busy trying to please you, they go ‘yes’, and you think ‘no’, but you can’t do anything about it (T29, 150306).*

*T4: They should be prepared to participate...They should be prepared to disagree, but also they should be prepared to put their own ideas forward...so I think students should take responsibility (T4, 240504).*

By contrast, many interviews show that Chinese students felt disappointed about lecturers’ inadequate explanations on background to the theories, and they thought they were disadvantaged in less-structured and fast-paced classroom discussions. They thought they ‘benefit less’ (C1, 011003) and ‘learned little’.

C27: *I really hate when the lecturer says at 9:30am, 'now I give you a case, I give you 30 minutes to read and discuss, and we meet at 10 o'clock'. We paid so much tuition, we want the lecturer to teach, rather than read and discuss by ourselves (C27 & C29, 311003).*

C10: *I've learned nothing from lecturers. Most of the time lecturers just simply asked us to read and discuss cases, rather than give lectures. I had to say I taught myself by reading rather than learning from lecturers through the year (C10, 130704).*

In sum, the above expectation gaps between Chinese students and British lecturers can be formed as a 'dialogue' below.

<b>Chinese student</b>	<b>British lecturer</b>
Why don't you teach us more?	Why don't you ask?
I've learned nothing from you	I can't do anything about it
(not caring)	(not independent)

#### Dialogue 5.1 teaching and asking

The above dialogue highlights the theme identified in this episode: Chinese students expected more academic (e.g. clearer instruction and sufficient knowledge input) and social/psychological support (e.g. empathy and care) from lecturers, due to their initial uncertain and unfamiliar experience in the first stage of adaptation. By contrast, lecturers expected Chinese students to question, challenge and learn independently.

Chinese students' preference for clear instruction and knowledge input is in line with Cortazzi and Jin's (1996a) finding that 67% of the students mentioned that a good teacher should have deep knowledge, based on a study of 135 university students' essay writing on perception of a good teacher in China. This may relate to the Chinese notion of a teacher as a source of knowledge, as discussed in Section 3.3.4.3.

The research finding shows that some British lecturers felt it to be tedious when they found they had to explain and do more teaching. This conforms to Bradley and Bradley's (1984) finding that lecturers tended to do more talking in the international class; meanwhile this finding also shows that some lecturers tended to lack an awareness of international students' initial language/academic and cultural difficulties/distances, and willingness to support these students. Burns (1991) also finds that most students at an Australian university, overseas and local, felt staff were hardly aware of their problems, whether academic, social, emotional or health-related, and lacked an interest in helping them.

Furthermore, the finding shows that Chinese students tended to be unaware of their new student role and academic identity: questioning and challenging in class. They tended to adopt their original student role by waiting for the lecturer's explanation and delaying their



questions till the end of the session. So far I have identified cultural and academic cultural factors that influence Chinese students' adaptation to the new student roles and academic identities. However, I also aim to take the above findings forward, by presenting further evidence to show that Chinese students tended to adopt more new student roles and academic identities in the second and third stage; meanwhile, the lecturers' lack of awareness of students' difficulties and expectations tended to bring further miscommunication between Chinese students and British lecturers in the second stage of adaptation process (see Chapter 6).

### Summary

Episode 1 shows an expectation gap between Chinese students and British lecturers. It also shows Chinese students encountered some initial academic difficulties in their early stage of study, they could not follow the lectures completely due to their unfamiliarity with the subject knowledge, academic knowledge (e.g. student's role, interactive approach) and sociocultural knowledge of the target culture. The underlying reason is identified: academic cultural distance in terms of students' and teachers' roles. In sum, this episode shows that some Chinese students tended to adopt their original academic identities of being good listeners and asking co-nationals after class, in response to the new academic identities - asking and challenging lecturers in class, and how British lecturers responded to their quiet classroom behaviour. The next episode will discuss how Chinese students adapted their second strategy – ask co-nationals in class by whispering to help each other, and how British lecturers responded to their 'deviant' classroom behaviour.

### **5.4.3 Episode 2: Why did Chinese students whisper in class?**

#### Introduction

This 'episode' contains a key incident and is supplemented by several extracts of similar incidents. Extract 1 and 2 show that some Chinese students whispered in class, which made the lecturers unhappy, and ask Chinese students to be 'quiet' and show respect to others. Extract 3 and 4 indicate the reasons for Chinese students' whisperings in class.

#### <Extract 1>

*9:51-10:05 A lot of whispering*

*10:06-10:15 Many students were whispering, especially Chinese students. The lecturer said, 'Ok, it is the solution'. The whispering level was rising.*

*10:41-11:42 (after break) The lecturer kept talking, fewer questions and answers, less whispering...A lot of whisperings...The lecturer said 'can we have one conversation?'.*

*11:43-12:35 The lecturer asked students to do exercise on page 148-149, a lot of whisperings, C1 (I sat next to him) asked me which page (some whispering again). The lecturer repeated the page, then one British student spoke loudly, 'it's furniture'. The lecturer said, 'Sorry, it's page 184-185, it is half hour discussion in groups'...*

*After group discussion, the lecturer was talking; a lot of whisperings arose again during the lecture. The lecturer was a little bit annoyed and said, 'you are so rude'...*

*One minute later, C9 asked a question, T2 did not answer, instead he/she said, 'I just replied the same question two minutes ago, because you were busy with talking to each other, I won't answer again'....*

*During break time, I asked C1 the reason for his/her not pointing to the lecturer's mistake, C1 said 'Feel shy to point out lecturer's mistake; it is an embarrassing thing'.*

*During lunch time, I asked C9's feeling about the whispering incident.*

*C9: I feel sorry about this. I think it's my fault. I talked with others in class. It has really influence the lecturer's feelings. I said sorry to T2 after class, he/she said, 'don't worry'...I will ask the lecturer directly or ask after class next time'. However, he/she further commented, 'I don't think T2 has explained clearly to us, otherwise we will not whisper' (Field note, 231003, Course D, T2, details see Appendix 15).*

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Similar episodes can be found in the other sessions. The lecturer T11 asked Chinese students to be 'quiet' in class when he/she was whispering.

<Extract 2>

*'There is some whispering from Chinese students, T11 said, 'it is not fair, please show a little bit respect when others are talking'' (Field note, 071103, Course E, T11).*

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Another Chinese student told me the reason for his/her asking peers in class.

<Extract 3>

*'...During break time, I asked C22 why he/she did not ask the lecturer directly, C26 replied, 'it is easier to ask peers, I don't want to bother others in class' (Field note, 141003, Course A, T17).*

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The similar phenomenon could be found in the RMBA class as well. C34 kept silent for the lecturer's mistake.

<Extract 4>

*C34 told me quietly, 'you see, the arrow is wrong', when the lecturer drew a market communication graph on the board. I asked him/her, 'why don't you tell him?'. C34 said, 'No, no, he will feel embarrassed' (Field note, 190504, Course K for RMBA, T39).*

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## Discussion

The above whispering stories show an expectation gap between Chinese students and lecturers. Chinese students thought they whispered because the lecturers did not explain clearly and they did not want to make the lecturers lose face by pointing out their mistakes; lecturers expected Chinese students to ask directly rather than whispering, which was thought to be 'so rude'. This episode and more field notes and interviews demonstrate that there are several possible reasons for Chinese students' whispering in class.

**Language distance.** Chinese students whispered for the purpose of helping each other in their first language, due to their lack of familiarity with the English meaning of the concepts/theories, and due to their collective culture of supporting each other (Bond, 1986, 1991; Hofstede, 1980).

*C15: During Course C session, the lecturer explained the concept of 'absolute deviation' for quite a while, some Chinese were still puzzled, C5 whispered to us in Chinese, 'juedui pingjun cha' (the Chinese meaning of 'absolute deviation'), we understood immediately (C15, 171003).*

**Academic cultural distance.** This episode shows that Chinese students and British lecturers tended to have different interpretations of interruption and whispering. Chinese students thought they whispered because they did 'not want to bother others' (C26 in Extract 3). This is related to Chinese students' previous learning experience and academic identities – students are expected to be quiet and polite in the teacher-centred class, and interruption and raising questions are generally discouraged, since it will 'slow down the teaching' (C16, 011103) in the teacher-centred class. By contrast, lecturers thought whispering was 'quite disruptive' (T2, 281003) and 'so rude' (T2 in Extract 1), and they expected students to ask directly and show 'respect' (T14 in Extract 2) to others. This finding is consistent with Flowerdew and Miller's (1995: 358) three-year ethnographic study on Hong Kong students' L2 lecturers, and this background whispering behaviour tended to be seen by Western lecturers as 'inattentive', quite distracting, or 'chattering during lecturing'. Therefore, lack of an awareness of each other's academic culture and expectations tended to bring expectation gaps between Chinese students and lecturers.

**Cultural distance.** One underlying cultural reason for Chinese students' whispering is identified: the notion of face-saving, due to Chinese collectivism- and relationship-oriented culture (see Section 3.2.2.3). Chinese students did not interrupt and ask questions directly in class for the sake of protecting their own face, since they felt reluctant to be singled out for attention in class and would 'feel shy' (C1, Extract 1), and 'they are afraid of making mistakes and losing face' (I18, 311003), 'It seems stupid' (C34, 211103). This finding agrees with Channell's (1990: 71-72) argument, 'international students tend to find it difficult to approach a lecture despite blanket invitations to do so at the beginning of the course', due to their 'fear of losing face'. Therefore, Chinese students tended not take the opportunity of asking help from lecturers in class and after class; and lecturers tended not to take an initiative to invite and support these shy students in and out of class.

One more important reason is identified in this episode: Chinese students did not point out the lecturers' mistake for the sake of saving the lecturer's face. 'The lecturer will feel embarrassed' (C34, in Extract 4), 'it is an embarrassing thing' to point out the lecturer's mistake (C1 in Extract 1). It may be also due to Chinese high power distance or vertical relationship between teacher and students (see Section 3.3.4.3). Teachers are regarded as authority, therefore, criticism and challenge may be regarded as not polite and offending. This reason seemed neglected by British lecturers who simply thought Chinese students

were ‘rude’ and did not ‘respect’ others. Therefore, lecturers’ lack of the underlying cultural reason may bring expectation gaps between international students and lecturers.

**Lack of cultural sensitivity.** This episode shows that lecturers tended to lack an awareness of international students’ language and cultural distances, lack sensitivity to the cultural notion of face-saving, and lack competence in managing affective factors dealing with cultural conflicts in the intercultural communication. For example, the lecturer T2’s unhappiness and impatience gradually grew from ‘can we have one conversation?’ to ‘you are so rude’. In the end, the lecturer refused to answer a Chinese student’s question, because he/she thought he/she had answered the same question two minutes ago. His/her refusal to answering questions shows a gap between his/her teaching philosophies and teaching practice – on the one hand, he/she encouraged students to ask and interrupt; on the other hand, he/she failed to give students further explanations when students did ask in class. Some students were dissatisfied with his/her reply. ‘I don’t think T2 has explained clearly to us, otherwise we will not whisper’ (C9 in Extract 1).

*I18: ‘I am not happy with some lecturers’ attitude to us...though it’s student’s fault, I still think the tutor should answer this question again, I can see students are still confused about the question’ (I18, 311003).*

Therefore, lecturers’ lack of cultural sensitivity and competence in managing their emotions may discourage and de-motivate students’ further classroom involvement, bring greater misunderstandings between lecturers and students, and may influence student-teacher relationship as well.

This episode also shows that Chinese students lacked cultural sensitivity of their new student roles and academic identities of asking and challenging lecturers in class. They tended to adopt their original cultural attitudes and student roles.

The above teacher-student expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts can be summarized into a dialogue below:

<b>Chinese student</b>	<b>British lecturer</b>
I don’t want to bother others	It is quite disruptive
He will feel embarrassed	You are so rude

#### Dialogue 5.2 Whispering and face-saving

This episode highlights Chinese students’ lack of an awareness and sensitivity of each other’s cultures and expectations. Chinese students need to be more aware of their new student role by questioning and challenging, rather than waiting for lecturers’ invitation; and lecturers need to provide more support and empathy to Chinese students for their adaptation.

## Summary

This episode shows that Chinese students adopted a face-saving strategy - whispering in class (Gudykunst and Kim, 1997; Samovar and Porter, 1994) in response to the new student role and academic identities - asking and challenging lecturers in class. An expectation gap between lecturers and Chinese students on whispering and politeness has been explored, and several underlying factors that influenced teacher-student communication and relationship have been examined: language reason, academic cultural distance, cultural distance, and lack of intercultural sensitivity. In sum, this episode has shown that Chinese students tended to adopt their previous academic identity by whispering rather than asking questions directly in class. The next episode will show how Chinese students adopted another strategy - asking lecturers after class, instead of asking questions directly in class, and how British lecturers responded to Chinese students' different classroom behaviours.

### **5.4.4 Episode 3: Asking 'the single right answer' after class**

#### Introduction

This episode contains four extracts of similar incidents, which is chosen to show Chinese students' third strategy in response to the new student role of questioning and challenging - Chinese students tended to be uncertain about the requirement; British lecturers thought Chinese students tended to seek the single right answer.

<Extract 1>

*As soon as the lecturer T1 finished the lecture, several Chinese students went to the front to ask T1 questions. Most of them asked about the assignment requirement, since it was the first core unit assignment, they might feel uncertain about the requirement (Field note, 021003, Course B, T1).*

Some international students mentioned this 'Chinese trait' in their interviews.

<Extract 2>

*I12: ...at the end of the class, they (Chinese students) go up and see tutor individually. When the tutor asked if you have questions, nobody will say anything, then the class finished, you can see there is a queue in front of the tutor, this is something I see (I12, 050804).*

Below is a lecturer's views on Chinese students' asking questions after class.

<Extract 3>

*T30: Chinese students like to ask me what to do, they need your instruction and recommendation, otherwise they feel uncomfortable...I asked students to write an assignment of 3000 words. I gave them a piece of paper with assignment requirement and 15 recommended books. After class, Chinese students made a long queue in front of my office, asking me the same question - to recommend one or two books they should read...I could not give them an exact answer, what I expected them to do is to*

*make their own choices and decisions. They are not supposed to read them all (T30, 240603).*

A similar episode can be found in other sessions.

<Extract 4>

*C9 asked the lecturer, 'how about different answer, will it be regarded right? It looks confusing'. The lecturer answered 'not confusing, different answers can be allowed if they are explained and justified properly' (Field note, 231003, Course D, T2).*

### Discussion

The above episode and other interview or field note extracts show that Chinese students tended to have different timing of asking questions – asking questions after class rather than in class, and they tended to seek the single right answer. This episode reflects an expectation gap between Chinese students and lecturers on the student's role. Lecturers expected students to ask questions in class and seek multiple answers/solutions by themselves; whereas Chinese students expected to be given a clearer answer, since they felt not familiar with the British academic system and requirement, and they felt dissatisfied with the lecturer's insufficient support and inadequate instructions.

*C9: I can only give 7 out of 10 to the degree of satisfaction with the lecturer's answer...Most of the time, the lecturer didn't give me a direct answer. I know it's a British style, no exact answer, it needs me to think and understand. ...but I need to get a clearer answer, because I was not familiar with their requirement and I worried if I could pass the exam (C9, 231003).*

*T1: 'Chinese students worry tremendously about how to present their assignments, trying to be given guidance on that...they want me to tell them which model to use...they just want me to give them the right answer. And I won't give them...I expect them to use a variety of other models (T1, 251103).*

The view that 'there was no right answer' recurred in other interviews.

*T4: I think they expect to be taught, I think they expect me to give them answers, and that's not my expectation. My expectation is that I would give them more questions than answers.... they would barely give their view, they take their own responsibility themselves for not expecting just to be told everything and given answers by mere others (T4, 240504).*

The above expectation gap between Chinese students and British lecturers can be summarized as a dialogue below:

**Chinese student**

**British lecturer**

What's the right answer?

What's your answer?

Dialogue 5.3 answer and right answer

This episode shows an expectation gap between Chinese students and British lecturers on students' roles – to be critical and challenging, and having their own ideas. Most lecturers thought Chinese students were 'less prone to challenge', since they tended to 'stick to textbooks rather than use additional reading materials to argue from different perspectives (T1, 251103), 'stick to orthodoxy' (T2, 281003), 'repeat the lecturer's opinions' (T5, 121004), 'reproduce the right answer' (T2, 281003) and 'copy' (T6, 201004) the lecture notes directly in the exams. Lecturers expected students to 'have your own opinion' (T5, 121004).

*T6: ...instead of writing sentences or paragraph, they use bullet points...They copy what you had in the handout...this is just a copy of lecture notes, not a real discussion of an exam question and not a critical reflection of the topic, there should be particular examples, discussed in detail and also in applications (T6, 201004).*

*T5: They very much tried to memorize things, they memorized large passages from the paper...then write them down back to you...learn by rote and write them down, don't demonstrate any understanding at all...I think Chinese students find it hard to have your own opinion rather than just repeat the lecturer's opinion (T5, 121004).*

However, most Chinese students tended to disagree with lecturers' opinions. They argued that the MBA course could not really reflect one's critical thinking and creativity. They said it was because they were not familiar with the British academic culture and Western theories that might cause lack of criticality and challenge in the initial stage.

*C1: I was unfamiliar with some theories at the beginning. I could not understand the theory very well. This is why I could not criticize them in a deep level. My assignment mark is normally around 60 percent. This does not mean I lack critical thinking ability (C1 & C32, 140304).*

*C7: You can't say that Chinese students lack of creativity or critical ability, just according to MBA students in our class. They can't represent the whole (C7, 171003).*

Some Chinese students argued that some big universities (e.g. Qinghua and Beijing University) in China also emphasise developing students' critical and independent thinking abilities; and they maintained that Chinese students' criticality could improve over time.

*C12: In Qinghua University, I learned not only knowledge, but also thinking style and problem-solving methods, how to see things from different perspectives...I was more critical in my assignment in the second semester when I was more familiar with the requirement and theories (C12, 040304).*

However, some Chinese students tended to admit and criticize Chinese students' lack of criticality and 'having your own ideas'. And they thought their preference of seeking a single-right answer was due to the Chinese centralized and exam-oriented educational system (e.g. multiple choice and simple answer are main types of exam questions). Since the exam questions require them to 'memorize facts rather than discuss and analyse the case' (C23, 111003), 'simply recite some facts and formula before exams' (C9, 220304).

‘We have only one textbook for one subject through the year’ (C2, 210704), ‘I was told since primary school that everything in the textbook is right, it is supposed to be the only answer’ (C31, 150704).

*C22: In China, we had various reference books for exam preparations and each book had ‘keys to questions’ to check if your answer was right or wrong...I was worried about essay-writing style exam questions before the exam, but now I felt it was not as difficult as expected (C22, 040204).*

Therefore, the exam-oriented education system, the authority position of the textbook, the transmitting role of the teachers as the main source of knowledge, and the limited teaching resources in China tended to restrict Chinese students’ critical thinking ability, seeing things from multiple perspectives and having their own ideas in their classroom communication and assignment performance.

Many field notes and interviews show that Chinese students tended to adopt more of their original academic identities and strategies in their early stage of study. For example, C20 got a low mark for his/her Course C exam, since he/she misinterpreted the meaning of ‘sketches’ as ‘table’, so instead of drawing two organizational structure figures and having a good discussion of two organizations, he/she simply listed some bullet points in two columns of the table for a comparison. When I asked C20’s permission to use his/her interview extract as data in this study, he/she agreed and gave me further reflective thought about this issue through email.

*C20: I still thought it in a Chinese way and regarded it as a simple answer question...All international students will have some language problems to some extent, those who are better in English may have fewer problems, and gradually we will overcome language barriers; but it is difficult to change our thinking habit (C20, 100306, email).*

As the word describes, a ‘simple-answer’ question requires students to give simple answers/facts mainly based on the textbook, rather than expressing one’s own ideas or combining one’s real experience with the theories. Many interviews show that many Chinese students encountered academic identity conflict in the early stage. On the one hand, they knew they were expected to have their own ideas and develop the new academic cultural identities; on the other hand, they were unfamiliar with the new learning requirement and felt uncertain about less clear instructions from British lecturers and they showed much concern with the right answer in their early stage of study. Therefore, most Chinese students were found to retain and adopt their original thinking habit and learning strategies, such as seeking the right answer, giving fact-based simple answers to the exam questions. However, they tended to adopt more new academic identities in the second semester, ‘I have learned how to think independently and my assignment marks got better in the second semester’ (C26, 160704).

Furthermore, another underlying cultural reason was identified as to Chinese students’



tendency of seeking the single right answer – they tend to have a low level of tolerance of ambiguity.

*T7: They are less comfortable with ambiguity...I suppose they are looking for answers rather than raising questions (T7, 180304).*

The finding shows that Chinese students appeared more concerned with the right answer and felt uncertain and anxious about unclear instructions from British lecturers and felt uncomfortable with the less-structured classroom discussions. This finding conforms to Hofstede's (1991: 119) classification that China is a strong 'uncertainty avoidance' culture. Therefore, many Chinese students felt uncomfortable and disappointed about insufficient direction and guidance from lecturers and academic staff in this study. They tended to encounter high levels of uncertainty and anxiety (Gudykunst, 1994) in the new learning environment. Therefore, Chinese students are expected to increase tolerance for ambiguity and risk-taking, willingness to take responsibility, and readiness for change (Gudykunst and Kim, 1997). Lecturers were expected to provide clearer instructions and develop a willingness to share Chinese students' initial uncertainty and anxiety.

### Summary

This episode shows that Chinese students tended to adopt their original strategies and student roles - asking questions after class rather than in class. This finding is similar to Flowerdew and Miller's (1995: 356) finding that Chinese students did not ask questions in class, but 'during a short break and at the close of the lecture, a number of students asked questions on a one-to-one, rather than an open-class basis'. It is related to Chinese students' previous academic experience, since private questions after class are entirely acceptable (McLaren, 1998), due to large-sized class and busy teaching schedule.

This episode also demonstrates that Chinese students tended to retain their original academic identities – to seek the single right answer in the new learning environment. An expectation gap between Chinese students and lecturers was identified: Chinese students expected lecturers to provide clearer instructions and help; whereas lecturers tended to expect Chinese students to be more questioning and critical in thinking. Most Chinese students argued that it was because they were not familiar with the academic culture in the beginning of their course, they appeared less questioning and less critical. They said they became more critical when they were more familiar with the academic knowledge and requirement. More evidence shows that Chinese students' classroom behaviour and academic cultural identity tended to change over time, when they were more familiar with the new learning environment.

So far, the above episodes showed that most Chinese students tended to adopt separation strategies by retaining their original academic identities – asking co-nationals after class, asking co-nationals in class and asking lecturers after class, in response to the new academic expectations, and how British lecturers responded to their different classroom

behaviours. The next episode is about how ‘active’ Chinese students adopted integration strategies by actively participating in the classroom talk, and how British lecturers responded to these active Chinese students’ talk in class.

### 5.4.5 Episode 4: ‘I was interrupted’

#### Introduction

Episode 4 consists of three extracts from similar incidents. It shows that some active Chinese ‘integrators’ tended to have some difficulties in classroom participation, due to their lack of communication/debate skills and lack of a ‘supporting and encouraging attitude’ (I12, 050804) from the British lecturers/students.

#### <Extract 1>

*T4 asked students to define the word ‘differentiation’. He/she asked ‘what’s differentiation?’ ‘Uniqueness’. C6 kicked out an answer immediately, maybe his/her pronunciation was not very standard, or maybe the classroom was so big, the lecturer asked again, C6 repeated. The lecturer put his hand close to his/her ear, B2 repeated loudly. The lecturer said ‘Yeah, good’ and wrote this word on the board (Field note, Course E, 211103).*

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#### <Extract 2>

*I12: I feel the tutors, it depends, once the student asks questions, the tutor goes close to them and try to understand what the question is, ‘sorry, what did you say, I haven’t heard of this’, they will worry about. So make sure they are not putting students in a difficult situation...so tutor’s supporting and encouraging attitude to those students is very important (I12, 050804).*

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#### <Extract 3>

*C12: I think we are slower than British students in thinking and speaking in class, because we think in a second language...For example, in T34’s Course E session, I wanted to give an example of my own company, I felt difficult to organize my ideas and speak them up logically. When I began to say, I found my voice was very small and I was interrupted by a British student immediately, maybe the lecturer did not hear what I said at all (C12, 071103).*

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#### Discussion

The above episode shows that ‘active’ Chinese students tended to have some difficulties in classroom talk in the initial stage. Extract 1 shows that C6 was not heard or understood by the lecturer due to his/her pronunciation or due to the large size of the classroom. Extract 2 shows an international student’s views on the lecturer’s less supporting and encouraging attitude towards international students’ talk in class. Extract 3 demonstrates that C12 felt it difficult to organise his/her ideas and then he/she found he/she was interrupted when

he/she was ready to speak, due to fast-paced classroom discussion.

This episode demonstrates some active Chinese students' dilemma situation and intrapersonal conflict in the adaptation process: on the one hand, they were motivated to adopt the new student role and academic identity by participating actively in the classroom discussion; on the other hand, they found their foreign accent and less good communication skills (e.g. turn-taking, organising ideas and debate skills) impeded their further contribution and they felt frustrated when they were in a disadvantaged position in classroom communication. They said they were often interrupted by the 'fast' local students and 'neglected' by lecturers. Many of them used the words 'not patient', 'not care', 'disadvantaged' 'not given opportunities' and 'demotivated' to describe their unhappy experience.

*C13: You know, I am an extrovert person, I am eager to talk when I have ideas. In the beginning, I often spoke in class, then I found I could not express my ideas clearly and fluently, and I found lecturers seemed not patient enough, and I was interrupted sometimes. I felt very frustrated, when I tried 2-3 times, I thought it was not the case, so I did not speak quite often since (C13, 190704).*

*C10: I wanted to ask two questions, but they were answered already (C10, 110104).*

C9 was an active and 'brave' Chinese student who often asked questions, and complained that some lecturers seemed to 'neglect' international students' questions and lack of encouraging attitude towards Chinese students.

*C9: I have a feeling, this is only my feeling, that lecturers care more about British students' understanding, rather than our international students' feelings. The international students can't explain well about their questions, because of our incorrect pronunciation, stress or intonation. Some lecturers often neglected our questions (C9, 231003)*

By contrast, lecturers' interviews show that some lecturers felt they 'struggled to understand 'Chinese accents' (T5, 121004) and their 'spoken style'.

*T7: I think one of the other problems is perhaps the spoken style, sometimes it is difficult to understand on the ear... Chinese students, the intonation, so that sometimes makes difficult to understand (T7, 180304).*

T9, the language lecturer and MBA in-sessional writing skill lecturer, thought Chinese students were not good at turn-taking skills in classroom interaction.

*T9: I found they (Chinese students) were not good at things like turn-taking, they didn't know when to stop speaking, or they didn't know when they would be interrupted, and how to handle by interruption (T9, 181103).*

Therefore, Chinese students tended to be disadvantaged in classroom discussion, due to their lack of competence and experience in communication skills (e.g. turn-taking,

pragmatic skills). Meanwhile, the different pattern of turntaking and timing of pauses might influence Chinese students' classroom behaviour as well, since turntaking tends to be culturally bound (Jin, 1992).

### Summary

First, this episode shows that Chinese students tended to lack communication skills (e.g. turn-taking, pragmatic skills), and their foreign accent may influence their effectiveness of talk. Second, an expectation gap and academic identity conflicts between Chinese students and British lecturers have been identified. Chinese students expected lecturers to be more empathetic and supportive; whereas British lecturers tended to expect Chinese students to be better at communication skills (e.g. turn-taking). British lecturers tended to feel frustrated about Chinese/international students' different discourse patterns such as turn-taking and the timing of pauses, Third, some contextual factors which might influence Chinese students' and British lecturers' communication and relationship are identified, such as the big size of the classroom (Extract 1) and the busy course schedule, which tend to keep lecturers with a fast-paced discussion, due to MBA's intensive course programme.

## **5.5 Teacher-student relationship in the early stage**

Since Chinese students had some initial academic difficulties in the new learning environment, they tried to seek help from the School four weeks after they started the MBA courses. They wrote a joint letter and asked B2, an MBA student representative, to report their expectations and concerns to the School.

<Extract 1>

*'...we can not fully understand every lecture, especially the point of views conveyed by native speakers...do hope that professors could understand the situation of Chinese students...we are willing to make active contributions to class and bring our perspectives to class. We do appreciate the tolerance of professors towards poor and inappropriate expression in English at times'* (a joint letter to School, 101103, via B2, the student representative).

This extract highlights Chinese students' biggest concern in the beginning of their study - seeking academic and psychological support from the lecturers. They expected lecturers' understanding and tolerance towards them. Meanwhile, Chinese students also showed several other concerns such as individual tutorials, handouts in time, study/discussion room availability, and academic performance of last year's MBA students. Below is B2's email to Chinese EMBA students, about the School's feedback after sitting in a staff/student meeting.

<Extract 2>

*Individual tutorials: T1 has stressed that he/she is available to speak to student about any concerns... All handouts will be given out 4 days in advance so that students have the opportunity to prepare the relevant material...Last year's MBA programme and*

*students' achievements: All non-native English speakers passed their MBA last year - it was hard but they did it!* (B2's email letter to EMBA Chinese students, 171103).

The above extracts demonstrate Chinese students' initial academic problem concerns (they did want successful academic achievement) and high level of anxiety and uncertainty at the beginning of their study, due to their unfamiliarity with the British educational system especially the assessment system.

The above extracts also indicate that Chinese students tended to pursue help on a group level through the joint letter rather than on an individual level, 'few came to me for help' (T19, personal tutor, 010306). This may relate to their collectivism-oriented cultural background. A similar phenomenon can be found in the second stage (see Section 6.3).

Although Chinese students and British lecturers had some expectation gaps on student/teacher's roles, however, the relationship between Chinese students and School/lecturers was generally good in the first stage, and Chinese students were quite satisfied with the School's quick feedback after they sought help on a group level.

## **5.6 Conclusion of the first stage**

This section has demonstrated a two-way adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers in the classroom communication context in the early stage of the MBA study. Expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts were identified and examined. Both Chinese students and British lecturers were found to be unfamiliar and uncertain with the new intercultural academic identity in the 'unfamiliarity and frustration' stage. Chinese students were found generally less questioning, challenging and independent in thinking and learning. British lecturers were found to lack sensitivity of Chinese students' initial difficulties and lack a willingness of providing support to Chinese students. I will now answer the research questions posed in the beginning of the chapter.

*What are the expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts between Chinese students and British lecturers in each stage of adaptation over one year?*

The findings show that there were some expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts between Chinese students and British lecturers in the early stage of their two-way adaptation process. Firstly, Chinese students felt disappointed about some lecturers' inadequate instructions and introduction to background knowledge of theories, and little use of international case studies in class. Secondly, Chinese students were not satisfied with British lecturers' social aspect of the teacher's role — providing moral support and empathy to international students. They complained that lecturers tended to keep fast-paced and less structured classroom discussion, and did not provide international students with many opportunities to participate in classroom discussions.

By contrast, lecturers tended to interpret their role as facilitating teaching and arranging various classroom activities to involve students in classroom discussion. They tended to focus on students' responsibility of adapting to the British academic culture. British lecturers expected Chinese students to be more active and challenging in classroom interactions, and they thought Chinese students tended to seek the single right answer rather than multiple solutions.

The research findings show that both Chinese students and British lecturers encountered academic cultural identity conflicts and psychological struggles. Many Chinese students encountered culture shock as soon as the MBA course started, due to their lack of familiarity with the new learning environment. Most lecturers felt frustrated about Chinese students' quietness in class. Some lecturers found it tedious when they had to do a lot of teaching in the MBA class with large numbers of international students. And some lecturers found they had to adapt their teaching style to these students, 'I have to adjust my teaching style to accommodate them by asking direct questions (T11, Field note, RMBA, 271103).

*What attitudes and strategies have Chinese students and British lecturers adopted to respond to intercultural adaptation?*

Chinese students and British lecturers tended to adopt different strategies to cope with their expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts. Most Chinese students and some lecturers were found to adopt separation strategies. Chinese students were found to retain their original academic identities - asking co-nationals after class, asking co-nationals in class, and asking lecturers after class. Some lecturers were found to give less clear instructions and explanations in class (Episode 1 in Section 5.4.2). They tended to lack cultural sensitivity of Chinese students' different classroom behaviour, and they tended to keep fast-paced teaching, with less supportive and less empathetic attitudes towards Chinese/international students (see Section 5.4.3 & 5.4.5).

By contrast, some Chinese students tended to adopt integration strategies by adapting to the new academic identities - asking and challenging lecturers in class. However, these Chinese students felt frustrated by their disadvantaged situation, due to their lack of communication skills and unfamiliarity with socio-academic knowledge, and due to some lecturers' less encouraging and supporting attitudes. They thought they were not given equal opportunity to enjoy the classroom talk and achieve successful academic achievement. The Chinese students' joint letter highlights this issue. Therefore, the host lecturer's attitude and lack of cultural sensitivity have been identified as two important factors that influence Chinese students' initial stage of adaptation.

*What factors influence both Chinese students' and British lecturers' intercultural adaptation process?*

The factors that influence the initial two-way adaptation process are identified in this stage:

predisposition factors; personal factors (host attitude, cultural sensitivity) and contextual factors (culture distance, academic culture distance, the host's attitude); and logistic factors (large class, long teaching hours, busy course schedule due to intensive course programme, and lack of personal tutor).

**Predisposition factors.** The finding shows that many Chinese students lacked familiarity with subject terminology and concepts, the interactive approach, and new academic identities. Therefore, they encountered language and culture difficulties and academic identity conflicts in the early stage. This involves how Chinese students prepare themselves for studying abroad. Meanwhile, some lecturers tended to lack intercultural experience (e.g. T11) and appeared unfamiliar with the underlying reasons for Chinese students' different classroom behaviour (e.g. Chinese students' whispering in Section 5.4.3).

**Personal factors** (host attitude and cultural sensitivity). Lecturers tended to lack an awareness of Chinese/international students' initial academic differences or difficulties. Chinese students were more concerned with lecturers' supportive attitude in the initial stage. They complained that some lecturers tended to keep fast-paced classroom discussion with inadequate explanations of the sociocultural backgrounds of concepts and theories (e.g. did not give handouts, used UK-centred case studies, and did not give enough opportunities to involve more international students to share their international experiences in classroom discussion). Some Chinese students complained that they were in an disadvantaged position and often interrupted (see Section 5.4.5). This finding supports Hellsten and Prescott's (2004:437) suggestions, 'there is a perception that special effort should be made by academic staff to accommodate incoming students' needs'. The finding shows that the host attitude would influence Chinese students' classroom and group participation and general academic performance. This issue became more significant in the next stage of adaptation (see Section 6.2.3, Section 6.3.2 and Section 7.5).

Meanwhile Chinese students were also found to lack cultural awareness and sensitivity. Due to their lack of familiarity with the British academic culture, some Chinese students tended to have negative attitudes towards conversation-based interactive teaching and British students' active engagement in the classroom talk, and they tended to retain their original academic identities in response to the new academic identities in the early stage of their study.

**Contextual factors** (cultural and academic cultural distance). Firstly, the Chinese notion of politeness and 'face-saving' has been identified as one of factors that influenced Chinese students' adaptation process. For example, Chinese students did not ask questions in class due to their consideration of saving their own face, since their English was not good, and they didn't want to be singled out (Episode 1 in Section 5.4.2). Chinese students did not point out the lecturers' mistake due to their consideration of saving the lecturer's face (Episode 2 in Section 5.4.3). Chinese students asked questions after class due to their other-orientation consideration: they did not want to waste others' time (both lecturers and other fellow students). They tended to ask single right answer, one underlying reason may

be related to Chinese culture – a tendency to have a high level of uncertainty avoidance. Secondly, academic cultural distance is also identified. Chinese students and British lecturers tended to have expectation gaps on the student's/teacher's role (see Section 5.4.2).

**Logistics factors.** There are some logistics factors that influence Chinese students' initial adaptation to the UK academic culture, such as long teaching hours, large-sized classes and lecture rooms, and lack of a personal tutor, and busy course schedule.

*Large classes and large number of Chinese students.* Since it was a big lecture room, lecturers had to approach speakers in order to hear clearly, but some lecturers did not summarize or repeat what the students talked in class, thus many students could not hear their conversation clearly. This made international students find it difficult to follow lectures completely and get involved in classroom discussions. There are 80 EMBA and 104 RMBA students in total. The big class is one of the reasons for Chinese students' quietness in class. Some Chinese students felt 'scared' (C36, 150306, email) to speak up.

*Long teaching hours.* The MBA is a one-year intensive course with a busy course schedule and limited teaching time. This is one of the reasons why lecturers tended to keep fast-paced teaching and discussion. EMBA students had whole-day (from 9am to 4:30pm) lectures two days a week in the first semester. RMBA students who took double units also had long lecture hours. Both lecturers and students found it tedious.

In sum, Chinese students and British lecturers encountered some expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts during their classroom interactions. Generally speaking, Chinese students and British lecturers were found to adopt separation strategies in the early stage adaptation. Chinese students tended to adopt their original academic identity in response to the new academic identity (e.g. asking co-nationals after class, asking co-nationals in class, asking lecturers after class), due to their unfamiliarity with the socio-academic knowledge of the target culture (e.g. interactive approach, teacher/student role, language inefficiency, especially communication skills). Both Chinese students and British lecturers felt frustrated in the early stage adaptation process. Chinese students felt uncertain and stressed about their new student role and academic identities; whereas some lecturers felt frustrated about Chinese students' different classroom behaviours in this stage. Therefore, this stage is called 'unfamiliarity and frustration' stage.

However, the first stage is relatively relaxed in terms of course schedule (there were only two core courses), and there was relatively good relationship between Chinese students and British lecturers. The second stage of adaptation shows that Chinese students gradually adapted to the new academic identities but encountered more psychological stress. Both Chinese students and British lecturers encountered bigger psychological struggles in the second stage. There was less good relationship between Chinese students and British lecturers as well.



## **Chapter 6 The second-stage adaptation between Chinese students and British lecturers: Gradual adaptation but more frustration**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the two-way intercultural adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers in the second stage (mid November 2003 – end of January 2004). Expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts between Chinese students and lecturers are examined; and strategies adopted by both sides are discussed; factors that influenced these gaps and conflicts are explored.

There were three core modules (Course C, D and E) of the MBA in the second stage of adaptation. All students had to meet close deadlines for several written assignments, and they were under pressure from the forthcoming first-semester examinations. Chinese students were found to adopt more integration strategies, and appeared more active and challenging in classroom interaction, due to their growing familiarity with the interactive teaching method and the new academic culture. British lecturers were found to involve more Chinese students in classroom discourses and improve their communication and academic skills. However, there were bigger expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts between Chinese students and British lecturers in this period. Both sides felt very frustrated and pained from the Course E presentation incident. Their psychological curve reached the bottom level in this stage, though they tended to have better classroom interactions to some extent. Therefore, this period is called the ‘gradual adaptation but more confrontation and frustration’ stage.

Two episodes have been chosen from many field notes and interviews in this stage, since they are significant in demonstrating Chinese students’ and British lecturers’ expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts and different strategies adopted by both sides in this stage. Episode 1 demonstrates that four Chinese students were actively involved in the classroom discussion, but two of them tended to be excluded in the latter part of the classroom interaction. The underlying reasons are discussed. Episode 2 indicates an expectation gap and academic identity conflict between Chinese students and British lecturers in a Course E marking incident since it had a big impact on both sides, and four underlying factors are identified.

## 6.2 Episode 1 Four Chinese students were actively involved in Course E classroom discussion

### 6.2.1 Introduction

The episode demonstrates that both Chinese students and British lecturers tended to adopt integration strategies in classroom discussion. Chinese students were more active and challenging than they were seven weeks ago, when they started the MBA courses (in terms of number of students involved in the discussion, turns of talk, length of talk, and types of questions/talk). Four Chinese students had classroom interactions with the British lecturer and students. The nature of their classroom talk was now mainly about giving examples, expressing opinions and showing disagreement, rather than checking understanding and asking for clarification.

Table 6.1 below analyses a 32-minute classroom interaction in this selected episode (see Appendix 21 for field note and Appendix 21 for full transcription of the whole episode).

Table 6.1 Classroom interaction in Course E session 141103

Students	Total talk (turns/time)	Initiated talk (turns/time)	Solicited talk (turns/time)	No of speaker (total 76/23Ns+53NNs)
Chinese	6 / 2.24 min	3 / 48 sec	3 / 1.36 min	4 / 39 (10%)
British	24 / 5.28 min	11 / 1.05 min	13 / 4.23 min	10 / 23 (43%)
Other	2 / 4 sec	1 / 1s	1 / 3 sec	2 / 14 (14%)

(Notes: Ns: native speaker NNs: non-native speaker)

However, the episode also shows that the classroom talk was still dominated by British students, who took more and longer turns than Chinese and international students. There were 76 students in total who attended this session (30% Ns, 70% NNs). 43% of British students talked in class, but only 14% of Chinese and 29% of other international students talked in class. Detailed classroom interaction will be analysed and discussed below.

The episode also shows that some British lecturers (e.g. T11) tended to adopt more integration strategies by involving more international students to talk about their experiences in classroom interactions. For example, T11 was complained about his/her teaching style by some Chinese students as ‘reading handout without explaining’ (C34, 211103).

### 6.2.2 An analysis of the first part of the episode: C10 became the centre of the classroom talk

The first part of the episode shows that two Chinese students were actively and successfully involved in discussion with the British lecturer and British students. The British lecturer T11 created a quite encouraging and relaxed atmosphere in the beginning of this classroom discussion.

<Extract 1> Field notes and transcripts, Course E, 141103.

Keys to transcripts:

T11: British lecturer

C10, C9, C2, C7: Chinese students.

B12, B14, B15: British students

I6: an European student.

xxx: unrecognized part of interaction due to big-sized lecture room

( ): description of non-verbal aspects of communication.

//: overlapping

(In this Course E session, the lecturer asked students to offer some examples to explain types of teams they have experienced. C9 gave an example of his/her team randomly formed for this unit).

*T11: ... anybody else would like to comment on self-managed team who hasn't a leader or manager, self-solve the strategy that has worked or has not worked?*

*C9: Our team xxx we don't have leadership.*

*T11: Ok, so there is not a natural leader in your group so far, there might be by the end of today but we don't know that (some students laughed, including T11).*

*C9: (laughing) probably.*

(When classroom discussion moved to the topic of the fourth type of team – a virtual team, one British (B12) student commented that 'It doesn't tend to work very well...'. C10 raised his/her hand and talked about his/her experience working in a virtual team in his/her company).

*C10: I worked for my previous company, we found that working in a virtual team is very difficult, we only talk with each other...'*

*T11: Had you ever met each other before at any stage?*

*C10: No.*

*B14: C10, can I ask, did you form any opinions about people based on emails?*

*C10: Yeah, and I think for introverted person, it works well, we actually communicate well and help each other xxx*

*T11: Yeah, that's interesting, isn't it (B12 raised his/her hand)? Yeah, go on.*

*B12: Can I ask a supplementary question? When you form an impression of a person through email, do they actually correspond to your impression when you actually physically met them?*

*C10: Some people do, other people don't xxx. I don't know how to express it very well, but my feeling is emails work very well in certain circumstances, it sometimes can reduce anxiety xxx.*

*T11: It certainly reduces anxiety for people who aren't very good at face-to-face... (Field note, 141103, Course E).*

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Discussion

Extract 1 demonstrates a successful classroom engagement and negotiation experience of two Chinese students. They were very active in sharing their group work experience and previous work experience with British lecturers and students. C10's real experience working in a virtual team roused the lecturer and two British students' interest who asked a range of follow-up questions. C10 became the centre of classroom conversation, he/she expressed his/her opinions fluently and clearly. As B1 commented (considering that people tend to see the same episode from different perspectives, I asked B1, a British part-time student, to correct this piece of transcription and send me his/her immediate thoughts on this episode. The comments made the analysis more convincing and cross-referenced):

*B1: C10 makes a good, interesting observation and for the first time there is some dialogue between European and Chinese students (B1, 200306, email).*

C10 was an active Chinese students who adopted an integration strategy and was very motivated to adapt to the new academic identity in classroom discussion.

*C10: I don't want them (British students) to say Chinese students contribute nothing to the group work. So I always try to contribute as much as I could, and I want to show them Chinese students can do as well as they do, as long as they let me try (C10, 091003).*

This extract shows that C10 had managed to 'let me try' and adapt to the new academic identity (being active and challenging) successfully in the classroom discussion. This episode also reveals that the lecturer T11 managed successfully to involve more Chinese/international students in classroom discussion by asking questions and giving encouraging comment, 'anyone else would like to comment on...', 'that's interesting, isn't it'.

However, the second part of the episode seems not so encouraging. Two Chinese students were also motivated to contribute to the classroom discussion and adapt to the new academic identity, unfortunately the lecturer tended to have different response to their 'deviant' classroom talk.

### **6.2.3 An analysis of the second part of the episode: 'I was not given an opportunity to speak more'**

Extract 2 shows how two Chinese students tried to engage in the classroom interaction, and adapt to the new academic identity, and how the lecturer dealt with their different classroom discourse or marginal thinking. The underlying factors are explored at the end of this section.

<Extract 2>

*B15: xxx I just think can we send an email to someone sitting next to you (some people laughed)?*

*T11: How dare you? Oh no, how sad is that! (T11 said in a very high pitch with a*

*smile, some people laughed) How dare you, no (T11 laughed with students)*

*B2: I would accept this kind of phenomenon.*

*T11: Really, I can understand because I can't be bothered to go up a flight of stairs and talk to Julia. I need to send an email to remind her to do something for me//*

*C2: I don't think//*

*T11: //but that's different from 'hello I am here, just give me...//(T11 laughed).*

*C2: //I don't// think it is necessary to send an email to the person next to you. That costs money. I was in a company (0.1). The good thing is if you write through email, and obviously later when you read the email and you can just simply forward the email to the other person. We are a bureaucratic country// (with a serious tone).*

*T11: (with a low and serious voice, he/she looked unhappy and uncomfortable by this unexpected serious interruption) //I am supposing it depends on the nature of why you send an email to the one next to you. I think B15 is just saying he was just doing it as a personal thing, rather than for a task-related reason, would you, B15?*

*B15: xxx*

*T11: Yeah (with a low voice, looked uncomfortable and unhappy, B12 cleared his/her throat).*

*C7: Sometimes, we send emails just because my boss forward to others, you can copy to others//*

*T11: //Yeah, but if that's to do with the task or to do with the team or project you are working on, and you need it for (0.1) Eh, you know, you need to use it for later information, I can understand it. I thought it was just like 'Hi, how are you', a sort of personal thing when you send it to the person next to you*

*I6: Anyway talking about something personal should not use the company's facility.*

*T11: No, you shouldn't (some people applauded and laughed) no, very good (B11 said with a high pitch and laughed)(B12 raised his hand). Yeah, B12.*

*B12: xxx (B12 continued his comment on communication for personal reasons) (Field note and analysis, 141103, Course E, T11).*

### Interpretation

T11 was happily discussing an interesting issue raised by B15, 'can we send an email to someone sitting next to you'? C2 interrupted by disagreeing, 'I don't think...'. His/her interruption was ignored by the lecturer the first time, since it seemed not to be at a suitable time - the lecturer and British students were still enjoying a jokey conversation about B15's interesting point. C2 made his/her second turn-taking attempt, 'I don't think it is necessary to send an email to the person next to you', then he/she tried to argue that 'the good thing is...'.

C2's interruption seemed not very welcome to the situation. One British student B12 cleared his/her throat at this moment (maybe unintentionally). The atmosphere of the classroom became tense and serious. T11 seemed not happy or uncomfortable by C2's serious tones and comments. T11's voice became low and serious, and he/she interrupted C2's further comment by saying, 'I am supposing', then unexpectedly defended B15, 'I think B15 is just saying..., would you, B15?' He/she attempted to continue with B15's point by giving B15 an avenue to claim the idea again.

Interestingly, another Chinese student C7 attempted to continue with C2's argument – a

task-based reason for sending email, by giving an example of his/her own company. Again, T11 interrupted C7's comment and told him directly by starting with a 'but' - 'but it's to do with the task...'.

Finally, the tense atmosphere was broken by a European student I6 who made a compromise comment which made everyone laugh again. T11 said 'very good' in a very high pitch.

### Discussion

*Why C2 said 'I was not given an opportunity to speak more'?*

This episode shows that Chinese students and British lecturers tended to have different discourse patterns and opinions on the classroom discussion. Two Chinese students' (C2 and C7) 'deviant' classroom talk seemed not suitable for the situation and not welcome to the lecturer. Chinese students and British lecturers/students tended to have different opinions on an argument 'sending an email to the person next to you'. C2 and C7 emphasised a task-related perspective, whereas T11 emphasised a personal and informal perspective.

There are several possible reasons for two Chinese students' unsuccessful interchange. Firstly, C2 appeared not good at communication skills, especially turn-taking skills, tending not to interrupt at a suitable time, when the lecturer and some British students were still joking about B15's interesting point – email to the person next to you for personal reasons. Instead of sharing their light-hearted discussion, C2 interrupted abruptly with a slightly serious tone, by saying, 'I don't think it is necessary'. At this point, C2 seemed less experienced in this intercultural communication.

Secondly, the lecturer appeared culturally insensitive and inexperienced in handling different opinions due to different speaking and thinking styles. Instead of giving a second thought on why two Chinese students thought in the other direction - emphasising the task-related aspect, the lecturer was more interested in the British student's point on personal aspects, he/she repeatedly told two Chinese students that their points were irrelevant. C2 felt very 'disappointed' about the lecturer's 'not quite encouraging' attitude thinking that he/she was 'not given an opportunity to speak more'.

*C2: ...my intention was to bring up the argument that, email communication is indeed necessary in a bureaucratic business environment...I felt disappointed that my argument was not rolled out. I was not given an opportunity to speak more. Discussion on this topic could be a good contribution for that international class...he/she stifled the argument...the lecturer's response was not quite encouraging (C2, 260606, email in English).*

Thirdly, this extract involves an underlying reason which is often taken for granted –

legitimate pedagogical culture and power relations between native lecturer/students and non-native students in the multicultural classroom. This extract shows that the native lecturer seemed in a superordinate position to control the classroom discourse. T11 repeatedly told two Chinese students that their points were task-related, whereas the ongoing debate was about personal aspects. He/she tended to assume that two non-native students did not know what was happening in the classroom. He/she tended to regard his/her talk with several native students as legitimate discourse, whereas two non-native students' thought were irrelevant, marginal and deviant, based on his/her own frame of reference and his/her own habitus (Bourdieu, 1977), which were different from those of two Chinese students. This conforms to Bourne's (1992) argument on the teacher's control of the legitimate pedagogic culture - classroom pedagogy tends to be legitimate for one group (British native speaker), whilst illegitimate for the other group (Chinese non-native speaker).

Both the verbal and nonverbal languages of the lecturer showed that he/she controlled the context and turns of talk in class, and he/she is 'very encouraging towards them (British students)' (B1, 200306, email). The lecturer ignored C2's first attempt of interruption; he/she gave B15 an opportunity to take a second turn, by interrupting C2, 'I am supposing...I think B15 is just saying....would you, B5?'; he/she used a 'but' to interrupt C7's further contribution, 'but if it's to do with the task...'. Thus the lecturer's verbal language excluded two non-native students from this pedagogic discourse.

Meanwhile, the lecturer appeared uncomfortable to be challenged by different or deviant discourse patterns or thoughts of C2 and C7. T11 still stood in the right side of the lecture room, where most British full-time students normally sat, rather than in front of the lecture room, when C2 and C7 (who sat in the middle of the classroom) argued with T11. He/she seemed to ignore the majority of the class (70% of international students) (see Appendix 21).

Furthermore, the subsequent five- minute chatty and informal talk between the lecturer and British students may exclude some international students as well, and it 'is more like a chat in the pub between mates' (B1, 200306, email). Many Chinese students found it difficult to follow native speakers' informal conversation, since jokey talk often involves some contextual background knowledge and slang. Some Chinese students felt unhappy with British lecturers/students' jokes in class.

*C7: Some Western students sometimes spoke loudly and made nasty jokes in class, it was very annoying...it is wasting our time...and I feel not happy with some lecturers' attitude to us, they seemed biased to them (C7, 090204).*

C7's quote might relate to the Chinese view of learning as a serious and effort-making process and formal teacher-student relationship. The use of colloquial language is one aspect of building solidarity (Scollon and Scollon, 1981) and often masks, 'an appreciable asymmetry of power' (Jones, 1999: 251). Thus the lecturer's attitude and the pedagogical

legitimate culture may influence non-native students' full participation in the classroom talk. This extract also confirms the point written in the complaint letter to the School – Chinese students expected 'tolerance' and 'understanding' from lecturers (see Section 5.5), since many of them experienced being interrupted by lecturers and native students and not being given enough opportunities to contribute to the class.

In sum, Extract 2 shows that C2 and C7 tried to adapt to the new academic identity in classroom talk but they had an unsuccessful experience, partly due to C2's lack of communication skills (e.g. turn-taking), and partly due to the lecturer's legitimate authority position in pedagogical culture, and lack of cultural sensitivity (e.g. different classroom discourses). The expectation gap and academic identity conflict in this extract can be summarized as a 'dialogue' below:

**Chinese student**

**British lecturer**

My voice was not heard

Your point was not relevant

Dialogue 6.1 Legitimate pedagogical culture

The above dialogue demonstrates that Chinese/international students' motivation and participation in classroom discourse might be influenced by several factors such as legitimate pedagogical culture, the lecturer's lack of cultural sensitivity of non-native students' different discourse patterns. This episode shows that the lecturers/academic staff are more likely to exercise their power unconsciously in their teaching, by employing their established pedagogical practices which, 'are perceived and recognized as legitimate' (Bourdieu, 1985: 724), in order to maintain their status in the field. Thus Chinese/international students are more likely to be 'deviant' and excluded from the legitimate classroom discourse. This generates a pedagogical question: Why are international students' voices less likely to be heard? How can international voices be heard in a multicultural classroom? How to support international students to adapt to the new academic identities in the intercultural classroom talk? I will attempt to discuss these issues in Section 9.4.1.

This episode shows a tension between Chinese students and the lecturer who have different cultures of learning, discourse patterns and academic identities. It involves whether minority learners' discourses are recognized by the mainstream teachers (Bernstein, 1990; Gee, 1996), whether lecturers simply adapt these international students to the legitimate discourse patterns or accommodate themselves to the alternative cultures of learning and discourse patterns. This also involves whether the lecturer sees this otherness as an opportunity to challenge themselves or a threat to their own academic identity or pedagogical authority position, and how lecturers balance the relationship between retaining their original academic identities and developing new academic identities (Cortazzi and Jin, 2002), in order to avoid ethnocentricity.



#### **6.2.4 Summary**

So far, two parts of the episode have been discussed. The former part is about two Chinese students' happy and successful experiences, and the latter part is about two Chinese men's unhappy and unsuccessful encounters. The lecturer's behaviour in this episode seems contradictory and inconsistent. On the one hand, he/she appear very encouraging to two Chinese students' involvement in the first part of the episode. It may be because the two Chinese students supported his/her question 'anybody else would like to comment on self-managed team who hasn't a leader?', and 'any examples on virtual team?', with their personal experiences; on the other hand, the lecturer's defensive attitude on behalf of B15 was quite discouraging to the two Chinese students' further involvement and contribution in the second part of the episode. It might be because the two Chinese men held different opinions, different discourse patterns and a different sense of humour from the lecturer's, which might make the lecturer feel uncomfortable and challenged about his/her assumed and established legitimate discourse authority position.

In conclusion, this episode shows that both Chinese students and British lecturers tended to adopt more integration strategies in the second stage. Chinese students appeared more active and challenging in classroom talk (see C2's research journal about his other challenging episodes in Appendix 9, Extract 1). Lecturers tended to involve more Chinese/international students in the classroom talk by encouraging them to talk about their own experiences. However, some 'active' Chinese students encountered some problems in this stage: they appeared not good at communication/debating skills, e.g. turn-taking; and their different discourse patterns and marginal thoughts were more likely to be regarded as irrelevant and deviant by the lecturers, due to different 'habitus' and prevailing pedagogical culture, thus they were more likely to be in a disadvantaged position and not given enough opportunities to speak in intercultural classroom settings. Both internal and external factors influencing the two-way adaptation process have been identified.

The next episode is about an unhappy Course E marking incident, which involves more expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts between Chinese students and British lecturers in the second stage.

### **6.3 Episode 2 An oral presentation marking incident: 'we don't mark effort, we mark outputs'**

#### **6.3.1 Introduction**

As part of communication skills, presentation skills were emphasised and assessed in the Weston MBA programme in the year 2003-4. There were two assessed group presentations for EMBA students over a year: Courses B and E. The oral presentation comprised 25% and 30% of the total mark of two modules respectively.

The first presentation (Course B) was assessed in the beginning of the first semester, the groups were allocated by the lecturer and mixed with different nationalities. Most of the presentations were conducted by native speakers, except in two groups (by a Chinese woman and a Japanese man). All groups got good marks (83-89 percent).

The second presentation (Course E) was assessed by a panel of four academic staff as well as by peers before Christmas, eleven weeks after the MBA courses started. The group members were allocated randomly by lecturers in alphabetical order, 6-7 people in each group. Each group was required to present for 15 minutes, then all group members stood in front to answer questions from the audience. Two Chinese-only groups (39% of Chinese students) failed their group presentation (they got 45% and 49% respectively, the pass mark is 50%). They wrote a complaint letter to the MBA director and then the director of the School of Management.

This incident was chosen since it had a big impact on both Chinese students and British lecturers – a ‘shock’ to most of them (including many other students). Chinese students were shocked by the failed marks; British lecturers were shocked by Chinese students’ use of the word ‘prejudice’ in the complaint letter. The underlying factors and the impact of the incident are discussed. Below is a field note and this is followed by a summary of different opinions on this incident.

<Extract 1>

*I sat in several CHC and Chinese-only groups’ final rehearsals this late afternoon. Two groups had been working there for at least two hours when I arrived at the Management School. I saw some presenters did not have notes in their hands, they almost recited all the contents of presentation, they said they had practiced many times, especially C18, who believed ‘practice makes perfect’; C5 told me his group met five times, each time 2-3 hours, today was the third time rehearsal. Some group members looked quite serious, they often gave presenters some critical comments on how to open, how to phrase well, and how to make eye contact with the audience (Field note, 111203, Course E).*

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## **6.3.2 Discussion**

### **6.3.2.1 Different views on the marking incident**

Three kinds of views on this incident are summarized below from a large number of interviews of Chinese/international students and British lecturers/students.

#### 1/ Competence-oriented views

These people (majority of lecturers) thought the marking was fair, since Chinese students’ English and communication/presentation skills were not good, they were not competent enough. Competence-oriented people thought the criterion should be the same for everyone,

Chinese/international students were expected to meet the academic criteria in the UK.

## 2/ Empathy-oriented views

These people (majority of Chinese students) thought the marking was not fair, since they thought Chinese students had made greater effort than native students; Chinese/international students were disadvantaged when they were assessed by the same criteria. Empathy-oriented people thought allowances in language skills should be made and efforts should be considered in marking oral presentation.

## 3/ Neutral attitudes

These people (majority of international students) thought though Chinese students' communication skills were not so good; however the marks should not be so low.

*I6: I think the problem is that they (School) should not throw them (Chinese students) away like this. I understand that Chinese has been angry about it, because they did not know what is expected. From the quality, there is not big difference... Many Chinese students feel disappointed, in general, if you see from psychological and pedagogical point, it is not good (I6, 090604).*

*I2: I was really shocked... I just think why, it is not fair... I didn't think presentation is that different (I2, 010404).*

I discuss how competence-oriented and empathy-oriented people viewed this incident, in order to explore expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts between Chinese students and British lecturers and the underlying factors involved in this incident. I will discuss it from the following perspectives: academic, pedagogical and cultural.

### **6.3.2.2 Academic perspective: Aware of lecturers' dilemma situation and students' needs?**

This episode involves an expectation gap and academic identity conflict on the teacher/student's roles. Chinese students were not happy with two aspects of the teacher's role: firstly, lecturers 'did not explain clearly what was expected from the presentation' (I2, 010404), thus students 'did not know what is expected' (I6, 090604), and the lecturer's oral information on the marking was 'inconsistent' (C2, 210704).

*C2: Before presentation, the lecturer said they would not consider much on language aspects in marking, but in fact they did consider language aspects too much, it was inconsistent (C2, 210704).*

Secondly, Chinese students felt disappointed about the lecturer's lack of socio-moral aspect of the teacher's role – some lecturers 'did not respond' (C5, 100604) to their email request on the group allocation, since they were 'worried about' (C24, 180704) their marks if they were placed in Chinese-only groups; they complained that some lecturers 'don't provide email address to students' (C26, 160704); 'they are too busy to care about us' (C5, 100604),

‘little interaction between lecturers and students after class’ (C18, 010804). Some British students (e.g. B28, RMBA) and international students complained about the lecturer’s lack of availability as well.

*B28: There is an attitude from a lot of lecturers, that they are here for the lecture, that is it, they are not here to help you outside of that, they always plan so busy, they always have a lot of work to do. They are not, their priority is not here for helping students, even if they should be or should not be (B28, 190504).*

*I2: ...in this country, you have to make an appointment, especially they are still busy, you know they have a little time table on the door, just a 10 minute slot, and you come in and put your name in this 10 minutes slot, and when you talk to them, they always look at their watch (I2, 010404).*

By contrast, lecturers said they had a set of written criteria shared by the panel of four academic staff, and they ‘told them in class’ (T11, 080306). Lecturers argued that they ‘allocate groups by random’ (T11, 080306) considering the diversity of groups. The MBA director T2 expressed a dilemma of allocating groups: international students expected to work in a mixed group, whereas the native students wanted to work on their own.

*T2: So again it comes back to the whole issue, how you set groups...the problem is that you get complaints from them (British students), because they feel they are carrying the rest of the group, the rest of the group expect them to do all the writing and presenting, which is not fair either. So it is difficult to deal with. You never get it right (smile) (T2, 240206).*

In sum, Chinese students’ and British lecturers’ interview quotes show that both sides tended to be unaware of each other’s needs and expectations. Lecturers tended to be insensitive to Chinese students’ expectations on lecturers’ explicit instruction and social/psychological support (e.g. empathy, availability); whereas Chinese students tended to be unaware of the British lecturers’ dilemma of balancing teaching and research, and meeting both international and local students’ needs.

### 6.3.2.3 Pedagogical perspective: ‘Marking outputs’ or ‘marking effort’?

Empathy-oriented and competence-oriented lecturers/students have different opinions on a criterion of assessing an oral presentation. Empathy-oriented students and lecturers argued that oral presentation is subjective in nature, effort and allowances in language aspects should be considered in the assessment scale, otherwise it is ‘not fair’ to international students (C14, 150904).

*C8: I think marking presentation is always subjective, students’ efforts should be considered. Let me tell you my story, when I did undergraduate degree in China, one course was Developmental Economics. The lecturer asked us to do a presentation...I spent a lot of time preparing the presentation and reading many Western books and journal articles. When I did presentation in class, the lecturer said what I presented*

*was all about green economics, which was not what he expected, but he gave me 80 percent, the second high mark in class, because I had made lots of effort in it (C8, 050204).*

Some empathy-oriented British students said they ‘took advantage’ (B1, 160304) of their good presentation skills. Empathy-oriented lecturers expressed their dilemma situation: they wanted to be ‘forgiving’, ‘I will make an allowance for that’ (T7, 180304), and they made allowance ‘intuitively’ (T2, 281003), but they had to follow the School’s policy as well,

*T6: When I started as a lecturer, I was very forgiving, for me it doesn’t matter, but the policy here in the School, I am not sure of the other schools, if language is very poor, you need to reflect in the marking, so I have changed according to it (T6, 201004).*

By contrast, competence-oriented lecturers and students argued that though international students were second language learners, they still need to be effective in communication/presentation skills. Therefore, international students should conform to the British academic rules and be assessed by the same criteria, ‘otherwise you shouldn’t be in the UK’, ‘It wasn’t as bad, but not as good, but compared with others, it wasn’t good’ (T11, 080306).

B2, a student representative, sat in a staff/student meeting for the Course E marking incident. He/she agreed with some competence-oriented lecturers’ opinions.

*B2: T11 said everyone wanted to gain 70 percent, but 70 percent has got to be 70 percent, no matter whether you are native or international, you have to speak in an effective way, otherwise you shouldn’t be in the UK (B2, 290405).*

*T4: I think university has responsibility to make sure everyone comes on the programme, has sufficiently good English...Their English wasn’t good...They didn’t have real skill actually presenting...you got to be able to present (T4, 240504).*

*T2: It wasn’t a good presentation, that is the proper reason for the low mark, they did not deliver as we asked, and they did not do very well....Probably they felt that they have put a lot of work into it and they deserve a better mark than they were given...it (effort) should definitely not be considered...because we don’t mark effort, we mark outputs (T2, 240206).*

The above debate on assessing an oral presentation can be summarized as the following ‘dialogue’:

<b>Empathy-oriented student</b>	<b>Competence-oriented lecturer</b>
Marking a presentation is subjective	We don’t mark effort
Effort needs to be considered	We mark outputs

#### Dialogue 6.2 Efforts and outputs

The above dialogue highlights an expectation gap between empathy-oriented Chinese students and competency-oriented lecturers. Chinese students tended to focus on social aspect of teacher's role – show empathy to international students' efforts; whereas lecturers tended to emphasize students' role of being competent in communication skills. Next I will discuss how these different attitudes made a difference in marking.

*How do different attitudes on assessment make a difference?*

Some competence-oriented lecturers thought Chinese students' presentations 'weren't easy to follow', they thought it was because 'their English wasn't good' (T4, 240504). There might be two possible reasons that made lecturers feel it was difficult to follow. The first reason is difference in discourse patterns, which is generally culturally bound. Chinese discourse patterns are different from British patterns, e.g. a tendency of inductive reasoning, long background introduction, or topic sentence delay (Scollon and Scollon, 1995). If lecturers are not culturally sensitive to the diversity of discourse patterns and thinking styles, they will be more likely to assume British discourse patterns as legitimate, whereas the non-native students' pattern will be assessed as deviant and illegitimate, thus these students might be more likely to encounter 'stereotype vulnerability' (proposed by Claude Steele, see Watters, 1995: 45) and poor minority academic performance, 'whenever (minority) students concentrate on an explicitly scholastic task, they risk confirming their group's negative stereotype. This extra burden...can be enough to drag down their performance' (ibid:45). Therefore, the competence-oriented lecturers' intolerance of international students' foreign accent or the deviant way of expressing their ideas might 'drag down' their marks.

Table 6.2 below (10 groups in total) shows that the Course E presentation marks of Chinese/CHC student groups were 20% lower than those of mixed groups.

Table 6.2 Course E presentation marks

group	4 mixed	3 CHC (except one Indian student)	3 Chinese only groups
presenter	Bs	Cs (one Indian)	Cs
average score	77	58	57

Table 6.3 below shows EMBA students' diploma marks and core module marks (each module includes a combination of individual assignment, group assignment and exam). It shows Chinese students' average mark for Course E is the lowest among all subjects, and the gap between Chinese and British students in Course E module is 14.18 percent. Therefore, the low mark of Course E presentation did influence Chinese students' general academic performance.

Table 6.3 EMBA students' average marks of core modules

Course	Diploma Mark	B	D	E	C	F	A	I
Average	60.32	62.87	60.73	57.73	60.75	58.83	63.70	55.43
UK	69.00	69.43	67.29	70.00	67.29	66.86	68.14	66.14
China	58.96	61.93	61.14	55.82	61.18	57.07	62.57	51.65
CHC	58.69	61.35	57.91	54.51	57.92	58.35	65.80	52.00

Table 6.4 RMBA students' average marks of core courses

RMBA	Diploma	Q	R	K	D	O	S	N	W	P	E	M	U
Average	61.55	60.22	60.18	61.67	53.99	73.02	66.97	66.26	63.69	66.23	65.01	56.28	60.98
UK	65.31	64.31	62.31	65.92	60.69	79.62	68.46	66.00	64.77	76.62	66.69	57.92	65.15
China	61.05	59.90	60.00	59.67	54.19	70.86	64.19	68.14	65.24	61.33	63.90	57.38	59.62
CHC	60.13	57.68	59.27	60.00	49.64	72.42	65.29	64.53	63.65	65.33	64.20	52.58	58.07

The other possible reason why Chinese students' discourses 'weren't easy to follow' is that they might have different or unexpected interpretations on Course E theories, since Course E is a 'soft' literacy-based subject which is based on Western philosophy. As discussed in Section 5.4.2 many Chinese students had different interpretations of the basic managerial theories due to different socio-economic system and cultural backgrounds.

*C19: I think Course E is a Western philosophy, I found difficult to understand well about some underlying notions (C19, 270704).*

C19's quote suggests that one of reasons for the low mark of some literacy-based subjects may be not simply because of international students' English inefficiency or lack of communication competence, but because of their unfamiliarity with the underlying Western philosophies and values. Therefore, the cultural distance rather than the mere communication competence tends to be the main reason for the difference in academic performance. For example, Table 6.3 shows that the gaps between Chinese and British students in Courses E (14.18 percent) and Course I (14.49 percent) are much bigger than the gaps in Courses C (6.11 percent) and D (6.15 percent). One possible reason is that Courses E and I are literacy-based and closely related to Western-philosophy and business ethics.

Therefore, if the lecturers simply emphasise international students' language proficiency and communication competence and neglect their potential difficulties in learning Western managerial theories, due to cultural distance, it would disadvantage these students, and it would add 'extra burden' for these students when they found they were not understood and not given adequate academic and socio-psychological support by the lecturers.

Further evidence can be found about how culture distance influenced Chinese/CHC students' academic performance. Table 6.3 and 6.4 show that Chinese/CHC students had the poorest diploma marks in both EMBA and RMBA classes (1.36 and 0.50 percent lower than average respectively). I want to argue that one of the main reasons is cultural distance. Chinese students tended to have more difficulties in their academic studies than students from similar language and cultural backgrounds as the British. As one European student said, 'I don't have to learn English; Chinese have to learn. Second, they are not used to

expressing some points in class, that style of communication, they are not comfortable to do it. I don't have problem speaking in class, they may feel that they are not confident' (I14, 190504).

This finding suggests that large language and cultural differences place Chinese students under greater pressure and they encounter bigger sociocultural and psychological problems during their MBA studies. This research finding is similar to some previous studies (Furnham and Bochner, 1982, 1986; Paige, 1993; Ward, 1996). For example, Furnham and Bochner's (1982) survey on 150 students from 29 different countries studying in the UK shows that the greater the differences between the sojourner's original culture and the host culture, the more sociocultural and psychological problems students encountered. Meanwhile, Ward and Kennedy (1996, 1999) find that Malaysian students experienced more sociocultural adaptation problems in New Zealand than they had in Singapore.

Furthermore, the finding indicates that there was inconsistency and ambiguity of marking criteria in the MBA programmes. Different lecturers tended to have different criteria for marking assignments and exams. Chinese students tended to feel frustrated about the marking criteria especially when they are not fully explained to students. 'For some assignments I feel not good enough, but I got the high mark; but for some I feel very confident, but I got the low mark. I really don't know. But it will be better if I know' (C31, 250704). And many Chinese students felt unhappy with the low marks they received.

*C12: My Course D exam mark is 71 percent, individual assignment is 70 percent....but my Course E and F (literacy-based) marks are very low...I worked so hard, I thought I should have got better marks than I had (C12, 080704).*

The mark analysis shows that there is no significant improvement in EMBA Chinese students' assignment and exam performance in the second semester. EMBA Chinese students' assignment marks were only a little bit better (0.13 percent rise) than in the first semester, and their exam performance is degraded by 2.27 in the second semester (see Table 2 in Appendix 14). It may be partly due to exam paper error, partly due to unfamiliarity with the subject (Course F is Western philosophy-based).

A comparison of ten assignments in two semesters (5 in each semester) also shows that there was no significant improvement in Chinese students' assignment marks in the second semester (0.30 lower than the mark in semester 1, see Table 4 in Appendix 14). Though many Chinese students got relatively higher individual assignments marks for some particular subjects, e.g. some of them got over 80 percent, e.g. C2 for Course S, C13 for Course T, C20 for Course Y.

RMBA Chinese students tended to have some improvement in assignment performance, but not in exam performance. RMBA Chinese students' assignment mark has improved by 3.51 percent, but exam mark degrades by 2.36 percent in the second semester (see Table 3 in Appendix 14). The reason for RMBA students' assignment improvement may be due to



their language improvement, familiarity with the academic writing and the British academic culture (e.g. critical and independent thinking, having their own ideas). The degrade of exam marks may due to the low mark of Course P (a literacy-based subject).

Since both EMBA and RMBA students' exam marks degraded, and since exam marks consist of 50% and 70% of the total marks of each module in EMBA and RMBA class, therefore, neither EMBA and RMBA Chinese students had significant improvement in their general performance in the second semester. Therefore, the increase in familiarity with the academic culture and in language efficiency did not guarantee an increase in assignment and exam marks, students' academic performance was influenced by more complicated factors, such as the host lecturer's attitude, the assessment system and cultural distance.

In sum, the Course E group presentation incident shows that students were not given clear criteria for assessing a good oral presentation, and the inconsistency and ambiguity of marking standards caused a cultural misunderstanding between lecturers and Chinese students. This finding conforms to the views of Elsey and Kinnell (1990: 3-5) who argue that differences in approaches to learning, teaching and assessment may cause 'cultural bias', due to its 'emphasis on the absence of academic guidelines, the overwhelmingly British context of teaching material, a lack of rapport with host students'. Therefore, an internationalization-oriented assessment system is suggested to be established (see Section 9.4.1.1).

Two other reasons for the Course E presentation incident are also identified. Some British lecturers tended to be not aware of Chinese students' different discourse patterns and difficulties in their understanding of the Western theories due to their lack of Western socio-cultural background knowledge. Thus lecturers' attitude and degree of intercultural sensitivity may influence Chinese/international students' academic performance. In sum, the Course E incident demonstrates how the assessment and marking scheme on oral presentation influences international students' general performance. It is argued that a clear and transparent assessment system needs to be established in response to internationalised higher education. This incident also highlights how to assess international students' group and oral presentations within an unbiased marking system.

#### **6.3.2.4 Cultural perspectives: 'sympathize with the weakest' or 'survival of the fittest'?**

'Dialogue' 6.2 in Section 6.3.2.3 also shows that competence-oriented lecturers tended to look at the incident objectively and impersonally, 'it wasn't good', 'they did not do very well', 'their English wasn't good', 'they didn't have real skill actually presenting'. Some lecturers' attitudes tended to be ethnocentric or UK-centred rather than internationalization-oriented. 'You have to speak in an effective way, otherwise you shouldn't do in the UK', 'you have got to be able to present'. These attitudes tended to

have little consideration and understanding of Chinese/international students' psychological needs and emotional involvement (e.g. frustration, bewilderment) in this incident, especially the underlying cultural values and notions of face and identity.

This incident seems to show that Chinese students were not familiar with the British marking system or tend to care about marks too much. However, many Chinese students thought this incident was beyond 'marks', it was more about the issue of equality, face and cultural identity. To most Chinese/international students, grades/degrees and academic successes are not simply objective and depersonalized facts but important personal achievements, self-growth and cultural identity development. As discussed, many Chinese students encountered culture shock or academic identity conflicts in the first stage of their study, so they tried to adapt to the new academic identities and prove their competence of adapting to the new learning environment through hard work, since they believed 'no pain, no gain' (C4, 140304), which was based on Confucian learning ethics, as discussed in Section 3.3.2.2.

*C24: We work hard because we want to prove that we are capable and competent for the courses. Many British students do work hard and care about marks as well, but they got what they wanted. I hope some lecturers can treat every single student equally and fairly, no matter where he/she is from (C24, 180704).*

Many Chinese students' great disappointment was that some lecturers' marks appeared unfair and showed inaccurate comments to them. They said some lecturers tended to have stereotypes and prejudice against them.

*C5: Some lecturers seemed biased to British students. They said we read a lot and read fast, but the British students read more and faster than us, it is not fair (C5, 100604).*

*C7: I still don't understand why T11 wrote on the feedback sheet, 'read a lot, talk to the screen, ignore the audience'...as everyone know, I did not read a word at all in the whole presentation and I walked around the classroom when the audience raised questions from different directions. If it is not technical mistake, then it is the lecturer's stereotype or prejudice against us (C7, 270804).*

Meanwhile, failed marks made Chinese students lose 'face' and threaten their assumed academic identity, e.g. the team leader of one failed group dropped off the MBA course without taking exams, since he/she felt 'no face' and 'not happy', since it is a group presentation.

*C22: It was not fair and it had a very bad effect on Chinese students, especially our group leader C25, who dropped off suddenly. He felt he lost his face as a leader. And he was not happy with the School as well as Chinese students. He said Chinese students should have given co-national students higher marks...Chinese students gave British students much high marks but gave their co-nationals so low marks. Maybe it is Chinese modesty, but it influenced our marks and image (C22, 040204).*

Since the Course E presentation was also assessed by peers, Chinese students tended to be polite and generous to others rather than to themselves, in order to give others ‘face’ – they gave British students very high and generous marks. And they also expected to be given ‘face’ and good marks by others. RMBA student C32 had the similar experience, ‘we marked British students 80-90%, they marked us only 30-40%. We felt very angry and upset, it is not fair’ (C1 & C32, 140304).

This is an interesting part of this episode. Chinese students tended to adopt their previous cultural values in assessing the self and other’s performance (another example see Appendix 22, C7’s dilemma on expressing positive self assessment). They gave British students high marks but gave themselves relatively low marks, and they expected the same treatment from British lecturers/students. However, when Chinese students found British lecturers/students did not share their cultural value system and gave them unfriendly low marks instead, they felt very disappointed. Therefore, this incident reflected a ‘cultural conflict’ between British lecturers and Chinese students.

*C12: I think there is different value system between China and UK. China is a nation which sympathizes with the weakest. Chinese people like to help and care for the poor and the needy. Chinese students have put themselves in the weak position...they think the lecturer should regard them as the weakest, and they think the lecturer would not consider too much on language aspect. However T4 did not think so. This is a sort of cultural conflict. He thought ‘if your language is not good and you have not reached this level, I would not give you the good mark’. I think western culture emphasizes much more on respecting the strongest, they think if British students’ language is their strength, it is reasonable to give them higher mark, whereas Chinese students are weak at language skills, then it is fair that they got lower or failed mark. This is a society that believes ‘survival of the fittest’ (C12, 080704).*

C12’s quote shows that British culture values ‘survival of the fittest’, whereas Chinese culture values ‘sympathize with the weakest’, which is based on the notion of Ren (benevolence), an other-oriented value system. As discussed in Section 3.2.1.2, Ren emphasises ‘if you want to do, do it for others; if you want to get, get it for others’ (The Analects, Yongye, Chapter 6 & 28). Since Chinese students regarded themselves as the weakest, being the second language learners in the UK, they expected to be treated well (e.g. show empathy) by the British lecturers and students who were the culture hosts, but they found that they were treated in a way they saw as unfriendly and unfair, thus they felt very disappointed.

Based on the above argument on ‘cultural conflict’ between Chinese students and lecturers, Dialogue 6.2 is thus developed into a new dialogue below:

Empathy-oriented student	Competence-oriented lecturer
Marking presentation is subjective Effort needs to be considered	We don't mark effort We mark outputs
(sympathize with the weakest)	(survival of the fittest)

### Dialogue 6.3 Empathy and competence

This 'dialogue' demonstrates the underlying cultural reasons for lecturers and Chinese students' different views on the incident. Both sides tended to lack cultural sensitivity - they tended to view the incident from their own cultural values rather than from the other's perspective. Lecturers appeared unaware of Chinese students' expectations on the equal opportunity, empathy and support from the British lecturers and the notion of face and *Ren* (benevolence) involved in the incident; Chinese students tended to be unaware of British lecturers/students' views and values on competition, competence and individual responsibility of adapting to the new learning environment and achieving academic success. Therefore, both sides need to be culturally sensitive and other-oriented. Other-orientation and mutual support is thus proposed in Chapter 9. Other-orientation means to see the incident from the other's point of view. Both sides need to be aware of each other's expectations and provide relevant support to others.

#### 6.3.2.5 Impact of Course E incident on Chinese students and British lecturers

This incident had both positive and negative impacts on Chinese students and British lecturers. Firstly, the positive impact on Chinese students is that this incident forced Chinese students to adapt to the new academic identity, so as to survive in the new learning environment.

*C2: We need to know about their rules, whether we accept their rules or not, we have to change ourselves and to be competent enough to survive in the new situation. We have no choice ...I notice that some Chinese students like to say, 'my English is not good', this kind of modesty will be misunderstood by British as lack of confidence or competence, since this is also an excuse of laziness. We should stop being so modest in this country, since competition and competence is more emphasised in this country. We should try hard and improve ourselves (C2, 210704).*

*C22: We have to adjust our attitude and make more efforts to improve your communication skills (C22 040204).*

These interview quotes show that it is the external factor (e.g. the host institution's pedagogical pressure – assessment system (an emphasis on students' communicative competence) and the internal factor (host attitude) that force Chinese students to adapt quickly to the new academic values and identities. They became very active in practising and improving communication skills (e.g. presentation skill) in the second semester (see

Section 6.2.2).

Secondly, this incident had a positive impact on lecturers' attitude change. Some lecturers began to be more aware of cultural differences. The lecturer T11 learnt about the Chinese 'face' issue by asking his/her Chinese friends after the incident. 'I learned from them, they told me so...I had some Chinese students....I asked them...after that (incident)' (T11, 080306). The lecturers began to provide more transparent criteria of assignment to students. Both T4 and T11 mentioned that they tried to give 'written form' of criterion of assignment in advance, 'to make sure the criterion is transparent' (T4, 240504).

Meanwhile, some empathy-oriented lecturers and students tended to consider how to change the assessment system from a dynamic and internationalized perspective. 'There should be some system...nobody does enough about that' (T7), or establish 'a mixture of British and international approaches' (C24). Therefore, how to internationalize the assessment system is a crucial issue to resolve the above expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts.

Thirdly, the biggest impact of this incident is on the psychological level of both Chinese students and British lecturers. Many interviews show that both Chinese students and British lecturers encountered cultural shock and psychological struggles from this incident.

*C1: The marks were informed just before the exam. Most of us got a shock and felt very frustrated about the results. C7 did not sleep for the whole evening, because he could not believe it...it was a shock to everyone...and it did influence our exams (C1 & C32, 140304).*

*T2: They (Chinese students) felt disappointed about the results they got. It was a difficult one, because it was not just the fact how they have been marked, but the lecturer's prejudice against Chinese students, that was a very difficult thing to deal with....it was very sensitive (T2, 240206).*

It was a shock for T11, who thought it was a 'really horrible' and 'very hurtful and very painful' experience.

*T11: Basically, I would tend to think I am a very fair person... try not to discriminate anybody, very hurtful and very painful to me...I came back from holiday, and they wrote to T2 and T35, not to me, so there was no direct conversation about it, it was just T2 and T35, so pretty horrible (when he/she talked about this, his/her voice was low, and s/he did not look at me directly, seemed not comfortable enough. I felt sorry about this- researcher's note)....that's really horrible...I am in tears, 'no no, I can't bear' ...both T2 and T35 were very supportive, they knew I have never done anything, I am not like that (T11, 080306).*

The above interview extracts show that both Chinese students and British lecturers felt pained and frustrated about this incident. I am quite sympathetic to both sides. Therefore, this unhappy intercultural conflict had a big impact on both Chinese students' and British

lecturers' psychological adjustment, and it involved their competence of managing affective factors in their intercultural encounters.

This incident brought some negative impact on the relationship between Chinese students and British lecturers/students. Chinese students were not happy with little communication between lecturers and the attitude of the School - 'just leave that' in this incident.

*T2: I don't think anybody else treated them unfairly, frankly I just think they were wrong, you just leave that, get on the work, rather than complain (T2, 240206).*

*C5: I always think conflicts can be solved by good communication. There should be more communication between school, lecturers and students (C3 & C5, 070704).*

Some Chinese students did not trust certain lecturers - so-called 'tough markers' (C12, 080704), and they did not choose particular lecturers' option units to avoid being marked down in assignments and exams; some Chinese students told the School they did not want certain lecturers to be their dissertation supervisors. There was a bigger gap between these students and lecturers. Some students said this incident was not good for the School's image as well.

*C1: ...from the administrative perspective, it is not good for School as well. When we go back to China and tell this unhappy incident to our friends, it will influence the School's reputation and its recruitment (C1 & C32, 140304).*

Fourthly, this incident had a big impact on Chinese students' attitudes towards working with British students for their final group assignment – Course F. The majority of Chinese students began to form their own co-national groups, since they believed they could do as well as British students and they did 'not want to be looked down upon' (C12, 080704) by British students. There was little contact between Chinese students and British full-time students after this incident.

### **6.3.3 Summary**

This episode shows that Chinese students encountered a low-mark incident due to their inefficient communication/presentation skills. Different attitudes, expectation gaps, academic identity conflicts involved in this incident have been discussed from academic, pedagogic and cultural perspectives. Both positive and negative impacts of this incident have been discussed.

Academically, Chinese students and British lecturers appeared not aware of each other's academic expectations and needs. Chinese students were not aware of the lecturers' dilemma situation of teaching and research, and managing meeting both local and international students' needs; lecturers were not sensitive to Chinese students' expectation on both academic and social-psychological aspect of the teacher's role.

Pedagogically, this episode shows that Chinese students and British lecturers had different views on criteria of assessing an oral presentation, e.g. how to assess international students' linguistic aspects in oral presentation, and whether subjective factors (empathy) can be involved in the assessment system. Both external factors (e.g. the pressure and policy of the host institution on assessment system, pedagogical culture) and internal factors (e.g. negative attitudes of host lecturers, lack of an awareness of students' cultural distances), influenced Chinese students' academic performance and adaptation process.

Culturally, Chinese students tended to value 'sympathize with the weakest', due to a collectivism-oriented cultural system; whereas British lecturers tended to value 'survival of the fittest', due to individualism-oriented cultural distances. And both sides tended to regard the incident from their own value systems, rather than from the other's perspective. Therefore, both sides tend to lack cultural sensitivity.

The positive and negative impact on Chinese students and British lecturers from this incident have also been discussed. Positively, this incident enhanced the two-way adaptation process. Both Chinese students and British lecturers began to change their previous academic identities. Chinese students began to realize the importance of developing new academic identities in the new learning environment, due to host conformity pressure. Lecturers tended to learn more about Chinese culture (e.g. T11's change in Section 6.3.2.5). Negatively speaking, both Chinese students and British lecturers encountered psychological shock and frustration from this incident, due to their lack of communication and cultural sensitivity. Many Chinese students suffered from psychological breakdown and their psychological curve reached the bottom. It had a negative impact on the teacher-student relationship as well. This episode indicates that managing one's affective aspect is significant for both Chinese students and British lecturers to achieve effective intercultural communication and intercultural relationship. Finally, I will discuss an emerging question from this episode:

*Which attitude to adopt: competence-oriented or empathy-oriented?*

Two major attitude differences on this incident have been discussed in this section so far. The discussion has been mainly based on the argument between empathy-oriented Chinese students and competence-oriented British lecturers; the former emphasised the importance of lecturers' empathetic attitude and emotional support for international students' academic performance and adaptation process; the latter focused on the importance of students' English proficiency and communicative competence in their academic success. However, both sides seemed to see the incident from their own perspective, based on their original cultural values and practices, rather than from the other's point of view. In other words, both sides tended to be ethnocentric and culturally insensitive. And both sides encountered psychological 'shock' due to expectation gaps and communication breakdown. Therefore, competence-oriented British lecturers and empathy-oriented Chinese students tend to adopt more separation strategies, they were less culturally sensitive than those who adopted

integration strategies (for other discussion about Chinese students' and British lecturers'/students' attitude see Sections 5.3 and 8.5).

I have also discussed the other two optional arguments of the empathy-oriented lecturers and competence-oriented students. The empathy-oriented lecturers tended to adopt a more challenging and dynamic view. They were thinking about how to establish an internationalized assessment system, rather than simply stick to a UK-centred or native speaker-centred system. The competence-oriented students tended to think that Chinese students should adapt to the British academic values and improve their communication and academic skill in order to survive in the new culture. Both sides tended to see the incident from a dynamic perspective and the other's point of view. Therefore, competence-oriented Chinese students and empathy-oriented lecturers tended to adopt more integration strategies and to be more culturally sensitive.

In sum, the Course E marking incident is not an isolated incident, though perhaps a more dramatic example of cultural conflict; it involves many underlying factors and has a big impact on both Chinese/international students and host institution/lecturers.

#### **6.4 Teacher-student relationship in the second stage**

There were more expectation gaps, academic identity conflicts and misunderstandings between Chinese students and British lecturers in the second stage of adaptation. Chinese student wrote a complaint letter on a group level seeking help from the School at this stage. Chinese students felt frustrated, de-motivated, angry and disappointed about what they perceived as the unfair treatment by the lecturers and the School from the Course E presentation incident. Meanwhile, lecturers experienced frustration, disappointment and pain/anguish as well. The relationship between Chinese students and British lecturers were less good, some Chinese students lost trust and kept distance from some particular lecturers after the unhappy incident. There was little communication between the majority of Chinese students and certain lecturers in this stage.

#### **6.5 Conclusion of the second stage**

The research findings show that both Chinese students and British lecturers tended to adopt more integration strategies in the second stage, e.g. T11 tried to involve more international students in classroom talks (Section 6.2.2). Chinese students tended to become more familiar with the new academic culture and more confident in adapting to the new academic identity in classroom discussion in the second stage (e.g. four Chinese students actively participated the classroom discussion in Section 6.2.2). However, both Chinese students and British lecturers tended to encounter more expectation gaps, academic identity conflicts and psychological struggles in this stage. For example, some 'active' Chinese students felt frustrated when they were interrupted by the lecturers and not given more opportunities to voice their ideas in classroom interaction (C2 & C7 in Section 6.2.3). The



majority of Chinese students suffered from stress, frustration, disappointment, anger and depression when they got the low marks of Course E presentation (some got low marks for their written assignments as well). Chinese students' psychological adjustment was in the lowest level in this stage. Some lecturers encountered psychological problems as well. For example, T11 felt frustrated when he/she was complained about as having prejudice on Chinese students. Therefore this stage is called 'gradual adaptation but confrontation/frustration' stage. Next I attempt to answer the following questions raised in the beginning of this stage and some questions emerged in the discussion.

Both Chinese students and British lecturers were found to adopt various strategies to cope with expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts between retaining their original academic identities/values and developing new academic identities/values. Integration and separation strategies are two main strategies adopted by Chinese students and British lecturers in the intercultural adaptation process. Those who adopted an integration strategy tended to see the adaptation process from the 'other's point of view; those who adopted a separation strategy tended to see the adaptation process from their own perspective.

*What are the key factors influencing Chinese students' adaptation process in this stage?*

Both external and internal factors have been identified in this stage: external factors include culture distance, academic cultural distance, legitimate pedagogical culture; power relations between native lecturers/students and non-native students; and host conformity pressure (e.g. host institution's policy - communication skills are emphasised). Internal factors involve both Chinese students' and British lecturers' negative attitude and lack of cultural sensitivity.

Firstly, host conformity pressure has been identified as an external factor that influences the two-way intercultural adaptation process. The research finding shows that the host institution (Management School in this study) and some lecturers tended to play to role to push Chinese/international students to adapt to the new academic identities, improve their communication skills and academic competence (Course E presentation incident in Section 6.3.2.5). This factor tended to facilitate Chinese students' quick adaptation process. However, it tends to bring Chinese/international students greater psychological struggles, relatively low academic performance, and distanced teacher-student relationship, as discussed in Section 6.3.2.5.

Secondly, legitimate pedagogical culture and native and non-native speakers' power relations were identified as the external factors influencing the two-way adaptation process. For example, T11 tended to regard two Chinese students' different discourse patterns as deviant and encouraged a British student B15 to continue with his argument (Section 6.2.3).

The majority of Chinese students and British lecturers were found to lack intercultural

sensitivity in this stage. Some lecturers tended to emphasise the UK-based assessment system, language competence and ignore the other factors that might influence Chinese/international students' academic performance, e.g. academic distance, cultural distance (e.g. lack of socio-cultural knowledge of Western philosophy), different discourse patterns and thinking styles. The findings show that lecturers tended to lack sensitivity of Chinese students' socio-emotional expectations of the lecturer's role (show empathy by considering efforts in students' work, give students positive feedback and emotional support).

Meanwhile, Chinese students were found to lack intercultural sensitivity as well. They tended to see the academic identity conflict from their own perspectives based on their original academic values rather than from the other's perspectives. Chinese students tended to lack an awareness of lecturers' difficulties in balancing their roles in doing research and teaching, meeting the curriculum requirement, or pedagogical goals and meeting both local and international students' needs.

The next section will discuss two-way intercultural adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers during their classroom interaction in the third stage: adaptation and relaxation.

## **Chapter 7 The third-stage adaptation between Chinese students and British lecturers: Adaptation and relaxation**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter first discusses Chinese students' classroom behaviour change (from early February to mid May 2004) and lecturers' views on their change in the third stage; then focuses on two key factors that influence two-way adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers in this stage – lecturers' pedagogical philosophy, attitude and practice; and lecturers' intercultural sensitivity.

After the first-semester exams, there was only one core module – Course F for EMBA students in the second semester. Generally speaking, Chinese students were found to be more active, relaxed and challenging in classroom interactions. They appeared more familiar with the target culture and confident in their classroom discussions (see Section 7.2) in this stage. Meanwhile, many British lecturers were found to adopt more integration strategies in this stage. For example, T14 asked many provocative questions to encourage C13's further contribution in Section 7.2); T12 encouraged many Chinese/international students in practising their presentation skills (Extract 4 in Section 7.5.1). Majority of Chinese students and British lecturers tended to enjoy their communication and relationship in this stage. Therefore, this stage is called 'adaptation and relaxation' stage.

Many field notes and interviews show an interesting phenomenon: Chinese/CHC students were particularly active in some sessions but relatively quiet in the other sessions, even in the same core module (double core units, normally three lecturers taught in one module). Chinese/CHC students and British/Europeans students tended to have different views and preferences for particular kinds of lecturers; lecturers also had different opinions on Chinese students' classroom behaviour and teacher-student relationships in this stage. This phenomenon generates a particular research question in this section: Why did Chinese students have different classroom behaviour in different sessions?

Four episodes have been chosen. Episode 1 presents how Chinese student C13 actively participated in the classroom discussion by providing evidence of several British companies and how the British lecturer encouraged C13's further contribution. Episode 2 indicates how two British students were impressed by C17's challenge to the lecturer. Episode 3 demonstrates Chinese/CHC students tended to be more involved in some lecturers' sessions. The underlying reasons for their activeness in these sessions are examined.

## 7.2 Episode 1: C13 began to dominate the classroom talk

<Extract 1 >

*The lecturer T14's teaching style was quite interactive in this session. He/she asked many provocative and challenging questions, such as 'Why?', 'Anything about it?', 'What's happening?', 'How does it matter significantly?', 'What about the position of Safeway?', 'what else?', to facilitate students to develop their arguments and move the classroom discussions forward.*

*As usual, British students generally dominated the classroom talk; they took more turns and made more initiated talks and interruptions to express their opinions (see Table 7.1 below, details see Appendix 28). When discussing a merger issue, C13 tended to dominate the discussion by using many figures/numbers in his argument, 'Morrison used a specific strategy to survive in the British supermarket by taking over Safeway. Compared with other three big supermarkets, Tesco takes 27% of the total market, Asda 17%, Sainsbury 16%. Safeway only takes 7%, and Morrison 9%. But when Morrison took over Safeway, they became 16%...they have made some changes to survive and they have very big distribution channel' (Field note, 110304, Course F).*

Table 7.1 Classroom interaction in Course F session 110304

	Total talk (turns/time)	Initiated talk (turns/length)	Solicited talk (turns/length)	No of speaker
Chinese students	3 / 2.32 min	1 / 1.56m	2 / 36 sec	1
British students	13 / 3.31 min	7 / 2.04 min	6 / 1.27 min	4

As discussed in Section 5.3.1 & 5.4.2, many Chinese students had difficulties in following lectures in the beginning of their course study. One reason is that they were not familiar with the background knowledge of the British case studies discussed by British lecturers and students in class. This episode shows that C13 discussed the local issues by using many figures and examples of several British companies to support his argument. This indicates that Chinese students were more familiar with the academic and socio-cultural knowledge of the target culture. More importantly, it shows that C13 managed successfully to adapt to the new academic identity in this classroom talk.

C13 was quiet and could not speak fluently in class in the first semester. The research journal of C13 (based on field notes and interviews) shows that C13 has made a gradual change in classroom/group discussion and assignment/exam performance through the year (see Appendix 9, Extract 2).

A large number of field notes and interviews show that most Chinese students had made gradual adaptation to the new academic identity in this stage. They were found to be more active in classroom talk, and more Chinese students challenged lecturers in class in the third stage (second semester). Many similar episodes can be found in other sessions. The next episode is chosen to show how two British students were impressed by C17's 'brave' challenge of the 'tough' Course F lecturer.

### 7.3 Episode 2: C17 challenged the lecturer

< Extract 1 >

B11: *I remembered (0.1) C17 very brave... had a really good discussion with T4, a very experienced man (smile) and with a lot of knowledge. And C17 was challenging his view, he was great...It was about Course F (pseudonym), about Henry Mintzberg. C17 was putting forward a particular view, 'Henry Mintzberg doesn't agree with what you said' (smile). T4 said 'Henry Mintzberg was not always right'. It was about five minutes' discussion. C17 read Henry Mintzberg's book at weekend, it was very interesting (smile) (B11, 310804).*

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<Extract 2 >

B1: *I respect C17, who is famous for reading all the key textbooks. C17 once challenged T4...C17 was very brave, he didn't mind looking silly in class. You know T4 is very tough and aggressive, very few people challenged him/her, and he/she always wants to win and squash somebody, but in the end C17 won, and T4 had to agree, which was a surprise to me (B1, 230904).*

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The above two British students' interview excerpts show that both of them were respectful of C17's 'brave' behaviour in challenging T4, who was very 'tough and aggressive' and 'very few people challenged him/her'. C17 had 10 years work experience and was a very diligent student, who read many books and often shared his/her ideas in classroom discussion in the second semester. However, C17 was not so confident and critical in the first semester:

*C17: I can only understand 60-70% of lectures, since I am not familiar with theories and background knowledge of some cases, so I am generally quiet in class. And I have to do a lot of reading prior and after lectures (C17, 101003).*

In sum, the above episode is one of many similar examples of how Chinese students became more active and challenging in class, when they were more familiar with the theories and background knowledge of cases in the second semester.

### 7.4 Lecturers' views on Chinese students' classroom behaviour

The research findings show that British lecturers' views on Chinese students' classroom behaviour tended to be positive in this stage. Majority of lecturers thought Chinese students were more 'interactive' (T7, 180304), 'contribute as much as the English', 'much more critically discuss issues' (T6, 201004) than the other students in class, 'they got more used to...they become more involved' (T1, 251103).

*T6: I don't necessarily think they are less creative, actually Chinese students ask more questions, they are more interested in asking questions, because they want to know how they can implement something in the current Chinese context....Chinese students are much more interactive, much more critically discuss issues during the lecture than the other students...Chinese students contribute as much as the English, you couldn't really see much of the difference (T6, 201004).*

By contrast, some lecturers viewed Chinese students' classroom behaviour from a dynamic perspective, they compared Chinese students with those several years ago. For example, T1 thought this year's Chinese students were more 'active' and 'argumentative'.

*T1: What I'm beginning to wonder is that this year's students in every aspects are better than last year's students and the year before, what I wonder is if the culture inside China is changing a bit...This year is more different, more active, more western style, and more argumentative, which was good (T1, 251103).*

The above lecturers' interview quotes are quite different from those quoted in the first semester (Section 5.4.2) – when many lecturers found it was difficult to involve Chinese students in the classroom discussion, 'it is hard', 'you can't do anything about it'.

However, Chinese students' classroom behaviours tended to vary in different sessions. The next episode will discuss two factors that influence two-way adaptation process in classroom communication and relationship development: lecturers' different teaching philosophy/strategy and intercultural sensitivity.

## **7.5 Episode 3: Why did Chinese students have different classroom behaviours in different sessions?**

### **7.5.1 Introduction**

Extracts 1 and 4 show that lecturers created a relaxed atmosphere and tried to involve more Chinese/international students in discussions. Extracts 2 and 3 indicate that both lecturers were more aware of cultural differences in intercultural communication and international business.

<Extract 1>

*T6 asked each student to introduce themselves about their work experience, cultural backgrounds, and their expectations and needs in this session...he/she engaged more international students into classroom discussion, especially Chinese and Japanese students, by asking them to give some examples of their own companies...more international examples were adopted in this session...he/she encouraged students to ask him/her questions. 'Don't be shy to raise questions. There is a chance for me to know your needs'. 'If you have any questions, do contact me'....*

*'T6 checked students' understanding by asking 'can you know what he is talking?', then he/she asked B12 to repeat and 'to be more specific'... After C10 answered, he/she asked, 'did you hear? A very important point', he/she gave a summary and a brief comment on what C10 said...He/she also encouraged different people to speak in class. 'This side is a little bit quiet', he/she walked to the left side of the lecture room (where most Chinese and CHC students sat), 'can anyone give me an example?...*

*He/she wrote some words on the white board or flip chart, e.g. core-competence, acquisition, entrepreneurship...* (Field note, 190204, Course F).

\*\*\*\*\*

<Extract 2>

*T6 arranged students to do a game - 'write instructions on how to fold an airplane in different languages'. He/she asked one volunteer group (two Chinese, two British, and one Japanese) to go out of the classroom; then the rest of the class separated into different groups to write instructions in different languages (English, Chinese or Japanese); finally the volunteer group returned and were asked to fold airplanes according to the instructions and comment on this activity...It shows the difficulty of intercultural communication in documentation making and in consultancy...students had a good time in this session* (Field note, 270204, Course G, T6).

\*\*\*\*\*

<Extract 3>

*T7 asked students to form small groups to draw a map of the world...then he/she showed the maps and made his comments.*

*'This one highlights Zambia, Asian did not exist at all'. Students laughed.*

*'This one focuses on China, the other countries disappear'.*

*'This one, England is huge, China is quite small'.*

*These three maps were drawn by African, Chinese and British students respectively. Then T7 summarized, 'people tend to regard their own country more important than others, it is hard to visualize the other countries'* (Field note, 180304, Course H, T7).

\*\*\*\*\*

<Extract 4>

*Students were arranged to do presentations in class, there were four bidding groups and two consultancy groups. T12 encouraged more Chinese/international students to do presentations in today's session. He/she also prepared some prizes for the winner groups...I found C11 and C23 were particularly active in today's presentations. C11 told me during break time: 'It is the first time for me to do presentation in class, I feel more relaxed and confident in this semester; and I really enjoy the informal and relaxed atmosphere in this session'...T12 told students how to prepare for a good presentation, he/she emphasized the importance of preparation and practice, 'no shortcut to any presentation, any good presentation will be through a good preparation and practice'* (Field note, Course J, 120304, EMBA, T12).

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## 7.5.2 Discussion

*Why did Chinese students have different classroom behaviours in different sessions?*

Based on the above three extracts and many interviews of lecturers and students in this stage, I will discuss two key factors that influenced the two-way adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers: lecturers' pedagogical philosophies and practice (Extract 1) and lecturers' intercultural sensitivity (Extract 2 and 3).

Extract 1 shows that T6's teaching and interaction style was quite different from those of T4 and T14, who tended to be more focused on 'teaching' and argumentation itself, rather than on 'students' themselves. Two lecturers' questions raised in Extract 1 in Section 7.2

Table 7.2 shows that T14's questions aimed to facilitate students to develop their arguments and move the discussion forward. Similarly, T6 also asked 'challenging' questions; besides, he/she also asking many other types of questions, such as 'Can you know what he is talking?', 'This side is a little bit quiet, can anyone give me an example?' These questions seemed not related to the content of the discussions, and tended to slow down the pace of discussions, but they well served the purposes of checking students' understanding and involving more 'quiet' and 'slow' students in the whole classroom discussions. The questions below reflect two different teaching philosophies and strategies, which may affect two-way adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers and Chinese students' classroom behaviours and learning outcomes.

Table 7.2 A comparison of competence- and empathy-oriented questions

Competence-oriented questions (T14)	Empathy-oriented questions (T6)
Why?	Can you know what he is talking? To be more specific
Anything about it?	Did you hear? A very important point
What's happening?	This side is a little bit quiet, can anyone give me an example?
How does it matter significantly?	Don't be shy to raise questions. There is a chance for me to know your needs
What about the position of Safeway?	If you have any questions, do contact me
What else?	

Many students' interviews show that most Chinese students preferred T6's teaching and communication styles; whereas most British and European students tended to like T4 and T14's styles. The former focused more on teacher's socio-emotional aspect of a teacher's role (empathy); the latter stressed more on the teacher's role as a facilitator (e.g. challenge the theory). Generally Chinese students liked T6's session for the following three reasons:

Firstly, many Chinese students found it easier to follow and learn more from T6's sessions than from other sessions, since T6 checked students' understanding, spoke slowly and clearly, used simple words, and prepared visual aids (Extract 1).

*C1: T14 did not tell us some backgrounds of case studies...I could only understand 50% of his/her lecture...I could understand 90% of T6's lecture. His/her English is much easier to understand...he/she cares about students' involvement (C1, 040804).*

T6's interview explains his/her teaching practice – he/she wanted to give students 'a chance to follow' (T6, 201004) the lectures.

Secondly, many Chinese students (and some British students) were 'very impressed' by T6's way of 'establishing relationship with students' (C5, 240704), especially by the way of using international students' experiences as teaching resources.



B4: *I was hugely impressed by the way T6...ask each of the students for a brief description...When he/she was trying to make a point, he/she could pick up the student and say how this was working in Taiwan, and how it was working in Saudi Arabia. I think it was fantastic, how he/she did it (B4, 110804).*

T6's interview quote shows that he/she valued the international students' experience and wanted to establish a relationship with students.

T6: *This is another way for me to establish relationship with my students, that is I give them a signal...I would like to know about your knowledge, I want to use it in my lecture, this is one part of building relationship; secondly it is the source of my examples (T6, 201004).*

Thirdly, many Chinese students appreciated T6's 'empathy' (C12, 080704) and 'fair' (B4, 110804) attitude towards international students, since he/she gave them many opportunities to speak in class.

C12: *T6 shows much empathy towards foreign students. He/she knows that many foreign students have not many presentation experiences, so he/she gave many opportunities to encourage these students to do presentation and speak in class, I was moved by his/her consideration. Some British students seemed not happy with this, they thought he/she cared too much about the foreign students. I think he/she is right, she sympathizes the weakest. On the other hand, we overseas students pay much higher tuition, we should have some opportunities to speak up, otherwise it is not fair (C12, 080704).*

T6's interview quote shows that he/she wanted to give these students 'more opportunities to practise' (T6, 201004) their presentation skills.

However, many Chinese students and international students thought T4 and T14 were less empathetic but more competence-oriented.

C12: *T4's philosophy is 'if you are competent, you can follow me; if you could not follow me, you are not competent enough'. He/she once told us in class, 'get them (the incompetent people in an organisation) out and shoot them all!'. And this has been his/her most famous saying (C12, 080704).*

I6: *T4 is looking for argument, and he/she is a little bit more provocative.... He/she is very often saying, 'oh, this kind of person is not fitting for the company, then you have to shoot him...if he/she really does not like something, he/she is really angry....Chinese, who often said they did not like T4 (I6, 090604).*

Interestingly, British/European students' interviews show that they also liked T6's empathetic way of teaching and speaking, but they preferred T4 and T14's 'joking' and challenging style.

B1: *I think most European students like T4, who is more practical, confident and*

*knowledgeable, he/she has made his achievements in his own field... Whereas, Chinese students tend to like T6...he/she is also practical, confident and knowledgeable, but he/she is more amiable and sympathetic to international students (B1, 250304).*

Furthermore, lecturers' interviews show that competence-oriented and empathy-oriented lecturers had different underlying teaching philosophies and beliefs. T4 thought it was the university's responsibility to 'make sure everyone...has sufficiently good English' for the course.

*T4: I think university has responsibility to make sure everyone comes on the programme, has sufficiently good English...I think a few people come to programme whose English is just not good enough (T4, 240504).*

T6 believed the job of a lecturer is 'to make sure everyone learns', including slow students.

*T6: Because I believe strongly that the job of a lecturer is to make sure that everybody learns, and not only the best one... if I only teach the good people, that is very easy, but if I have to teach who are not so good or learn very difficultly, I think that is the challenge (smile) (T6, 201004).*

The above discussions and T6's equality- and empathy-oriented view and T4's competition- and competence-oriented views can be summarized as a 'dialogue' below.

**Empathy-oriented lecturer**

Make sure that everyone learns  
Teach not only the good ones



(pedagogy-oriented teaching)

**Competence-oriented lecturer**

Make sure everyone has good English  
Teach good ones and 'shoot' not good ones



(elite/achievement-oriented teaching)

Dialogue 7.1 Pedagogy- vs elite-oriented teaching

The above dialogue shows the basic differences of competence-oriented and empathy-oriented lecturers in pedagogical philosophies, attitudes and teaching strategies. Firstly, this dialogue explains the reason why Chinese students were generally quiet in competence-oriented lecturers' sessions, in which elite/achievement-oriented teaching were kept, since these lecturers believed to 'make sure everyone...has sufficiently good English'; if you are competent enough, you can follow the lectures. These lecturers tended to keep fast-paced classroom discussion, they spoke quickly, with little attention to check understanding and provide visual aids (e.g. T14 did not provide handouts in the first semester, see Appendix 28). Besides, they tended to use more European-based materials and case studies and did not intentionally involve international students in classroom discussions. Thus international students' voices tended to be less likely to be heard in these lecturers' sessions.

Secondly, this dialogue also explains the reason why Chinese students were generally active in empathy-oriented lecturers' sessions, in which pedagogy-oriented teaching was carried, because these lecturers believed to 'make sure everyone learns', not only the good and fast ones. These lecturers tended to keep slow-paced classroom discussion, they spoke slowly and clearly, checked students' understanding, used more international examples and cases in class, and gave Chinese/international students more opportunities to speak in class.

Thirdly, this episode has identified another important factor that influenced lecturers' teaching practice and students' classroom behaviours – the lecturer's intercultural sensitivity. Extracts 2 and 3 show that both T6 and T7 were more aware of cultural differences in the MBA class, this also explains why many empathy-oriented lecturers tended to use more international examples/cases and gave more opportunities to international students to participate in classroom discussion, and why these empathy-oriented lecturers' marking were relatively generous as well (based on students' final marks and interviews).

In sum, based on the above pedagogical philosophies/attitudes, competence-oriented lecturers tended to target 'fast' local students; whereas empathy-oriented lecturers were more motivated to target and approach 'slow' Chinese/international students – the majority of the class (78% in average). This also involves how lecturers 'tailor' their teaching to different levels of students. As B18 suggested, 'lecturers have to tailor their lectures to full-time and part-time students, RMBA and EMBA students' (B18, 200505). I want to add one more point, lecturers should also tailor their lectures to both local and international students and increase intercultural sensitivity to provide students with both academic and socio-emotional support. Next, I will discuss a question generated from this episode.

*How did lecturers' pedagogical philosophy and attitude influence Chinese students' classroom behaviour and teacher-student relationship?*

Field notes and interviews show that Chinese students tended to be more active in empathy-oriented lecturers' sessions and have better relationships with these lecturers, since Chinese students were given more opportunities to become involved in the classroom interaction. The majority of Chinese students' interview quotes also show that they were satisfied with empathy-oriented lecturers' teaching and relationship with them. For example, T6's interest in China motivated C1 to share a VCD with T6, who would 'use it as the teaching resource' for next year's students (C1, 240604). Interview quotes of some empathy-oriented lecturers show that they enjoyed their communication and relationship with Chinese students in class as well.

*T6:...to set up a kind of relationship...you decide if it is going to be a relaxing lecture....As a lecturer, you have the opportunity to influence your students to be open to you or to be closed ...if I want certain students to talk to me, no matter how shy they are, I can get them talking (T6, 201004).*

By contrast, Chinese students were relatively quiet in competence-oriented lecturers' sessions and in less good relationship with these lecturers. Many students mentioned that T4 was 'tough' and 'aggressive' to 'squash somebody' (B1, 230904), which made students feel 'distanced' (C36, 111004) and 'scared' (C38, 280804). T4 also felt it difficult to establish relationships with Chinese students. T4 thought there was no relationship between himself/herself and Chinese students, since they 'don't want at all' and he/she asked an interesting question, 'am I threatening?' during the interview.

*T4: Some of them don't participate, and they won't ask questions. It is very difficult, it is impossible to know, you have no relationship, because they don't want at all, and it's also very hard to know whether they understand, because you don't get response...maybe they consider me threatening, maybe, I don't know, am I threatening(smile)? (T4, 240504).*

Therefore, lecturers' different pedagogical philosophy and practice influenced Chinese/international students' classroom behaviour and teacher-student relationship.

### 7.5.3 Summary

In sum, Episode 3 discusses two key factors that influenced Chinese students' and British lecturers' two-way adaptation process: the lecturer's pedagogical philosophy and strategy; and the lecturer's intercultural sensitivity. The research findings show that there were good communication and relationship between Chinese students and those empathy-oriented lecturers; less good communication and relationship between Chinese students and those competence-oriented lecturers.

## 7.6 Teacher-student relationship in the third stage

As discussed, Chinese students tended to have good relationships with some empathy-oriented lecturers in the third stage, they had some academic and social interactions, especially during the dissertation writing period (end of May to end of September 2004).

In the third stage, Chinese students again wrote a complaint letter to the School in this stage (drafted by a British part-time student, signed by many Chinese/CHC students), concerning an exam paper error, where the exam questions did not match the teaching contents in the second semester. Chinese students felt this was unfair since they made greater efforts in this last and the only exam in the second semester, and they thought it might influence their final marks. The School responded with an email letter. However, some Chinese students were not quite happy with the School's reply. 'I think they should provide students a more formal letter explaining who should take the responsibility' (C18, 010804).

Generally speaking, there was very little relationship between lecturers/School and Chinese students through the year, and few social activity was arranged by the School.

Many students were not happy with the lack of social dimensions of learning experiences in the UK.

C38: *I hope we can have more after-class time for social interaction....I suggest the School arrange some social activities for MBA students and there should be more interactions and better relationships between native and international students (C38, 280804).*

B11: *University should try a little more togetherness...it seems we finished the last lecture in April, and some people may probably not see each other since then...there is no sort of feeling belonging to a group....I do feel the school should facilitate with these things...I know they should watch the group...I think the advantage of school is this, people go out, wherever they are from, go back and say I had great time in Weston (B11, 310804).*

The questionnaire finding shows that Chinese and international students felt unhappy with lack of communication and relationship with British lecturers. Table 7.3 shows that only 11% Chinese students and 9% international students thought they had regular contact with lecturers (Question 4, Section 4, Questionnaire, Appendix 20 & 29).

Table 7.3 Regular contact with different groups of people

	Cs	Bs	Is
Chinese	61	33	32
British	19	56	24
Other international	39	44	55
Lecturer	11	22	9

By contrast, the British lecturers/School tended to emphasise the students' autonomy and independence, they expected students to arrange social activities by themselves, the school would facilitate them to some extent. Therefore, there was an expectation gap on this point.

T2: *There is an expectation there that School should provide a social programme, the School doesn't do that, we will certainly encourage students of any group to arrange social events for themselves, we will try to support and help that, but it is not perceived as part of our role, not in relation to MBA (T2, 240206).*

In sum, there were good relationships and more social interactions between Chinese students and British lecturers who adopted integration strategies, but less good relationships between Chinese students and British lecturers who adopted separation strategies in this stage.

## 7.7 Conclusion of the third stage

Three episodes were chosen to demonstrate the two-way adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers in the third stage. The findings show that both Chinese students and British lecturers tended to adopt more integrative strategies in this stage. More Chinese students were active and challenging in classroom discussion (Section

7.2 and 7.3), due to their more familiarity with the subject and the academic culture and the new academic identities. British lecturers tended to involve more Chinese students in the classroom discussions (see Section 7.5). Furthermore, most British lecturers' comments on Chinese students were quite positive and encouraging in this stage. The majority of Chinese students appeared more confident and relaxed in their classroom behaviours. Interviews show that they enjoyed their adaptive experience through the year. 'I am happy I've learnt how to think critically' (C18, 010804). Lecturers appeared more relaxed and happy in involving more Chinese/international students in class. 'I enjoyed teaching them (T7, 180304). Therefore, this stage is called 'adaptation and relaxation' stage (see Figure 9.1), though some Chinese students and British lecturers tended to be unhappy with their less good communication and relationship.

Two factors influencing the two-way adaptation process have been explored: lecturers' pedagogical philosophy and lecturers' intercultural sensitivity. The findings show that the more culturally sensitive and empathetic the lecturers are, the more active and challenging Chinese students would be in their sessions, and the better relationship established between these Chinese students and British lecturers.

Another reason influencing the two-way adaptation process is less course pressure and better physical setting. There was only one core module in this stage, the optional course are assessed by 100% individual assignments only in the second semester.. Therefore, students felt more relaxed and had more time to prepare for the classroom discussions. A better physical setting meant that some optional classes tended to be smaller, and Chinese students felt more relaxed and active in these classes (e.g. Courses G, H, I and J). Some Chinese students began to have some social interactions with lecturers and their fellow students and take some part-time jobs during the dissertation writing period.

The increased language and communication skills may be also the reason for Chinese students' active classroom behaviour in this stage. Questionnaire response shows that Chinese students' four skills of English language have improved gradually over time, especially listening and writing skills (rise by 61% respectively, their speaking skill improves by 39%); their confidence in using English increased gradually, from 17% before Christmas to 44% during dissertation writing period (see Table 24 & 25, Figure 6 and 7, Section 2, in Appendix 20). Meanwhile, lecturers' interviews also show that increased knowledge, skills and positive attitude of coping with Chinese students' needs tend to facilitate better communication and relationship with Chinese students in this stage as well.

In sum, the two-way adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers in the third stage has been discussed. There were good communication and relationship between integrative Chinese students and British lecturers, but less good communication and relationship between separative Chinese students and British lecturers in this stage.

## 7.8 Conclusions of Chapters 5-7

In Chapters 5-7, I have discussed the two-way intercultural adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers in the classroom communication context. Chinese students and British lecturers underwent a three-stage adaptation process: from the initial ‘unfamiliarity and frustration’ stage - many expectation gaps, much frustration, but relatively good relationships; followed with a ‘gradual adaptation but more frustration’ stage - more expectation gaps, more frustration, less good relationship; to the final ‘adaptation and relaxation’ stage – more integration, satisfaction and better relationship between most Chinese students and British lecturers, but less good communication and relationship between those who adopted separative strategies.

The research findings indicate that Chinese students’ and British lecturers’ sociocultural adaptation (e.g. communication skills, academic skills, knowledge of both academic cultures) tends to follow a positive learning curve. However, their psychological adaptation (e.g. emotion and motivation) tends to follow a U-curve pattern, both sides encountered the initial psychological struggles (e.g. most Chinese students encountered language and academic culture shock soon after the courses started, see Section 5.3.1; most lecturers felt frustrated about Chinese students’ different classroom behaviours, not questioning directly in class, but whispering to each other in class and asking questions after class. Moreover, both sides encountered the bigger psychological struggles from Course E presentation marking incident, see Section 6.3) in the second stage. This finding challenged the U-curve hypothesis, which assumes a honeymoon stage as the first stage of the sojourner’s adaptation process. Both sides tended to become more relaxed and satisfied in the third stage. The finding that Chinese students (and British lecturers) had different sociocultural and psychological patterns conforms to Ward’s (1996) finding as discussed in Section 2.3.4.

The research findings show that both Chinese students and British lecturers encountered academic identity conflicts between retaining their original academic identity and developing new academic identity in the adaptation process. On the one hand, most Chinese students were motivated to adapt to the new academic identities and values: to be questioning, challenging and independent in learning; they were motivated to achieve equal success and recognition in the new learning environment, as C10 said *I want to show them Chinese students can do as well as they do, as long as they let me try* (C10, 091003). However, many Chinese students found that lack of communication skills and unfamiliarity with the target socio-cultural and academic culture influenced their classroom performance and academic achievement. Another factor that influenced their classroom talk is host attitude legitimate pedagogical culture. Some lecturers were complained that they tended to lack socio-emotional support to Chinese/international students in classroom interaction, therefore, these Chinese/international students tended to be excluded from the classroom talk. British lecturers were motivated to adjust their teaching style to Chinese/international students, however, lack of intercultural sensitivity and awareness of cultural differences made them feel frustrated, e.g. whispering incidents in Section 5.4.3.

The research findings show that the two-way adaptation process is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include Chinese students' communication skills and knowledge about the host cultural and academic culture (Section 5.3.1 and 5.4.5), and the pedagogical philosophy and cultural sensitivity (Section 7.5.2.2). The research findings show that Chinese students' insufficient communication skills and unfamiliarity of British cultural and academic cultural knowledge prevented them from success. The host conformity pressure from the institution also tends to influence adaptation process (e.g. Course E presentation emphasises Chinese/international students' communication skills especially presentation skills. The research findings show that those empathy-oriented and culturally sensitive lecturers tended to have better communication and relationship development with Chinese students, vice versa.

The external factors include the host attitude and legitimate pedagogical culture (lecturers tended to regard international students' discourse patterns as deviant, Section 6.2.3); the host conformity pressure from the institution influenced Chinese students' adaptation and academic achievement (see Section, 7.5, language and communication skills were emphasised). Fourth, culture distance. Chinese culture values collectivism, equal opportunity and mutual support – sympathize the weakest; whereas British culture values individualism, competition - survival of the fittest. Fifth, academic culture distance, both sides tended to have different student's/teacher's roles. The British lecturers tended to emphasise the teacher's role as 'facilitator' by giving Chinese students more independence and responsibility for their own English and academic skills (e.g. T4's quote in Section 5.4.2); whereas Chinese students tended to expect lecturers to give them clearer instructions and empathy and support. For example, some lecturers were found to use UK-based teaching materials for case studies, not give handouts, and not give transparent instructions.

The research findings show that most Chinese students and British lecturers tended to increase their cultural sensitivity over time; their strategies tended to change from separation to integration over time. For example, T14 was complained that he/she did not provide students with handouts and PowerPoint in the first semester, he/she changed in the second semester. Some lecturers were complained that they did not give clearer instruction and assessment criterion for Course E oral presentation. After the incident, they provided students with explicit 'written-form' assessment criteria (T11, 080306). Meanwhile, T11 learned more about Chinese culture after the incident by asking some Chinese students' opinions (e.g. the notion of face-saving) (see Section 6.3.2.5). T5 said he/she could understand Chinese students better after several years' teaching and working with Chinese students. At the beginning he/she struggled to understand Chinese students' accent and behaviour (T5, 121004). Some lecturers were found to involve more Chinese/students in classroom talk (T11 in Section 6.2.2). T6 and T7 adopted international case studies and adopted Chinese/international students' experiences in their teaching sessions (Section 7.5.1).

Those lecturers tended to have a positive view on Chinese students' classroom behaviour



change over time (T1, T6, T5 and T7) they said Chinese students were more active and challenging in the second semester). Some lecturers (T1, T5, T6) also noticed that Chinese students in recent year were more active than those several years ago.

Some lecturers were found to lack cultural sensitivity. For example, T2 called Chinese students' whispering in class as a 'Chinese trait' (T2, 281003) and had a negative attitude towards Chinese students' classroom behaviour. T4 had been teaching in Weston University for many years, and felt frustrated about Chinese students' quietness in class, and did not know the underlying reasons for their quietness and relatively low academic marks. When I asked T4 'Could that be cultural difference in their way of structuring their writing?'. He/she responded with a 'No' immediately, then with a hesitant 'maybe' (T4, 240504). He/she tended to attribute Chinese students' quietness in class and deviant writing style to Chinese students' inadequate communication skills. He/she had less good relationships with Chinese students in class (see Section 7.5).

Both Chinese students and British lecturers encountered psychological struggles during their adaptation process in different stages, T2 was angry about Chinese students' whispering in class and refused to answer one Chinese student's question (Section 5.4.3). T11 had a 'very hurtful and very painful' experience and felt 'really horrible' about the Chinese students' complaint that he/she was prejudice against Chinese students (T11, 080306) in Course E presentation marking incident. Many Chinese students encountered psychological stress/shock from the course E presentation marking incident, e.g. C16 dropped the MBA course. Therefore, competence of managing affective factors needs to be developed. The concept of 'Intercultural Adaptation Competence' (IAC) is thus developed and proposed in Chapter 9.

Meanwhile, Chinese students tended to change their attitudes and strategies from separation to integration over time. For example, in the first stage, many Chinese students did not ask question in class but after class (Episode 1). However, in the second stage, Chinese students were found to develop new academic identities and values, more Chinese students asked questions and challenged lecturers in class (e.g. four Chinese students were active in Course E classroom interactions, in Section 6.2.2) in the second and third stage.

External factors include legitimate pedagogical culture (e.g. some lecturers tended to regard international students' deviant discourse as threatening their assumed legitimate pedagogical culture, see Section 6.2.3), cultural distance (e.g. the notion of face-saving and *Ren* - empathise the weakest), and academic distance (e.g. views on teacher/student's role).

In sum, Chapters 5-7 have discussed two-way intercultural adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers in classroom interaction. The next chapter will discuss the two-way intercultural adaptation process between Chinese and British students in the group communication context.

## Chapter 8 Chinese and British students' two-way intercultural adaptation in the group communication context

### 8.1 Introduction

This analysis chapter examines Chinese and British students' two-way intercultural adaptation process during their group interactions. Expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts are examined. Five strategies adopted by both Chinese and British students are discussed, based on Ting-Toomey's (1988) five styles of managing conflicts, with an emphasis on the particular context of each episode. Both external and internal factors that influenced the intercultural adaptation process are explored.

Communication skills especially group work/teamwork interaction skills are key skills for Weston MBA students (see Appendix 23 - MBA student handbook 2003-4: 13). Students were expected to participate actively and challenge each other during group work or teamwork activities. As discussed, students' group work performance was assessed via group presentations (see Section 6.3). Meanwhile students were asked to reflect on their group work performance in their individual assignments. Therefore, the analysis of this chapter is based on interviews, individual assignments, field notes and questionnaire responses.

The general research question in this chapter is research question 2 (Section 1.4): How do Chinese and British students undergo a two-way intercultural adaptation process in the group communication context?

The sub-questions of this chapter are:

- What expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts do Chinese and British students encounter?
- What attitudes and strategies do Chinese and British students adopt to cope with expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts?
- What factors influence Chinese and British students' intercultural adaptation process during their group interaction?

Three-stages group communication and relationship development between Chinese and British students are identified, based on Tuckman's (1965: 384) four-stage group work progression model (forming, storming, norming and performing). The norming and performing stage are combined in the third stage in this study:

- The first stage - forming stage (26 September 2003 – 10 October 2003), much communication and frustration, initial good relationship. Core units were Course A and B. All groups were mixed with different nationalities and allocated by lecturers, and students did their first two group assignments within the same mixed group.

- The second stage – storming stage (11 October 2003 – 12 December 2003), less communication, more frustration, less good relationship. Core units were Course C, D and E. Course C and D groups were self-selected. Course E groups were allocated by lecturers.
- The third stage – norming and performing stage (7 January 2004 – end September 2004), more communication and satisfaction, good relationship between those adopting integration strategies (between some Chinese students and British part-time students and between Chinese and other international students); little communication and relationship between those adopting separation strategies (between many Chinese and British full-time students). Core course was Course F. The group was self-selected. There was a group work activity for an external project as well in this stage (see Appendix 18 for all episode lists).

## 8.2 The first stage adaptation: group forming

### 8.2.1 Introduction

Three episodes have been chosen from a large range of field notes, interviews and individual assignments in this stage, in order to explore both Chinese and British students' initial intercultural adaptation experience. Different strategies adopted by both Chinese and British students are discussed; factors that influenced expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts are explored. Episode 1 involves a successful and happy intercultural experience, when both Chinese and British students adopted integrating strategies. Episodes 2 and 3 are unhappy intercultural adaptation stories. As I discussed in Chapter 4, each episode may contain several extracts from similar incidents, for the purpose of representing a bigger picture of the two-way intercultural adaptation experience. Chinese students' strategies and attitudes tend to change from initial integrating to avoiding or compromising strategies when they found they were in an inferior position in the group discussion. Majority of British students tended to adopt dominating strategies during the group interaction, some British students adopted integrating and compromising strategies in this stage (see Table 8.1 below for the first-stage episodes and strategies adopted by both Chinese and British students).

Table 8.1 The first-stage episodes and strategies

Stage 1	Theme	Participants	Strategy (Chinese/British)
Episode 1	Product line debate	C3, C6 and B3 and B4	Integrating/integrating
Episode 2	We are excluded	C12 and B12 & 11	Avoiding/dominating
Episode 3	They are taking control	C15 and B15	Avoiding/dominating

### 8.2.2 Episode 1: Product line debate (C3 & B4)

This episode is chosen to show how both Chinese and British students adopted integration strategies and had successful intercultural communication and relationship in a mixed

group work activity.

### 8.2.2.1 Introduction

This was the first group I observed. It consisted of nine CHC students (8 Chinese, 1 from East Asia) and two British part-time students. These CHC students volunteered to join in the part-time student group for the Course A group assignment, due to too many students in the full-time group. One of the main reasons for these students' voluntary moving to the part-time group was that these students appeared more motivated to 'practise English' (C6, 011103), improve their 'communication skills', and 'learn more from the part-time local students' (C3, 261003).

The extract below shows how C3 adopted an integrating strategy to defend his argument and adapt to the new academic identity (actively participating, challenging and independent in learning) in this group interaction, and how British students adopted a positive attitude and integrating strategy to adapt to the intercultural academic identity (e.g. to be sensitive to both academic cultures, other-oriented and supportive) and 'scaffold' (a metaphor for providing a framework or structure – providing support) these CHC students in their first group interaction experience. Different ways of interaction and debate are explored, and the underlying factors influencing this group's interaction are discussed. There was an 8-minute debate between C3 and B4 on whether the company in the case was a manufacturer or a distributor, based on the information given on the assignment sheet below:

<Extract 8.1> Assignment Sheet

*The company in question has two main product lines:*

*1. Custom built racing and off road machines.*

*2. Imported mass production machines for the general market (Assignment sheet, Course B, 121003) (my underlining).*

<Extract 8.2> Selected transcript

#### Keys to transcripts:

B3 & B4: two British students

C3, C6, C9...: Chinese students.

0.1: short pause

( ): description of non-verbal aspects of communication.

//: overlapping

*B4: That's excellent, can I just ask you about this one, number three, what do you mean by 'improve efficiency of manufacturing'? I don't understand this.*

*C3: I think there are two ways, one way is by (0.1) extending sales of existing products, maybe they can increase production.*

*B4: They are not a manufacturing company, they are only doing distributions and*

sales.

C3: No, I don't think so, because they have two production lines.

B4: They've got specialist production//

C3: //Line, yeah, yeah, I think if they can receive more orders from the customers or wholesalers, maybe they can increase their production (one Chinese student cleared his/her throat).

B4: Ok.

C3: Another point is (0.1) if E-bicycles and scooters can be produced by using existing production lines, I think they can make full use of it.

B3: Yeah that's a good point.

B4: You see I don't think this company significantly is manufacture, primarily they are distributor.

B3: (0.2) Right, we need to make some assumptions, that's the key because we don't have data.

C3: But according to information, I didn't find any information about it. I personally think ...

(Some Chinese woman students began to look for the assignment requirement sheet).

B4: The company is called distributor, because they imported mass-product machines from the major market.

C3: Yeah, they just imported these machines from//

B4: //My view is this is very good, but I think this company is primarily an importer.

C3: Yeah, maybe (smile) I disagree with you

B4: Ok.

B4: //I think you have misunderstood this sentence, because that means imported mass-production machines, C3 thinks that means manufacturing machines, I think that machines is bicycle machines.

B3: it is bicycles

C9: So the lines here should be//

B4: //that// does not mean production machine, that machine means bicycles//

C3: //But// why they mentioned two main production lines?

B3: That's right, I mean they got what you got, they got two types of vehicles they produced, what they got is specific customer built-up//

B4: //And what it is said, what's produced road machines, machines here means bicycles.

B3: So that means bicycles. Right.

C3: Yeah yeah yeah.

B3: So two types of bicycles, one is mass-produced bicycles, the other is the special bicycles made just for those people//.

C9 C6 C22: Two types of bicycles.

C22: This is product line, not production line (speak in Chinese 就是产品线, 不是生产线).

B3: Are we agreeing with that or not?

C6: I agree with B4, because lines here not mean manufacturing line, it means category line.

C22 C9: Yeah, two types of products//

C6: //not production line

B3: Product lines means (0.1) a particularly product//

C3: //Ah I see (speak in Chinese in a low voice, seemed a little bit embarrassed).

B4: //Products. I am sorry, that's what I mean, I think it must be language difficulty, I am afraid.

B3: Don't worry, C3. I think this is terrific staff, this is very very good.

B4: But the only thing that is slightly wrong//

C3: //Maybe I had some misunderstanding for this (smile) (people laughed including B3 and B4)

C26: Yeah//

B3: //That's right, never mind.

B4: I mean I can understand you've taken the view you had, but my personal view is this means bicycles, and that means large scale volume products. And it is imported.

(Some Chinese women said in Chinese (it is due to language reason)

C3: Yeah, yeah yeah, I think you must be correct, because your English is better than us (everyone laughed again) (Field note, C3 and B3, 071003, group work for Course B).

### 8.2.2.2 Interpretation

In the beginning of the second group meeting of this group, each subgroup was asked to report their research on the case study. C3 was the first person to speak, he provided six strategic suggestions to the company. As soon as C3 finished his report, B4 asked a question politely, 'can I just ask...I don't understand this', after a compliment 'that's excellent'.

When B4 pointed out C3's mistake directly, 'they are not manufacturer'. C3 appeared very assertive by arguing in a very direct way, 'no, I don't think so, because...', and interrupted B4, '//line, yeah, yeah, I think.'

B4 responded with an 'Ok', the other British student B3 (the group leader) made a positive comment on C3's further argument, 'that's a good point' and B3 made a compromising suggestion, 'right, we need to...'. C3 continued with 'but...' at the beginning of his/her argument.

It might be B3's polite and encouraging attitude that made C3 feel more comfortable to say 'but', and later C3 said 'I disagree with you', though he used 'yeah, maybe' and smiled before he said 'I disagree with you'. B4 continued with his polite way of expressing his disagreement, 'this is very good, but...' and responded with an 'Ok' again.

These turns of speaking show that C3's speaking style seemed a little bit direct and confrontational in defending his argument by showing disagreement, and two British students appeared more polite and patient to express their different opinions in the above interactions and negotiations. As to the content of this debate, B4 and C3 had different interpretations of 'machines'. B4 thought it referred to 'bicycle machines', whereas C3 meant 'manufacturing machines'. Then B4 pointed out a key point that he and C3 had different interpretation of the word 'machines', which meant 'bicycles'. This time, B3 and C9 joined in their debates, B3 agreed with B4's views that machines meant 'bicycles', C9 tried to distinguish product lines from production lines. Then C3 asked a crucial question, 'but why they mentioned two main production lines', neither B3 and B4 answered him, instead they explained that the company had two types of machines/vehicles - mass-produced bicycles and specialist bicycles. Then C3 realized that 'machines' meant 'bicycles'. He used three 'yeah' to express his agreement. C9, C6 and C22 all realized

'machines' meant 'bicycles'.

However, neither B3 nor B4 answered C3's question 'why they mentioned two main production lines'. It was a Chinese woman C22 who found the answer and told C3 in Chinese, 'this is product line, not production line', which made C3 realize his mistake immediately, C3 said 'I see' in a low voice in Chinese.

Later B4 expressed his apologies for pointing out C3's mistake and comforted C3 that it was just 'slightly wrong' due to language difficulty; B3 gave a very positive comment on C3's summary, 'this is terrific stuff, this is very very good'. C3 admitted his mistake, 'maybe I had some misunderstanding for this (smile)', by using 'maybe' and followed with a smile again. He seemed a little bit embarrassed. B3 and B4's ensuing remarks helped C3 to build his confidence again, he started with three 'yeah', followed with an interesting comment, 'I think you must be correct, because your English is better than us', partly flattered C3, partly defended himself (for face-protection). This 8-minute debate ended up with people's hearty laughter.

### 8.2.2.3 Discussion

*Why did Chinese students have different interpretation of the basic concept of 'product line'?*

This episode shows that C3 had an 8-minute debate with a British student B4 about a conceptual issue – whether the company was a manufacturer or a distributor, at the beginning of the actual discussion.

This episode shows that Chinese students tended to have some difficulties in understanding the assignment requirement. C3 had two misunderstandings on the selected assignment information. Firstly, he misinterpreted the meaning of 'machines', he regarded 'machines' as 'manufacturing machines' that produced bicycles, B4 corrected him that 'machines' meant 'bicycle machines' rather than manufacturing machines. Secondly, C3 thought the company had two production lines, rather than 'product lines', based on his misunderstanding of machines; therefore, he thought the company was a manufacturer, his suggestions to the company was mainly based on his interpretation of the company as a manufacturer. Therefore, this episode shows that C3's misinterpretation of the basic concepts 'product lines' and 'machines' influenced his analysis and proposal to the company. If it were an individual assignment, C3 might get a low mark, since he got the fact wrong.

There are two possible reasons for C3's misinterpretation to the basic concepts of 'product line' and 'machines'. Firstly, it may be due to linguistic reason, for C3 did not distinguish product line from production line; and he did not know 'machines' could refer to bicycles. In his and most Chinese students' minds, 'machines' normally refer to 'big equipment'. Secondly, it might be because of cultural distance. C3 had no idea of what product line was,

though he was more familiar with production line, since he used to do foreign trade business, and ever imported some equipment/production lines from abroad for some factories. The other Chinese students were not familiar with the concept of 'product line' as well. Therefore, Chinese students' lack of socio-economic and cultural knowledge of basic concepts of case studies often influenced their interpretation of assignment requirements/case studies and effective communication.

*Why did Chinese students in this group have a successful experience of debate?*

Firstly, the two British students' positive attitudes towards international students is one of the main reasons for Chinese students' successful debate experience. The two British part-time students appeared very patient and polite in listening to C3's argument, by giving C3 enough time and opportunities to defend himself. Their comments on C3's contribution were quite encouraging, and they played a scaffolding role in helping C3 to understand the situation of the company (e.g. machines mean bicycles). B4 used 'Ok' twice to respond to C3's 'aggressive' way of debate, 'I disagree with you', 'I don't think'. Two British students created a very relaxed and encouraging environment. However, C3 seemed less experienced. He used few conjunction words, or polite turn-taking patterns, such as those B4 and B3 used in the debate several times, 'that's excellent...can I ask...', 'it is very good, but...', '...I am afraid', 'I am sorry'. By contrast, C3 used a relatively abrupt and direct way to defend himself. 'I don't think so', 'I disagree with you'.

As discussed in earlier chapters, the Chinese students were second language learners, and they had little debate/interaction experience in China, due to a teacher-centred transmission approach. Many of them were not very skilful in expressing their opinions appropriately, especially using some polite tones and expressions. Therefore some native speakers might feel offended to some extent. RMBA student C31's example showed a misunderstanding caused by an inappropriate expression by a Chinese student.

*C31: We were in a group with one native student for Course D. Normally the British student would write the final draft for the group. Once one Chinese gentleman in our group asked the British if he has finished the final draft, because he didn't receive the writing from him yet, so he urged him, 'when would you get it ready?', his speaking tone sounds not pleasant, maybe because different speaking style. This British student was not happy and complained about it to me (C31, 150704).*

In this product line episode, B3 and B4 appeared more tolerant to C3's less appropriate way of debate, and their positive comment on C3's argument encouraged C3 to be 'brave' enough to defend his argument. Therefore, B3 and B4 had created a relaxed environment for these second language learners, who felt relaxed and motivated to participate in group discussion. And C6 even corrected B3's grammar and spelling mistakes in this group. 'I pointed out B3's grammar mistakes in the report. He seemed happy about it' (C6, 011103).

Secondly, this group's successful experience is also due to the Chinese students' strong motivation to participate and challenge in the group discussion and adapt to the new



academic identities. For example, C3 adopted an integrating strategy and appeared very confident in defending his argument in the negotiation/debate process. The other example is C6's negotiation of conducting an oral presentation for the group.

<Extract 8.2>

*'When the group discussed who would do a presentation for the group, C6 suggested, 'everyone should have a chance to practise'. Two British students agreed to let her have a try, and they would answer questions from the audience' (Field note, 031003, C3 & B4, group work for Course B).*

After presentation, C6 was very happy with his/her equal contribution to the group work.

*C6: B3 and B4 were very encouraging, after presentation, they came to me and said, 'well done!'. I was very happy to have done something for the whole group...I think every student should be given some opportunities to practise this skill (C6, 011103).*

Thirdly, Chinese students' previous work experience might be one of the reasons for this group's successful communication. Four out of six of the Chinese students in this group used to work in joint ventures or foreign companies, therefore, their previous intercultural work experience might help them build confidence in actively participating in group discussions.

After this enjoyable group work experience, both Chinese and British students' motivation for further interaction increased. Some group members had some informal small group interactions.

*I saw B3, C6 and C9 discuss the case as soon as the presentation finished this afternoon (Field note, C3 & B4, 071003, group work for Course B).*

C9 and B3 did another group assignment in the third stage, however, their initial stage of relationship did not develop as time went on, B3 expressed disappointment when interviewed the second time in the third stage (see Section 8.4.4).

#### **8.2.2.4 Summary**

This episode shows how both Chinese and British students adopted an integrating strategy in their group interaction. C3 managed to develop the new academic identity (questioning and challenging) through a successful debate with British student B4 and B3; C6 managed to negotiate an opportunity to deliver a successful oral presentation for the group. These Chinese students not only built their confidence, developed their new academic identities, but also gained British students' respect, recognition and good relationship, as B3 wrote in his email, 'I was impressed with the effort made by each member of the team and very impressed with how C6 delivered our presentation' (B3, email, 111003, 12:22:03).

Two factors were identified for this group's successful communication: The first factor is

British students' positive and 'encouraging' (C6, 011103) attitude. Two British students argued in a polite and patient way, and played a scaffolding role in the argument, gave a Chinese student the opportunity to do a presentation, and created a very relaxed environment. The second factor is Chinese students' high motivation of developing their new academic identities.

In sum, both Chinese and British students felt satisfied with their initial group communication and relationship development in this group. The next two episodes show some unhappy group communication experiences. Neither Chinese students nor British students felt happy with their initial group interactions and relationships. Different attitudes and strategies adopted by these students are presented, and some underlying factors are explored.

### 8.2.3 Episode 2: 'We are excluded from the discussion' (C12 & B12)

This episode is chosen to show that Chinese and British students tended to adopt different strategies – integrating and avoiding strategies respectively. An expectation gap and academic identity conflict between Chinese and British students is identified. The underlying reasons are identified: both Chinese and British students tended to lack cultural sensitivity. British students' unfriendly attitude towards Chinese students demotivated Chinese students' further contribution to the group discussion.

#### 8.2.3.1 Introduction

There were five nationalities in this group, three native students (two British students B12 and B13 and I1, who had a British educational background and regarded himself/herself as a native speaker of English), and six CHC students, and one Asian student. During this group's first group work (Course A), C12 tried to ask two British students to slow down their speaking speed, but his request was ignored shortly afterwards, and he felt shy to ask again.

<Extract 1>

*C12: B12 spoke very quickly and he had a strong accent. If I were him, I would consider that this/here were several foreign students in this group, and I would slow down my speaking speed, to make sure if they understood, he seemed not care about othis/hers. B13 also spoke very fast. At the beginning, I asked, 'would you speak a little bit slowly', B12 said 'sorry' and slowed down a little bit, then in several minutes, they seemed to forget and spoke as usual. I was shy to ask again, I felt very difficult to follow their discussion and felt very frustrated. If I could not make sense of what they were talking about, how can I contribute to the group discussion?' (C12, 071103).*

Besides, C12 had an unhappy experience in the second group work within the same group for Course B. His proposal was rejected in an unpleasant way and he and othis/her students were ignored by British students for 15 minutes after the refusal. He felt 'excluded' and demotivated by British students' unfriendly attitudes.

## &lt;Extract 2&gt;

C12: *When I proposed a suggestion during discussion, B12 and B13 smiled at each other and said nothing. I felt very frustrated and upset by their facial expression, which gave me a feeling that they might think my idea was very stupid...they tend to have a sense of superiority in front of us...Later, B12 and B13 had a big argument on one issue, both of them spoke very quickly, I could not follow their conversation, the more they were talking to each other, the further behind I was getting left, about 15 minutes later, they turned to me, 'do you agree with that', what can I say, I can't disagree now in 15 minutes. I feel we are excluded from the discussion in this 15 minutes' argument (C12 071103).*

The one CHC student in this group thought British students tended to 'dominate the conversation and ignore his/hers' opinions' (I8, 160304). By contrast, the native speakers thought Chinese/CHC students lacked willingness to participate in the classroom and group work discussion.

B11: *They (Chinese students) are not as loud as we are...I was a little bit disappointed that some Chinese in the whole year never spoke in class...It is disappointing...they should be more open and willing to give their ideas and suggestions...(B11, 310804).*

I1: *I would love to know more about what's going on in the Chinese system, they don't give information very readily...they don't really express themselves at all, seem to be unwilling (I1, 131103).*

**8.2.3.2 Discussion**

Firstly, this episode shows an expectation gap between Chinese and native students. Chinese students found the British students lacked caring and supporting attitudes. C12's request to 'speak slowly' was ignored by native students (Extract 1); his proposal was rejected by two British students in an pleasant way - they 'smiled at each other' by 'saying nothing'. Furthermore, C12 and other international students were ignored by two native students for about 15 minutes during their heated argument (Extract 2). This/therefore, C12 felt 'excluded' from the group discussion and thought native students did 'not care about others'. By contrast, the native students expected Chinese students to be active in discussion. They found Chinese students were quiet and 'not as loud' (B11, 310804), seemed 'unwilling' (I1, 131103), and 'not very confident' (B14, 141103) to contribute to the group discussion. The expectation gap between Chinese and native students can be summarized as a 'dialogue' below:

<b>Chinese student</b>	<b>British student</b>
Can you speak a little bit slowly?	Can you be more active?
You seem not caring	You seem unwilling

## Dialogue 8.1 Empathy and willingness

Secondly, this episode also demonstrates how both Chinese and British students coped with a tension between retaining their original academic identity and developing intercultural academic identities, especially how Chinese students encountered psychological struggles, such as language shock and academic identity conflicts in their early group interaction stage. On the one hand, Chinese students suffered from language shock and loss of confidence due to their lack of English efficiency and communication skills. On the other hand, they suffered from a loss of personal and social identity recognition, after they left their original work roles and social status and started their MBA course in the UK. Both C12 and C1 used to be upper-intermediate managers in their previous companies and neither of them could follow the discussion well in this group, and they felt 'very frustrated' (C1, 171003) and 'very stressed' (C12, 080704).

*C12: My first degree is computer, I am good at patterned things... I felt very stressed coz I was not confident about my English. I always think language is my weak point, I know I am using my weakest point to compare with people who has the strongest point....I had many good ideas...but I don't know how to express in English...My self confidence is suffering (C12, 080704).*

This conforms to Brumfit's views that 'the mismatch between their awareness of their own competence, intelligence, and status at home, and their perception of their linguistic confusion and consequently deserved (as they may see it) low status his/here is a major cause of tension' (2001: 61). After this unhappy experience, C12 and C1 adopted an avoiding strategy – they chose to work in Chinese-only groups for their other assignments.

Thirdly, this episode shows that Chinese students' strategy tended to change from initial integration to avoidance. British students' negative attitude towards Chinese students influenced these students' further motivation towards participation. Some Chinese students mentioned that their motivation towards participation decreased when they noticed some unfriendly non-verbal languages from native speakers (e.g. C12 felt B12 and B13's sense of superiority from their facial expressions, Episode. 1); 'I felt more nervous if British students looked away when I was talking or interrupted me...they were not patient enough to us' (C21, 241003). RMBA student C31 had the similar experience.

*C31: B16 was very arrogant and conceited, when you talk to him, you would have a feeling that he regards you as an idiot....From his body language, you can feel that...let me tell you the most unbearable thing, once a person from Taiwan asked B16 if he would like to work togethis/her for a group assignment, B16 said, 'don't come to me, just because I am a nice person. After you prepare your plan, you can come to me, then I will consider working with you'. I stood this/here, felt really unbearable, he went too far. I don't know whethis/her that person went back to him. If he said in this way, I would not go to him again. I thought maybe because he had some bad experience working with Chinese students before, and he thought all Chinese would be like that (C31, 150704).*

The above quotes show that some British students' negative attitude influenced Chinese/international students' motivation and full participation in the group work and

brought them psychological adaptation problems. This finding supports some previous researchers' views that some British students tended to show indifference and even hostility towards international students (Furnham and Bochner, 1982: 193; Kudo and Simkin, 2003). This finding is also consistent with Leong and Ward's (2000) survey finding on 106 Chinese sojourners' (in Singapore) cultural identity conflict that higher tolerance of host students is related to the lower level of cultural identity conflict and better relationship with host nationals. Thus empathy, tolerance, a sense of good will, other-orientation and support from host nationals are very important for the two-way intercultural adaptation process.

The above quotes show that Chinese students tended to be more concerned with, or sensitive to, British students' body language. This may be due to Chinese relationship-oriented and high-context culture (Hall, 1959, 1976). British students need to be aware of their attitude and body language, when they worked with Chinese students.

Meanwhile, the finding shows that native students encountered some psychological struggles as well. B12 once told me he felt 'frustrated' and 'nervous' (Field note, C15 & B12, 241103, group work for Course E) when he found some Chinese students kept silent in group work discussion. B11 felt 'disappointed' (B11, 310804) about Chinese students' quietness in group work. I was rejected politely by B12 and B13 for interviews since both of them felt stressed with their studies.

This episode also shows that both Chinese and British students (e.g. C12 and B12) lacked cultural sensitivity and intercultural competence. Chinese students tended to adopt their original cultural values of politeness (e.g. C12 felt 'shy' to interrupt again, rather than negotiate with native students after rejection), and they appeared not skilful in managing their affective factors (e.g. emotion, motivations) after their proposal was rejected and they adopted a separation and avoiding strategy after the incident. By contrast, two British students adopted a dominating strategy and appeared to lack awareness/sensitivity of international students' language and academic difficulties. They did not create a relatively relaxed and empathetic environment and opportunities to involve international students for an equal contribution to the group work. This may be due to B12 and B13's lack of intercultural communication experience prior to their MBA course (neither of them had previous experience of working with Chinese/CHC students before), and it may be due to their strong personalities and different working styles (task-oriented).

C31's quote suggests that some native students tended to generalize their unhappy experience with some particular Chinese students to other cases. This involves another factor that influences group interaction – stereotype and prejudice. For example, I1's pre-assumption/stereotype of Chinese students is that Chinese students would have high intelligence quotient (IQ), based on a journal article about Chinese students' high numeracy skills. 'I thought their IQ is amazing' (I1, 131103). However, I1's previous positive pre-assumption/stereotype tended to bring greater disappointment in Chinese students.

*'I was very conscious of the high average IQ score attributed to East Asians and their reputation as excellent students...I was this/herefore greatly disappointed at their apparent lack of initiative, inability to take charge of a situation and dependence on being instructed as to their actions' (I1, 281003, individual assignment).*

I1's further experience working with Chinese students show that his/her negative stereotype turned into prejudice. I1's second group work (Course E) was with two Taiwan students who appeared quiet in group discussion (see Appendix 24 for detailed field note). He/she thought two Taiwan students were 'reluctant contributors', and did 'not wish to share' their ideas and make more efforts in the group work (I1, 121203, individual assignment, Course E). And he/she suggested working virtually by sending emails between group members after the first face-to-face meeting.

Meanwhile, I1 'generalised a suspicion that the Asian members were deliberately concentrating on individual assignments at the expense of the group' (B9, 121203, individual assignment, Course E).

*Far Eastern team members did not wish to share their ideas for the benefit of their teams; these members preferred to focus their time and effort on their individual assignments, leaving others to carry the load; or certain lecturers consciously or unconsciously awarded marks to some of them based on perceived effort rather than results (I1, 121203, individual assignment, Course E).*

So far, I1's gradual change of attitudes on CHC students can be summarized below: firstly, he/she had a positive stereotype/assumption on Chinese students' high numerical skills and general high IQ score before he/she met them; then, he/she felt disappointed about Chinese students' lack of contribution to the group work, he/she thought they were 'not willing' to contribute to the group interaction and he/she thought these students had low emotional quotient (Emotional Quotient) performance; finally, he/she had a negative stereotyping and prejudice on Chinese/CHC students, who got relatively good marks in their individual assignments, but low level of group contribution, he/she thought these CHC students 'did not wish to share' their ideas in the group, but focused their time and effort on their individual assignment. And he/she even doubted some lecturers' marking standard. In sum, I1's attitude has changed from a positive stereotype to negative stereotype/prejudice on CHC students over time. He/she tend to generalize about the majority of Chinese/CHC students based on his/her limited contact/communication with certain Chinese students (two group work experiences).

One reason for Chinese students' high marks in written assignments but quiet group work performance may be due to Chinese students' different outputs in their written and oral English. Many interviews show that Chinese students were more confident in their written English rather than oral English. For example, C10 was very good at writing (his/her first assignment was over 75 percent, but she was not confident in speaking. 'My writing is ok, but I'm not good at oral expression (C10, 110104). This might be due to grammar-based

and teacher-centred teaching method and little debate/interaction experience in group discussion in China.

### 8.2.3.3 Summary

In sum, this episode shows that there were expectation gaps and cultural conflicts between Chinese and British students in their initial group discussion. Both sides adopted different strategies and neither side felt satisfied with the other. Three underlying reasons were identified – native students' negative attitudes, stereotype, and lack of cultural sensitivity. The finding shows that native students tended to adopt the dominating strategy during group discussion. The next episode explores the other underlying reason for the unhappy group work interaction between Chinese and native students: the native and non-native power distance.

### 8.2.4 Episode 3: 'They are taking control' (C15 & B15)

This episode shows Chinese and British students adopted different strategies. The former adopted dominating strategy; the latter changed their strategy from integrating to avoiding or following during their group work interactions.

#### 8.2.4.1 Introduction

There were two British, one European, three Chinese and four CHC students in this Course B group. Three Chinese students were initially motivated to contribute to this group work, they had some subgroup meetings prior to the whole group meeting, since 'it was much easier to understand and more efficient when we talked in Chinese before meetings' (C15, 171003).

During group discussion, three Chinese students suggested a renting scheme for the E-bike marketing strategy, but their proposal was rejected by B15 immediately, who preferred another type as the main product for the company. C15 thought B15 was 'louder and impatient' not to listen to their explanations (C15, 171003).

*C15: I was not happy about it, I think our plan is very useful for the company's strategy, but B15 is louder and impatient to listen to our explanations...we are in a disadvantage position (C15, 171003).*

The European student I6, who was in the same group also thought British students were not 'patient' and 'did not give many chances', and Chinese students did not take initiatives and to be more 'open' to participate in group discussions.

*I6: English students at the beginning have not been patient...did not give many chances...Chinese students tended to be followers instead of initiators...Chinese students should be a little bit more open, and should be a little bit more willing to communicate, communication is not working fine...The lecturers did not speak much*

*about direction of task....Normally, I expected maybe it is the School, some of teachers have to facilitate much more (I6, 141103).*

Similarly, RMBA Chinese student C40's graph was regarded as irrelevant to the framework and rejected by British student B26, when they met for the second meeting.

<Extract 1>

*C40 sent his/her structure graph through email to B26 as expected, B26 commented, 'your structure is a little bit irrelevant to our framework, so I did not use it'. C40 said, 'that's fine' (Field note, 071203, Group work, C40 & B26 for Course N).*

#### 8.2.4.2 Discussion

This episode and some other interviews show that British students tended to dominate the group discussion, and most Chinese students' proposals tended to be regarded as deviant and be rejected by native students during group discussions. One underlying reason is identified: the native and non-native speakers' power distance. British students tended to set the framework, and dominated the group discussion, due to their 'privilege' (B15, 270404) of language proficiency and familiarity with the local culture and academic culture. Other opinions and perspectives were more likely regarded as deviant and be rejected.

By contrast, Chinese students appeared at a 'disadvantaged position' (C15, 171003), due to their lack of communication and debating skills and lack of familiarity with the British socio-academic culture. 'If the discussion is in Chinese, I can dominate the conversation...If Chinese students can not overcome this (language) barrier, they will not dominate the group work' (C8, 280704). 'Chinese students don't have much experience of debates' (C15, 171003).

*B15: European students tend to dominate, because of privilege...I think Europeans are more aggressive, tend to dominate the discussions. So in the end, perhaps two ideas might be equally feasible, both can achieve the results, but the Europeans are forceful enough how they are, they will choose this way, that's the way will be chosen to do it (B15, 270404).*

Many Chinese students expressed their disappointment and frustration during group work: on the one hand, they expected to contribute to the group discussion and adapt to the new academic identities, as C35 said, 'I want to be the leader' (C35, 130604); on the other hand, they found it difficult to play the dominant role in group discussion due to their lack of communication and debating skills. More importantly, due to native and non-native power distance. Some Chinese students said they had to change their strategy from the initial integrating to a compromising or following strategy.

*C35: For Course B teamwork, we had two native speakers - British and Canadian; two Chinese, two Greek, one Indian, one Thai and one Japanese. I feel Canadian and British students dominate everything, they were very active. Before you want to speak,*



*they have already assigned the tasks to everyone. I feel that my role is separated. In my mind, I want to be the leader, but they arrange everything, I could not change the situation...So I felt very frustrated. The other thing is that they could not understand what I was talking about, they were just puzzled there. It is nothing to do with my pronunciation or grammar, but the meaning of my talk, I could not make myself understood by others. For example, I wanted to give them a metaphor or an example to express my ideas better, but they didn't understand what the metaphor or example meant...So I find that I can not persuade others, it will be inefficient if I insist. And it is teamwork, I don't want to waste others' time. So I follow them and do the part which I am assigned (C35, 130604).*

The above quote shows that RMBA C35 wanted to be the leader, but in reality, he found it was difficult to be the leader since the British students tended to have the power to control the group work, which made C35 feel very disappointed that his personal and sociocultural identity was not recognized. Some Chinese students felt very frustrated about this, since they also 'wanted to enjoy the group discussion' (C31, 150704). After their proposals were rejected, many Chinese students' motivation to participate in the group discussion decreased.

By contrast, British students tended to ignore this subtle change of Chinese students' feelings; they thought Chinese students were not working hard and contributing enough.

*B15: The European students feel that they have to lead or want to get it done, and also feel the Chinese students are not pulling their weight, not working hard enough. Ok, on the other side of that, the Chinese students feel 'well, these Europeans are just taking control, not listening to what we are saying', that demotivated them, so they don't contribute as much as they could, so I think it's (smile) the real problem there (B15, 270404).*

Therefore, the expectation gap between Chinese and British students and their respective inner thoughts after conflicts can be portrayed into a dialogue below:

<b>Chinese student</b>	<b>British student</b>
You are taking control	You are not pulling your weight
Not listening to what we are saying	Not working hard enough

#### Dialogue 8.2 Motivation and dominance

The above 'dialogue' shows that Chinese students thought British students were 'taking control' and did not give them enough time and space to contribute to the group work, they felt distanced and demotivated after they found they were in a disadvantaged position during interaction. By contrast, British students thought Chinese students were not 'pulling their weight', they felt dissatisfied with Chinese students' quiet behaviour in the group work discussion.

The second reason for British students' dominance of the group discussion is also identified: different communication styles. British students tended to be task-oriented rather than relationship-oriented. 'The team's intention is to achieve the task...my desire is to get the job done...to achieve the results' (B15, 270404). Another British student B7 also stressed: 'I think European students are more task motivated or goal motivated...we just want to get the job done (B7, 180304).

By contrast, Chinese students tended to emphasise the relationship and group's harmony. For example, C7 proposed a plan on OEM (Original Equipment Manufacture), which was disagreed with and refused by British students immediately. On the one hand, C7 'felt disappointed about British students' lack of knowledge of this popular international business concept and practices' (C7, 171003); on the other hand, C7 thought British students' ideas might be more suitable for the British situation; therefore, he 'made a compromise' and 'followed their ideas', 'for a group's harmony' (C7, 171003), since Chinese students did 'not like to have conflicts' (C4, 121203, Course E, individual assignment). One reason for Chinese students' adoption of the avoiding or compromising strategy may be embedded in Chinese collectivist and high context cultural context, with particular emphasis on harmony and relationship.

#### 8.2.4.3 Summary

Firstly, this episode shows that British students tended to dominate the group discussion, whereas Chinese students tended to be in an inferior position during the group discussion. Two reasons were identified: a) the first factor is power distance between Chinese and British students in their group interaction. British students tended to dominate the group discussion due to their 'privilege' (B15, 270404) of language efficiency and familiarity with socio-academic culture. Under this power distance, international students' motivation and degree of involvement decreased, they were found to change from the integrating strategy to compromising or avoiding strategies.

b) the second factor is different working styles due to individualism-collectivism cultural dimensions: British students tended to be more task-oriented; whereas Chinese students appeared more relationship-oriented. This finding conforms to Ting-Toomey's (1988) argument, people from high-context culture tended to adopt a less confronting strategy in order to avoid intercultural conflicts. This also coincides with Carson and Nelson's (1996) finding that Chinese students avoided criticizing their peers or claim an authority during their peer studies in a writing class, for the sake of harmony maintenance in the group.

One consequence of this phenomenon is that international opinions and voices were less likely to be heard, due to British students' dominance in group work. The other consequence is the loss of opportunity of sharing optional ideas, due to 'groupthink' phenomenon: '...an illusion of unanimity in the group, with silence being interpreted as consent' (Janis, 1982). More importantly, this compromising strategy may also make Chinese students appear incompetent and less critical, and impedes their adaptation process.

Therefore, this involves how Chinese and British students adopt an integrating attitude and strategy to tackle intercultural conflicts and achieve intercultural competence: Chinese students should be 'more open' and 'more willing to communicate' (I6, 141103); British students need to be more 'patient' and open to hear different voices. This also involves how British institutions and lecturers 'facilitate much more' (I6, 141103) during the group discussions.

The next section will discuss Chinese and British students' relationship development in the first stage. Both sides encountered a psychological struggle between retaining their original academic identities and developing new academic identities.

### 8.2.5 Relationship development in the first stage

Most Chinese and British students thought that they had a good relationship in the first stage, though their working level was less good, since they encountered some expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts.

*I1: So far, very good...Very friendly at first, we didn't work very well together, our relationship level was very good, but the working level was not so good... As to interpersonal level, we had good time, we laughed and we had fun of it, it was the first time for us working together (I1, 131103).*

Similarly, some Chinese students experienced language shock and had unhappy experiences in their first and second group work (e.g. C1 in Section 8.2.3), however, they generally valued their first group work experience. *'I have experienced a big difference in terms of speaking and thinking styles between the East and the West...we had some misunderstandings...however I really cherish this first experience working with different nationalities'* (C1, personal diary, 300903).

However, some Chinese students felt unhappy working with British students who tended to dominate the group work and show little concern to Chinese/international students; therefore, these Chinese students started to form their own selected-groups with only Chinese students, for their next two group assignments. And some British students also formed their co-national groups as well.

### 8.2.6 Conclusion

Three episodes have been chosen and discussed, to demonstrate the two-way adaptation process between Chinese and British students during their group communication context in the first stage. Episode 1 is a successful experience of two-way adaptation whereas Episodes 2 and 3 are unsuccessful intercultural adaptation experiences.

Both Chinese and British students encountered expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts. British students expected Chinese students to take more responsibilities and initiatives to adapt to the new academic identities. Chinese students expected British

students to be empathetic, tolerant and give them more opportunities to let them speak and enjoy the group discussion. Both sides were found to have encountered psychological struggles between retaining their original academic identities and developing new academic identities. On the one hand, Chinese students appeared motivated to adapt to the new academic identities; on the other hand, lack of communication skills and British students' dominant attitude made them feel difficult to adapt to the new academic identity.

Different attitudes and strategies have been discussed in this stage. Avoiding and compromising strategies were mainly adopted by Chinese students, due to their relationship- and harmony-oriented cultural and working values. By contrast, dominating strategy was mainly adopted by British students, due to their task- and goal-oriented cultural and working values (Episode 2 & 3).

Some factors that influenced the two-way adaptation process between Chinese and British students have been identified and discussed in this stage. Firstly, power distance between native and non-native students has been identified. Native students' privilege of language efficiency and socio-academic cultural familiarity gave them a dominating position, whereas Chinese students' language inefficiency and unfamiliarity with British socio-cultural knowledge and communication/debate skills impeded their effective communication and academic identity adaptation and made them in a less dominant position. The finding suggests that Chinese students tended to have fewer opportunities to enjoy the debate process, thus many Chinese students suffered from academic identity conflicts during this period.

Secondly, the host students' negative attitude and lack of intercultural sensitivity have been identified as the possible barriers for successful communication and adaptation. The finding shows that British students tended to be insensitive to Chinese students' language and academic difficulties, they adopted dominating strategies and showed little care, patience and support towards international students (e.g. keeping fast-paced discussion in Episode 2, less patient to listen to Chinese students' opinions in Episode 3). The finding is in harmony with the argument that the negative attitude or indifference of host members toward sojourners impeded intercultural interactions (Furnham & Bochner, 1982; Kim, 1994). Meanwhile, Chinese students also tended to lack cultural sensitivity. They tended to interpret the negotiation process from their original cultural values (e.g. face protection in Episode 2 and harmony orientation in Episode 3) by adopting compromising and avoiding strategies.

Thirdly, stereotyping is identified as one of the factors that influence two-way intercultural adaptation. It's positive stereotype of Chinese students' high score of intelligence quotient changed into a negative stereotype and prejudice and assumed that Chinese students were not willing to contribute to group work. Some Chinese and British students tended to generalize their unhappy experience to other cases.

Fourthly, cultural distance has also been identified. For example, Chinese and British

students had different speaking and working styles, Chinese students had less confronting and relationship-oriented styles, which is in contrast to British students who adopted dominating and task-oriented styles (Episodes 2 and 3). This may be due to their collectivism-oriented versus individualism-oriented cultural backgrounds respectively (see Chapter 4).

The relationship development between Chinese and British students was generally good, though most groups encountered expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts, most of them enjoyed their initial intercultural experience.

In sum, there were a lot of disagreements and arguments during the 'forming' stage of the two-way intercultural adaptation process. Chinese and British students tended to adopt different attitudes and strategies. Several factors were identified such as culture distance; native and non-native power distance, native students' negative attitudes towards international students (Episode 2), stereotyping and so on. However, Chinese and British students were generally satisfied with their initial experience of intercultural communication and relationship development in this stage.

The next section will discuss Chinese and British students' second-stage two-way intercultural adaptation experience.

### **8.3 The second stage – group storming**

There were three core courses (Course C, D and E) in the second stage of group communication and relationship development (11 October to 12 December 2003). There was less communication but more frustration between Chinese and British students and their relationships were less good in this stage. One of reasons was the time and task pressure, since all students had to meet close deadlines of several assignments in this period.

#### **8.3.1 Introduction**

In this section, four episodes were chosen from many similar episodes, to explore how Chinese students developed their academic identities and their relationships in their mixed groups, and how British students responded to Chinese students' group performance in this stage (see Table 8.2 below). Episode 1 shows that both CHC and British students adopted an integrating strategy, especially two CHC women who managed to develop new academic identities successfully in this group; Episode 2 and 3 were two self-selected groups, both groups adopted avoiding strategies for different reasons; Episode 4 is a mixed group among non-native students only.

Table 8.2 The second-stage episodes and strategies

Stage 2	Theme	Participants	Strategy (Chinese/British)
Episode 1	B8 was criticized by two CHC women	C10 & B8	Integrating/integrating
Episode 2	They did not ask our opinion	C13 and B2	Avoiding/avoiding
Episode 3	How to tell him our disagreement	C9 and B5	Avoiding/avoiding
Episode 4	We vote for the presenter	C6 and I4	integrating/integrating

### 8.3.2 Episode 1: B8 was criticized in public (C10 & B8)

This episode was chosen for two purposes: to show how several CHC students successfully managed to develop their new academic cultural identities in their Course E group presentation question time and group discussion; and to show some active integrating Chinese students' dilemma of obtaining their original academic identities/values and relationships and developing new academic identities/values and relationships in the adaptation process. This group includes six people, one British male and five CHC female students (1 mainland Chinese, 2 Taiwan students and 2 other CHC students).

#### 8.3.2.1 Introduction

This was an interesting episode, when five CHC women and one British man stood in front of the lecture room, ready to answer questions after presentation, everyone laughed and some British students made some jokes as well. When they answered questions, one more interesting thing happened, a Chinese woman pointed out that the British presenter 'forgot to mention' one point during presentation; one minute later, the other CHC woman mentioned that one slide 'was not covered' in the presentation (when she said this, she smiled at the British man). The audience whispered and some laughed. What happened to this group? Why were these two CHC women so 'brave' and 'critical' to 'criticize' the British man in front of the audience? How did the group members interpret this episode? I interviewed five members in this group and collected three individual assignments, trying to explore the untold half story of this group. The extract of transcription of their question time interaction during presentation shows how group members cooperated and developed intercultural academic identities when they answered questions from audience.

<Extract 1> (details see Appendix 25)

#### Keys to transcripts:

B8: a British student    C10: a Chinese student.  
 I10: An East Asian student    CT1: a Taiwan student  
 Q/B2: a question from a British student B2  
 Q/T: a question from a lecturer  
 xxx: unrecognized part of interaction due to big-sized lecture room  
 ( ): description of non-verbal aspects of communication.  
 //: overlapping

(B8 took an initiative to answer the first question from a British student, then C10 interrupted).

*C10: //Can I// add something?* (C10 looked at B8 and the other group members). *Yes, the reason why we, I think B8 forgot to mention something* (some people laughed, some whisperings from audience). *Well, we'll have the change sponsor, which is either CEO...* (B8 helped her to turn the slide to the page she was mentioning).

*Q/B2: //You'll also// have conflicts, how to manage it?*

*B8: Well* (nodded at I10, when he found I10 was looking at him with a smile).

*I10: We also discussed training plan which was not covered in the presentation* (she smiled at B8). *Course E team should provide different training for different levels....*

*B8: I think change would only be successful if by training.*

*Q/B3: Concerning the Far East, how many employees on shop floor feel, because they do day-to-day shop work, how staff reacts to the change?*

*CT1: I may answer this question* (CT1 started in a very low voice, then raised her voice). *Because in local shop, local people have more pressure than top manager....*

*C10: Can I add something? First of all we employ low level employees....*

*Q/T: How will the communication be achieved?* (a question from the lecturer T4, who stood up from the back left corner of the lecture room, his voice couldn't be heard very clearly).

*B8: (B8 walked to T4's direction a little bit) There are many ways. One way is communication... Any further thoughts?* (asking group members).

*C10: I think change is from both directions, from senior to junior, then the other way around, from top first.*

*I10: Company should change its behaviour and look to a new vision, starting the trust of the employees.*

*B8: I think the leadership comes to this...Any more questions?* (looked at the audience with a smile) (Big applause from audience) (Transcription of question-time interaction in Course E presentation session, 121203).

\*\*\*\*\*

### 8.3.2.2 Interpretation

This extract shows that three CHC students actively took their turns to answer questions, B8 took an initiative to answer the first question, C10 interrupted by asking politely, 'can I add something?'. I10 took his/her turn by smiling at B8 and answered the second question. CT1 answered the third question by saying softly and politely 'I may answer this question'. Furthermore, C10 took the second turn by saying 'Can I add something?'. The fourth question was firstly answered by the team leader B8, then he politely asked his group members, 'Any further thoughts?'. C10 and I10 took their third and second turn respectively to contribute their thoughts. Finally B8 made a summary.

This extract demonstrates that B8 played a good role of a team leader and organizer in this group. He answered the first question and made a brief summary after each question was answered. He took 8 turns during the question time, and gave his group members opportunities to take their turns and add their further thoughts; and he helped C10 to turn to the slide which C10 was mentioning, though C10 had just pointed out his mistake in front

of the audience.

Three CHC students were very active to take their turns (6 times) to answer question 1, 2, 3 respectively, especially when their team leader B8 asked them 'any further thoughts?' on question 4, two CHC students made their spontaneous comments immediately. It shows that these CHC students had successfully managed to develop new academic identities (active participation, challenging) in this 10-minute question-time interaction.

### 8.3.2.3 Discussion

There are several reasons for this group's successful group communication. Firstly, both CHC and British students adopted an integrating strategy – CHC students were very 'motivated' (CT1, 090104) and 'active' (B8, 080104) to 'get the job done well' (I10, 070104), 'contribute' to the group, and develop the new academic identities in their group interaction; the British student B8 was 'very polite and helpful' (CT1, 090104) and 'encouraging' (C10, 110104) to provide opportunities to these CHC students to voice their opinions. Therefore, both sides enjoyed good rapport and relationship in this group during their group communication and presentation in class.

Secondly, the other reason for this group's good cooperation and equal contribution may be due to their previous intercultural experience. B8 was the only one full-time British student who had some experience working with CHC people prior to the MBA course. He worked in an East Asian country for six years, so he might be more familiar with CHC students' thinking and working styles. Meanwhile three in five CHC students used to work in joint-ventures or foreign companies. Therefore, they appeared more confident in participating and arguing in group interaction, and developing new academic identities and achieving success in their studies.

Thirdly, the above extract also implies some expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts in this group. One of the reasons for CHC students' criticism on B8 during their question time interaction is the different working style. The CHC students tended to pursue 'accuracy' (C10, 110104) and certainty, and emphasise good preparation for each slide before delivering the real presentation, due to their low level of uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980) and high expectation on a good result. By contrast, B8 tended to stress flexibility and spontaneity of communication and presentation.

*B8: I like to be flexible and changeable. They like to prepare very well... ..nothing is fixed...I think they worried too much (B8, 080104).*

*I10: We found that B8 didn't mention the main points exactly, each time he said differently when he did rehearsal. I worried about this before presentation...I think good preparation is very important. I have to make sure everything is ok before we deliver the result (I10, 070104).*

Fourthly, this episode also shows CHC students' dilemma in the intercultural adaptation



process: on the one hand, CHC students tried to adapt to the new academic identities/values by active participation in the group work; on the other hand, they tended to maintain their previous academic identities/values during their intercultural adaptation process. The subsequent part of the episode further shows this dilemma.

### *Saving his face?*

The two CHC women's criticism of the British student in public made some other CHC students feel uncomfortable, since they thought it was not good for group harmony and relationship, and it might make B8 lose face. B8 did not tell the researcher directly that he was not happy about being 'criticized' by his members. 'I think it's fine. It's just different opinion' (B8, 080104). But he sent an email to his group members to express his concerns, and a Taiwan student CT1 thought C10 and I10's speaking styles (criticism in public) were not suitable for the group's harmony.

*CT1: I think they are very capable. But their criticism in public was not suitable. Some Taiwan classmates asked me, 'what's wrong with your group?'. They thought our group didn't cooperate well, and their speaking styles were not suitable. B8 sent us an email after presentation. He hoped that we were satisfied with his presentation. He did very well actually. It doesn't matter if he forgot one or two points. We couldn't include everything. I think they wanted to get things to be perfect (CT1, 090104).*

Some Mainland Chinese students also thought C10 should have saved B8's face, during their first self-arranged dinner party after the Course E oral presentation.

*As soon as presentation finished, Chinese students went to a Chinese restaurant for celebration. Some Chinese students told C10 that she should not have criticized B8 and should have saved his face, because he is a very proud person (Field note, 121203, post Course E presentation dinner party).*

The above CHC students' responses and concerns about the C10 and I10's criticism might be based on Chinese collectivism-oriented and high-context culture, since pointing out a person's mistake in public is often regarded as an impolite and embarrassing thing - make people lose face and not good for the group's harmony and relationship. This implies an academic identity conflict of some 'active' Chinese students, when they challenged others during group/classroom interactions, or adopted some new academic identities and kept more non-Chinese friendships in the new learning environment. Some interview quotes show that some active Chinese students tended to be 'isolated' and 'distanced' a little bit, and they tended to be under public pressure from the Chinese community (Chinese classmates as a whole) when they had more relationships with non-Chinese students. One of RMBA student C32 also experienced this pressure.

*C32: I know some Chinese classmates gossip about me, but I don't care, I have to improve my English, so most of the time I would rather do group work and have social activities with some non-Chinese students (C32, 131203).*

This quote shows Chinese students' dilemma in the adaptation process. On the one hand, some 'active' Chinese students tried to participate and challenge others, and develop their new academic identity through group discussion; on the other hand, they might have to consider retaining their previous academic identities and relationships with other Chinese students. This may be due to the large population of Chinese students in the MBA programme, and it is mainly due to Chinese collectivist and high-context cultural values – an emphasis on the in-group relationship. However, this tendency will impede Chinese students' adaptation process and it may sometimes cause unnecessary psychological stress to these 'active' Chinese students and may bring intercultural miscommunications as well. For example, C9 was more worried about his/her relationship with his/her subgroup members, so she did not speak much during group discussions which made B5 feel frustrated about Chinese students' quietness (see Section 8.3.4).

#### 8.3.2.4 Summary

This episode shows that both CHC and British students adopted an integrating strategy in their group interaction and several CHC women had managed to adapt to their new academic identities and values successfully in their group interaction and presentation – actively participating, challenging and equally contributing. The underlying factors that influence the two-way adaptation process in group interaction have been explored. Firstly, one of the main reasons is B8's positive attitude towards CHC students in group discussions. He provided these CHC students with many opportunities to let them try and voice opinions. Secondly, these CHC students were more motivated to contribute to the group and felt more relaxed and confident to argue with and criticize B8 in this small-sized group, and even in public. Thirdly, Chinese and British students' previous intercultural experiences also facilitate this group's good communication and relationship development.

Some expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts between group members were identified. CHC and British students tended to have different thinking and working styles. CHC students tended to be more structured and accuracy-oriented; and they tended to have low level of uncertainty avoidance. By contrast, British students tended to be more flexible and spontaneity-oriented.

Both Chinese and British students' inner struggle of coping with a tension between retaining one's original academic identities and relationship, and developing new academic identities and relationships was examined. Some Chinese students encountered pressures from the Chinese community, they needed to consider their original values (face-saving) and relation rather than adopt more new values (criticism and challenging) and relationships. Meanwhile, some British students also encountered psychological struggles when they had to adapt to CHC students' different speaking and working styles and cultural values (e.g. B8 felt frustrated by C10 and I10's emphasis on accuracy and good preparation).

In sum, this group had many arguments and negotiations among group members, and CHC

students contributed a lot of good ideas when they were given opportunities to 'try'. Both CHC and British students adopted an integrating strategy to achieve a good communication and relationship. The next episode will show that there was little communication and more misunderstandings among mixed group members, and some Chinese students complained that British students 'did not ask our opinions' during group interaction.

### 8.3.3 Episode 2: 'They did not ask our opinion' (C13 & B2)

This episode is a self-selected group. Both Chinese and British students firstly adopted an integrating strategy to work together. However, both sides changed to adopt avoiding strategies during group work, they did not have good communication and relationship development in the end. The underlying factors are examined.

#### 8.3.3.1 Introduction

B2 enjoyed his first group work, due to an equal contribution from both Chinese and British students (see Appendix 26). B2 was popular among Chinese students, since he was patient and gave some Chinese students' opportunities to contribute to the group work. However, B2 did not have a good experience in this Course C group, though it was self-selected and they had a good beginning.

<Extract 1>

*Two Chinese students took an initiative to approach two British students to express their willingness to work together on the Course C assignment. C13 said, 'the reason why we want to do this assignment with both of you together, is because our English is not good, but we are very good at statistics, and you are good at English and writing'. I saw B2 and B12 look happy and accept immediately, during Course D break time (Field note, 141103, Course D).*

C13's reason for working with British students is that he thought both sides could benefit from an equal contribution, since he thought he was good at statistics though his English was less good. B2's reason for working together is that he liked its diversity, 'two British, two Chinese, it was a good diversity' (B2, 290405), and also he was not confident enough in statistics, so he was happy to know that both Chinese were good at statistics. They had good communication in their first meeting.

<Extract 2>

*They met and discussed at 2:30pm in the Management building...C13 looked very confident when he told British students how he used this software (SPSS) to get the data organized and analyzed, and B12 asked C13 some relevant statistical issues. They split into two groups, British students were responsible for analysis and writing, Chinese students for statistics...They finished at 7:30pm (Field note, 251103, C13 & B2, groupwork for Course C).*

However, they did not have any contact since then, not even email correspondence before submission. B2 felt unhappy about this group work afterwards, because he felt that he and

B12 did most of the job, but when I asked him if they asked any help from their Chinese group members, he said 'No', and he did not even send the first draft to Chinese students to read before submission, though both Chinese students were willing to offer help anytime.

*B2: It was difficult to liaise. B12 lives in P, I live in B, we didn't send email between each group members. The reason was that we wanted to take the responsibilities to write it up. They said to us, they would like to do what we asked them to do, but they did stats only, B12 and I had to take more time in organising the ideas of this assignment...B12 and I took more responsibilities than they did, it was not fair...This was the last assignment I did with Chinese students (B2, 290405).*

*C13: It is a shame that we did not have any interaction with each other after the first meeting, maybe because we were all busy with assignments. I was not happy that they did not send us any draft before submission. You know, I am very confident in this subject, I would very much like to offer any help if they asked me...I thought they would ask me (C13, 190704).*

### 8.3.3.2 Discussion

*Because you did not ask!*

Both Chinese and British students were very motivated to work together on an equal level at the beginning of their group interaction. However, both sides adopted an avoiding strategy – they did not have any kind of communication after their first meeting. Therefore, an expectation gap and misunderstanding existed in this episode: British students expected Chinese students to take an initiative to contribute more; whereas Chinese students expected to be 'asked' (C13, 190704) or 'invited' (T5, 121004) by British students to share their responsibilities and ideas in group work. B2 tended to have different group performance from his first group work, where he tended to give more opportunities to Chinese students (See Appendix 26). *'I gave C17 an opportunity to speak his ideas, 'what did you mean', and I agreed to put some of his ideas in the assignment (B2, 290405).*

Similarly, the lecturer T5 told of a personal experience with RMBA Chinese students' contribution in one particular situation, when they were asked for opinions.

*T5: ...in one particular situation, where Chinese students knew how to solve this particular problem...I was a facilitator, and they were putting themselves forward to one particular situation, where the (Chinese) group said to them, 'you collaborate with my ideas', and they said 'you do this', 'you do this', and 'you do this'. And they were amazed, and asked 'why didn't you say?', they said 'you didn't ask'. So it is like they are supposed to be invited to do...if you invite them to conversation, they have something important to say, but usually they need to be given enough space to be invited in, and the time to pick up what they want to say (T5, 121004).*

T5's narrative makes an important point – when Chinese students were invited to speak or given enough space and time to contribute to group discussion, they had a lot to say and

contribute. Therefore, an expectation gap and misunderstanding between British and Chinese students during their group interaction and adaptation can be summarized into a 'dialogue' below:

**Chinese student**

You didn't ask.

(lack of communication)

**British student**

Why didn't you say?

Dialogue 8.3 Asking and offering

This dialogue shows that both Chinese and British students tended to lack cultural sensitivity, and both sides tended to retain their original values. British students thought it was Chinese students' responsibility to take an initiative to shout their ideas out, and they tended to take full responsibility to write the assignment up by themselves; whereas Chinese students expected British students to invite them and give them opportunities to let them speak. And a lack of communication made them unaware of each other's expectations and leads to some misunderstandings and conflicts.

One possible reason for Chinese students' preference for waiting for an invitation is based on Chinese collectivist culture which values other-orientation, modesty and politeness (see Section 3.2.1.2). Children are told to be sensitive to the other's needs, listen to and learn from others, especially seniors; otherwise, they will be regarded as showing off and not polite. Students are normally called by teachers for answering questions, rather than raising questions or taking initiatives to express their opinions, though they might have very good ideas in their minds. This is related to a teacher-centred transmission approach and hierarchical teacher-student relationship. Therefore Chinese students tended to retain their original academic identities during their group work interactions. Therefore, Chinese students felt disappointed when they found they were not invited to comment on the assignment and group work, they thought British students dominated the group work and did not trust them.

The other possible reason is that Chinese and British students had different working style. Chinese students tended to take equal turns to speak in group discussions. This might be associated with Chinese collectivist culture and equal policy in education (see Section 3.3.4.1). As one Chinese student said, 'I enjoyed working in Chinese group. Everyone has an opportunity to express his/her ideas and I can learn more' (C11, 190304). However, British students tended to dislike this kind of 'equal' style of group discussion. They thought it 'wasted time' (B7, 180304), 'Chinese students tended to have long group meetings, everyone said nothing' (B15, 270404).

The third reason may be related to Chinese culture with a high level of uncertainty avoidance, as discussed in Section 5.4.4 and being less fluent in English and unfamiliar with the host cultural knowledge. They felt uncertain about their ideas. One example is a

Chinese student who kept silent during group discussions until one European student 'chased' him/her for opinions (see Section 8.5). I17's quote suggests a solution to Chinese students' inactive and passive involvement in the group work: some culturally-sensitive go-between need to 'chase' these quiet students for their opinions and give them enough space and time and a 'safe' environment to let these less confident Chinese/CHC students to speak up. In this study, I identified many international students who played the role of cultural 'go betweens', since they tended to be the cultural buffers who know both cultures well and had good relationships with both sides. Therefore, they tended to do some voluntary jobs to make Chinese students and British lecturers/students understand each other (other examples see Section 8.5).

Another reason for this group's lack of communication is 'time and task pressure' (B2, 290405). All students had to meet several close assignment deadlines (all between the end of November to the early December). The last reason is inaccessibility (both B2 and B12 lived outside the Weston city). Therefore, they had little contact with each other. Both sides felt frustrated and stressed during this period.

### **8.3.3.3 Summary**

In sum, this episode shows an expectation gap between Chinese and British students. Chinese students expected to be invited to speak and contribute to group work. British students expected Chinese students to take their responsibilities to speak their ideas. Both sides were not happy with each other. Chinese students felt unhappy with the British students' dominance of writing the assignment without asking their help and advice before submission. British students felt dissatisfied with Chinese students' lack of initiative and small contribution to the group work. Chinese and British students tended to change their strategies from integration to avoidance during their group work process. Neither group had any contact after their first meeting. Therefore, there was less good communication and relationship development between group members, thus Chinese students' voices were not heard in this group. The next episode is also a self-selected group, who had less good communication and relationship development experience.

### **8.3.4 Episode 3: 'How to tell him our disagreement' (C9 & B5)**

This episode is chosen to demonstrate how Chinese and British students changed their strategies from integration to separation during their group communication and relationship development. Both sides' expectation gaps and psychological struggles are examined. Both Chinese and British students were found to have a dilemma in retaining their original academic identities and developing new academic identities in their two-way adaptation process in the group communication context. British student B5 felt frustrated about the Chinese students' quietness and delayed reply to his second draft report. Chinese students struggled about how to express their disagreement without offending British student B5 and gave him a long list of recommendations of correction four days before the deadline.

Several factors that influenced their two-way adaptation process are identified: lack of communication and lack of awareness of cultural distance (e.g. collectivist and individualist cultural values), and pressure from the Chinese community.

#### **8.3.4.1 Introduction**

This Course D group was self-selected, consisting of one British part-time student and five CHC students (4 Chinese, 1 from East Asia). All five CHC students used to work in the Product Line group (in Section 8.2.2), in which these CHC students were very active. However, these CHC students met a new problem in this Course D group: how to express their disagreement to B5, whose second draft of the group assignment appeared too theoretical and exceeded the word limit. They worried whether their disagreement would offend B5 who had made big efforts in the writing.

*C9: We did not know how to tell him...because we thought B5 put a lot of effort and he might be right...we care what B5 felt because he worked very hard on that assignment, so we were very cautious to express different opinion (C9, 250106, msn).*

The CHC student I18 in this group also thought Asian students 'feel reluctant to show disagreement.

*I18: I find Asian students like to respect the other's feelings...they feel reluctant to show disagreement...they are not used to (I18, 090104).*

Therefore, it took some time for these CHC students to meet, discuss and modify B5's second draft, finally they sent B5 an email letter. The letter was drafted by C16 and sent by C3 on 29 Nov, 2003, four days before the deadline, together with several pages of recommendations and an executive summary written by C3.

#### **8.3.4.2 Discussion**

##### *Expectation gaps and different strategies?*

Firstly, this episode shows an expectation gap between Chinese and British students. Different strategies were adopted by both sides. There was little communication between Chinese/CHC students and British students. British student B5 was not happy with the Chinese students' quietness and delayed reply to his draft. And he adopted a direct way of communication and confronting strategy to show his disagreement and dissatisfaction. In fact, B5 did not know about the underlying reasons for the Chinese students' quietness and delay. Chinese students thought they worked hard and contributed a lot to the group. And they adopted indirect ways of communication and a less confrontational strategy of dealing with disagreements. Chinese students had a lot of subgroup discussions before the meeting but they tended to be quiet when they met B5.

C9: *We discussed a lot... We wrote out key points to B5 before the meeting, so we were silent... we even listed all main points we need to include in the report before B5 started writing... B5 adopt all ideas we discussed in the report (C9, 250106).*

However, B5 was not aware of the Chinese students' hard work before the meeting and their struggles of how to ask B5 to modify the draft without offending him. In fact, B5 was not satisfied with the Chinese students' quietness in group work and the delayed reply to his draft.

Therefore, there was an expectation gap between British and Chinese students: British student B5 thought Chinese students 'have not contributed more' since they were quiet during group meetings, and lacked response to the draft. Chinese students thought they 'discussed and contributed a lot in a subgroup before the whole group meeting, and they wrote out key points which were adopted fully by B5. The underlying reason for the expectation gap and academic identity conflict may be based on their different working styles and cultural values: Chinese students tended to be more relationship-oriented, since they were more concerned with B5's feelings and the group harmonious relationship. For example, some CHC students played the role of reconcilers for the group's harmony, when C3 argued with B5 during discussions. 'After C3 pointed out the recommendations, B5 was a little bit annoyed, so we just reconciled with him and C3... we don't want B5 to feel bad (C9, 250106, msn). By contrast, the British student tended to be more task-oriented. 'I have to carry on, because we have to get the task done' (B5, 120304).

*B5: I was disappointed about this, they have not contributed more... they are very quiet... lack of response, lack of feedback, leaving things to the last minute... I was quite angry, but I just said 'sorry I can change a few minor things, but I can not do any major reconstruction (B5, 120304).*

The British student B7's interview confirms this cultural distance, 'I found they (Chinese students) are not decisive... they do a lot of talking, no one seems to upset anyone by saying things... I think European students are more task motivated or goal motivated... we are always working towards delivery of presentation, which is not process' (B7, 180304).

Therefore, the expectation gap and the underlying reasons can be summarized into a dialogue below.

**Chinese student**

We don't want him to feel bad  
(Relationship-oriented)

**British student**

We have to get the task done  
(Task-oriented)

Dialogue 8.4 Relationship- vs task-oriented working style

Therefore, this episode shows that Chinese and British students tended to lack communication and lack awareness of each other's expectations and cultural differences.



Therefore, both sides tended to encounter psychological struggles and misunderstandings, which consequently influenced their relationship.

### *Why C9 was quiet in Course D group*

This episode shows that both Chinese and British students tended to change their strategies from integration to avoidance and separation. Both sides volunteered to work together as a self-selected group. And both sides worked hard (Chinese students had some subgroup discussions before the group meeting; B5 worked hard to write the draft). However, lack of awareness of each other's expectations and academic values and lack of communication caused misunderstanding, psychological struggles and change of attitude and strategy.

By contrast, this episode shows Chinese students' academic identity conflict between retaining their previous academic identities and relationships and developing new academic identities and relationships. As discussed in Chapter 6, C9 was one of the most active Chinese students in the EMBA class. She often raised questions, challenged lecturers and fellow students during classroom discussions, and she was very active in his/her first group work in Course B as well.

However, C9 was very quiet in this Course D group, so were the other CHC students (three out of five CHC students were Course D experts). I assumed these CHC students would be very confident and active in this assignment as they were in the first group. C9 told me the reason why she was relatively quiet in this group.

*C9: Yeah, that was why I was quiet. I did not want them to feel I have said too much. Actually I discussed a lot with C16 and I18, but I need to give them the chance to express. If I spoke out what we discussed, they would thought it was not contribution of myself, but I spoke all for them. They would feel bad...But they could not express well and they chose not to say...well I need to do so, because I was doing group work with them (C9, 250106, msn).*

The above quote indicates C9's dilemma: on the one hand, she wanted to adapt to the new academic identity and participate actively during group work; on the other hand, she had to keep silent, in order to give others opportunities to speak and retain a good relationship with his/her subgroup members, who were not confident enough to talk during group interactions. The underlying reason for C9's emphasis on loyalty to the subgroup and relationship with ingroup members may be traced back to the Chinese collectivist and relationship-oriented high-context culture (Hall, 1959, 1981; Hofstede, 1980), as discussed in Chapter 3.

There is also a practical reason for C9's concern with Chinese students' relationship, since there were many Chinese students in the MBA programmes, they often supported each other academically and psychologically. For example, they had exam revision groups; they often had some dinner parties together during weekends and holidays. Therefore keeping a good relationship with co-nationals is a very important part in their one-year sojourning

life in the UK. Therefore, the underlying factor that influences the two-way adaptation process is identified: pressure from the Chinese community. This episode shows the strong influence or pressure of the conational group/community on Chinese students' academic identity adaptation in the new culture. And this pressure tends to impede Chinese students' active participation and adaptation to the new academic identity in the group discussion.

### **8.3.4.3 Summary**

This episode shows an expectation gap and strategy change between Chinese/CHC and British students during their group communication and adaptation. Chinese students tended to be relationship-oriented, they adopted a delaying/avoiding and less confrontational strategy to deal with disagreement and conflicts, due to Chinese collectivist and high-context culture on relationship and harmony; whereas the British student tended to be task-oriented and adopted a confrontational strategy by showing his/her disagreement and unhappiness immediately, when he/she was told to modify the draft within short period. Both sides changed their strategies from integration to avoidance and separation.

This episode also demonstrates both Chinese and British students' internal dilemma and conflict between retaining their original academic identity and relationship (caring and loyal to sub group members) and developing new academic identity (asking and arguing). Two underlying reasons for this group's unhappy adaptation experience were explored: cultural distance (collectivist and relationship-oriented culture), pressure from the Chinese community.

In addition, this episode shows that both Chinese and British students encountered psychological stress and dilemma. B5 was a quiet science research student (in his first-year PhD study) as well as a part-time MBA student. He did his first group work with CHC students. He felt nervous and uncertain about CHC students' quiet behaviour through the group work, especially the delayed reply. In the end, he burst into anger when he was asked to modify the second draft within limited time before submission. 'It made me feel a bit nervous...I still don't know, whether they are really happy...I was quite angry' (B5, 120304). B5 chose to work with British part-time students for his subsequent group work assignments.

In sum, this episode is an unhappy intercultural communication experience due to a lack of communication and cultural awareness of both sides. The next episode will show a better group communication and relationship development between non-native speakers. Both sides adopted integration strategies.

## **8.3.5 Episode 4: 'We vote for the presenter' (C6 & I4)**

### **8.3.5.1 Introduction**

This episode will show how non-British students worked in a group. Interestingly, I

noticed that in non-native international groups, there was a more equal relationship between team members and there seemed to be more arguments and conflicts involved in discussion. For example, in C6's Course E international group (3 Chinese, 2 Taiwan, 2 Japanese), there was a big argument on who would be the presenter for the Course E group assignment, in the end, they had to vote for the best presenter.

*C6: We had a lot of arguments in this group...The CHC student (added by researcher) I4 was very aggressive, he wanted to do the presentation, most group members did not agree, because they thought my pronunciation and presentation skills are better than him. Someone suggested voting for the presenter, I got five out of seven, then I did presentation in the end (C6, 230504).*

In RMBA group, C35 also had a similar experience.

*C35: We have four Chinese, three Indians in this group...There were nearly international conflicts among us...We had different methods to deal with the assignment. Three Indian students liked to list items, they listed 30 items...Four Chinese students thought we should have several key points ...We could not persuade each other, finally they did their part, we did our part, and we consulted the same lecturer respectively. The lecturer said both methods would be ok.... Anyway we got the highest mark for this assignment, and we have become very good friends now (C35, 130604).*

### **8.3.5.2 Discussion**

This episode is chosen to show that there seemed more communications, disagreements and conflicts but more equal interactions and relationships among non-native and non-European student groups. This may be because no one tends to have the privilege of linguistic and academic culture, and they tend to be in the similar level of certainty and familiarity with the target culture. C35's quote also shows that these non-native students tended to solve the conflicts via the third party – two groups of students went to consult the same lecturer. More interviews show that most Chinese students enjoyed their group communication and relationship with other international students, and working with other international students is the second choice for some active Chinese students to improve their English and learn about other cultures.

#### *More interactions among non-British students*

Most Chinese students found that it was easier to establish good relationship with non-British, since they were friendly, and more willing to learn about other's culture; the other reason is that Chinese students wanted to practice English and learn about their cultures, especially RMBA Chinese students tended to have relatively better communications and relationships with other non-British students (88% of RMBA students were non-British students).

*C31: I often play with some international classmates, they are very friendly, they like*

*to learn about other countries' cultures and make friends with you. They are very nice... though their English is not very good, but at least you have to speak English with them, you know, if you practise more, your language will get better. I want to create an environment by myself (C31, 150704).*

### **8.3.5.3 Summary**

This episode shows that there seem to have better communication and relationship development among non-native and non-European student groups, due to their similar linguistic and academic status.

### **8.3.6 Relationship development in the second stage**

The research finding shows that there were less communication, more miscommunications and less good relationship between British and Chinese students in the second stage. Many Chinese and British students tended to change their strategies from an integration to an avoidance or separation in the second stage. The interviews show that many Chinese and British students wanted to work with co-nationals for their subsequent group assignments, if they were allowed to choose a group by themselves. One question is generated below.

*Why didn't they want to work with each other again: a dilemma situation for both British and Chinese students?*

Interviews show that many British students did not want to work with Chinese and other international students again in the second stage of group interaction. They chose their co-nationals instead. And some Chinese students chose their co-nationals as well, since they didn't want to be looked down upon by British students. These Chinese students had some bad experiences in their first two group work activities (e.g. C1, C7, C8, C12). Therefore, they formed a so-called 'self-reliance' (C12, 071103) Chinese-only groups.

As discussed in the first stage, both Chinese and British students encountered psychological struggles when they worked in a group. I will discuss both Chinese and British students' dilemma below.

#### *British students' dilemma*

More interviews show that many British/European students were in a dilemma situation working with Chinese students. On the one hand, they felt uncertain, 'nervous' (B5, 120304), 'difficult' (I17, 171104), 'frustrated' (B15, 270404), 'angry' (B5, 120304), and 'unfair' (B2, 290405) to work with Chinese students who appeared quiet and less responsive during the group work. They did not know whether Chinese students agreed or not, whether Chinese students were happy or not, whether they were 'pushing' or 'bullying' (B5, 120304) their opinions/ideas too much. On the other hand, they felt that they 'had to carry on', 'get the task done', and 'produce results', since they were more eager to get the job done due to their concern about time and task pressure, and due to their

task-oriented working style.

I1: *We don't have time, drop it and produce results, this is what we have to do* (I1, 131103).

I17: *They (Chinese students) are usually very polite, but it is very difficult for Westerners to really understand their thinking...I think you convey messages in indirect way...if we have disagreement, I will say, 'no I disagree, because...'. They will smile and say nothing, though they don't agree* (I17, 171104).

B15: *In an Asian group, it doesn't seem to be any leader who stands up straight away and says, 'I am in charge of this...the thing is that you have to lead it* (B15, 270404).

Besides, British students thought European students have 'more in common' in thinking style, and there was no extra language problem.

B15: *Just commonality of thought process...just the way you think about, how you structure, I find there is more in common with the European students only...they all talk if they don't agree with me, someone takes leadership, so I stop taking leadership, so I know, they will say something* (B15, 270404).

B14: *I was pleased really to find myself in a group where the additional problem of communication is not there, so I can focus on knowledge I need to* (B14, 141103).

The third reason for British students' unwillingness to work with Chinese students is that they did not want to get the marks 'pulled down' by having slower international students.

B5: *There were English students who only want English students, deliberately getting into group with the only English students, I believe that is because they don't want their marks to be pulled down by having slower foreign students who seem to take time for them to follow ideas and take time to express themselves, because they want a distinction in MBA...I think that is a very sad attitude* (B5, 120304).

Another reason for British-Chinese lack of good communication and relationships is British students' lack of experience of working with Chinese/CHC students and lack of awareness of culture difference. Most of the full-time British students had little experience working with Chinese students (only one out of seven had an experience working with CHC people). For at least 1/3 part-time students it was their first time working with Chinese students. Therefore, they appeared shocked and frustrated about how to deal with cultural difference issues in their communication and adaptation process, and they appeared 'not think of others'.

B15: *In this team working in MBA, most of European students don't have enough cultural experience, they just want to get a good mark, they don't think of others* (B15, 270404).

However, 'it is a sad attitude' (B5, 120304), they showed little interest in learning from international students as well as supporting and helping international students. Therefore,

an increase of intercultural sensitivity is needed by British students.

### *Chinese students' dilemma*

By contrast, many Chinese students were also in a dilemma situation. On the one hand, most Chinese students were very willing to work in an intercultural group, since 'that's why we are here', to 'experience the Western way of learning' (C1, 040804). On the other hand, they felt disappointed about the 'unexpected reality' that there were 'too many Chinese students' in the MBA programme; and British students 'don't like to work' with Chinese students. Therefore, most Chinese students felt that they 'have to' work in the Chinese-only group (as typified by the statement below).

*C1: I think it involves two things, subjective and objective factors really. If you ask Chinese students which group they like to be in, I think most of them will answer 'mixed group', because that's why we are here, we want to experience the western way of learning. This is a motivation issue. The other thing is objective factor and unexpected reality...there are too many Chinese in our class, we could not avoid having many Chinese in each group, especially when students are supposed to form their own groups. I know that some Western students don't like to work with Chinese in a group, so we have to form our own group (C1, 040804).*

RMBA students tended to have a similar pattern in their intercultural communication and relationship development in the second stage of group work.

*C31: ...in the second semester, people tend to work with co-nationals only in a group. Chinese go for Chinese, British go for British...Some Chinese students like to work with only Chinese. I think these Chinese students might have some unhappy experiences working with British and international students. So they would rather rely on themselves. Once I heard one Chinese students said when we had lunch together, 'our Chinese only group got a very good mark for Course D, it proves that we could do the same or even better than them' (C31, 150704).*

In sum, Chinese/international students tended to have strong motivations to improve their English, learn about the British culture and develop intercultural friendship. However, many British students who tended to be culturally insensitive showed less motivation to work in intercultural groups and learn about international cultures in this study. They thought it was a waste of time or added extra burden, they felt that they had to work harder but learned little from Chinese/international students. Therefore, they preferred to work with their co-nationals only.

### *Why with co-national groups?*

The research finding shows that there is a tendency of separation between different national groups, based on field notes and interviews in the second stage. '...there is a tendency that Chinese with Chinese, British with British, they are kind of reluctant to mix, or reluctant to be taken out of their environment' (I2, 010404). 'Class is now separated,

British on one side, Chinese on the other. Japanese is neither in British nor Chinese' (I4, 120304).

*Share the same communication styles.* Some Chinese students tended to adopt a separating strategy and lack an interest in working with other nationals, since they felt more comfortable to share the same communication styles with co-nationals. One Chinese student (C11) said to his/her self-selected Chinese only group, 'Let's read for 10 minutes before discussion, not like British students, who always talk, talk...' (Field note, 241003, group work for Course D).

*C20: It is more efficient to discuss with the people from the same cultural background, no need to explain the background knowledge and easy to share common sense (C20, 150704).*

*Seeking socio- & psychological help.* Meanwhile, some Chinese/CHC students thought they could help each other academically and psychologically with co-nationals, especially during their revision periods. They shared revision notes and worries and gave each other psychological support. This reflects one aspect of Chinese collectivist culture.

*C37: Most of us lived in the same student hall, we helped each other during revision periods.... If a person has never learned operation and has no idea how to prepare it for the exam, one student who knows the subject well will summarize a note for this unit and helped this person whenever he/she needs...I am glad I had made some good Chinese friends (C37, 210704).*

#### *Why little relationship with British students?*

The research findings show that many Chinese students felt dissatisfied with their superficial relationship with host nationals, since they found it difficult to make deep friendships with local students, and they thought British students tended to consider them only as an acquaintance rather than a friend.

*Different interpretation of friendship.* One possible reason for lack of relationships between Chinese and British students is different interpretations on friendship, 'friends' and 'strangers'. Chinese students tend to have high expectations on establishing solid, warm and intimate friendship with their British classmates. They felt disappointed when they found that most British students were 'not friendly' (I18, 311003) and only regarded them as 'passer-by' (C1, 250604). B15 agreed that British people tended to be 'unfriendly to strangers'.

*B15: I got friends (stress on 'friends') in MBA?....I would not class this group of people similar to my normal friends, so they are not people associated with me, while I don't think I will stay with them when the course finishes... We are not friendly enough to strangers...unfriendly to strangers, not unfriendly to people you know. So it is quite cliquy....English people seem to have a group of friends, outside it is penetrating,*

*which you may find it very difficult....So people in England get their own, they don't look outside (B15, 270404).*

Some British part-time students were very impressed with the intimate and warm friendship among some Chinese students, who shared happiness and sadness easily.

*B1: They tend to work much more together during revision periods, they helped each other by exchanging revision notes...They share revision notes and their research, they would like to share their hard work for nothing....I found Chinese students often encourage each other and share their worries. It seems very easy for them to tell each other's feelings. This is what I admired (B1, 160304).*

Some interviews show that the underlying reason for Chinese and British students' different interpretation and expectation on friendship may be due to cultural distance. This may be due to different cultural backgrounds. Chinese students are from collectivist and high-context culture, closer and intimate interpersonal relationship is more emphasised; whereas the UK is individualist and low-context culture, individual's privacy and independence is more emphasised.

*C30: Some Chinese students have high expectation on establishing close relationship or have more communications with British students, like we do between Chinese friends, it is not realistic. In fact British students are very independent and they tend to have strong individual tendency, they don't want to have a close relationship with anybody, even between their British fellows (C30, 150304).*

*I6: European people are egocentric...personal development is more emphasised...group feeling is less strong, they are more individual. But Eastern Asian people...have strong group belonging. They like to mix together...and share happiness together (I6, 141103).*

This finding conforms to Brislin's (2000) comment that individualists tend to keep a greater emotional distance with others, whereas collectivists keep closer psychological presence of others. In other words, CHC/Chinese students are more likely to pursue socio-emotional support (Ward *et al.*, 2001). This is also in line with Barnlund's (1989) finding that people from collectivism- and individualism-oriented cultures tend to have different interpretations of characteristics of 'friend'. The former emphasizes group harmony and warm and close relationship between people; whereas latter focuses on honesty and independent relationships between each other.

*Different interpretation of offering help.* Interviews show that Chinese and British students tended to have different interpretations on offering and seeking help and support. Chinese students tend to wait for help rather than asking for help. 'In China, people tend to offer help first, if they see someone needs help. But in the UK, people won't help until you ask. They seem very indifferent, but if you ask them for help, they would be very helpful and friendly. My British neighbour is such a case' (C10, 130704). This may relate to Chinese other-oriented collectivist and high-context culture, people tend to be more sensitive to



other's concern and offer help in advance. By contrast, based on individualist and low-context culture, British students/people tended not to take initiative to offer help, since they tended to be more concerned with the other's privacy and independence. In other words, one won't get help until he/she asks. This may trace back to the Christian teaching, 'ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you' (Matthew 7: 7, New International Version of the Bible).

*Lack of common interest.* Some Chinese students thought they lack 'common interest' (C37, 210706) and 'mutual topic' (C13, 190704) with British students, due to their different living styles and cultural values and expectations. For example, many Chinese students did not like to drink in the pub, which is regarded as the main part of social life by British/European students. The European student I6 felt it difficult to understand this aspect.

*I6: It is very difficult, because our interest is so different...they have to be more willing to mix up with people...for example, as I live in B (student residence hall), 70% of students are Chinese, and nobody is in the bar; nobody, so strange enough, basically only 30% are Greek, some English, American are the only guys in the bar (I6, 090604).*

By contrast, many Chinese students tended to have high expectations on the long-term relationship and contact with their international classmates. They preferred more social activities and they felt disappointed about lack of social activities with British students. One Chinese woman complained that 'It is a pity we did not have a group picture of our classmates for memorization of this overseas experience' (C22, 200804). Besides, one Chinese man suggested a MBA classmate networking connections for the future contact (C12, 080704). This is in line with Turner and Acker's (2002) findings, the idea of classmate (*tongxue*) is of great social importance in China and students expect to make connections with each other for the rest of their lives.

#### *Why more interactions among non-British students?*

The research findings show that Chinese students tended to have better communications and relationships with other international students rather than with British students, especially among RMBA students, during their group dissertation writing period. They tended to have more social activities and enjoyed their intercultural experience and they said they became more open-minded, and their English improved as well.

*C34: Group dissertation is very good, and I started to benefit from the teamwork. At the beginning, we didn't understand each other and felt not happy, but now we value each time we meet...We had 6 people, 2 from Ghana, 1 from India, 3 from China...We learned each other's culture during group work. For example, in Ghana, men are regarded more superior than women, they would not adopt women's ideas, thought it might be very good. Since we talked about this during our group discussion, thus we understood each other and cooperated better (C34, 280704).*

One possible reason for better relationships between Chinese students and other international students is that international students tended to be more culturally sensitive than British students. They showed more interest in intercultural relationship development. For example, one Asian student I8 suggested 'establishing all EMBA students' alumni network' (I8, 160304).

The other reason may be due to easy accessibility and similar status of international students – most international students lived in the hall of residence, and they were all non-native speakers to live in the new culture. Therefore, it is much 'easier for them to contact with each other' and 'we are sympathetic to each other' (C37, 210706).

By contrast, native students did not live in Weston, and there were too many Chinese in the MBA programmes. Busy schedule of study is also one of reasons for limited social contact and activities. Some Chinese/British students complained that the School should arranged some social events for students.

### **8.3.7 Conclusion of the second stage**

In the second stage, there was less communication, more miscommunications and less good relationships between Chinese and British students, though communication and relationship development between non-native students seemed relatively good.

#### *Sociocultural and psychological struggles?*

Many Chinese and British students tended to change their strategies from integration to avoidance or separation in this storming stage. Both Chinese and British students encountered more psychological struggles, due to time and subject pressure and other socio-academic reasons. For example, B2 did not send the first draft to two Chinese students for advice before submission, and neither of them felt happy – Chinese students thought British students took control, whereas British students thought it was not fair since they took more responsibilities than Chinese students which was not fair (Episode 3 in stage 2); B5 was not happy about Chinese students' lack of response and late notice of modification of the draft (Episode 5 in stage 2); B8 felt frustrated with 'criticism' in class from his CHC counterparts (Episode 1 in stage 2). Therefore, most British students at this period felt unhappy working with Chinese students who made less contribution; meanwhile Chinese students felt unhappy with British students' intolerance, lack of care and support, taking control of the group work, their miscommunication and misunderstanding became bigger in this stage, and their relationship was not good as well.

#### *Factors influencing the group communication and relationship development?*

First, culture distance is identified. Chinese and British students tended to have different working styles, based on different collectivist and individualist cultural values (Episode 3). Second, power relations between native and non-native students was identified. British

students tended to dominate the group discussion (e.g. Episode 2); whereas there was more equal communication and relationship development among international groups (Episode 4). Third, pressures from the Chinese community were also explored. For example, C10 was criticized by his/her other co-nationals (Episode 1); C9 was concerned with his/her relationship with his/her subgroup members (Episode 3). Fourth, both Chinese and British students were found to lack intercultural sensitivity. British students need positive attitudes towards working with international /Chinese students; Chinese students need to take initiatives and responsibility to negotiate and adapt to the new academic cultural identity.

### *Strategies adopted by Chinese and British students?*

Most groups in this stage tended to shift their strategies from integration to avoidance or separation. It is interesting to find Chinese and British students' strategy change in two self-selected groups (Episode 2 & 3): from integrating to avoiding strategies. Both British and Chinese students had high levels of motivation for working together and tended to have good communication in the beginning of their group discussion. However, they had little interaction in the end of their group work; either because British students wanted to take full responsibilities of the writing up without asking Chinese students' help (Episode 2); or because of Chinese students' indirect (by email) and delaying way of showing disagreement (Episode 3). These two episodes show different academic values and communication styles: British students tended to be concerned too little about Chinese students' involvement; Chinese students tended to be concerned too much about the British students' feelings, thus they delayed their reply. The underlying cultural distance on individualism and collectivism and high/low context culture were discussed. Neither British and Chinese students worked together again after their unhappy experiences.

In sum, there was less communication, more frustration, less good relationship between mixed group members in the second stage. The next section will discuss the two-way adaptation process between Chinese and British students in the third stage. It demonstrates that some integrative Chinese and British students successfully adapted to their new academic identities (intercultural academic identities) and enjoyed their intercultural relationships in this stage. By contrast, some separative Chinese and British students tended to encounter psychological struggles when they had less successful communication and relationship development.

## **8.4 The third stage – group norming and performing**

### **8.4.1 Introduction**

Students were allowed to choose their own groups for their last group assignment - Course F in the third stage (in the second semester, 7 January 2004 – mid May 2004). Most British and Chinese students formed their own co-national groups. Full-time British students did not form any mixed group and develop intercultural relationship with non-British students

in this stage, except B9. However, some active Chinese students established some intercultural groups and relationships with some British part-time students and entered into a relatively good norming and performing stage. Interestingly, some non-British and non-Chinese students had to form their international group together. The European student I6 said:

*I6: Even worse for me, it is difficult to get into British group, because British say they will arrange their group with each other...For example, for KPMG, I thought maybe I can sneak in the British group, but more or less, I can tell you from full-time students, six-six English people together, and I said, 'oh, my god'. There were no other group left, and both courses are busy, I have to have a group with I8 (an Indian), and with two Japanese (I6, 090604).*

In the RMBA class, most Chinese and British students tended to work with their co-nationals for their group assignments and dissertation as well, since they thought there was no extra communication problem, and they had 'greater cultural background' to share (B27, 190504).

There were only three mixed groups in this stage. Meanwhile two Chinese students volunteered and were selected to work in an external project for the National Health Service (NHS) system. Therefore, four mixed-group episodes are chosen to indicate how Chinese and British group members adapted to each other and developed their relationships during their group interactions (see Table 8.3 below). Episode 1 and 2 are two happy experiences, group members had good group communications and relationship development. However, Episodes 3 and 4 are two unsuccessful stories, in which they had less good communication and relationship development.

Table 8.3 The third-stage episodes and strategies

Stage 3	Theme	Participants	Strategy (Chinese/British)
Episode 1	I enjoyed the email communication	C10 and B9	Integrating/integrating
Episode 2	As long as it is good for the group	C6 & B1	obliging/integrating
Episode 3	I was quieter in this group	C9 & B3	Integrating/dominating
Episode 4	I did try, but I failed	C23 & B6	avoiding/dominating

#### 8.4.2 Episode 1: 'I enjoyed the email communication' (C10 & B9)

As discussed in Section 8.2.3, some native students proposed to have email communication instead of face-to-face discussion, in order to decrease time and task pressure. This episode was chosen to show that email communication can be an effective communication method, when both Chinese and British students adopted integrating strategies in their email communication process; meanwhile a proper social relationship can be established among group members as well. One factor is identified for a successful intercultural communication and adaptation: both Chinese and British students' positive attitude (other-orientation and mutual support).

### 8.4.2.1 Introduction

This group consists of five people (1 British, 2 Chinese, 1 CHC and 1 Asian student). The deadline for this assignment was on 19 April 2004. I was very grateful for the group members' great trust in allowing me to attend their group meetings and access their internal group email interactions. This group only met twice for group discussions due to time pressure, for they were busy with other assignments, but they had a lot of email contact among group members. Below is an analysis of an intra-group email interaction among group members for their Course F module.

The analysis will focus on three aspects: How C10 adapted to the new academic identity in the email group discussion, how British student B9 led a scaffolding role in the communication; and how their social relationship developed among group members through email interaction, and factors influencing this group's successful two-way intercultural adaptation.

<Extract 1>

B9 took an initiative to write the first draft with 2,500 words and sent it to the group members before their second meeting. He adopted an integrating attitude to encourage his group members to give some comments on the writing, and he left some space and opportunities to involve his group members to contribute to the group work.

*...there is some duplication within and between sections and I may have left out some bits you feel important (if so, please speak up). I tried not to interfere too much with them.... We need to decide what to tackle next Tuesday and in what order (B9, email to the group, 170304, Wed, 11:52am).*

His sincere and encouraging attitude brought quick responses and contributions from C10 and I4 (a CHC student). C10 made a valuable comment on the basic structure and the main discussion points for the second meeting.

*I think if we can have time to do a little bit of brain storming on how the KPMG change program can be better carry out...and then integrate these new ideas... We may also need to arrive to a conclusion on... We then comment on whether or not Sharman's personal perspective is trustworthy (C10's email to group, 190304, Fri, 22:13pm).*

I4 and C10 made their comments directly on the draft during the weekend (210304, 11:07 am to 12:55pm; 210304, 22:57pm to 23:53pm). I4 made eight comments to the draft. C10 put a model of strategic change with some comments into the draft.

The group met the second time on Tuesday, 23 March 2004. C10 and I4 were very active to give their comments on the first draft during the meeting, B9 typed in some modifications and suggestions on the draft into his/her laptop directly. B9 worked very efficiently, he/she sent the second draft at the midnight of the next day, and he/she encouraged the group members to give him/her further comments.

I was very impressed by B9's excellent communication skills of how to express his

appreciation to I4 and C10's contribution on the one hand, and how he/she expressed his dilemma that he could not use all of their comments fully in the writing on the other hand, in his email to the group. He/she wrote his/her explanations in separate paragraphs to I4, C10 and all group members, like a dialogue between each of them:

*I attach the draft as promised yesterday. It is around 2,100 words, leaving around 1,000 for the balanced scorecard.*

*I4 - your comments on the earlier draft were valuable, and I hope most are covered. Please feel free to repeat any not covered.*

*C10 - I have not managed to get in your strategic change model. Let me know if you see an obvious way.*

*All - please make lots of comments, I won't be hurt! (B9's email to the group, 250304, Thu, 12:28 am).*

His/her thoughtful and modest attitude and the way of dealing with the contributions of the group members were appreciated by C10, who also used the similar pattern in his/her next email to all group members.

*Attached please find a rudimentary draft on the balanced scorecard...I am sure you will find lots of problems in the draft as I am not a meticulous thinker... I will not be hurt by negative comments.*

*I4, thanks for the work you've done on the scorecard, I have adopted some of your idea, but omitted some, since I cannot fit everything into the model I used to build the scorecard (C10 to group, 290304, Mon, 01:35am).*

So far, we can see that B9 and two CHC students adopted an integrating strategy in their group interaction, B9 encouraged and gave enough opportunities to group members to contribute to the group work; CHC students tried hard to contribute their ideas and expressed their agreement and disagreement in their group interactions.

Meanwhile, social relationships between group members were also reflected in their email communications. For example, B9 expressed his/her uncertainty on the issue and his/her sincere expectation of getting help from the group and tried to establish a rapport between group members when he/she sent his/her first draft to the group, 'I am afraid I struggled a lot', and he/she wrote 'see you on Tuesday' in the end of the email (B9, email to the group, 170304, Wed, 11:52am).

As soon as receiving B9's first draft, C10 gave his/her prompt response and expressed his/her appreciation to B9's contribution and tried to establish further contact and rapport with group members.

*I read B9's draft yesterday, and believe that there were enough good ideas to start with...its just some of my personal opinion. I will spend sometime over the weekend thinking about the balanced score card, see you on Tuesday. Thank you very much B9! Nice weekend for all (C10's email to group, 190304, Fri, 22:13pm).*

Then, C10 sent his/her second email to the group after he/she added a strategic model into the first draft, like B9, he/she expressed his/her uncertainty about this model and modesty that he/she left the final decision to the group.

*I was trying to find a definition for strategic change, but cannot. I find a diagram*

*illustrating strategic change process, and integrated it into B9's report. Hope it is going to be useful, you can decide, I have attached the updated document (C10's email to the group, 220304, Mon, 00:00).*

When B9 sent his/her second draft of the assignment, he/she ended his/her email with '*see you in a couple of weeks (if not in Course I (pseudonym) tomorrow)*' (B9 to the group, 250304, Thu, 12:28 am), to imply that the group will not have further meetings for this assignment.

Again, C10 made his/her prompt response to B9's email immediately on the same day, to express his/her gratefulness to B9's and I4's contribution and his/her plan to work on balanced score card during weekend. The quote below shows that C10 seemed to enjoy the email communication and tended to regard this internal mailing list as his/her 'chatroom' and more willing to share his/her personal feelings and stories with his/her group members.

*Thanks very much for the draft report, I will look at it over the weekend, and will try to do a draft on the balanced score card then. I really want to attend the Ethics lecture today, but I have lots work to do on the NHS assignment, also have to sort out the dissertation topic with a last year lecturer. See you all again soon, all the best (C10 email to the group, 250304, Thu, 10:24 am).*

In his/her last email to the group, he/she told the group his/her further story that the reason for the 'late' draft of the balance score card is due to his/her daughter's illness from chickenpox. '*Sorry to be late, an excuse is that my daughter has caught chickenpox, very nasty one*' (C10's email to the group, 290304, Mon, 01:35am).

C10 was one of the most intelligent and diligent Chinese students in the EMBA programme, he/she took his/her daughter with him/her while he/she studied his/her MBA, and he/she got a merit diploma mark and a distinction dissertation mark. His/her determinism and good performance had won him/her good reputation and recognition among Chinese and British students. 'Some Chinese students are very good and have got very good marks. I know C10 is doing extremely well and very diligent' (B4, 110804) (Research Journal, 230904).

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#### **8.4.2.2 Discussion**

The above analysis shows that there were a lot of intra-group email interactions among group members, though two out of five did little contribution to the group through this mailing list. Two CHC students were actively involved in the group interaction and had successfully adapted to the new academic identities and had some social relationships with British students. For example, C10 appeared very active to make full use of this communication platform to express his/her opinions and enjoy building a rapport and relationship with his/her group members. B9 also adopted an integrating strategy to encourage Asian students to contribute to the group interaction. Several factors influencing this group communication will be discussed below.

##### *Open-mindedness and cultural sensitivity*

B9 tended to be culturally sensitive and have a positive and empathetic attitudes towards

working with CHC students, he/she gave these CHC students more opportunities to be involved in the group interaction, and in return, he/she learnt 'many good ideas' from them, and he/she enjoyed his/her intercultural experience and relationship with these CHC students as well. Below is his/her reflections on his/her experience with these CHC students, when he/she gave me a permission of using this group's email communication as data in this study.

*B9: The Chinese students seemed fairly quiet, but interesting if you got talking to them...they had many good ideas....There were some who were quiet in meetings but still contributed by email...When people were silent I hope that I and others tried to involve them more.... On relations with Chinese students...I enjoyed working with them...meeting people from different backgrounds is really interesting (B9, 040606, email).*

B9 was the only British full-time student who did all of his/her group work with CHC students, and he/she was a distinction student in the MBA class. I noticed he/she normally sat in the left side of the lecture room, together with some Chinese students and part-time British students, rather than at the back right corner where most British full-time students normally sat together (see Appendix 12). He/she seemed to have more contacts and better relationships with Chinese students than other local full-time students. B9 also expressed his/her opinions on differences in full-time and part-time British students.

*B9: I think I felt that the group of UK students on the other side were quite a close clique...They seemed louder...I found the part-timers more relaxed, more mixed, more fun, with down-to-earth concerns outside the course and interesting to talk to (B9, 040606, email).*

### *High expectation and motivation*

These emails themselves have been an invaluable evidence to show these MBA students' diligence during their studies. I found that most of them worked hard during weekends, since many emails were sent during weekends or at midnight (e.g. I4 sent an mail at 12:55pm on 21 March (Sun); B9 sent an email at 12:28 am on 25 March (Wed); C10 sent an email at 00:00 on 22 March (Mon) and at 1:35am on 29 march (Mon). It is also a good way to see how efficiently they were working in this assignment, B9 sent his/her first and second draft shortly after each meeting, and I4 and C10 gave their comments on the same day or during the immediate weekends. Most of CHC/Chinese students did not take break during weekends and holidays. Interviews show that there are generally the following three reasons for Chinese/CHC students' diligence in the UK:

Firstly, most of them felt that they were not good at English, and they wanted to work harder to overcome this language barrier. Secondly, they were very motivated to achieve good academic performance and adapted to the new academic identities in the new learning environment. They regarded learning abroad as self challenge and self improvement (see Section 6.3.2.4). Thirdly, most of Chinese students paid high tuition fees



by themselves, they wanted to value the time and money spent in the year abroad. C5 wrote through msn after he/she went back home, 'I am happy I worked hard during that period. I'm proud of myself, I managed to balance work and study well' (some Chinese students did part-time jobs in the second semester during their studies).

### *Scaffolding roles and a supplementary way of communication*

This episode also shows that B9 played a scaffolding role in CHC students' communication skill development (e.g. expressing disagreement). For example, C10 adopted B9's way of writing in his/her emails by using the similar writing style to 'talk' to I4, 'I4, thanks for the work...I have adopted some of your idea, but omitted some, since I cannot fit everything into the model...I will not be hurt by negative comments' (C10 to group, 290304, Mon, 01:35am). Since B9 used the similar pattern to address the similar issue in one of his/her email before.

Many other interviews show that Chinese students learned from British students about the British way of writing through group work. For example, one British student talked about his/her experience of modifying Chinese students' writing.

*B1: This is something I really enjoyed doing for a Chinese colleague recently. He sent me a recent assignment on Course H (pseudonym) and he had a wealth of points and experience within the text - but many of his points were obscured behind trying to write in an alien language. It took me a while, but by changing word orders and tenses I was able to make his arguments much stronger - a very satisfying intellectual exercise for me and hopefully it helped him too! (B1, 170504, email).*

Another example is from a RMBA student who learned how to structure the assignment from a British student.

*C39: We have two Chinese and one British in our group. Two Chinese emphasised on the background introduction and analysis of the data...We (two Chinese) sent the analysis to the British guy, who sent the first draft by email one day before the deadline. We found that a chunk of background introduction and analysis were deleted. He explained that the deleted part was not very relevant to the argument, what we should do is to focus more on whether the data analysis support the argument and make the whole assignment look logical and coherent...and he also said that our descriptions were too much. We got 73 percent for this assignment. From him I learned how to structure my assignment (C39, 150804).*

This episode shows that this group had managed successfully to use email communication as an effective way to exchange their ideas, motivate group's contribution, and bridge the group's rapport and relationship. Both Chinese and British students quite enjoyed their interaction and relationship in this group. Since Chinese students were not generally good at spoken English, and some of them found hard to follow the quick discussion pace during group work, this episode suggests that it might be a possible option to use email communication as a supplementary way of communication to follow up their further

reflections and thoughts, since many Chinese/CHC students were more confident in their literacy skills. Meanwhile, email communication can be also used to solve the space and time restrictions, and establish a good relationship and understanding among group members.

#### **8.4.2.3 Summary**

Firstly, this episode shows that both Chinese/CHC and British students adopted an integrating strategy and managed to have a good interaction and relationship, and two CHC students successfully managed to adapt to their new academic identities in this group. Secondly, two important factors that influenced this group's successful communication and relationship development have been explored: British student's cultural sensitivity and positive/empathetic attitude and CHC students' high level of motivation of adapting to the new academic identities. Finally, email communication can be used as a complementary medium of facilitating intercultural communication and relationship, and it allows time for international students' responses as well. The native students' scaffolding role has also been discussed in this episode.

The next episode tells a happy story of two-way adaptation between some Chinese students and British part-time students.

#### **8.4.3 Episode 2: 'As long as it is good for the group' (C6 & B1)**

This episode is chosen to discuss how two British students adopted an integrating strategy to deal with disagreement and rejection of a Chinese student's 2000-word proposal. This is in contrast with five CHC students who adopted a delaying/avoiding strategy and struggled to express their disagreement to a British student's draft writing in Section 8.3.4. This is also in contrast with some British students who adopted dominating strategy, to decide the framework and refuse adopting Chinese students' proposal immediately without considering Chinese students' feelings (Section 8.2.3 and 8.2.4).

##### **8.4.3.1 Introduction**

As discussed, C6 was one of the most active Chinese students who was very motivated to adapt to the new learning environment. He/she volunteered to do a presentation for the Product Line group (see Section 8.2.2). C6 (and C27) proposed to work with three British part-time students for their last group assignment- Course F. 'I want to have a good mark...improve my English...learn more from them (British students)' (C6, 230504).

C6 wrote a piece of work with 2000-3000 words, but two British students B1 and B11 thought it was irrelevant and decided to put it in the appendix. Two British students felt awkward to tell C6 about it, and they thought C6 might feel offended. To B1 and B11's great surprise, C6's attitude to the refusal was very obliging and positive, 'that is fine, as long as it is good for the group', and C6 was also happy with two British students'

thoughtfulness. 'Both B1 and B11 were very thoughtful and caring, they asked me to join them in the draft modifications and I learned a lot from them' (C6, 230504). British students also said they learnt about Chinese culture from Chinese students.

*B1: C6 was very motivated and active in our group, he/she wrote a massive piece of writing with 2-3 thousand words, but B11 and I thought it was irrelevant. To make sure everybody contribute, we decided to put C6's writing in appendices. We scared to say so, we worried that he/she might feel upset or angry, but he/she wasn't, he/she smiled and said 'that is absolutely fine, as long as it is good for the group'...we learned more about Chinese collectivist culture from him/ her (B1, 160304).*

#### 8.4.3.2 Discussion

Firstly, this episode shows that two British students in this group adopted a direct face-to-face communication strategy to ask C6's consent before they wanted to put C6's piece of work in the Appendix. C6 adopted an obliging and positive attitude towards refusal, 'that's fine, as long as it is good for the group'. C6's obliging strategy maybe due to Chinese collectivist culture which emphasises the group's interest and harmony; whereas British students' confronting and direct way of solving problems may be due to British individualist culture. Both Chinese and British students learned from each other through effective communication.

Secondly, this episode shows that good communication helps to have good relationship development. For example, Chinese and British students in this group had some social activities (e.g. dinner party), and they learned more about each other's cultures through informal conversations.

*C12: We invited B1 and B11's family to our hall of residence for a Chinese dinner party. B1 invited us to his home...It was a very good experience, to exchange our ideas about Chinese and British cultures (C12, 080704).*

*B11: Very nice to be invited and my family as well...When we had dinner, it is very nice, lots of discussions...some issues might be quite sensitive to Chinese, like Tian'anmen Square, the forbidden city, this sort of thing, when we got to know each other well, they are happy to talk about it (B11, 310804).*

Thirdly, more cultural contacts and better communication and relationship between Chinese and British students helped them to increase their cultural sensitivity and positive attitudes towards others. For example, as group work went well, B1 and B11 were invited to Chinese students' revision group and were regarded as 'insiders'. B1 was very much impressed by Chinese students' collectivist support to each other, 'they shared revision notes and their research, they shared their hard work for nothing...' (B1, 230904). B1 also reflected in the questionnaire.

*B1: By the time of the strategy exam in May/June, it was flattering that several European students were included in the revision group hosted by C12...I found it to be a very valuable experience. Gradually I gained more Chinese friends and felt myself*

*being more accepted and allowed to see things which, I had the impression, were not usually available to foreign 'ghosts'!* (B1, questionnaire reflection, 201204).

As C27 said, '*B1 is the person who has most interaction with Chinese students*' (C27, 211004). The more interactions B1 had with Chinese students, the more he/she felt interested in Chinese culture (he/she made his/her first visit to China in Oct 2005, and he/she is working in China now). The trigger is his/her initial interaction with these Chinese MBA students. B1 and B11 found that there was little interaction between Chinese and British students. Therefore, they arranged the first and the only social activity for all the EMBA students – pub crawl, though some international students had already returned to their home culture at that time.

<Extract 1>

*Unfortunately, only one full-time British student came, one Taiwan, one Japan, one Indian, the others were all mainland Chinese students and part-time British students...Many of them talked about their future plans...*(Field note, 200804).

Below is a summary of B1's attitude change towards China and Chinese students, based on the research journal on B1.

<Extract 2> B1's change of attitudes towards China and Chinese students

*B1 was a part-time student who started his/her MBA study in 2002 (one year before the researched MBA students in this study). He/she was very impressed by Chinese students' modern facilities and open-mindedness. He/she admitted that some British students had some stereotypical views on China.*

*'Have worked with an increasing number of international students (mostly from mainland China) and actively seek them out - partly for their academic input, but also because I have been fascinated with China from a very early age and am starting to realise just how many false impressions I'd received about the country through UK media!...also some UK students have fairly stereotypical views and interpret the actions/views of Chinese students with these preconceptions. Have been guilty of this myself, in the past!'* (B1, 150304, email, 13:12pm).

*When B1 had more interactions with Chinese students, he became more motivated to learn about Chinese culture. And he went to visit some MBA classmates in China in Oct 2005, and has been in China since July 2006. Therefore, B1 tends to have a positive change. Compared with I1, whose positive stereotype changed into a negative stereotype and prejudice, due to his/her lack of communication with Chinese students (Research Journal, B1, 200706).*

The above research journal shows that more cultural contacts between Chinese and British students helped them to understand each other's culture, and their stereotype/pre-assumption tended to change over time. Many field notes and interviews show that Chinese and British students' cultural sensitivity increased over time, they tended to see two cultures in a more open-minded perspective.

For example, C7 tended to be ethnocentric at the beginning of the MBA study. Once there was a classroom debate on an issue of international brand. C7 felt very disappointed when he/she found some Chinese students (some of them had been in the UK for more than one year) agreed that China did not have a big international brand so far. C7 said quite passionately, 'we should have a strong sense of national spirit...I think we shouldn't always think that others are better than us and look down upon ourselves' (C7, 171003). After one-year study, C7 said he/she became more flexible and could see things from multiple perspectives (C7, 170704, research journal).

Many interviews in the third stage demonstrate that many Chinese and British students became more ethno-relative and culturally sensitive after they had more intercultural encounters. For example, some British students tended to have some incorrect prior assumptions on China in the beginning of their MBA study. Interestingly, in the same session, when T8 said China would be a superpower in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and the UK's economy will tend to slow down, some UK students showed their disagreements and had a heated discussion with several Chinese students during break time. B6 was one of British students who did not believe what T8 said in class. Later he/she changed his/her mind.

*B6 gave me a copy of a journal article, telling me that it was true that China would be the future superpower....he showed me the figure in this article...B6 said, 'I did not realize this before T8 said, I went back to look for the evidence, then I found this...my previous assumption was wrong' (Field note, 241003, Course D).*

Another example is C10's change. C10 thought British people were not friendly and unhelpful at the beginning, but as he/she made some British friends, his/her negative attitudes gradually changed, he/she found British people were very friendly, patient when you asked for help.

*C10: Before I came to UK, I heard British people were selfish and unfriendly; they only cared about themselves, since they were an individualist country. But when I have made some British friends, I found they were very considerate and friendly, and when I asked them questions, they were very patient to explain as clearly as possible...I feel I am more respected here than in China. They are very sincere, they don't doubt your ability and they trust you. But in China, I seldom had this experience (C10, 130704).*

Meanwhile, I found that Chinese students who had been in the UK for one or two years prior to their MBA studies tended to adapt better than those who just arrived. Those Chinese students who had been in the UK for at least one year tended to be more culturally sensitive and adopted integrative strategies; those who were in their first year in the UK tended to be less culturally sensitive and adopted separative strategies. Therefore, the research findings show that the more familiar with the target culture, the more sensitive and open-minded and less prejudiced the participants tended to be. The same applied to British students. Those who had previous intercultural experience with Chinese/CHC people tended to adopt more integrative strategies. For example, B1 and B11 (part-time MBA students) were in their second year working with Chinese students. Their previous

assumptions tended to change and they became more willing to learn about Chinese culture and provide support to Chinese students.

An interesting finding is that intercultural adaptation experience tended to arouse participants' interest in learning more about their original culture. For example, C30 arranged a 'Chinese cultural identity' study group to learn traditional Chinese culture since November 2003. This group consisted of four MBA students (two EMBA and two RMBA) and two PhD students in Weston University. It aims to 'regain our identity', and this idea was generated after they learned more about the Bible and the British culture.

*C30: I was inspired by the weekly Bible study in the Chinese church. The more I learn about the Western culture, especially the Bible, the more I realize that I know so little about our own culture. I think many of us lack deep understanding of Chinese traditional culture, we are facing a crisis of faith and identity, especially for the new generation...it aims to learn and retain our culture and regain our identity (C30, 150304).*

From June 2004, C30 started to publish one paragraph of 'Analects' every week to the Chinese community via the mailing list of Weston Chinese Students and Scholars Association. 'Let all people who are interested in joining in this group, to be able to learn and retain our culture' (C30, 11 June, 2004, 18:36).

This implies that intercultural adaptation experiences tended to increase these Chinese students' intercultural sensitivity of both cultures, and this experience generates their interest of knowing and respecting their own and other cultures. This conforms to Stier's (2006: 5) view that 'increased intercultural education also contributes to increases appreciation of one's own culture'. This conforms to Jin's (1992; Jin & Cortazzi, 1993) cultural synergy theory that culture learning is a two-way learning process, in which one learns the new culture as well as retain his/her own culture.

#### **8.4.3.3 Summary**

This episode shows that two British students adopted a direct face-to-face communication strategy to deal with disagreement, and one Chinese student adopted an obliging strategy in response to disagreement, for the sake of the group benefit. The happy adaptation experience increased both sides' mutual understanding and promoted their interest in learning more about each other's culture, and their intercultural relationship was established and developed as well. Therefore, transparent communication and open attitude to each other might help both sides achieve more effective intercultural communication and relationship. Secondly, B1's attitude change about Chinese culture was analysed, together with other examples of Chinese/British students. It shows that increased intercultural communication and contact facilitates increased cultural sensitivity, thus reduce stereotype and prejudice.

The next episode will show that several European part-time students adopted a dominating

strategy in their group interaction, and the only Chinese woman in this group had little communication and relationship with them.

### 8.4.4 Episode 3: 'I was quieter in this group' (C9 & B3)

As discussed, C9 was very active in the Product Line group in the first stage (Section 8.2.2); relatively quiet in Course D group in the second stage (Section 8.3.4); this episode will show that C9 was even quieter in Course F group in the third stage. The underlying factors are explored.

#### 8.4.4.1 Introduction

This group consists of six people (one Chinese woman, five European men, four British students included). C9 adopted an integrating strategy and volunteered to work with British part-time students, which very much impressed B3 who used to work with C9 in the Product Line group. 'She is very determined...she steps outside of his/her own natural grouping' (B3, 260404). However, the field note and interviews show that C9 was very quiet and contributed little in this group work activity. 'I don't think she contributed as much as in this assignment we did' (B3, 260404). The field note also demonstrates C9's quietness.

<Extract 1>

*It was the second meeting for C6 and B3's Course F group, in B4's office...Four European students were very active...C6 was generally quiet during group discussion. She only asked one question on the concept of 'core-competence' during the whole discussion (Field note, 220304).*

#### 8.4.4.2 Discussion

*Why was C9 even quieter in this group?*

There were several possible reasons that influenced C9's involvement in this group. Firstly, native and non-native power relation and gender difference existed in this group. C9 was the only Chinese woman who was not familiar with the topic in this group, whereas the others were all experienced part-time European men, who were fluent in English.

*C9: They speak very fast, especially B12, I have to focus on some key points (C9, 220304).*

*B3: I haven't had a chance to ask C9 how she found working with five strong, male, European management people....and C9 a lot of the time didn't get the chance to be involved (B3, 260404).*

Secondly, European students adopted a dominating strategy and tended to be task-oriented, by keeping a fast-paced discussion and involving more argument, and the discussion environment tended to be tense. Therefore, C9 felt it difficult to follow and get involved in

the discussion completely. And B3 felt it difficult to give C9 more care in this new group, as he did in the first group.

*B3: The whole point of exercise, to be quite honest, is to get the best mark we can, this is very competitive nature of individuals. You got to keep up with us, we could perhaps I should be more caring for C9, to make sure she is ok, to make sure she is involved, and to be honest I was more interested in getting the job done...we did not have much contact with each other since our first group work (B3, 260404).*

Though C9 was generally quiet and less involved in the interaction, she learned more about task-oriented working styles, and she was very impressed with these European students' direct way of speaking and she thought it was more efficient.

*C9: They are very structured. I think it is more efficient in a European group...They were very loud and had many disagreements. They just said 'no' if they didn't agree, and said 'yes' when they agreed. This saves time and makes things easier. I like this kind of direct way of speaking and working (C9, 220304).*

Thirdly, lack of familiarity with the topic and course/time pressure are also reasons for C9's quietness in this group, compared with her performance in the first group work.

*C9: in Strategic Organisation...the topic and case was much easier to understand, and it was the first assignment, we had enough time to prepare for the discussion, so I contributed a lot. There were only two native speakers...so I felt very relaxed at that one, not like this one...I am not quite familiar with this topic, so I did not participate much in discussion (C9, 220304).*

#### 8.4.4.3 Summary

This episode together with other similar episodes which were discussed previously demonstrate that both Chinese and British students felt less satisfied about their group communication and relationship development in their group work. Chinese and British students' group work performance and relationship tended not to change as time went on. For example, C9 became quieter in the second and third stage than she was in the first stage. B3 was more supportive and encouraging in his first group activity. The reasons are complicated and multidimensional: different communication environment (e.g. the native and non-native power relations); the different working style (relationship- vs task-oriented); the degree of cultural sensitivity and motivation to adapt (e.g. B12 retained his dominating strategy in several group work activity with Chinese students (Section 8.2.3 with C12, Appendix 24 with two Taiwan students, Section 8.3.3 with two Chinese students); the degree of familiarity with the subject; and time/task pressures and so on. All these factors might influence Chinese students' group communication and relationship development. The next episode will show an active Chinese student's unsuccessful experience of doing an external project with native students.



## 8.4.5 Episode 4: 'I did try, but I failed' (C23 & B6)

### 8.4.5.1 Introduction

C23 and C10 volunteered and were selected to join in an external project for the NHS service, together with three British full-time students. Two Chinese students encountered problems of lack of communication skills and socio-cultural knowledge of UK, especially NHS system (e.g. the framework of the NHS service, power relations between different health services). Neither British nor Chinese students tended to be satisfied with their last group work activity. Chinese students felt disappointed about British students' lack of empathy and support.

*C23: I felt it very difficult to understand their thinking and follow their argument. They kept a fast-paced discussion, the more I failed to follow, the more I felt frustrated...I did not know much about the local market and NHS system...The British students were not quite tolerant and did not show much sympathy to me...They said I did not contribute a lot to the project. The more they were not happy with me, the more I felt frustrated (C23, 050804).*

*C10: I felt frustrated with British students' colloquialism and I could not follow their logic. This project requires us big vocabulary and solid professional knowledge, which makes me feel difficult. I did the technical job - analysed the data using balanced score card (C10, 130704).*

British students felt unhappy about Chinese students' lack of communication skills and socio-cultural knowledge. For example, B6 who worked in this project expressed his/her disappointment about Chinese students' lack of socio-cultural knowledge of the Western business principles and practices.

*...too much time was spent explaining basic Western business principles and practices rather than focussing on the theory and subsequent group discussion (explaining how the NHS works for instance) (B6, 020105, questionnaire's further comments).*

The above quotes show that two Chinese students had difficulty in following the fast-paced group interaction. Meanwhile, two Chinese students found themselves in a disadvantaged position in a real project due to their lack of linguistic efficiency and lack of familiarity with socio-cultural knowledge of the project and the target culture. They encountered some expectations gaps and academic identity conflicts in this group as well. The underlying factors are discussed below.

### 8.4.5.2 Discussion

Firstly, this episode shows an expectation gap between Chinese and British students, as discussed previously, Chinese students expected empathy and support from British students; whereas British students expected Chinese students' competence of language skill and knowledge of host culture. Both sides tended to have different strategies and working

styles. British students tended to be more task-oriented, they were more interested in completing the project quickly, so they adopted a dominating strategy by keeping fast-paced discussion and showing little empathy to two Chinese students. By contrast, Chinese students tended to be more relationship-oriented.

Furthermore, both Chinese and British students encountered unhappiness with their academic cultural identity adaptation process, and they tended to change their strategies during group work. Two Chinese students firstly adopted an integrating strategy to volunteer to join in this project and contribute to the group discussion. However, when they found they lacked particular vocabulary and specific socio-cultural knowledge of the project; and when the British students did not show much empathy and support, two Chinese students changed their strategy from an integration to a separation. For example, C10 had different opinions on the approach adopted by British students, he/she did not argue, due to his/her lack of familiarity with the situation.

*C10: I think their approach is not the best one, but I dare not say, because I don't know the situation and their customs very well. So I have to follow them, as long as the customers are pleased (C10, 130704).*

British student B14 felt 'very disappointed' (Field note, 270404, Course I) about C23's performance. Meanwhile, C23 experienced an inner struggle or psychological breakdown in this project. He/she suffered from a conflict between having a high expectation of himself/ herself and a loss of self assertiveness. His/her personal identity changed from a successful middle manager (in a Sino-American company in China) to an unsuccessful student. He/she encountered a tension between high motivation of adapting to the new academic cultural identity and low ability of communication skills and unfamiliarity with the target culture. He/she was very motivated to learn not only subject knowledge but also socio-cultural aspects of the UK and adapt to the new academic identity in the new learning environment. He/she said one of his/her learning objectives of studying abroad is to 'learn more about the outside world' (C23, 161003). He/she believes that 'if I tried my best, I could do it'. Therefore, he/she made great efforts in this project, but he/she ended with a disappointed comment:

*C23: I did not achieve what I expected though I worked very hard...I felt that it was like a nightmare following me everywhere in those days. It was a painful experience...I did very well in China, it is the first time for me to face so much frustration and experience a failure....I cried for several times, I realized that I was not competent enough to do this kind of project...I felt sorry that I did not contribute a lot to this project (C23, 050804).*

This episode is chosen, not only because it is C23's personal experience, but also it reflects most Chinese MBA students' situation: They made three to four times the effort to compensate for their language barrier and lack of familiarity with the subject and sociocultural knowledge of the target culture. However, they were not quite successful in the end of their study. Many Chinese students' interviews reflect their concern with their

actual communication skills in the real situation. 'I don't have the ability to negotiate with foreign businessmen in English. It is a big problem for some Chinese companies to find a competent person who is both good at business management and oral English' (C13, 190704). 'I have learned English for at least 10 years, but I still feel difficult to communicate with British students' (C27, 211004). Therefore, many Chinese students encountered psychological adaptation problems during their group discussion and development process. Affective factor is thus one of most important aspects to manage in intercultural encounters.

The interviews show that many EMBA Chinese students were very successful in their jobs, 78% of them were intermediate managers (53% lower and 25% upper intermediate managers) in their companies. However, they found themselves incompetent in the group interaction due to language and socio-academic cultural barriers. Their high expectation on adapting to the new academic cultural identity but low intercultural adaptation competence made them feel frustrated and even depressed. This involves the issue how Chinese institutions prepare Chinese students for studying abroad with a package of adequate socio-cultural knowledge of the target culture combined with adequate intercultural competence.

The CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) approach was initiated in the 1980s (Brumfit, 1980, 1988; Littlewood, 1981) and was introduced to China in mid 1980s (Yu, 2001). However, the Chinese exam-oriented educational system found it difficult to apply this approach. Chinese students' real communication skills (especially oral English) have been a crucial issue for many years in China, but it has not yet been solved. These MBA students' communication skills impeded them from an effective intercultural communication during group discussion, though many of them said they had good ideas, they found difficult to defend themselves in English, as discussed in Section 8.2.4. Consequently, they suffered academically and psychologically during their studying abroad period. It is really the time to take some actions to solve this problem.

Finally, this episode stresses the issue of how British students' lack of empathetic and supportive attitude made Chinese students feel more frustrated. Therefore, a sense of other-orientation and support from the host students is identified as one of main factors that influence the intercultural communication. For a brief summary of C23's intercultural adaptation experience through the year see my research journal of C23 (Appendix 9, Extract 3).

#### **8.4.5.3 Summary**

This episode shows that two active Chinese students tried to adopt an integrating strategy to participate in a real project; however, they encountered some language and cultural problems and they gradually adopted a following or avoiding strategy during the process of the project. Expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts of both Chinese and British students have been discussed. The reasons for this unhappy adaptation experience have

been explored.

#### 8.4.6 Relationship development in the third stage

In the third stage, the majority of Chinese and British full-time students (except B9) did their group work with their co-nationals only, there was little interaction and relationship development between Chinese and British full-time students. However, good relationships between Chinese and some British part-time students were established and developed in this stage.

Generally speaking, Chinese students had the least contact with British students, more contact with other international students, and the most contacts with co-national students. The questionnaire response supports the field/interview data. Table 8.4 below shows that Chinese students had the most contact with their co-nationals (61%), more contacts with other international students (39%) and least contacts with British students (19%) and lecturers (11%), though they expected to have more contacts with British students/lecturers and other international students (Question 4, Section 3, Questionnaire, Appendix 20).

Table 8.4 Chinese students' willingness and real contacts with others

	willingness	real contact
Chinese	39	61
British	67	19
Other international	56	39
Lecturer	50	11

Meanwhile, each group of students had the most contacts with their co-national groups (see Table 7.3). This finding conforms to previous researchers' view that Chinese students tend to prefer to engage in more intimate activities with co-nationals and fellow foreigners (Furnham and Bochner, 1982: 193; Ward *et al.*, 2001; Furnham and Alibhai, 1985). As Bochner (1986: 357) indicates, '...the various groups prefer the company of their fellow nationals...In many cases, the foreign students had not made a single host-country friend even after a lengthy sojourn'.

There are two possible reasons for the tendency that British part-time students had better relationships with Chinese students. Firstly, part-time students tended to be more experienced in age and work experience, one third of them had intercultural experience prior to their MBA study, whereas one out of seven full-time students had intercultural experience. Therefore, part-time students tended to be more culturally sensitive and tolerant to CHC students. Secondly, part-time students had less time and task pressure, they studied for two years, and most of them were funded and had current jobs; whereas full-time students were more stressed, most of them had to pay by themselves and they were more motivated to get good marks for pursuing better jobs.

### **8.4.7 Summary of the third-stage group adaptation**

Four episodes have been chosen and discussed to show a pattern of two-way intercultural adaptation between Chinese and British students in the third stage. It is found that there was little communication and relationship between those who adopted separation strategies (many Chinese and British full-time students), but more communication and relationship between those who adopted integration strategies (between some Chinese students and part-time British students, and between Chinese students and other international students). Similar patterns could be seen in the RMBA programme, and RMBA Chinese students tended to have more communication and better relationship with other international students.

## **8.5 Conclusions of the whole chapter**

This chapter has discussed the two-way intercultural adaptation experience of both Chinese and British students during their group interaction and relationship development over their one-year MBA study in the UK. The expectation gaps and academic cultural identity conflicts between Chinese and British students have been examined; the attitudes and strategies that both Chinese and British students adopted in group interaction have been explored; and the underlying factors that influenced their intercultural adaptation process have been discussed. I will answer the research questions posed in the beginning of this chapter (Question 2 in Section 1.4).

*How do Chinese and British students undergo the two-way intercultural adaptation process in the group communication context?*

The research findings show that Chinese and British students went through three stages of group progression, from the initial forming stage, via storming stage, to the norming and performing stage.

In the first stage, there were more negotiations and conflicts between Chinese and British students, but their relationship was generally good. In the second stage, there was less face-to-face communication but more conflicts and misunderstandings between Chinese and British students, and Chinese-British relationship was less good. In the third stage, there was better communication and relationship development between those who were culturally sensitive and adopted integration strategies (some Chinese and part-time British students and between Chinese students and other international students, Section 8.3.5 and 8.3.6), but little communication and relationship development between those who were less culturally sensitive and adopted separation strategies (most Chinese and full-time British students). Those culturally insensitive students tended to form their own co-national groups in the second and third stage.

*Sub question 1: What expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts have Chinese and British students encountered in their group interaction and relationship development?*

The research findings show that Chinese and British students had different expectations of each other during their group communication and relationship development. Chinese students expected more support, empathy, positive attitude and more opportunities provided by British students in the group discussion due to their relationship-oriented collectivist culture. By contrast, British students expected more involvement and contribution from Chinese students, due to their task-oriented individualist culture.

Both sides were found to have inner struggles of balancing a relation between retaining their original academic identity and developing new academic identity, and both sides suffered from psychological struggles. For example, C10 and I10 tended to maintain their original accuracy-oriented working style, while they adapted to their new academic identities (actively participating and challenging) (Section 8.3.2); C9 tried to be loyal to his/her subgroup and keep a good co-national relationship while he/she adapted to the new academic cultural identities (Section 8.3.4). B5 felt nervous about Chinese students' quietness during group discussion while he/she tried to support the group work by writing the draft report, then he/she became angry about Chinese students' delayed feedback on the draft report, due to lack of communication between each other (Section 8.3.4). B2 felt frustrated when he/she found he/she took more responsibility for writing the assignment, though he/she had a good first meeting with two Chinese students.

Meanwhile, Chinese students were found to have encountered a conflict between a high level of expectation/motivation (e.g. self growth and academic identity adaptation, their academic achievement and intercultural relationship development) and low level of intercultural competence (especially affective dimensions); and high level of English proficiency scores and low level of real communication skills. Many Chinese students said their low level of communication skills and socio-academic cultural knowledge made them encounter psychological breakdown (C12 lost his confidence and motivation and adopted an avoiding strategy in Section 8.2.3. C23 suffered from a psychological breakdown when he/she tried to adapt to the new academic identity in Section 8.4.5.

*Sub question 2: What strategies did Chinese and British students adopt in response to expectation gaps and academic cultural identity conflicts?*

The finding indicates that both Chinese and British students tended to change their strategies during their group work. Both sides tended to have high motivation to work and learn from each other in the beginning of their work group activity. However, both sides tended to change their strategies from integration to avoidance or separation as group communication went on. For example, some Chinese and British students volunteered to form their self-selected mixed groups (e.g. C9 & B5 in Section 8.3.4; C9 & B3 in Section 8.4.4). For example, neither Chinese nor British students contacted each other after the first group meeting (C13 & B2 in Section 8.3.3), due to time pressure and inaccessibility. Lack of communication between Chinese and British students deepened their misunderstanding.

Both successful and unsuccessful episodes have been discussed in this chapter. Generally speaking, Chinese and British students adopted different strategies such as integrating, avoiding, obliging, and compromising in their group communication. The research findings show that culturally sensitive Chinese and British students tended to adopt integrating strategies in their communication and relationship development. British integrative students tended to provide more opportunities and play the scaffolding role to encourage international students to speak (B3, B8 and B9). Chinese integrative students were motivated to negotiate their opportunities to adapt to the new academic identities. They tended to be more aware of cultural distance (e.g. different working and thinking styles). They tended to have learned more about each other's cultures, and they enjoyed their intercultural relationship as well. For example, British students thought they learned about 'many good ideas' and 'enjoyed working with' CHC students (B9, 040606, email). Some Chinese students learned more about the British way of writing (C39, 150804) and communication/debating skills through working with British students (e.g. C10 imitated B9's writing style in Section 8.4.2).

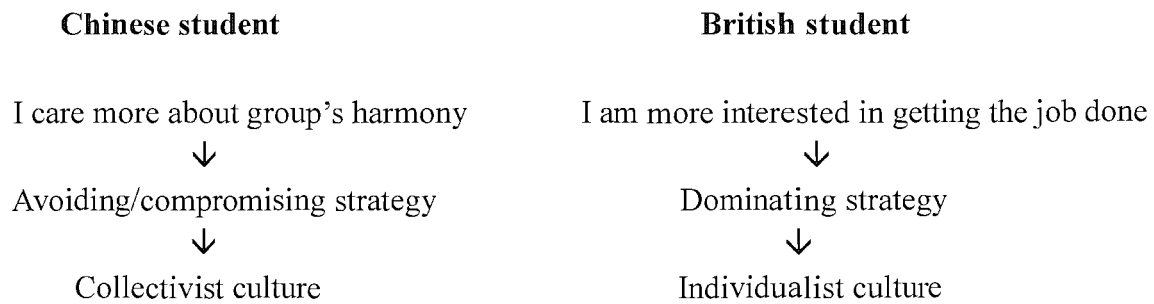
However, some Chinese and British students appeared insensitive to cultural differences and tended to adopt their original academic identities/values to deal with expectation gaps and potential academic identity conflicts. They thought they learned little from each other, and they had little or less good relationships with each other. Many British students tended to adopt the dominating strategy to control the framework and discussion. They appeared task-oriented by keeping fast-paced discussion, arguing directly and showing little empathy and support to international students in group discussion.

The research findings show that Chinese and British students' strategy and attitude towards group work activity tended to change over time and vary in different situations (from integrating, to dominating, following, avoiding and compromising). In the first stage, many Chinese and British students tended to adopt more integrating strategies to work in mixed groups, both sides tended to have high motivation to contribute to the group discussion. However, when they encountered expectation gaps or academic cultural conflicts (due to academic and cultural distance), both sides tended to retain their original academic identities. For example, when some Chinese students found their proposals were more likely to be rejected by the British students who tended to have the privilege to control the framework of the group discussion; and when some British students showed little empathy and support to them, these Chinese students' motivation of participating to the group work decreased. For example, C12 became quieter after his/her request and proposal was rejected, and he/she chose to work with Chinese students for his subsequent group assignments (see Section 8.2.3). In the second stage, two self-selected groups worked well in the beginning of their group work but had little interaction in the end of their group work (C13 in Section 8.3.3 and C9 in Section 8.3.4). In the third stage, C9 and C23 volunteered to work with British students, but both of them kept quiet in their group activities due to British students' dominance of the group work. British students' strategies changed according to different contexts as well. For example, B3 was supportive in the first group (product line group in Section 8.2.2) and adopted integrating strategies.

However, he/she cared little about Chinese students and tended to adopt dominating strategies in his/her last group work (see Section 8.4.4)

*Sub question 3: What factors influenced Chinese and British students' group interaction and relationship development?*

The research findings show that culture distance is one of the main factors that influence Chinese-British group interactions and relationship development. Chinese culture is collectivism-oriented (Hofstede, 1980, 1991), which emphasises harmonious relationship and mutual support; whereas British culture is individualism-oriented, which focuses more on individual achievement and self expression. Therefore, Chinese students tended to be more process- and relationship- oriented and adopt more indirect and less confronting strategies (Ting-Toomey, 1985) (see Section 3.2.2.3) dealing with expectation gaps and conflicts (they adopted more avoiding and compromising strategies). By contrast, British students tended to be more outcome- and task-oriented and adopt more direct, confronting and dominating strategies dealing with expectation gaps and conflicts. The above cultural distance can explain the above sub research questions 2-4 and it can be summarized as a dialogue below (each line highlights each question: what (expectation gap), how (strategy) and why (factor):



Dialogue 8.5 Culture distance: collectivism and individualism

Secondly, power distance between native and non-native students is identified as one of important factors that influence Chinese-British group interaction and relationship development. Chinese students felt that they were excluded and in a disadvantage and less legitimate position during group interactions, especially in decision makings, due to their lack of communication/debate skills and unfamiliarity with the socio-academic cultures (Section 8.2.3 and 8.2.4). However, Chinese students tended to have more equal interaction and relationship with other international students and they adopted more integrating and dominating strategies in these groups (Section 8.3.5).

Thirdly, intercultural sensitivity is also identified as one of the important factors influencing two-way intercultural communication and relationship development between Chinese and British students. Some cultural sensitive students tended to adopt an integration strategy and were more motivated in working with culturally different others and developing new academic identities. 'I think Chinese students should be more active in



participating in the group work... I want to be recognized by the group, and learn more from participating the group discussion' (C37, 210704). However, some other Chinese and British students tended to adopt a separation strategy and tended to retain their original academic identities/values and relationships.

The native speaker's negative attitude is also identified as one of factors that influenced the two-way intercultural adaptation process. Some British students tended to have negative attitudes towards Chinese/CHC students, they tended to lack a sense of empathy, other-orientation and support (e.g. B12 did not show empathy and ignore Chinese students' request). This finding conforms to some previous researchers' views that some British students showed indifference and even hostility towards the international students (Furnham and Bochner, 1982: 193; Kudo and Simkin, 2003). This also conforms to Leong and Ward's (2000) survey findings of 106 Chinese sojourners' (in Singapore) identity conflict that higher tolerance of host students is related to lower level of identity conflict and better relationship with host nationals. Thus empathy, tolerance, sense of good will and other-orientation and support from host nationals are very important for Chinese/international students' intercultural adaptation and relationship development.

Stereotyping/prejudice is identified as one of factors that influenced group interactions and relationship development (e.g. I1's stereotyping change, Section 8.2.3). By contrast, B1's intercultural adaptation experience tends to be a positive change (see Section 8.4.3).

Fourthly, time and subject-related pressure is also identified as a factor influencing the adaptation process. In the first stage, Chinese and British students seemed more relaxed, they had better interactions and relationships, and they tended to be more tolerant and patient. However, when they were under greater pressure to meet the deadlines of several assignments in the second stage, they tended to be less tolerant to each other, and there was less communication, more miscommunications and less good relationships in mixed groups. In the third stage, full-time Chinese and British students tend to avoid each other and formed their own co-national groups, because they found they had many extra pressures and conflicts due to cultural differences and language barriers in intercultural groups.

Fifthly, other minor reasons are also identified. For example, both Chinese and British students who had some intercultural experiences prior to their MBA study tended to adopt more integrating strategies as well (Section 8.3.2). The size of the class and group is also one of factors influencing group communication. Most participants mentioned this factor in their interviews. 'In smaller groups, they (Chinese students) talked more, they enjoyed the discussion more, I feel that they like small groups better' (I12, 050804). Gender difference is also identified, Chinese female students tended to be more active in classroom and group discussion and generally had a better performance in the EMBA class, 'Chinese women are much more active...much more versatile, and probably the language is less of the issue than men (I2, 010404) (see Appendix 14, final diploma mark analysis)..

Next, I will discuss two concepts generated from this chapter: cultural go-between and other-orientation and support.

*Cultural go-between, other-orientation and mutual support*

This study shows that many Chinese, British and other international students tended to be more sensitive to cultural differences, more willing to play the role of 'cultural mediator' or cultural 'go-between', who bridges a better understanding between Chinese and British students. This section will discuss the notion of cultural 'go-between' and the notion of other-orientation and willingness to support, based on following case studies of three cultural go-between in this study.

I30 was a bicultural person (half Asian and half European origin), with 'east-meet-west mentality' (I30, 281003). He/she played the role of a cultural 'go-between', helping a British student to understand Chinese students' 'reticent behaviour' - not only due to language difficulty, but mainly due to Chinese cultural notions of 'modesty and trust'.

*The Asian members were more reserved and would not eagerly volunteer information about their experience and social status unless asked directly. Only part of this reserve was the limited language skills. The other, and bigger part I believe, was the cultural notions of modesty and trust, i.e. it has to be cultivated and proven over time. And I suspect that the English team members did not understand the real cause of such a conduct: thus, when I tried to justify the seemed reticent behaviour of Asian students to one of my English classmates, he seemed to be appreciative, but closed the conversation with 'we would all listen, if they want to talk; but, as we say in England, you can bring a horse to the water, but you can't make it drink' (I30, 281003, individual assignment, Course A).*

The above extract shows some British students' attitudes (who tended to adopt a separating strategy): it is the Chinese students' responsibilities to adapt themselves to the new situation, they could do nothing. This attitude is similar to some competence-oriented lecturers, who complained that Chinese/international students were not involved in the classroom interaction, and they felt 'I can't do anything' (T29, 150306) (see Section 5.4.2).

The next cultural go-between person told a much more encouraging story, by emphasising the notion of other-centredness and 'support'. B28 was a Hong Kong-born British RMBA student (his/her parents have been working in Hong Kong for more than 30 years. He/she received his/her primary education in Hong Kong, junior secondary education in Britain, senior secondary and higher education in America, and had one-year work experience in Hong Kong). B28 knows both British and Chinese cultures well, and he/she could have a good communication and relationship with both British and Chinese groups during his/her MBA study in the UK, 'I can go each way very easily' (B28, 190504), and he/she was more interested in the Chinese notion of support and loyalty. 'Hong Kong or Asia, where work ethics is to be loyal, and to help each other...you help to support them and they help to support you' (B28, 190504).

B28 explained the notion of 'support' by telling a story of a Chinese man.

*B28: I heard a story about China, one of the guys who founded a motorcycle company in China. Nowadays he's making lots of money, very successful, but he still borrows a lot of money from his local bank, at quite high interest rate, so that he can help keep paying high interest back into bank. He says 'when I was just starting out, they helped me by lending me money, so I always keep borrowing some from them'. So he can help keep paying and helping them, that's something you can get in Asia, but not in the UK or America.... you always look for the next time you need some help...I think that's mainly Asian or Eastern philosophy...you have to think for the long term, not just short term (B28, 190504).*

B28's story and his/her quote of 'you help to support them and they help to support you' is based on a very important Chinese notion of Ren (benevolence, an other-oriented concept), 'if you want to do, do it for others; if you want to get, get it for others' (The Analects, Yongye, Chapter 6 & 28). This reflects one crucial characteristic of Chinese culture – relationship- and harmony- oriented collectivist culture, which emphasises other-orientation and a mutual support and dependence between people. This quote is in contrast with the British student's saying in the first case, 'you can't make it drink', which simply emphasises international students' own responsibility to adapt to the new situation. Therefore, the above two attitudes towards 'others' can be summarized into a dialogue below:

<b>Chinese student</b>	<b>British student</b>
You help to support them, and they help to support you	You can bring a horse to the water, but you can't make it drink
↓	↓
Other-oriented collectivist culture	Self-oriented individualist culture

#### Dialogue 8.6 Opportunity and responsibility

This 'dialogue' highlights an expectation gap between Chinese and British lecturers/students on a cultural attitude towards 'others', and it implies a tension between opportunity and responsibility as well. Chinese students tended to emphasise more British students' willingness of providing opportunities and empathy, based on their collectivist culture of mutual support and dependence; whereas British lecturers/students tended to stress more Chinese students' initiatives of taking their own responsibilities of adapting to the new culture, based on their individualist culture of self-reliance and independence. This dialogue suggests that both sides are moving towards each other.

Another story below will further demonstrate how to balance the relationship between responsibility and opportunity. I17 a European student who also played the role of 'cultural go-between', helping a Chinese student to 'change' and 'move forward' to the new academic cultural identities in the new culture.

*I17: We have an interesting thing, one of our dissertation group, he/she was from Hong Kong, and often we had a meeting. In the group he/she was very very timid and quiet, but afterwards, when I chased on him/her, checked with him/her, then he/she came with a very good idea. I asked, 'why didn't you say to them?'. He/she said, 'You guys know so much than I know...I was not sure if I am right or wrong'. Then I said to him/her, 'you can't lose anything, anyway, we are friends, so just say what is in your mind, it is a learning process'. If they really want to survive in the Western environment, they have to change; otherwise they will die in their career life, because they can not move forward, in my opinion (I17, 171104).*

I17's quote shows that he/she gave a Chinese student an opportunity to speak in mind and encouraged him/her to change his/her academic cultural identity in order to survive in the new situation. This quote and the above dialogue demonstrate a solution to two-way intercultural adaptation: both Chinese and British students are expected to be cultural go-betweens: willing to be other-oriented and adaptive to each other. On the one hand, Chinese/international students are expected to take responsibilities/initiatives to adopt the new academic identities to negotiate and bid for their turns to shout their opinions out, so as to 'survive in the Western environment'; on the other hand, the British/European students are expected to adopt a more supportive and other-oriented attitude to provide Chinese/international students more opportunities and create a more relaxed environment, to invite, chase on and check with international students, thus Chinese and international students' voice can be heard and consequently benefits everyone.

Therefore, based on the above evidence, the notion of 'cultural go-between' is identified. Byram (2001: 30) adopted the term 'go-between' to emphasise language students' 'direct experience' in the target culture. The meaning of 'cultural go-between' in this study is beyond Byram's (2001) 'go-between' who is referred to a language learner who tries to adapt to the new learning environment. The meaning of 'culture go-between' takes one step further, it can refer to anyone (either native or non-native speaker) who is in the intercultural communication environment. The 'cultural go-between' is identified and it has two meanings in this study: the first meaning is similar to established meanings of bicultural, intercultural or multicultural person, a person who is aware of both of his/her original and other cultures. For example, Adler uses the term 'multicultural' person, whose 'essential identity is inclusive of life patterns different from his own and who has psychologically and socially come to grips with a multiplicity of realities' (1977: 25-26). Bennett uses the label of 'pluralistic person' (1993: 59), to refer the person who can 'see one's self existing within a collection of various cultural and personal frames of references', but also 'maintain one's primary cultural affiliation', if one reaches the integration stage. Martin and Nakayama maintain, 'the multicultural person is neither a part of nor apart from culture, but someone who acts situationally' (2000: 221). Kim's 'intercultural person' refers to a person who 'empathizes with all kinds of people' and constructs a new identity in the host culture, who is beyond national and ethnic boundaries' (2001: 197).

The second meaning of 'cultural go-between' goes beyond this established meaning, it

emphasises the real action or active 'practice' of an intercultural person who understands and appreciates cultural differences, willing to adapt to others and react situationally and sensitively according to specific communication contexts, good at managing the balance of retaining one's original academic cultural identities as well as developing new academic identities. Moreover, a 'cultural go-between' is more willing to think from other's perspective and make efforts to support and facilitate an understanding between culturally different groups. This meaning is similar as Bochner's suggestion of 'bicultural persons who can mediate between the two groups' (1982: 37).

In sum, this chapter has discussed Chinese and British students' two-way intercultural adaptation process in group communication contexts. The expectation gaps and academic identity conflicts have been discussed; strategies and attitudes that British and Chinese students adopted in group discussion have been explored; the underlying factors that influenced their effective communication and relationship development have been examined. The next chapter is a concluding chapter, which presents a two-way intercultural adaptation model generated from the empirical study.

## Chapter 9 Conclusions

### 9.1 Introduction

In this chapter, first a summary of three key findings of this study is examined; then a concept of intercultural adaptation competence and a two-way intercultural adaptation model developed from this study are presented; their implications in the wider context of intercultural research are discussed; finally, an evaluation of this study, including its claim to originality and significance, is addressed.

### 9.2 A summary of major findings in this study

Three major findings emerging from this study are summarized in this section: sociocultural and psychological adaptation patterns, intercultural academic identity adaptation, and factors that influence intercultural adaptation.

#### 9.2.1 Sociocultural and psychological adaptation patterns

##### *Three-stage intercultural adaptation processes*

The research findings of Chapters 5-7 indicate that the two-way adaptation process, which involves both aspects: intercultural communication (IC) and intercultural relationship (IR) development, between Chinese students and British lecturers, follows a three-stage adaptation pattern: from the initial unfamiliarity and frustration stage, via gradual adaptation and more frustration stage, to the final stage of adaptation and relaxation (more IC and IR between those adopting integration strategies, less IC and IR between those adopting separation strategies).

The research findings of Chapter 8 shows that the two-way adaptation process, which involves IC and IR development, between Chinese and British students, also follows a three-stage adaptation pattern, from the initial 'forming' stage (much communication and frustration, initial good relationship), via 'storming' stage (less communication, more frustration, less good relationship), to the final 'norming and performing' stage (more communication and satisfaction, better relationship development between those adopting integration strategies, but little communication, less satisfaction, less good relationships between those adopting separation strategies).

The above findings reveal that both adaptation processes between Chinese students and British lecturers and between Chinese and British students follow a similar three-stage pattern: from the initial unfamiliarity and frustration (forming) stage (the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 2<sup>nd</sup> month), via gradual adaptation but more frustration (storming) stage (the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup>

month, before the first-semester examination), to the final adaptation and relaxation (norming and performing) stage (the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 12th month). Both patterns tend to have varied adaptation outcomes in the third stage: better adaptation outcomes between Chinese students and British lecturers/students who were more culturally sensitive and adopted integration strategies, less adaptation outcomes between those who were less culturally sensitive and adopted separation strategies. Figure 9.1 below shows these two different adaptation outcomes. The solid line indicates those who adopted integration strategies (more culturally sensitive) and had a positive learning curve - they had better communication and relationship development over time; the dotted line indicates those who adopted separation strategies (less culturally sensitive) tended to have less significant learning outcomes – they had less good communication and relationship development over time.

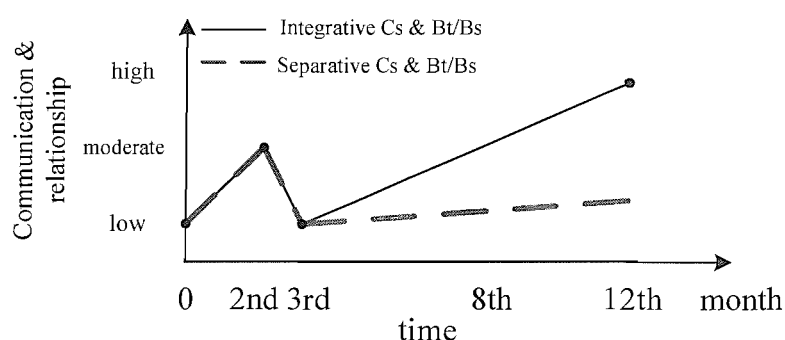


Figure 9.1 Three-stage adaptation processes between Cs and British lecturers/students  
Cs: Chinese students Bt: British lecturers Bs: British students

#### *Different sociocultural and psychological adaptation curves*

The most significant finding of this study is that Chinese students and British lecturers/students underwent different sociocultural and psychological adaptation outcomes (see Figure 9.2 below). Chinese students' and British lecturers/students' sociocultural and psychological adaptation curves tend to differ. Their sociocultural adaptation (in terms of communication skills, academic skills, classroom and group communication performance, familiarity with the academic cultures, intercultural sensitivity growth) follows a positive learning curve (the solid line in Figure 9.2): from the initial unfamiliarity, via gradual adaptation, to the final adaptation. Most Chinese students' and British lecturers/students' intercultural sensitivity tended to increase over time, their strategies tended to change from separation to integration, and they tended to adapt to the intercultural academic identity gradually. Both Chinese students and British lecturers/students tended to have better classroom and group communication and relationship development, though a little bit fluctuation, due to Course E presentation marking incident in the 4<sup>th</sup> month of the one-year adaptation period.

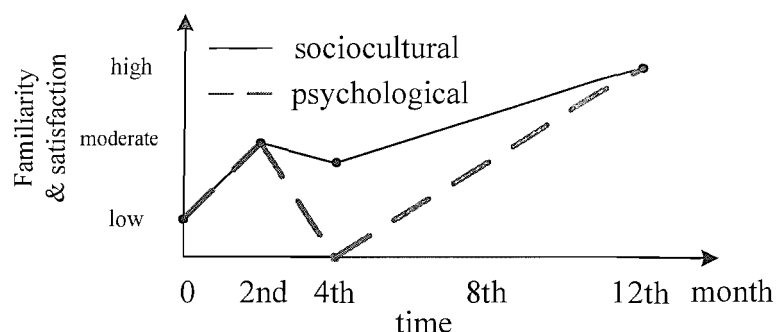


Figure 9.2 Sociocultural and psychological adaptation curves of Cs and British lecturers/students

By contrast, the research findings show that Chinese students' and British lecturers/students' psychological adaptation (e.g. emotion and motivation) curve (the dotted line in Figure 9.2) tends to fluctuate over time. Figure 9.2 shows that both Chinese students and British lecturers/students had a less good beginning of adaptation experience. They encountered frustration and academic culture shock (especially Chinese students in this study, see Section 5.3.1) in the very beginning of their adaptation process. This finding challenges the U-curve hypothesis, which tends to assume a relaxed honeymoon period in the first stage. The research findings show that both Chinese students and British lecturers/students encountered more confrontation and frustration in the second stage of adaptation (before the end of the first semester), especially during the period before exam and after the exam marks reported – the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> month, their psychological struggles reached to the bottom. Then both sides entered a gradual adaptation and relaxation third-stage in the second semester.

The finding shows that Chinese students and British lecturers/students encountered two low periods in the first few months in their one-year study in the UK: the very beginning and the following 2-4 months. This demonstrates that they encountered adaptation difficulties soon after the MBA programmes started and their intercultural encounters, due to their unfamiliarity with each other's academic expectations; then they encountered more cultural conflicts and psychological struggles in the second stage due to more complicated reasons. This study shows that the most difficult period or stage of both sides' adaptation process is between the 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> month in both classroom and group communication and relationship development processes. As one Chinese student said,

*From October to 12 December was the most difficult period for me and for most of Chinese students. Most core units were put in these two months...Many assignments overlapped...After this, I felt not as stressed as before, when I became familiar with the educational system (C13, 190704).*

This finding is contrary to Lysgaard's (1955) U-curve hypothesis, which assumes that international students/sojourners have a honeymoon period in their initial stage of sojourning (see Section 2.3.1), but consistent with Ward's (1996) findings that Chinese students had a positive sociocultural adaptation curve, but a reverse U-curve pattern in



their psychological adaptation. Therefore, it is very significant to facilitate and enhance Chinese/international students' initial- and middle-stage adaptation experience in the target culture.

The finding shows that Chinese students and British lecturers were generally satisfied with their sociocultural adaptation, but felt disappointed about the psychological aspects of their adaptation experience. Chinese students were not satisfied with most British lecturers/students' lack of empathetic/supportive attitudes and little communication and relationship development with British lecturers/students. This finding conforms to the views of Gu and Schweisfurth (2006: 83) who emphasise the individual students' psychological adaptation, 'Chinese students' survival and development in UK universities involves far more than strengthening their linguistic competence and subject knowledge and adapting to a different teaching and learning approach. Change at the deepest level tends to be psychological and personal'. Therefore, it is more significant to develop a high level of competence of managing one's affective factors in intercultural encounters. The concept of intercultural adaptation competence (affective factor is emphasised) is thus developed from this study (See Section 9.3.2).

In summary, Chinese students' and British lecturers/students' sociocultural adaptation follows a positive learning curve, their communication skills, academic skill, their classroom/group communication behaviours and relationships, and their intercultural sensitivity tended to improve gradually over time. Briefly, both sides had gradually adapted to the intercultural academic identities. However, their psychological curve tends to follow a reverse U-curve – both sides tended to encounter the biggest psychological difficulty (emotional and affective struggles) in the second stage of their intercultural adaptation.

The next section will discuss the second key finding of this study – Chinese students' and British lecturers/students' intercultural academic identity development in the classroom and group communication contexts.

### **9.2.2 Intercultural sensitivity and intercultural academic identity development**

As discussed in Chapter 1, intercultural adaptation is a process of developing one's intercultural identity, from being monocultural to intercultural (see Section 1.2.2 & 1.2.3); and a process of increasing one's intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1986, 1993), from being ethnocentric to ethnorelative. Since this study aims to provide qualitative empirical data to demonstrate a two-way adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers/students, therefore, one main focus of this study is to explore how both sides develop their intercultural sensitivity, and intercultural academic identity in the classroom and group communication contexts, and to examine how both sides cope with the tension between retaining their original academic identity/values (and co-national relationship) and develop intercultural academic identity/values (and intercultural relationship) in a two-way intercultural communication and intercultural relationship development process.

Based on large numbers of field notes, interviews and questionnaire open-ended responses, both Chinese students and British lecturers/students were found to adopt different attitudes and strategies in their intercultural encounters – integration and separation (Berry et al., 1988, 1989) and most participants tended to have an increase of intercultural sensitivity over time, though some participants were found to have little increase in intercultural sensitivity.

### **9.2.2.1 Chinese students' intercultural sensitivity and identity development**

The findings show that most Chinese students tended to change from a separation to an integration strategy and adapt to the new academic identities over time. In the first stage, they tended to adopt separation strategies and maintained their original academic identities and values (e.g. face-saving, quiet and modest, less confronting, less challenging). For example, most Chinese students asked co-nationals after class (Section 5.4.2) or whispered in class (Section 5.4.3); or asked lecturers after class (Section 5.4.4). Many Chinese students adopted an avoiding strategy (Section 8.2.3), or compromising strategy (Section 8.2.4) in group interaction. Some Chinese and British (or native) students who adopted separation strategies appeared ethnocentric and took stereotyped perspectives. e.g. I1 (a native student) had a negative stereotype of Chinese students in his/her group communication (see Section 8.2.3). C7 took an ethnocentric view on his/her original culture in the beginning of the course (see Section 8.4.3.2). Some lecturers used only UK-based teaching materials and assessment criterion in Course E presentation incident (in Section 6.3).

However, Chinese students were found to adopt a more integrative strategy to adapt to the new academic identities/values (questioning, challenging and independent in classroom and group interactions) in the second and third stage.

The findings show that Chinese students' and British lecturers/students' strategies tended to change in different contexts. Some Chinese students and British lecturers/students who initially adopted integration strategies tended to shift to separation strategies after they encountered expectation gaps or academic identity conflicts (e.g. some Chinese students did not have a good relationship with certain lecturers and British students after the Course E oral presentation marking incident, Section 6.3.2). Some Chinese students who initially adopted a separation strategy were found to adopt more a more integrative strategy (e. g. C12 were more active in classroom/group interactions, had more interactions with British part-time students in the second semester and arranged a revision group involving several British students, see Section 8.4.3), after they overcame the initial unfamiliarity and uncertainty difficulties. Many Chinese students said they changed from being ethnocentric to ethnorelative, they could see things from different perspectives and accept the cultural differences.

### 9.2.2.2 British students' intercultural sensitivity and identity development

The findings show that British students tended to adopt separation and integration strategies as well. Those British students who adopted integration strategies tended to be more empathetic, other-oriented and supportive, and tended to have better communication and relationship with Chinese students. For example, B3 and B4 helped Chinese students to understand the concept of 'product line' (Section 8.2.2) and 'sanitary' (Appendix 19, Extract 4) in a patient and supportive way; B1 and B11 had an individual talk with Chinese member C6 before deciding to put his/her writing in the appendix (Section 8.4.3); B1 helped Chinese students with their writing (Section 8.4.3); B8 gave more opportunities to CHC students to talk during group discussion and presentation question time (Section 8.3..2). These students were more acceptable by Chinese students. For example, B1 and B11 were accepted as 'insiders' to join in the revision group arranged by Chinese students spontaneously. They tended to change from being ethnocentric to ethnorelative, from being monocultural to intercultural over time. For example, B1 and B11 learned more about Chinese culture, after they had more interactions with Chinese students. B1 has started his new career in China after graduation. However, some British students tended to adopt separation strategy, and tended to dominate the group work (e.g. B12 & B13 in Section 8.2.3) and showed little concern and support to 'others'. They tended to be ethnocentric and to stereotype others.

### 9.2.2.3 British lecturers' intercultural sensitivity and identity development

Most lecturers tended to increase their intercultural sensitivity in the adaptation process. In the first stage, some lecturers did not provide handouts and explicit instructions and tended to use UK-based teaching materials (Section 5.4.2). In the second and third stage, some lecturers were found to change their teaching strategies and attitudes to accommodate Chinese/international students' needs. Several lecturers were interviewed twice or more on different occasions. They had been teaching in the Weston University for several years. Their interviews show their reflections on their adaptation process. For example, T11 changed to accommodate international students, by giving more transparent guidelines of assignment. T11 said, 'I have to adjust my teaching style to accommodate them by asking direct questions' (Field note, RMBA, 271103). T6 modified his/her teaching strategies by involving more Chinese students in classroom discussion and presentation in recent years (Section 7.5). Furthermore, some lecturers (e.g. T1, T5, T6 and T17) also noticed the impact of Chinese cultural change on Chinese students' behaviour in class (e.g. more active than Chinese students several years ago).

Some lecturers were found to lack an intercultural sensitivity (academic). Most lecturers were interviewed once (see Appendix 5), since they had lectures only for two or several sessions in one academic year, especially for some visiting lecturers. They tended to focus on delivering the lessons rather than developing their teaching strategies or intercultural academic identities and intercultural relationships with students. Some lecturers tended to

lack cultural sensitivity and they tended to maintain their original academic identities/values (teacher's role as a facilitator, which is individualism-oriented), rather than develop new (or expected) intercultural academic identities/values (e.g. teacher's role to be empathetic, caring and other-oriented, which is collectivism-oriented) or a mixture of both academic cultural values. Some lecturers tended to see Chinese students in a relatively fixed perspective. Chinese students appeared not active and challenging enough in their sessions. For example, T2 has been teaching MBA students at Weston University for several years. He/she showed his/her unhappiness and refused to answer a Chinese student's (C9) question in class (Section 5.4.3). T4 has been teaching in Weston University for years, his/her interview showed that he/she did not think Chinese students changed over time. He/she thought Chinese students were generally quiet in class, some of them did not reach the proper linguistic standard. He/she thought the School should raise the score of the entrance language proficiency test.

However, many people who adopted separation strategy changed to adopt integration strategy over time. For example, C12 was more active in classroom/group interactions, and had more interactions with British part-time students in the second semester (Section 8.4.3.2).

*C8: My personal quality has been improved, I've become more confident. I learned how to see one thing from different perspectives and how to tolerate and respect others (C8, 280704).*

The research findings show that the majority of Chinese students enjoyed the cultural pluralism – they were enriched by both learning approaches and they learned to see things from multiple perspectives. Some Chinese students said they become more flexible, open, tolerant, and reflective than before, and they were satisfied with their improvement of interpersonal skills as well. These findings are in line with the view of Murphy-Lejeune (2003: 113) who describes the experience of learning abroad and adaptation as ‘a maturing process and ‘a personal expansion’, ‘rather than a total personality change’. They also conform to Bennett's (1986, 1993) view that intercultural adaptation is a self improvement experience. This finding supports some researchers' positive views on culture shock as a process of self-development. For example, Adler (1975: 22) views culture shock as self growth, ‘in the encounter with another culture the individual gains new experiential knowledge by coming to understand the roots of his/her own ethnocentrism and by gaining new perspectives and outlooks on the nature of culture...Paradoxically, the more one is capable of experiencing new and different dimensions of human diversity, the more one learns of oneself’. These findings are also in agreement with Coleman (2002, 2004) and Mitchell *et al.*'s (2005) findings that studying abroad is a self improvement experience in their independence, self-reliance and self-awareness development.

The research findings show that those Chinese students who adopted separation strategy tended to have better psychological adaptation, since they often supported each other both academically and psychologically among their co-nationals, especially during revision

periods, they shared revision notes as well as worries, and they often had some social activities (e.g. dinner parties) together. The questionnaire survey shows that 67% of Chinese respondents regarded co-national friendship/networking as one of main learning outcomes for many Chinese students (see Table 15, or Q6, Section 1, Questionnaire analysis in Appendix 20), and they still kept their friendship/networking after they returned to their home culture.

Those who adopted integration strategy tended to be culturally sensitive and ethnorlative, and more motivated to adapt to intercultural academic identities and intercultural relationships in intercultural encounters. For example, B28 could go between Chinese and British groups easily (see Section 8.5). T6 challenged students as well as showing much empathy and support to international students in class, and he/she benefited from having a good communication and relationship with both British and Chinese students (see Section 7.5). Another example sees B1 and C6 in Section 8.4.3. Meanwhile, those who adopted integration strategies tended to play the role of facilitating a good understanding between two or more cultural groups (Section 8.5). The concept of ‘intercultural go-between’ is thus identified in this study.

The research findings show that those who adopted an integration strategy tended to have better sociocultural adaptation and academic performance than those who adopted a separation strategy. Some Chinese students who adopted an integration strategy said their English improved rapidly after they had more communications with local and other international students. As discussed, some British students tended to play a scaffolding role or as a language example for Chinese/international students in the group discussion (e.g. Product line episode in Section 8.2.2; email communication episode in Section 8.4.2). And they learned more about different thinking and working styles through mixed group work (C9 in Section 8.4.4).

However, the research findings indicate that many Chinese students who adopted an integration strategy tended to encounter more psychological struggles/shock than those who adopted a separation strategy in the classroom and group communication. For example, many Chinese students who adopted an integration strategy felt very frustrated, demotivated and disappointed when they were found they were in a disadvantaged position in classroom discussion when some lecturers ignored their contribution (e.g. C2 in Course E classroom debate in Section 6.2.3); when some British students dominated the group work and showed little care and support to them (e.g. C12’s request was rejected in Section 8.2.3; C23 in external project in Section 8.4.5). The research findings show that some Chinese students who adopted an integration strategy had to change their strategies from integration to avoidance or separation when they found British students adopted dominating and less supportive attitudes in classroom/group communication (e.g. B2 and C13 in Section 8.3.3). Meanwhile, some Chinese students who adopted an integration strategy had to cope with a tension between retaining their original academic identities/values and developing new academic identities/values. For example, C9 was concerned with his/her subgroup relationship (Section 8.3.4). The finding of this study

challenges Ward and Kennedy's (1994) finding that those who adopted an integration strategy tended to have less psychological and sociocultural problems.

Furthermore, the research findings show that both Chinese students and British lecturers/students encountered psychological struggles in the classroom and group interactions and in intercultural adaptation process (T2 in whispering episode in Section 5.4.3; T11 in Course E presentation incident in Section 6.3; B5 in Course D group in Section 8.3.4). The finding also shows that only a small number of successful people who adopted an integration strategy enjoyed good intercultural communication and relationship development and benefited from embracing two cultural and academic identities/values and retaining bicultural/intercultural relationships. Therefore, both Chinese students and British lecturers/students should increase intercultural sensitivity of being other-oriented and supportive to culturally different others, and develop intercultural adaptation competence of managing their affective factors during their intercultural adaptation process.

#### **9.2.2.4 Cultural go-between and IAC**

The research findings show that those participants who had better group communication and relationship development tended to adopt integration strategies and were determined to adapt to the new academic identities. They tended to be other-oriented and supportive to others. For example, in Section 8.2.2, both B3 and B4 were other-oriented and supportive, they were patient and tolerant to C3's different and somewhat confronting debate style, and created a relaxed environment to encourage C3 to defend his ideas; they gave opportunities to C6 to encourage him/her to do a presentation for the group; they played a scaffolding and supporting role in explaining the meaning of 'product line' and 'sanitary' (See Extract 4 in Appendix 19) in their first group work activity, and there were good communications and relationships between British and Chinese students.

Similarly, many Chinese students took initiatives to adapt to the new academic cultural identities - active participation and challenging and supporting others in the group work activity. For example, C6 volunteered to join in the British part-time group and volunteered to do an oral presentation for the group (Section 8.2.2). C10 took initiatives to write a 1500-word report for the group, most of his/her ideas were included in the final draft of the group assignment (Appendix 26). C12 arranged a revision group and invited some British students to join in, and they to share their ideas of cultural differences (Section 8.4.3. They invited British students to participate Chinese students' social activities (a formal Chinese new year party) or Chinese dinner parties in student hall. Similarly, B28 arranged a regular Monday pub meeting for RMBA students, to create a chance for both Chinese and British students to have more communication, though few Chinese students attended.

In sum, the above students tended to be more willing to adopt an integration strategy and adapt to the new academic identities/values and take initiatives to support others. Thus the concept of 'cultural go-between' is developed from the study. They are volunteers to go

one step further to the other groups and played the role of cultural go betweens and buffers.

They tended to be well accepted by both sides. For example, B1, B11 and B9 were well-accepted by Chinese community. C6, C10 and C12 were well recognized and gained high respect from British students. Some international students acted as cultural go-betweens as well. They knew both British and Chinese students, and they had good relationships with both sides.

They tended to gain the respect and recognition by both groups, in other words, they are both insiders and outsiders. For example, B1 is accepted by both groups, so is B28. C6, C10 & C12 won the respect of British students. For other discussions on the concept of cultural go-between see Section 8.3.3.2; 8.2.6; and 8.5).

The research findings show that both Chinese students and British lecturers/students were found to lack intercultural sensitivity - see the adaptation incident from their own perspective and lack willingness of adapting to 'others' (intercultural academic identities/values). Therefore, a notion of the 'cultural go-between' and a concept of 'intercultural adaptation competence' (other-orientation and mutual support are the domains) are thus generated from this study (see Figure 9.3, detailed analysis see Section 8.5). A 'cultural go-between' can be defined as a person who is culturally sensitive, other-oriented and supportive to others, who knows bicultures or multiple cultures, retains bi- or multiple cultural and academic identities and relationships, and who is able to go easily between bi- or multiple cultures, and plays the role of facilitating understandings and relationships between culturally different groups.

Figure 9.3 demonstrates three cultural groups (Chinese students, British lecturers/students, and other international students) in three interlocked circles; each group/individual retains their own cultural identity and relationship, but also develops new cultural identities and relationships with other groups, during their cultural encounters. The highlighted core part between three circles represents the cultural go-between, who can go between each culture easily and sensitively (with adequate knowledge, skilful behaviour and other-oriented and supportive attitudes – main components of IAC, see Section 9.3.2 for detail).

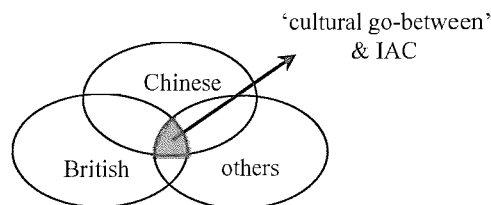


Figure 9.3 The cultural go-between & IAC

The research finding shows that the Chinese collectivist culture values other-orientation, empathy and mutual support; the British individualist culture focuses on the self-orientation, competence and self-reliance (see Section 8.5). This study suggests that

both cultural values are equally significant, and both Chinese students and British lecturers/students are supposed to be cultural go-betweens who retain both cultural identities/values and relationships during their intercultural encounters.

In sum, the notion of cultural go-between and IAC were developed from the study. Next, I will discuss another important finding and answer research question 3: What factors influence two-way adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers/students.

### **9.2.3 Key factors influencing two-way intercultural adaptation**

In this section, external/contextual factors and internal/personal factors that influence two-way adaptation process are firstly examined; then predisposition factors are discussed.

#### **9.2.3.1 External factors**

This section will summarize several identified external factors that influence two-way intercultural adaptation process: culture distance; academic culture distance; legitimate pedagogical culture; the native and non-native power relations; host conformity pressure; pressures from Chinese community, and other minor external factors.

##### **a) Culture distance**

Culture distance has been identified as the main factor influencing the two-way intercultural adaptation process in this study. Much data show that most British lecturers/students tended to emphasise Chinese students' competence in communicating effectively and thinking independently; whereas most Chinese students tended to emphasise British lecturers/students' empathetic and supportive attitude in classroom/group communication. Therefore, an expectation gap existed, due to the underlying reason - culture distance: British individualist culture emphasises competence and independence, whereas Chinese collectivist culture focuses on mutual support and dependence (see Section 3.2.1.3 and 6.3.2.4).

The research finding also shows that Chinese and British students tended to have different communication styles and strategies of dealing with cultural conflicts. For example, Chinese students tended to adopt less confronting strategies (e.g. avoiding or compromising strategy (Section 8.2.3 and 8.2.4) and an indirect way of speaking to avoid conflicts/misunderstandings with British students during group discussion (Section 8.3.4); whereas British students tended to adopt more confronting strategies and a direct way of speaking to tackle the conflicts. Meanwhile, the finding shows that many Chinese students did not ask questions or express their opinions in class, for the sake of protecting their own face and the lecturers' face (Section 5.4.3).

These findings conform to a number of researchers' discussions on the Chinese collectivist cultural dimension (Hofstede, 1980; Jin and Cortazzi, 1998) and the Chinese high-context



culture (Hall, 1959), which emphasises relationship and group harmony, avoids individual opinions and conflicts, and avoids loss of face (Cortazzi and Jin, 1999; Flowerdew and Miller, 1995; Gao and Ting-Toomey, 1998; Watkins and Biggs, 2001).

### **b) Academic culture distance**

The research findings show that Chinese students had difficulties in following and participating in the classroom/group discussions, especially in the early stage of their study, due to their unfamiliarity with the interactive approach, which is less structured and predictable in nature. They tended to expect 'considerable structured guidance' (Else, 1990: 55) from British lecturers in the beginning of their study (see Section 5.4.2). This is in line with Channell's (1990) findings that the system of learning in the British higher education is much less structured than international students would have liked. The underlying reasons was identified: academic culture distance, especially the difference in the culture of learning. The Chinese culture of learning emphasises knowledge accumulation and teacher-centred transmission approach (teacher's explicit, structured and transmitting role and student's collective learning role are emphasised) (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996a; Kember, 1997); whereas the British culture of learning focuses on knowledge exploration and student-centred interactive approach (teacher's facilitating role, students' self-directed and independent learning role and self-expression are emphasised) (see Section 3.3.4.3).

In sum, academic culture distance especially culture of learning - the deep structure of academic culture, has been identified as the main factor that influences the two-way intercultural adaptation process.

### **c) Legitimate pedagogical culture and native and non-native power relations**

Firstly, one of the most significant factors that influences two-way intercultural adaptation and identity construction process in this study is identified: legitimate pedagogical culture. Chinese/international students were found disadvantaged and excluded from the mainstream classroom discourse as well as from the UK-centred assessment system. Consequently, Chinese/international students' voices were less likely to be heard in the British classrooms. The research findings show that Chinese/international students tended to be in a marginalized and disadvantaged position and were not given enough opportunities to follow and participate in the fast-paced classroom/group discussion (Section 5.4.2 & 5.4.5; Section 6.2.3; Section 8.2.3 & 8.2.4). Some lecturers tended to regard the British discourse pattern as legitimate and ignore the international students' discourse patterns, e.g. two Chinese students were told their views were not relevant in one session. It implies that the lecturer's pedagogical philosophy and habitus (Bourdieu, 1977), and the control and practice of legitimate pedagogical culture (Bourne, 1992) influenced Chinese/international students' classroom behaviour and adaptation process (see Section 6.2.3).

Secondly, the findings show that Chinese students' proposals were more likely to be rejected due to British students' priority of language proficiency and academic familiarity

(Section 8.2.3 and 8.2.4). However, Chinese students tended to have more equal opportunities and contributions when they did group work with other international students.

It implies native and non-native power relations. This finding conforms to some previous researchers' views that Chinese/international students were more likely to be disadvantaged in the dialogic learning environment (Biggs and Watkins, 1996; Carson and Nelson, 1996; Samuelowicz, 1987), since the interactive approach requires more assertive and highly verbal speaking style (Ginsburg, 1992), and often shares many attributes of informal conversation. And the native students were more likely to code-switch to the use of the colloquial language or local dialect during a discussion, for the unconscious solidarity building, which the teacher could feel and testify; whereas international students are thus more likely to be excluded from this solidarity system (Jones, 1999), due to international students' unfamiliarity with the Western discourse patterns (speaking/writing), 'common ground' (Brown and Levinson: 1987) or the Western 'fixed interactional routines' (Fairclough, 1989: 65). Therefore, classroom/group discussion involves social distance and asymmetry of power between native and non-native speakers (Foucault, 1980; Green, 1998; Norton, 2000; Scollon and Scollon, 1995).

#### **d) Host conformity pressure**

The research findings show that the 'host conformity pressure' (Kim, 1994: 397) from institution/lecturers had greater impact on Chinese/international students' adaptation to the target academic culture. For example, the Course E presentation incident (Section 6.3) indicates that international students' communication/presentation skills is emphasised in the Weston MBA assessment system. Chinese/CHC students got much lower marks than native speakers (e.g. Chinese/CHC students' Course E oral presentation mark is 20% lower than the one made by British students; and Chinese students' Course E average mark is 15% lower than that of native speakers) (see Table 6.2 and 6.3 in Section 6.3.2.3).

The research findings show that the pressure from the host institution promotes Chinese/international students' adaptation process. Therefore, the particular assessment system in the particular learning environment tends to influence Chinese students' learning strategies and academic cultural identities. Chinese students were found to be more active, challenging and independent over time in this study. This finding conforms to Elton and Laurillard's (1979: 100) view that 'the quickest way to change student learning is to change the assessment system'. However, the host conformity pressure tended to cause more psychological struggles for Chinese students (see Section 6.3).

#### **e) Pressures from Chinese community**

Meanwhile, Chinese students' adaptation process was also influenced by the pressures from the Chinese cohort/community and attitudes of their co-national students. My research shows that some active integrators tended to be isolated by the Chinese community. For example, C10 was criticized by some CHC students for his/her direct way of criticism in public (see Section 8.3.2.3). C9 appeared less active in his/her second group

work, because she worried about his/her relationship with his/her subgroup members if she spoke out all the subgroup ideas instead of other members who were generally quiet in discussion (see Section 8.3.4.2). Therefore, these integrators appeared in a dilemma situation during their adaptation process: in retaining their original academic cultural identities and developing new academic cultural identities and relationships. The dilemma was influenced by Chinese culture's emphasis on ingroup relationships and a collectivist view on the self – the self is viewed as a member of a group rather than an individual. A large number of Chinese students in the MBA programmes may be one of reasons that makes this factor significant in this study.

#### **f) Other minor external reasons**

Some minor external factors that influence the two-way intercultural adaptation process are also identified; e.g. time/task related pressure (one-year intensive course), the big class (e.g. large number of Chinese/international students); the large lecture room with less good acoustics might influence Chinese students' following the classroom discussion. This is in line with Cheng (2000)'s finding. The unavailability of native students (e.g. family commitment, living far from university) is also one of reasons for little interaction between British and Chinese/international students.

### **9.2.3.2 Internal factors**

Several internal or intrapersonal factors that influence the two-way intercultural adaptation process have been identified: knowledge/cognition (both home and target cultural awareness), attitude/affective variables (e.g. cultural sensitivity, including other-orientation/support, empathy and openness), and skills/behaviour (e.g. communication skills, academic skills, and interpersonal skills).

#### **a) Knowledge (cultural awareness)**

The research findings show that both Chinese students and British lecturers/students tended to lack an awareness of both home and host cultures. Some culture-insensitive lecturers tended to lack an awareness of Chinese/international students' language and socio-academic culture difficulties and differences, and lack an awareness of Chinese students' expectations on teacher's socio-moral role and lack a sense of other-orientation/support to Chinese/international students; some lecturers did not provide transparent instructions, positive and constructive feedback and quick reply to students' email request (Section 6.3.2.2). This finding conforms to the finding of Eley (1990: 51-55) who found British lecturers lacked concern with the 'social dimensions of student experience' and lecturers are expected to be 'sensitive and caring', with a 'sympathetic listening ear and personal support'. This is also in line with the finding of Channell (1990) who found that academic staff tend to lack ability or willingness of seeing a situation from the overseas students' point of view.

Meanwhile, the findings also indicate that some British students tended to be unaware of Chinese students' expectations on other-oriented and supportive attitude and

relationship-oriented working style. For example, B5 did not know the underlying reason for Chinese students' delaying reply is due to their concern about his feelings and their quietness is due to their concern about their co-national relationship.

British students tend to dominate the group discussion without consideration of others' involvement. For example, B12 and B13 had a 15-minute discussion without considering other's feelings and equal contribution of others, this may be due to their lack of knowledge of emphasis on other-orientation in Chinese culture, and due to their individualist cultural background. They like to let their own opinions be heard.

Secondly, the research findings show that more cultural contacts facilitate more interest/motivation of learning about the other culture and reduce stereotype. For example, B1 and B11 asked more about Chinese culture, especially about their stereotypes of Chinese cultural revolution (see Section 8.4.3.2). Many Chinese students' sociocultural and academic knowledge about the UK also increased over time. Meanwhile, the finding shows that increased knowledge of both cultures tended to promote better understanding and relationship between both nationals (Section 8.4.3.2). This finding conforms to Jin's (1992) Cultural Synergy theory – intercultural communication is a two-way process, both host and international students benefit from learning about each others' cultures and retaining both cultural values, identities and relationships. Furthermore, Chinese students' intercultural adaptation process involves an increase of both target and home cultural awareness. For example, several Chinese MBA students formed a Chinese culture learning group after they learned more about the target culture (see Section 8.4.3.2).

#### **b) Attitude (cultural sensitivity)**

One of main findings of this study is the identification of intercultural sensitivity in the two-way intercultural adaptation process. Culture-sensitive British lecturers/students and Chinese students (integrators) are found to have good communication and relationship development (e.g. T6 in Section 7.5.2; B1 and C6 in Section 8.4.3); whereas culture-insensitive British lecturers/students and Chinese students (separators) are found to have less good communication and relationship development (e.g. T11 in Section 6.3; C12 and B12 in Section 8.2.3). This conforms to Chen and Starosta's (1998) view that sojourners with high levels of intercultural sensitivity will have fewer adjustment problems. However, the research also shows that intercultural adaptation is not a linear process but a dynamic and cyclical process with many complicated factors involved. For example, it involves contextual factors such as legitimate pedagogical culture.

Attitude and sensitivity have been identified as the more important factors in this study. Both British lecturers/students and Chinese students responded differently. Both integrators and separators tended to encounter uncertainty and anxiety, or psychological stress. Integrators encountered frustration. For example, with the HR presentation marking incident, some lecturers tended to give unclear instruction and inconsistent marking criteria. These lecturers tended to lack cultural sensitivity of Chinese students' expectations on clear instruction and empathetic attitudes towards students.

Many culture-sensitive and highly motivated British and Chinese ‘integrators’ tended to encounter psychological struggles during their classroom/group communication and relationship development. For example, C2 felt demotivated and frustrated when he was told his point was not relevant (see Section 6.2.3). B5 worked hard and felt frustrated when he did not get a quick and active response from Chinese students (see Section 8.3.4). Therefore, both host lecturers/students and Chinese/international students are expected to have high levels of intercultural sensitivity, especially ability of managing one’s affective factor.

The research findings reveal that culture-insensitive or less motivated Chinese students and British lecturers/students tended to be ethnocentric rather than other-oriented, supportive and open to others. For example, some lecturers adopted UK-based teaching materials and assessment criteria. This finding is similar to Eley’s (1990: 51) finding of, ‘the almost complete absence of anything other than an ethnocentric British view in some areas of study’.

Some British students were found to adopt a task-based dominating strategy to keep a fast-paced discussion and set the framework for the group assignment. They tended to have a sense of superiority due to their advantage of familiarity with the target language and academic culture (see Section 8.2.3); some Chinese students were found to be ethnocentric and stereotyped, less open and tolerant to accept the cultural differences (C7 in Section 8.4.3.2). However, the research finding shows that more cultural contacts tend to increase both British lecturers/students and Chinese students’ cultural sensitivity and reduce ethnocentrism and prejudice.

In sum, both British lecturers/students and Chinese students were found to lack cultural sensitivity in their intercultural encounters. Therefore, it is necessary to consider ways of increasing all participants’ intercultural sensitivity (I will return to this point in Section 9.4.2).

### **c) Skills**

The research findings indicate that both Chinese students and British lecturers/students tended to lack adequate skills for an effective two-way intercultural adaptation. The skills include language, communication, academic and interpersonal skills. Many Chinese students had high scores in English proficiency tests (IELTS, TOEFL) but poor communication skills especially in classroom/group communication skills. They could not follow the lectures and classroom/group discussions, and could not express their opinions freely; their assignment/oral presentation marks were lower in the first semester; and poor communication skills and academic skills influenced their sociocultural adaptation. This finding supports some researchers’ views that language fluency is associated with sociocultural adjustment (Ward and Kennedy, 1993). This finding also conforms to the findings of Jin (1992) and Sun and Chen (1997), who found that Chinese students had high score in English language tests but a low level of communication skills and academic skills

when they initially arrived in the UK and USA respectively.

Meanwhile, some British lecturers/students were found to be weak at intercultural communication skills. They tended to keep fast-paced discussion and took quick turn-takings without considering non-native students' full participation in discussion. They are expected to leave enough space and time (e.g. a longer span of pause) during their interactions. Some lecturers/students were found to have strong accents and they tended to use a lot of slang. Such poor communication skills influence Chinese students' effective communication, relationship development and psychological well-being and satisfaction (Gullahorn and Gullahorn, 1963). Many Chinese students encountered language/culture shock (C12 in Section 8.2.3; C23 in Section 8.4.5). This conforms to Ying and Liese's (1991) finding that Taiwan students with poorer English ability had higher levels of depression.

Furthermore, both British lecturers/students and Chinese students were found to be weak at interpersonal skills and competence of managing their affective factors (T2 in a whispering episode in Section 5.4.3; T11 in Course E episode in Section 6.3; C12 in Section 8.2.3).

In sum, communication skills, academic skills and interpersonal skills are identified as the important factors that influence an effective intercultural communication and intercultural adaptation. So far, three internal factors that influenced Chinese students' intercultural communication have been identified and discussed. Furthermore, some predisposition factors that influence two-way intercultural adaptation were identified and are discussed in the next section.

### 9.2.3.3 Predisposition factors

The research findings show that both Chinese students' and British lecturers'/students' predisposition factors affected the two-way intercultural adaptation process. The disposition factors include realistic expectation, adaptive personality, previous intercultural experience (both home and abroad). Some British lecturers/students were found to lack adaptive personality. B12 and B13 kept a 15-minute conversation going with little concern for other international students. Most British lecturers/students were found to lack intercultural experience. For example, T11 lacked knowledge of Chinese students' concern of face value until he/she encountered Course E presentation incident.

**Realistic expectation.** The research findings show that Chinese students tended to lack enough preparation for studying abroad, and have high expectations of their academic performance and abroad experiences, but they tended to lack good communication skills and adequate socio-academic knowledge of the target culture. Therefore, many of them encountered language and culture shock in the beginning of their study (see Section 5.3.1). For example, many Chinese students encountered psychological breakdown from the Course E oral presentation incident, one of reasons is due to their high expectation of the marking. This is also in line with Volet and Renshaw's (1995) finding that Chinese

students tend to set higher academic goals. Therefore, a proper and realistic expectation of the host society or the studying abroad experience is expected (Kim, 2001).

British lecturers/students were also found to have high expectations of Chinese students. Lecturers had a high expectation of Chinese students' classroom performance since they tended to have high scores at English proficiency tests. However, they felt disappointed about Chinese students' classroom/group performance, especially their quietness and less challenging behaviour. One reason for their high expectation is a lack of knowledge of Chinese students' and their cultural and academic cultural values. For example, I1 thought Chinese students had high IQs and expected to learn from them, but ended with disappointment with Chinese students' quietness.

However, Chinese students' high expectations in the beginning of their studies tended to modify over time. Questionnaire and interviews in the second and especially in the third stage show that they became more realistic in their expectations on adaptation experience and the host society. For example, Figure 2, Q6, Section 1 in Appendix 20 shows that Chinese students' views on career prospects and professional improvement decreased as time went on. This is consistent with Furnham's (1988) argument that appreciating the realities of the host culture often leads to the modification of expectations of the sojourn. Paige (1993: 10) proposes to, 'help sojourners maintain their enthusiasm while at the same time thinking realistically about the upcoming experience'. And Chinese students are expected to be culturally sensitive to the context in which they are staying.

**Adaptive personality.** The research findings show that both Chinese students and British lecturers/students' predisposition and personal traits influenced their adaptation process. Several aspects are identified as significant such as openness, intercultural sensitivity, other-orientation, tolerance for ambiguity, personality strength. For example, some strong-minded and adaptive Chinese integrators appeared more confident in adapting to the new academic cultural identities. And these students tended to be able to manage their affective factors well. For example, C9 had a less good experience in his/her Course D group (Section 8.3.4) in the second stage. However, she continued to negotiate his/her opportunities to work with British students, she stepped out of his/her co-national group to ask to work in a British part-time student group in the third stage (Section 8.4.4). By contrast, some Chinese students who were less strong in personality or less good at managing their psychological/affective factor tended to adopt avoiding strategy (e.g. C12 in Section 8.2.3), by choosing to work with co-nationals in their following group work.

Meanwhile, a strong personality entails the students' preparation for affective factor management. The research shows that many Chinese students did not prepare for their psychological adaptation in the pre-arrival stage. Therefore, they encountered double stress: language and academic difficulties, as well as psychological struggles (see Section 5.3.1).

**Previous intercultural experience** (home and abroad). The research findings indicate that British lecturers/students and Chinese students who had previous intercultural experience

influenced their intercultural adaptation. Some Chinese students who had previous experience working with culturally different others tended to have better adaptation than those who did not. For example, several active Chinese volunteers had a good argument with British students in the Product line group (Section 8.2.2); several CHC women appeared more active and confident to answer questions during question time and in their group discussion (Section 8.3.2). These students' previous intercultural work experience might be helpful in their two-way adaptation experience.

B8 in the group tended to be supportive and gave those CHC students a lot of opportunities to speak. B1 and B11 asked C6 for permission before they decided to put C6's writing in an appendix.

The research findings also reveal that Chinese students who had stayed in the UK for more than one year or studied MBA as the second degree in the UK tended to have better performance than those who just newly arrived in the UK (e.g. C2 and C10 were in the second year study in the UK and both of them did very well, since they were more familiar with the British socio-academic culture than others). This conforms to Kim's (1988, 2001) views that predisposition factor is one of important factors that influences the intercultural adaptation, and it is also in line with Ward's (1996) finding that the sociocultural adaptation is associated with the length of staying in the target culture.

In sum, external, internal and pre-departure/disposition factors that influence British lecturers/students and Chinese students' two-way intercultural adaptation experience have been identified and discussed. The next section will discuss a theoretical model grounded from this study, the above factors will be included in this model.

## **9.3 An integrated model of two-way intercultural adaptation**

### **9.3.1 Introduction**

This section will discuss the concept of IAC, which is a mixture of affective, cognitive and behavioural aspects, with affective aspect as its domain. Based on the above empirical research findings, it is necessary to develop the new concept of IAC, in order to clarify the situation of intercultural communication and intercultural adaptation studies.

### **9.3.2 Developing the concept of IAC**

Several dimensions of the concept of IAC have been identified based on the empirical research findings and further literature review.

#### **9.3.2.1 Affective factor as the deep structure of IAC**

The research findings show that Chinese students' psychological adaptation pattern tends



to follow a reverse U-curve: many Chinese students experienced psychological struggles in their early stage of the adaptation process, and they encountered more stress and frustration in the second stage (Section 9.2.1). Meanwhile, the research findings also reveal that both Chinese students and British lecturers/students encountered psychological difficulties in managing their affective factors (such as frustration, disappointment, mistrust, confrontation and anger) during their classroom/group communication and relationship development. For example, T2 got angry when he/she found Chinese students' background whispering grew louder in the class (Section 5.4.3); T11 cried when he/she was complained that he/she had some prejudice on Chinese students (Section 6.3); C12 felt frustrated with two British students' unfriendly attitudes and ignorance of Chinese students' request and involvement (in Section 8.2.3); B5 was a shy and humble science researcher, he lost his temper when he was asked to modify the draft based on a list of recommendations drafted by his Chinese group members four days before the deadline (Section 8.3.4); B8 felt frustrated by two CHC women's criticism in the group presentation question time and wrote a letter hoping these CHC students to feel satisfied with his presentation performance (Section 8.3.2); One of the Chinese woman was criticized by the Chinese community for his/her open criticism of others in public (Section 8.3.2). C9 struggled about how to retain his/her co-national relationship and developing new academic identity (Section 8.3.4). B2 felt it was unfair when he found he and B12 took full responsibility to write the assignment; whereas C13 felt frustrated about two British students' lack of trust and invitation for his help and involvement (Section 8.3.3). C23 suffered from a psychological breakdown due to his/her communication inefficiency and unfamiliarity with the target culture and British students' lack of empathy and support in an external project (in Section 8.4.5).

Questionnaire data also shows that people's psychological and affective change (attitude) is not so obvious as the other two aspects (behaviour and knowledge) in the adaptation process (see Table 38, Q 5, Section 4, Questionnaire analysis, in Appendix 20). Therefore, compared with the other two dimensions (behavioural and cognitive) of intrapersonal competence, the affective factor is found to be more difficult to manage but more important to influence effective intercultural communication and relationship development.

### 9.3.2.2 IAC and deep structure of culture and academic culture

Because of the clear importance of affective adaptation in my empirical study, and its apparent neglect in earlier literature, I returned to the literature following the study, to develop a new model which would give affective issues the foregrounding they deserve.

Since affective factors involve people's cultural values and attitudes, which are embedded in the deep structure of a culture and academic culture. The main part of culture (e.g. values, belief and attitudes) is normally hidden and embedded in the 'deep structure' of culture (Hall, 1966; Samovar *et al.*, 1998: 32) or psychological culture - the so-called implicit and submerged part of a 'cultural iceberg' (Hall, 1966) (see the upper left oval in Figure 9.4 below). The deep structure of culture is often regarded as one main reason for

intercultural miscommunication and misunderstanding.

Meanwhile, the ‘deep structure’ of academic culture (Broadfoot *et al.*, 2000: 206) involves students/teachers’ perspectives/attitudes and the underpinning cultural epistemology and so on, compared with the ‘surface structure’ of teaching methods, curriculum and so forth (see the upper right oval in Figure 9.4 below). The deep structure of academic culture is often the crucial factor that influences international students’ academic adaptation and expectation gaps between Chinese/international students and British lecturers/students in the new learning environment, though it is often taken-for-granted for its hidden and implicit nature.

Therefore, based on the empirical research findings (affective factor as the most important factor that influences the adaptation process and the most difficult aspect to manage, psychological adaptation follows a reverse U-curve, both sides tended to lack intercultural sensitivity, especially a sense of other-orientation and mutual support), and back to review of the concept of deep structure of culture and academic culture, three intrapersonal factors are thus identified below: behavioural (e.g. skills) and cognitive (e.g. knowledge) factors are in the surface level, and affective (e.g. attitude, emotion) factor in the deep structure – the hidden and implicit level (the bottom oval in Figure 9.4 below).

Figure 9.4 shows the interrelationship between culture, academic culture, and IAC. Academic culture and culture (both home and target culture included) are two external factors, and behavioural, cognitive and affective factors are three internal factors that affect the intercultural adaptation process and one’s IAC development; meanwhile, IAC includes two aspects of intercultural communication and intercultural relationship (the left and right part of the bottom oval in Figure 9.4).

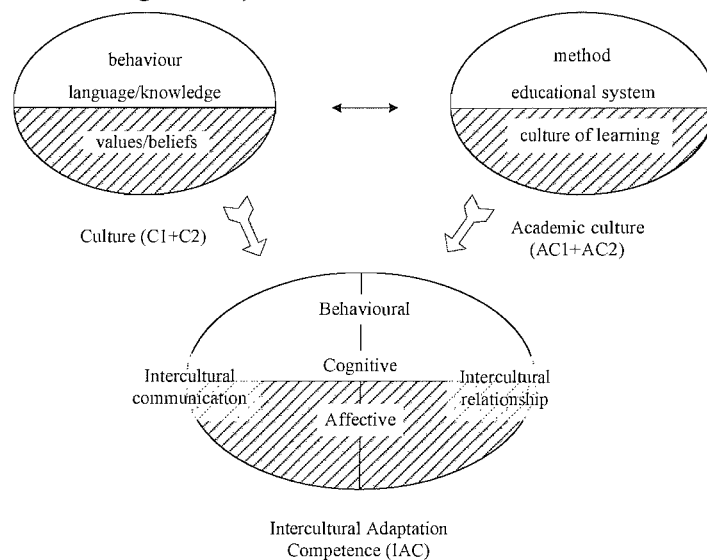


Figure 9.4 IAC in intercultural adaptation process

C1: the first culture

C2: the second culture

AC1: the first academic culture

AC2: the second academic culture

IAC: Intercultural Adaptation Competence

In sum, the concept of IAC is grounded from the empirical research findings, which identify affective factors as the most important factor to influence the intercultural adaptation process and the most difficult factor to manage in the adaptation process as well. Meanwhile, back to literature review of the deep structure of culture and academic culture, affective factor is thus identified as the ‘deep structure’ of adaptation competence.

### 9.3.2.3 IC and IR as two aspects of IAC

As discussed in Section 2.2.3 and Section 2.4, one of aims of this study is to challenge the existing concept ICC, which tends to focus on one aspect of ICC – intercultural communication (IC) or intercultural relationship (IR). This study has explored both aspects (IC & IR) in the adaptation process. The empirical research findings show that Chinese students and British lecturers tended to follow three-stages of a two-way intercultural adaptation process in classroom communication context. They had relatively good IC and IR development in the first stage (See Section 5.5), less good IC and IR development in the second stage (due to Course E presentation marking incident, see Section 6.4 & 6.5); varied IC and IR development in the third stage (good between those who were culturally sensitive and adopted integration strategy, less good between those who were culturally insensitive and adopted separation strategy, see Section 7.6, Section 7.7, Section 7.8 and Section 9.2.1). The research findings also reveal that Chinese students and British students tended to follow three-stages of a two-way intercultural adaptation process in the group communication context. Chinese and British students had relatively good IC and IR in the first stage (Section 8.2.5), less good IC and IR development in the second stage (Section 8.3.6), varied IC and IR in the third stage (good between those who were culturally sensitive, less good between those who were culturally insensitive, Section 8.4.6, Section 8.5 and Section 9.2.1). The above research findings show that IC and IR tend to have positive relationships, good IC tended to have a positive impact on IR development; good IR tended to have a positive impact on further IC development, vice versa (C6 & B1 in Section 8.4.3).

Meanwhile, back to literature review, I found that the concept of IAC has some similarities with a psychological concept of ‘emotional intelligence (EI), ‘the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating the self, and for managing one’s emotions and his/her relationships with others well’ (Goleman, 1995, 1998: 317). Firstly, IAC emphasises the affective factor as the deep structure of intercultural adaptation competence, which means an individual’s competence managing one’s affective factor (e.g. emotion and motivation) is the most important dimension of IAC influencing the adaptation process. Secondly, IAC emphasises two aspects of ICC (IC and IR), it is also similar to EI, which involves an individual’s *intrapersonal abilities* (understanding oneself, including self-awareness, self-regulation and self motivation) and *interpersonal abilities* (understanding others and other’s feelings, including empathy, social awareness and social skills) (Bar-On 1997; Early and Ang, 2003; Gabel *et al.*, 2005; Gardner, 1983, 1993; Goleman, 1995; Mayer and Salovey, 1997).

Therefore, IC and IR have been identified as two important aspects of IAC, based on empirical research findings and literature review of the psychological theory.

#### **9.3.2.4 Other orientation and mutual support as domain of IAC**

Based on the analysis of the two-way adaptation processes between Chinese students and British lecturers in the classroom communication context (Chapters 5-7) and between Chinese students and British students in the group communication context (Chapter 8), I found there were some expectation gaps and academic cultural conflicts between both Chinese students and British lecturers/students. The tension between empathy and competence is identified as the main cause of expectation gaps between Chinese students and British lecturers in the classroom adaptation context. For example, in the first stage of adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers, Chinese students expected lecturers to show empathy by providing them with explicit instructions and support (Section 5.4.2), equal opportunities to involve in the classroom discussions (Section 5.4.5). By contrast, British lecturers expected Chinese students to be competent in communication skills and academic skills, and take initiatives and responsibilities to ask and adapt to the British academic culture (Section 5.4.2, Section 5.4.4). Chinese students' expectations on empathy are highlighted in the letter on behalf of Chinese students as a group to the MBA staff-student committee (Section 5.5). In the second stage, the tension of Chinese students' expectations on empathy and equal opportunity on classroom involvement (Section 6.2.3) and academic success (Section 6.3.2.4) and lecturers' expectations on Chinese students' competence (communication and academic skills) became more obvious in the Course E presentation marking incident (Section 6.3.2.4). In the third stage, the impact of different pedagogical philosophy and classroom discourses adopted by lecturers on Chinese students' classroom involvement was discussed, the tension between empathy and competence was highlighted in a comparison of classroom discourses of two different lecturers with different pedagogical orientations (Section 7.5.2).

The tension between empathy and competence is also the main focus of the adaptation process between Chinese and British students in the group communication context. In the first stage of adaptation, Chinese students found they were ignored by British students who tended to dominate the group discussion; whereas the native students thought Chinese students were not willing to talk and contribute in group discussion (Section 8.2.3, Section 8.2.4). In the second stage, Chinese students thought they were not given opportunities and not asked to provide support; whereas British students thought they took too much responsibility in the group work, which was not fair (Section 8.3.3). In the third stage, two volunteered Chinese students' frustration about British students' lack of empathy and British students' dissatisfaction about Chinese students' lack of competence was highlighted in an external project (Section 8.4.5).

Therefore, the tension between empathy and competence was identified as the main cause of expectation gaps and academic cultural conflicts between Chinese students and British

lecturers/students, and consequently influenced effective intercultural communication and relationship between both sides and the intercultural adaptation process. The underlying reason for the issue concerned was discussed in Section 6.3.2.4, Section 7.8 and Section 8.5. It is due to cultural distance between collectivism versus individualism. Collectivist culture (e.g. China) emphasises empathy or other-orientation (e.g. ‘sympathize the weakest’), relationship (harmony); whereas individualist culture (e.g. UK) emphasises competence or self-control (e.g. ‘survival of the fittest’) (See Dialogue 6.3 in Section 6.3.2.4). Meanwhile, collectivist culture tends to be relationship-oriented; whereas individualist culture tends to be task-oriented (See Dialogue 8.5 in Section 8.5). The other underlying reason for the expectation gaps between Chinese students and British lecturers/students is lack of intercultural sensitivity, which influences the two-way intercultural adaptation process. Both sides tended to see the expectation gaps and cultural conflicts from their own perspective, rather than from the other’s point of view, and neither side tended to show enough willingness to support and adapt to each other during the intercultural adaptation processes. The research findings show that most Chinese students and British lecturers/students tended to adopt separation strategies, including those who initially adopted integration strategy but changed to separation strategy when expectation gaps or cultural conflicts occurred or when other external factors influenced the adaptation process.

Therefore, the concept of other-orientation and mutual support is identified as the domain of intercultural sensitivity and intercultural adaptation competence (IAC), based on the empirical research findings. The ‘cultural go-between’ is also identified in this study. Cultural go-between is the person who has a high level of intercultural sensitivity and IAC and possesses a sense of other-orientation and mutual support in the intercultural adaptation process (Section 8.5, Section 9.2.2.4).

The research findings show that the Chinese students and British lecturers/students tended to lack a sense of other-orientation and a willingness to support in the adaptation process. It is found that the more other-oriented and supportive the lecturers are, the more active the Chinese students appeared in their sessions, and the better relationship between these lecturers and students (Section 7.5.2). Similarly, when British students had a patient ‘listening ear’ and empathetic heart to tolerate Chinese students’ ‘foreign accent’ and unskilful way of debates, Chinese and British students would have a better group interaction and relationship development (C3 and B3 in Section 8.2.2.3; B1 and C6 in Section 8.4.3.2). Another example is that those Chinese students (C6, C10) who were highly motivated to adapt to the new academic values and identities, were more likely to achieve better adaptation outcomes, e.g. C6 and C10 took initiatives to contribute to the group work, they volunteered to write the group report and conduct the oral presentation for the group and gained the respect and recognition from the British students, though Chinese students’ classroom and group communication performance tend to be influenced by other external factors as well, as discussed in Section 9.2.3.

Returning to the literature review, the concept of other-orientation and mutual support can

be traced back to the other-oriented traditional Chinese culture, especially the Confucian concept of Ren (benevolence), ‘if you want to do, do it for others; if you want to get, get it for others’ (The Analects, Yongye, Chapter 6 & 28), Yi (loyalty and care), and a collectivistic and high-context cultural notion of harmonious and supportive relationships, as discussed in Section 3.2.1.2. The notion of other-orientation and mutual support is similar to the concept of empathy, which refers to the ability to ‘walk in another person’s shoes’ (Martin and Nakayama, 2000: 319), which often involves open-mindedness in sharing information, a willingness to understand cultural differences and see things from the other’s point of view (Chen and Starosta, 1998). However, the notion of other-orientation and mutual support is one step further, it emphasises not only an empathetic and open-minded attitude, but also providing actual support to others, and it is beneficial to both native and non-native interlocutors.

So far, three important dimensions of IAC have been discussed: i) three intrapersonal factors: behavioural, cognitive and affective, with the affective dimension as the domain or deep structure of IAC; ii) two aspects of adaptation competence: IC and IR; iii) two domains of IAC: other-orientation and mutual support.

Therefore, it is necessary to give a definition of IAC below: The concept of IAC is developed from empirical research findings and further literature reviews, it refers to an individual’s ability to manage one’s intrapersonal factors, especially one’s affective factor in the intercultural adaptation process. The concept also entails one’s sense of other-orientation and willingness to support others, when dealing with intercultural communication and intercultural relationship development in the intercultural encounters.

So far, the concept of IAC and its main dimensions have been discussed, an evaluation of the concept IAC will be discussed in the next section.

### 9.3.2.5 An evaluation of IAC

**Why IAC?** Firstly, the concept of IAC extends the existing concept of ICC, by identifying affective factor as the deep structure, while behavioural and cognitive factors are the surface level of one’s intercultural adaptation competence, based on the empirical research findings and literature review of deep structure of culture and academic culture. This concept is one step further to the existing concept of ICC, which tend not distinguish three factors, e.g. Kim’s (1988, 2001) concept of HCC tends to treat three intrapersonal factors equally (see Figure 2.1).

Secondly, this concept is one step further to Kim’s (1988, 2001) model of cross-cultural adaptation and the concept of HCC, which tend to focus on the sojourners/international students’ communication competence developed in the host culture. The concept of IAC emphasises adaptation competence of both hosts and international students.

Thirdly, the concept of IAC is developed from the qualitative empirical research, with an emphasis on an individual's affective factor and intercultural sensitivity development (one's attitude-oriented), rather than one's intercultural awareness (one's knowledge-oriented) in the adaptation process. It involves both hosts' and international students' development of intercultural sensitivity, especially a sense of other-orientation and mutual support, which are identified as two dimensions of intercultural sensitivity. Thus this concept extends the dimensions of intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1986, 1993).

Fourthly, the domain of IAC (other-orientation and mutual support) is derived from the other-oriented concept of traditional Chinese culture (Ren, which emphasises other-oriented relationship and mutual support. This is one step further to the existing concept of ICC, which is developed from the Western literatures and mainly based on the Western individualist culture which emphasises one's competence and skills development.

Fifthly, the concept of IAC is developed from the adaptation process based on qualitative empirical research findings, it emphasises the particular context and particular people in the specific culture. It refers to not only an outcome, but mainly a process and a mediating tool of achieving successful intercultural communication and adaptation process. Thus it is an extension of ICC, which tends to be regarded as the outcome and ultimate goal of intercultural communication, and it is more frequently researched and measured through a quantitative approach. As EI, IAC can be developed through intercultural adaptation training programmes, one's competence of manage one's affective factor and intercultural sensitivity can be developed.

Sixthly, the concept of IAC is developed from the qualitative empirical research findings, and it distinguishes the intrapersonal factors with a particular emphasis on the affective factor that influences the adaptation process. In fact, it is virtually impossible to distinguish these three factors completely, they tend to be overlapping, especially between cognitive and affective factors (Ward et al, 2001). Therefore, the identification of the deep structure of the concept of ICA indicates only a tendency of significance of affective factors in the adaptation process based on the evidence of this study.

In sum, the notion of IAC (especially its domain of other-orientation and mutual support) is derived from a Chinese cultural concept and developed from a qualitative empirical research finding, thus it extends the notion of ICC; and it emphasises an individual's intercultural sensitivity and ability of managing his/her affective factors. The next section discusses a theoretical model grounded from this study, with the notion of IAC as the main part.

#### **9.3.4 An integrated model of intercultural adaptation**

Based on the above discussions, an integrated theoretical model of an individual's (whether a native or non-native speaker) intercultural adaptation is grounded and developed from the data and analysis. This model involves both external and internal factors that influence the

adaptation process (see Figure 9.5 below).

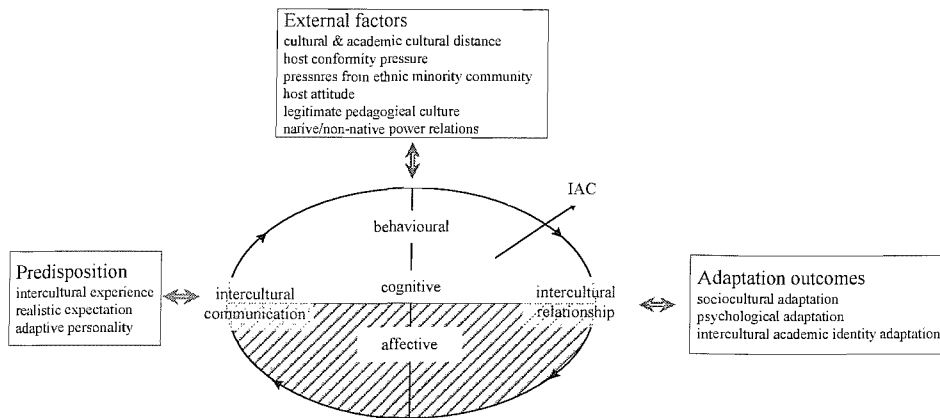


Figure 9.5 A model of an individual's intercultural adaptation process

Figure 9.5 presents an individual's overall intercultural communication process, which starts with the predisposition (the left rectangle) and ends with learning outcomes (the right rectangle). This intercultural adaptation process includes both intercultural communication (the left part of the middle big oval) and intercultural relationship development (the right part of the middle big oval).

The predisposition factors include an individual's realistic expectation, adaptive personality, and previous intercultural experience. The outcomes include sociocultural adaptation, psychological adaptation, and intercultural academic identity adaptation. These remain as in Kim's (1988, 2001) model and as in Figure 2.8.

The adaptation process (the middle big oval) is influenced by both external (the upper rectangle) and internal factors (behavioural, cognitive and affective). The external factors have been further developed from the model in Figure 2.8, to include culture distance; academic culture distance; legitimate pedagogical culture; native and non-native power relations; host conformity pressure; pressures from ethnic minority community (e.g. Chinese community in this study); and other minor external factors, such as time/task-related pressure, class size, and demographic (availability of local students) (see Section 9.2.3.1).

The internal factors include participants' three intrapersonal aspects – behavioural, cognitive and affective. Behavioural and cognitive factors are above the surface level (see Section 9.3.2.3), while affective factor is in the deep structure of the IAC concept and as the core item of the intercultural adaptation process. The cognitive factor refers to cultural awareness of both home and host cultures and academic cultures and their differences; the behavioural factor refers to an individual's communication skills, academic skills and interpersonal skills. The affective factor mainly refers to one's cultural sensitivity, in which the sense of other-orientation and willingness to provide support are identified in this study.



Figure 9.5 also illustrates that the intercultural adaptation process is a dynamic process (see four arrows of the middle big oval), which includes different stages of change over time (from unfamiliarity and anxiety, via gradual adaptation, to adaptation and satisfaction). Meanwhile, variables that influence the intercultural adaptation process are interrelated (see double arrows between predisposition and adaptation process, between external factors and adaptation process, and between the adaptation process and adaptation outcomes).

In sum, the integrated model of intercultural adaptation implies a dynamic and cyclical process of intercultural adaptation, in which adaptation variables tend to fluctuate according to different contexts and periods.

This model differs from the original theoretical framework (Figure 2.8 in Section 2.4) in the following aspects, based on the findings through empirical work:

- i) Several variables that influence intercultural adaptation process are identified. For example, pressure from ethnic minority community, legitimate pedagogical culture, native/non-native power relations are identified and added in the external factors (the top rectangle).
- ii) The interrelationship between three internal factors is identified through empirical work. Affective factor is identified as the deep structure of intercultural adaptation competence.
- iii) This model indicates an individual's intercultural adaptation process in the intercultural context. The individual can be either a native or non-native speaker. It emphasises both a native and non-native speaker's two-way adaptation process, rather than simply a non-native speaker's one-way adaptation to the host culture.
- iv) The new concept of intercultural adaptation competence (IAC) is developed from the empirical study. This concept goes beyond Kim's (1988, 2001) Host Communication Competence (see Figure 2.4 in Section 2.3.3), which tends to emphasise the host national or sojourners' communication competence, rather than both host and sojourner's two-way adaptation competence. Meanwhile, the concept of IAC includes an individual's intercultural relationship development in the adaptation process, rather than simply the intercultural communication development emphasised by Kim (1988, 2001) in his/her cross-cultural model. Therefore, the new concept developed from this study is broader than Kim's concept.
- v) This model moves one step further than Kim's (1988, 2001) model, which emphasises the concept of 'host communication competence', and developing the sojourner's communication competence in the host culture. The model developed from this study emphasises the broader competence – intercultural adaptation competence, which both host and sojourners need to develop, to examine the components of intercultural adaptation

competence.

### 9.3.5 A two-way intergroup intercultural adaptation model

In sum, Figure 9.5 indicates an individual's intercultural adaptation process in the intercultural adaptation context. Figure 9.6 below presents an intergroup intercultural adaptation model, for the purpose of representing a more explicit model of the two-way intercultural adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers/students. It also highlights the concept of IAC in the adaptation process, based on findings of this empirical study.

The three rectangles are the same as those in Figure 9.5. The middle big oval refers to an intercultural adaptation process in the particular communication contexts of this study. In this process, both the Chinese students (CS) and the British lecturers/students (BT/BS) communicated and adapted to each other, from two aspects: intercultural communication (IC) and intercultural relationship (IR). Both sides developed their Intercultural Adaptation Competence (IAC) through their adaptation process (see double arrows between Chinese students and British lecturers/students).

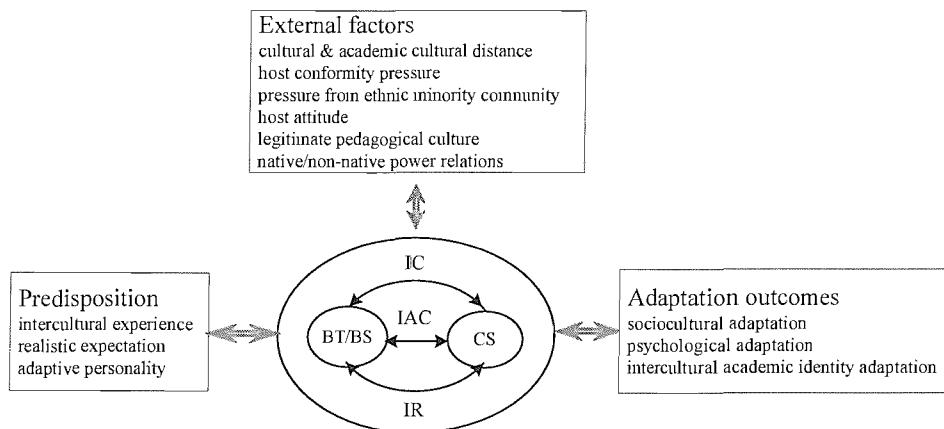


Figure 9.6 A model of two-way intergroup intercultural adaptation

BT/BS: British lecturers/British students; CS: Chinese students;  
 IC: intercultural communication; IR: intercultural relationship;  
 IAC: intercultural adaptation competence

This is an integrated model, which contains both external and internal factors that influence an intercultural adaptation. This model (Figure 9.6) demonstrates a two-way intercultural adaptation process between host and sojourners in the intercultural adaptation contexts - starting with predisposition, going through different stages of adaptation, ending with outcomes, and continuing with the new adaptation process.

Furthermore, this model emphasises an individual's affective variable as the deep structure of three intrapersonal variables, and one's intercultural sensitivity, especially a sense of

other-orientation/support as the domain of IAC.

This model also demonstrates that intercultural adaptation includes both intercultural communication and intercultural relationship development, an individual's intrapersonal and interpersonal skills are emphasised in the intercultural adaptation process.

It emphasises both native and non-native speakers' two-way communication and adaptation to each other, rather than simply one-way of international students' adaptation to the target culture, as is the focus of previous research/model, e.g. Kim's (1988, 2001) cross-cultural model. This model is an extension of Jin's (1992, Jin & Cortazzi, 1993) cultural synergy model and Kim's (1988, 2001) cross-cultural adaptation model, since it has provided some qualitative evidence, with a particular emphasis on an individual's attitudinal and affective change in the intercultural adaptation process. It implies that one's intercultural sensitivity (e.g. other-orientation and mutual support) and ability of managing one's IAC plays an important role in an effective intercultural communication and relationship development.

Finally, this model is grounded in qualitative/ethnographic research, emphasises an individual's affective/psychological change in the whole process of intercultural adaptation, and it develops directly from participants' in-depth perceptions and reflections (semi- and unstructured interviews), based on particular contexts and episodes, thus its validity and effectiveness tend to be enhanced. This model is hoped to rectify the situation of many previous models that are simply based on a survey report or intuitive reasoning from the theoretical research.

#### **9.4 Implications of research**

'There is nothing so practical as a good theory' (McNamara and Harris, 1997: 4). Considering the inseparable relationship between theory and practice, this study proposes a number of recommendations for British higher education. As Martin and Nakayama (2000: 40) argue, 'the goal of the critical researcher is not only to understand human behaviour but to change the lives of everyday communicators'.

Although the context of the present study is a particular university in the UK, the concept of IAC and the model of intercultural adaptation developed from this qualitative study is of interest to several groups of people: language and content lecturers who teach international students in pre-sessional and in-sessional courses; British and Chinese institutions; general educational researchers and intercultural communication researchers; and all stakeholders dealing with issues of international students, especially CHC/Chinese students.

The previous sections have answered the thematic issue and the title question of this study – why Chinese/international students' voices are less likely to be heard in the British educational settings? This section will mainly discuss two issues: How can UK HEIs facilitate international students to adapt to the new learning environment and make

international voices be heard in the British higher education? And how to develop teacher/student's intercultural adaptation competence (IAC) in order to achieve effective intercultural communication and relationship development?

#### **9.4.1 How to provide support to international students?**

Four recommendations will be proposed in this section: establishing an unbiased pedagogical culture and assessment system; recognizing international students' previous experiences as teaching resources; accommodating teaching methods to international students; and supporting international students in different stages.

##### **9.4.1.1 Establishing unbiased pedagogical culture and assessment system**

The research finding shows that lecturers tended to have the power to determine legitimate patterns of classroom discourse, and international students were more likely to be excluded from the legitimate pedagogical culture (Section 6.2.3 and 6.3.2.3). Meanwhile, wide variations in the marking criteria (e.g. different degree of stress on linguistic aspects) for postgraduate's written assignments, oral presentations and exams tend to be biased against international students, who were more likely to be unaware of the British assessment system. This can be seen as poor educational practice (Bush, 1994).

Therefore, an equal and unbiased pedagogical culture and internationalized assessment system (rather than UK-centred or non-native-speaker-oriented) should be established. Firstly, lecturers are expected to develop professional competence, individual habitus and 'pedagogic habitus' (Grenfell, 1998), and take account of students' dispositions in their pedagogical practice, to increase an awareness of international pedagogical philosophy with 'no ideological, national and cultural boundaries' (Calleja, 1995: 41), with an 'intercultural understanding' of an 'international context' (UNESCO, 1995: 7-10), to help enhance international students' intercultural adaptation process.

Secondly, multicultural teaching materials and 'multiple literacies' (Cazden, 1992; Gee, 1996; Michaels *et al.*, 1994; Michales and Sohmer, 2002: 171) should be adopted. Since minority (e.g. international students') literacy practices (ways of talking, reading, writing, valuing) tend to be different from the mainstream students (Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Gee, 1996), therefore multiple literacies can ensure minority students' full participation in the classroom discourse, ensure their voices are recognised, and ensure their equal access to the mainstream curriculum and equal opportunities of academic success in the British academic culture.

Thirdly, an open and safe learning environment should be created, e.g. to keep a moderate pace of teaching, and provide students with sufficient time and space to become involved in classroom/group discussions. For example, an informal question time is suggested to be provided at the end of lectures, where questions can be asked in a less threatening way (Turner and Acker, 2002).

In sum, it is suggested that the host institutions/lecturers need to recognize students' diverse communication/discourse patterns and expectations; to hear and respect the multiple voices from different cultural backgrounds; to provide a safe learning environment for the growing international student population, to encourage a genuine communication between international students and host institutions/lecturers/students. This is also very crucial for British HEIs' internationalization process (Brennan, 1997; Lin, 2005).

#### **9.4.1.2 Recognizing international students' previous experiences as teaching resources**

The research finding shows that some lecturers tended to be ethnocentric by mainly using UK-based teaching materials and assessment, emphasising international students' responsibility of adapting to the UK socio-academic system. It is suggested to recognize and value international students' home-based cultures and their previous experiences as important teaching/learning resources by the university community (Keech, 1994) and integrate both domestic and international students' experiences into the curriculum (Eisenclas and Trevaskes, 2003), since 'recognition of students' previous experience-as-learning through the use of accreditation processes' (James, 1998: 108) can improve the quality of teaching, enhance intercultural learning experiences of both British lecturers/students and international students, and thus consequently facilitate university curriculum internationalization.

#### **9.4.1.3 Accommodating teaching methods to international students**

Lecturers are expected to increase their awareness of international students' language/academic difficulties, develop willingness and strategies to accommodate their teaching methods to international students, and provide them with more opportunities in classroom discussions. For example, lecturers are expected to keep a moderate pace of teaching, speak clearly and slowly, paraphrase or simplify their message, avoid idioms and colloquialisms, make extensive use of visual aids (e.g. using pictures, charts, graphs, symbols, diagrams, jot up on the whiteboard) and use some non-verbal language (e.g. gestures, facial expressions, pantomime, and paralinguistic clues) (Samovar *et al.*, 1998: 213). Lecturers are expected to develop their questioning techniques and expand the range of questions. Dillon (1988: 25) suggests a number of alternatives to questioning (e.g. making statements, using signals, silences and repair strategies, and re-posing a speaker's question). Meanwhile, lecturers are expected to show students different types of questions (e.g. information-seeking questions or opinion-seeking questions), and give them guidance as to when and how to ask these questions. Lecturers are suggested to be aware of how and when to give constructive feedback during classroom interaction; allow a moment of silence or pause between turns; to encourage quiet and less confident students participate; to be sensitive to involve some students who appear to be motivated to speak but could not find a space to do so in interactions.

#### 9.4.1.4 Supporting international students in different stages

The research findings show that Chinese students encountered both sociocultural and psychological difficulties in their adaptation process. Therefore, a systematic and holistic support system (both academic and social/psychological aspects) is recommended to be established in both pre-departure and post-departure periods.

##### a) Pre-departure support

The research findings show that Chinese students had high expectations but low communication skills, especially speaking and writing skills (e.g. Course E presentation incident in Section 6.3; C23 in an external project in Section 8.4.5), and lacked familiarity with subject vocabulary and socio-academic knowledge of the British contexts. Therefore, three recommendations are proposed for Chinese home institutions: to prepare Chinese students with real communication skills, rather than simply high scores of language proficiency test; teach culture in the ELT (English Language Teaching) class; combine English teaching with subject teaching; and help Chinese students to have realistic expectations prior to their departure.

Chinese students' low level of communication skills may relate to relatively low priority of speaking and writing in ELT teaching, and writing tends to be confined to sentence production for grammar practice rather than discourse level in China (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996b). Therefore, it is suggested to improve Chinese students' real communication skills, e.g. pragmatic skills, paralinguistic skill (Jones, 1999), and academic writing on discourse level in the ELT in China. The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) or interactive approach is supposed to be adopted in a more effective way, e.g. to incorporate more authentic materials into the curriculum (Kramsch, 1993; Robinson, 1981), create authentic environment, e.g. have some E-learning on-line courses, video conferences, in order to improve Chinese students' real communication competence.

Secondly, in order to enhance students' communicative competence, it is necessary to integrate language and culture teaching, and build bridges between students' own culture and the target culture in the ELT pedagogy (Alptekin, 1993; Hinkel, 1999; Kramsch, 1993; Scovel, 1994). Meanwhile, it is suggested to learn not only culture-specific knowledge (Irwin, 1996: 139), but also culture-general knowledge of the target culture, in order to avoid cultural stereotypes (Gudykunst and Hammer, 1983). Therefore culture-general courses or a wide-ranging curriculum is suggested to be provided. It may cover fields such as anthropology, ethnography, sociology, intercultural communication. Meanwhile, an ethnographic approach is proposed (see Section 9.4.2).

Thirdly, it is suggested integrating English language teaching with subject teaching in the home culture's ELT curriculum, as well as the host culture's pre-sessional or ESP course, since foreign language teaching can be beyond the language curriculum. For example, Grenfell (2002: 178) proposes Modern Language Across Curriculum (MLAC) as an approach - the content subject is taught by the target language, in other words, English

language is used as a means of instruction. Teachers are required to have both advanced language and content knowledge.

Fourthly, it is suggested to help Chinese students to have realistic expectations prior to their departure, e.g. to provide adequate pre-arrival information, familiarise students with British socio-academic culture; to establish some international network and cooperation between home and target institutions, in order to help students have some pre-departure contacts with the target culture (Pruitt, 1978), in order to minimize Chinese students' adaptation difficulties in the post-arrival stage. A video conference can be used to have a pre-arrival communication with the target institutions for a proper understanding of UK culture and academic system (Elsey and Kinnell, 1990). A further solution is an exchange scheme, students are sent to the target language institutions to learn the subject for a certain period.

#### **b) post-arrival support**

First, the early-stage support. This study shows that CHC/Chinese students do not participate in classroom/group discussion as fully as native students do. Consequently, CHC/Chinese students are less likely to benefit from the advantages of classroom/group discussion and have less opportunity of success on the MBA programme. Lack of language efficiency and intercultural communication competence, and lack of familiarity with the British academic culture have been identified as two reasons for these international students' equal success in the new learning environment.

Therefore, it is suggested to incorporate intercultural communication more effectively into orientation programmes (La Brack, 1993; Martin, 1986), as Lucas argues, 'the orientation programmes are necessary but insufficient for addressing the range and depth of intercultural issues that students studying abroad face' (2003: 302). Therefore, it is suggested to provide language support, academic study skill and socio-cultural knowledge of the target culture in both pre-sessional course and orientation programmes, and in-sessional programmes through the year, to facilitate international students to overcome their language and academic difficulties. It is also suggested to have language teachers and subject lecturers to work together in in-sessional programmes (Keech, 1994). Since some British lecturers were found to fail to make the rules of the academic 'game' more explicit to international students (Turner, 2004), therefore, it is suggested to provide international students with more transparent and specific guidance and constructive feedback, in order to help them to build their confidence in the new academic environment (Foster, 2005) in this stage.

Second, the middle-stage support. The research findings show that Chinese students had the biggest social and psychological problems in the middle stage of their study, due to more time- and subject-related pressures and other complicated factors; and there were few communications and more misunderstandings between lecturers and Chinese students. Therefore, it is suggested to provide sufficient monitoring/support and more constructive feedback during their classroom/group interactions in the second stage. Since most support

programmes tended to neglect this stage, as McKinlay *et al.* (1996: 391) comment, 'current practice is geared towards arrival and orientation and neglects the follow up mechanisms needed to minimize the possible negative effects of cultural adaptation'. Therefore, an awareness of providing more academic especially social/psychological support to international students is emphasised in this stage.

Third, the third-stage support. The study shows that Chinese students tended to be generally satisfied with their sociocultural adaptation experience in the third stage. However, some students were not satisfied with limited contact with lecturers outside class, this involves the need for an enhanced social/psychological role of lecturers. Social activities are suggested to be arranged to integrate students and lecturers, especially those who are less confident but willing to integrate during this period, considering both Chinese students and British lecturers/students are getting more familiar with 'others' academic identities and values at this relatively relaxed adaptation stage. Therefore, it will be a good opportunity for lecturers and Chinese students for more communication and better understanding in this stage.

In sum, different support programmes are suggested in the pre-departure and post-departure stages in order to enhance international students' intercultural adaptation experience. The next section will discuss the second main recommendation of this study: How to develop teachers/students' IAC?

#### **9.4.2 How to develop British lecturers' and their students' IAC?**

Both British lecturers/students and Chinese students are expected to develop their IAC, in order to achieve better intercultural adaptation outcomes. Recommendations will be based on the following three aspects - sufficient home and target cultural knowledge; other-oriented and supportive attitude; and good communication/interpersonal skills.

##### **a) Improving knowledge of both home and target culture.**

Both British lecturers/students and Chinese/international students are expected to increase an awareness of their own and others' cultures (Byram, 1997; Byram and Fleming, 1998: 4; Jin and Cortazzi, 1993). This involves both culture-specific learning (learn about a particular culture, including its language) and culture-general learning (learn about universal and cross-cultural phenomena such as cultural adjustment). Students are expected to adopt different learning strategies, ranging from reflective observation to active experimentation. It involves Kolb's (1984) 'experiential learning' style, since culture is dynamic and variable, the meaning is constructed through communication with others. It involves how to learn from the context by being immersed in it.

One of the important ways of increasing students' cultural awareness and intercultural competence is to increase cultural contacts (Irwin, 1996; Jin and Cortazzi, 1993: 94; Kim, 1988) by immersing international students with native speakers in the target culture, since the specific context is very important for a person's actual intercultural experience in the



host culture, 'cultures are not only different, but that such difference must always be understood totally within the context of the relevant culture' (Bennett, 1986, 1993). Therefore, it is suggested to increase both the quantity and quality of contacts with native students, through student exchange programmes and study-abroad programmes (Byram, 1994; Coleman, 2002, 2004; Jordan, 2002; Mitchell *et al.*, 2005).

However, it is not realistic to learn multiple cultures by living in different cultures, and knowing multiple cultures does not necessarily guarantee a successful intercultural communication (Bochner, 1981). Indirect cultural contact (Byram, 2001) can be also adopted in intercultural classroom (Byram, 1989), by using an ethnographic approach (Byram, 1989; Coleman, 2002, 2004; Cortazzi and Jin, 1999; Kramsch, 1998; Robinson, 1981) in the intercultural classroom. Ethnographic approach involves a process of observing, participating, describing, analysing and interpreting, in order to 'see through our own eyes' (Robinson, 1981: 150). It emphasises learners' active participation and critical reflection of their lived intercultural experience, and develops their intercultural competence (Byram and Fleming, 1998; Byram & Zarate, 1994).

One example can be given from this study: both British and Chinese/international students were expected to reflect on their own intercultural experience in their assignment/journals. The research finding shows that MBA students (both British and Chinese/international students) were required to reflect their own and the others' group work behaviour and intercultural experience in their individual assignments. 'Through experiential activities, reflection and contact with theory, they then identify strategies for managing and learning more effectively' (Unit syllabus for EMBA 2003-2004). Therefore, experiential learning and self reflection in individual assignments can increase both domestic and international students' intercultural awareness and intercultural communication intelligence. Meanwhile, self-reflection in their individual assignments can be an important source for lecturers to be aware of students' intercultural experience (e.g. psychological struggles) through reading their assignments, thus lecturers are recommended to provide students with constructive feedback and offer further support to these students.

Since the proposal of 'teacher as a reflective practitioner' (Watkins and Biggs, 2001: 17) is based on an assumption that the teacher's conceptions/philosophies of teaching are fundamental to the quality of teaching and learning, therefore teachers are supposed to be reflective and collaborative in intercultural communication and to develop 'critical cultural awareness towards the Self and the Other, and through honest and balanced negotiation' (Phipps and Guiherme, 2004: 3). Teachers are expected to become colearners and play the role of 'brokers between cultures of all kinds' (Cortazzi and Jin, 1999; Kramsch, 1998: 30;) or 'cultural mediators' (Buttjes and Byram, 1991), along with their students in an intercultural classroom, to develop intercultural awareness. Teacher training and development programmes are supposed to emphasise a two-fold teacher's intercultural learning process: both personal and professional aspects (Sercu, 1998).

**b) Developing a sense of other-orientation/support.**

The research findings show that some British lecturers/students and Chinese students tended to be ethnocentric and have some negative stereotypes in their interactions, by assuming ‘the world-view of one’s own culture is central to all reality’ (Bennett, 1986: 33), and lack an awareness and willingness of seeing a situation from other’s point of view (Channell, 1990). Therefore, it is suggested that all participants - both British and Chinese/international students - develop a sense of other-orientation/support during their intercultural communication, to ‘monitor their ethnocentric biases on the cognitive, affective, and behavioural reactive levels, and learn to listen attentively, and observe mindfully and reflectively’ (Ting-Toomey, 1994: 369), and increase an awareness of ‘cultural relativism’ and understand others ‘from their frame of reference’ (Gudykunst, 1994: 102). Similarly, Bennett (1986) suggests practising ethno-relativism by accepting and respecting cultural differences.

Meanwhile, one way of reducing over-generalization/stereotype is to increase the complexity of stereotypes by improving one’s understanding of a particular culture, and differentiate individuals from their group, thus individual characteristics and personal identity are emphasised (Gudykunst and Kim, 1997), e.g. to see an individual not just as a Chinese or British from a particular culture, but also see him/her from other personal identity or traits such as certain status, education, age, gender and personality.

The research findings show that some lecturers tended to be too busy to answer students’ email requests, and some lecturers complained it was ‘tedious’ to teach international students. One of the reasons for lecturers’ negative attitude towards teaching international students is that teaching is not highly regarded as a priority activity within universities compared with academic staff’s research abilities (Kinnell, 1990). Therefore, British HEIs need to take action to modify the reward system to motivate lecturers to teach international students, and change lecturers’ attitude, either by intrinsic or extrinsic strategies. The intrinsic strategy entails providing lecturers with adequate training and orientation programmes. Lecturers are expected to be aware of international students’ educational, socio-cultural and personal needs, develop a supportive attitude, to ‘move from negative attitudes towards the presence of overseas students to positive ones’ (Channell, 1990: 112), give extra time and attention to international students, and establish more interactive relationship with students (Barker, 1990). The extrinsic strategy involves providing lecturers with opportunities for promotion and extra bonus for teaching and supporting international students.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is proposed to be taught in the international curriculum (Goleman, 1998; Sherlock, 2002). Kelly and Moon (1998) suggest developing students’ academic excellence as well as non-academic intelligences – understanding one’s own feelings and other’s feelings. Therefore, I propose IAC to be taught in the international curriculum. Both Chinese/international students and the host lecturers/students are taught to be competent in intercultural communication and adaptation, to be aware of culturally different others, considering other’s perspectives, providing support to others, managing

one's affective domain, increasing self-awareness and other-awareness. As 'Johari Window' (Luft & Ingram in Luft, 1970) suggests, expanding the 'open self' – to know both the self and the other, in order to achieve better intercultural communication and adaptation. Roberts (2003: 124-5) calls the adaptation a 'holistic' experience, since 'it involves the whole social being struggling to make sense of him or herself as she or he tries to make sense of others'.

**c) Developing communication and interpersonal skills.**

Firstly, the research findings show that Chinese students tended to lack an involvement in classroom discussion; and lecturers tended to lack an awareness of Chinese/CHC students' academic culture and socio-cultural difficulties (e.g. unfamiliarity with interactive approach, face issues) and lack sufficient support in involving these students in the classroom discussion. Therefore, both British lecturers/students and Chinese students are expected to improve their verbal skill such as interaction management skill (e.g. turn-taking), provide positive feedback; as well as take some 'positive non-verbal actions' (Samovar *et al.*, 1998: 261- 263) such as smiling, head nods, eye contact, facial expressions and physical proximity (Chen and Starosta, 1998: 247; Hammer, 1989) during their intercultural communications. Meanwhile, they are expected to attend to the other person's needs, manage their emotional and affective aspects (Scovel, 1994), and to allow equal opportunity for all participants to share the time of discussion (Chen and Starosta, 1998; Samovar *et al.*, 1998).

Secondly, both British lecturers/students and Chinese students are expected to develop their intercultural relationships. The research findings show that there is inadequate communication between lecturers and Chinese/international students. British institutions may need to increase the staff-student ratio, since less than adequate teaching staff may cause lack of teacher-student relationship. 'Staff-student ratios have fallen from just over 1:10 in 1983 to 1:18 in 2000 and this tends to mean that students write fewer assignments and have less face-to-face contact with staff' (White paper 2003: 15). Chinese students need to learn social and communication rules of the host society (Kim, 1994) and improve their communication skills and develop intercultural relationship.

Thirdly, both Chinese and British students need to change attitudes towards outgroups (Gudykunst and Kim, 1997: 137). The research findings show that some native students tended to have little interest in interacting with international students. They are expected to develop intercultural awareness and IAC, especially a sense of other-orientation and support, since the rapid growth of globalization requires people to have more intercultural network in a more intercultural environment. Chinese students were found to have more close relationships within their own co-national network. They are expected to make their group boundaries more flexible and open to outsiders (Yum, 1994), and play an active questioning/challenging role in class (Liu and Littlewood, 1997). Since 'communication is the central tool we can use to reduce uncertainty and gain insight into our communication partner' (Samovar *et al.*, 1998: 244). Therefore, more communication is needed between British and Chinese students and peer-paring programmes are regarded as effective to

facilitate interaction and social integration between British students and international students (Westwood and Barker, 1990).

Fourthly, group work as a learning strategy is proposed to develop communication and relationship between British and Chinese students. The research findings reveal that most Chinese students thought intercultural group work to be a very beneficial intercultural experience. They developed debating and negotiation skills and constructed their new roles/identities, and established their relationships through intercultural group interaction. The research findings also suggest that some British students played a scaffolding role in setting good linguistic and academic examples for these international students who generally enjoyed their group work with British students.

The research findings indicate that Chinese students tended to prefer collaborative, or group learning (e.g. several self-selected revision groups among Chinese students were formed to help each other), and have better performance (67%) in small group discussions (See Table 30, Q5, Section 3 in Appendix 20) than in classroom discussion (22%), they might feel more confident and it may reduce the risk of loss of face (Bodycott and Walker, 2000; Howarth, 2003), one of concepts in collective culture (Bond, 1991; Hofstede, 1980), in much relaxed environment of small group discussions. Therefore cooperative learning (Slavin, 1995) or group learning is suggested to be a good learning strategy to develop both native and international students' communication and interpersonal skills, develop intercultural relationship, and construct their roles/identities in the new learning environment (Jackson, 2002; Liu and Littlewood, 1997) and improve students' IAC. It is suggested that both native speakers and international students engage in intercultural communication and adaptation, prepare themselves for living in a global intercultural environment, and benefit from learning from each other. Cathcart *et al.* (2005) propose Peer Learning and Support Groups as a mechanism for supporting and enhancing the learning experience, based on their assessed group work project in Sunderland Business School.

## **9.5 Evaluation of this study**

In this section, I will firstly provide a brief evaluation of methodology adopted in this study; then a justification of the strengths, limitations and areas for future work for this study will be discussed.

### **9.5.1 An evaluation of methodology**

As discussed, this study mainly adopts a qualitative/interpretative approach, which enables the researcher to have a close observation of different cultural groups and an in-depth understanding of the complexity of the learning situation. Therefore, the goal of this study on the whole is not to generalise the information obtained from the samples to the whole population of Chinese overseas students in the UK or other countries. I was more interested in providing an in-depth understanding of Chinese students' intercultural

adaptation especially psychological adaptation process, by comparing different cultural groups' (especially Chinese and British) subjective views on the particular episode and context, and exploring underlying factors involved in the intercultural encounters. Though the qualitative data did not enable me to arrive at generalized conclusions, some indicative patterns emerged from analysis. These patterns reveal a change process in the learners, affected by a range of inter-related personal, cultural, social, psychological and contextual factors. The qualitative data also enabled me to build a model which should support further research in other contexts.

Furthermore, I adopted mixed and different sources of data for triangulation in this study. Though episode analysis is the main analysis method, I used different sources of data representing the same episode. For example, the field notes and interviews show that Chinese students generally adopted four strategies in their early stage of adaptation: asking co-nationals after class, asking co-nationals in class; asking lecturers after class; and asking lecturers in class. I also represent the questionnaire data as supplementary evidence (see Section 5.4.1). Overall, the methods employed by the researcher were successful in addressing the objectives of the study and achieving an acceptable level of validity and reliability within the qualitative research paradigm (see Section 4.2). It is hoped that this study and its pedagogical recommendations can contribute to the teaching/learning of Chinese overseas students in the British higher education and other educational settings.

I will argue that though I classified different cultural groups in this study, e.g. four different questionnaires were designed for four groups of participants (British lecturers, British students, Chinese students, and other international students), I emphasise individual case studies and specific episodes to explore how individuals reflect their intercultural experience and how they perceived culturally different others. Analysis is based on their classroom/group interactions, to see the process of how they construct their new student roles and educational identities.

### **9.5.2 Strength and limitation of the study**

Hammersley (1990: 107) defines two aspects of public relevance of the research: the importance of the topic in terms of public issues, and the contributions of the findings to existing knowledge. This study has explored Chinese students' intercultural adaptation and two-way identity construction process in both classroom and group communication contexts. With the increasing number of Chinese and international students coming to study in the UK, this topic is very significant for current British higher education, in terms of supporting an understanding of both British lecturers/students and international students' two-way intercultural adaptation and identity construction processes and experiences. And this study has extended Kim's (1988, 2001) and Jin's (1992, Jin and Cortazzi, 1993) models, with a particular emphasis on both host lecturers/students and international students' adaptation and identity construction process, based on a one-year ethnographic study. This study has contributed to existing knowledge by developing a concept of intercultural adaptation competence and a two-way intercultural adaptation model which is

grounded from the empirical study.

Firstly, this study has provided a holistic picture of the two-way intercultural adaptation process between Chinese students and British lecturers/students, including both sociocultural and psychological adaptation, and cultural and academic cultural identity adaptation. A concept of IAC (the domain is other-orientation/support) and an integrated model of intercultural adaptation were generated from the empirical research. The concept of IAC is mainly based on Chinese collectivist cultural values. Most intercultural adaptation research/models are developed by Western researchers who tend to bring their own subjective cultural assumptions in the theories/models. This one-year ethnographic study has attempted to provide an in-depth description of Chinese students' intercultural adaptation experience from a Chinese researcher's perspective. Meanwhile the researcher tried to trace back to the original Chinese classic works for a general philosophical background introduction to Chinese cultural and academic culture (especially Confucian philosophy), in order to provide a more reliable and unbiased discussion on Chinese students' intercultural adaptation process and explore the underlying factors more in-depth and develop an integrated theoretical model.

Since this study aims to provide a rich description and in-depth understanding of culturally different groups in the particular contexts, episode analysis was adopted as the main analysis method. This method enabled the researcher to present culturally diverse perspectives and explore the external and internal factors influencing the particular incidents, based on field notes and interviews. Meanwhile, in-depth interview enabled the researchers to explore participants' inner thoughts and psychological struggles in depth.

Secondly, both external and internal factors that influence the dynamic process of intercultural adaptation were identified and discussed. Its pedagogical recommendations can contribute to the teaching of Chinese/international tertiary students in the UK and other countries.

Thirdly, this study emphasises a two-way communication and adaptation process (a movement between Chinese/international students and British lecturers/students in their intercultural encounters, and it is found that currently this lacks a 'dialogue' and good communication/relationship development between two sides most of time. Therefore, an artificial dialogue is adopted to highlight/unravel their inner thoughts/feelings and build a theoretical theme based on the data.

Fourthly, multiple voices (four cultural groups - Chinese students, British students, non-Chinese and non-British students, and British lecturers/administrative staff, 28 nationalities) and 'culturally diverse perspectives' (Van-De-Vijver and Leung, 1997: 13) are emphasised in this study. Therefore, the results of this study are based on opinions of culturally diverse participants, rather than simply those of Chinese students, and it is thus hoped to have provided an unbiased representation and increased validity and reliability of this research.

However, some limitations to this study have to be mentioned. Firstly, this study is a qualitative/interpretative study of Chinese students' and British lecturers'/students' intercultural experience, based on an interpretation of both the researcher and participants. Therefore, it has inevitably involved personal and subjective values in the research process and interpretation, since no qualitative inquiry is value free (Lincoln, 1990; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The researcher has identified this limitation through the research process (see Section 4.6.1).

Secondly, since this study takes a qualitative/interpretive assumption, the definition of IAC and the integrated model of intercultural adaptation developed and grounded from the empirical research are based on just two MBA programmes in one particular university in the UK. It may vary from the larger population and larger settings. It aims to provide an in-depth description of the specific case rather than generalizing the whole overseas Chinese population. Therefore, findings derived from this study have to be viewed in light of this limitation.

Thirdly, the samples in this study are MBA students who might be more aggressive and challenging in personality than students in other subjects; meanwhile, the nature of the subject also requires them to be more critical. As C2 wrote in his email, 'the MBA ethos is challenge everything' (C2, 260606, email). Meanwhile, the MBA students normally enjoy high social status prior to their studies, therefore, they might have encountered more academic identity conflicts and psychological struggles than students of other subjects. Therefore, the MBA students' views and experience might be more typical than other subject students. However, the MBA student body is constructed by students from various academic and professional backgrounds.

Fourthly, since there was limited communication and contact between British and Chinese students, participants tended to hold stereotyped and ethnocentric views, therefore, the views of participants in this study tend to be restricted to own interpretations of particular episodes/contexts, based on their limited contact with each other. This study aims to present their inner thoughts and expectation gaps and explore the underlying reasons for the conflicts. Lack of communication and cultural sensitivity are identified.

Fifthly, due to time and resource limitation, this study is only focused on Chinese students' adaptation process from the beginning to the end of their study (12 months) in the UK, it does not cover the pre-departure period and re-entry (e.g. reverse culture shock) period. However, this study aims to explore the process of the two-way adaptation and intercultural identity adaptation between Chinese students and British lecturers/students in the particular context, highlighted in the specific episode during their study period in the UK. The next section will discuss the further research that can be conducted based on this study.

### 9.5.3 Suggestions for further research

The present study is an in-depth study of the intercultural adaptation experiences of Chinese students at Weston University in the UK. The issues raised are complex and there are a number of ways in which the study could be extended in both of its breath and depth. A few suggestions are provided below:

Firstly, since this study is mainly about postgraduate students' intercultural experience in their one-year intensive course, one of factors identified is time- and task-related pressure, which tends to impede the quantity and quality of intercultural communication and relationship development between participants, especially between Chinese and British students. Therefore, further research is suggested to compare Chinese undergraduate students who study for three years in the UK, to see whether there are different patterns in their intercultural adaptation process.

Secondly, this study mainly focuses on Chinese students' intercultural adaptation experience, two different sociocultural and psychological adaptation patterns have been identified, further research can be conducted to explore the other international students' intercultural adaptation patterns and outcomes.

Thirdly, this study mainly focuses on Chinese students' intercultural experience in the UK, further research can be conducted to explore the impact of Chinese students' adaptation process in the year abroad on their academic identity adaptation after they returned to their home culture (e.g. comparing integrators' and separators' different re-adaptation process). The intrapersonal psychological adaptation of the returning students in the re-entry phase has begun to be explored (Martin, 1993; Ward *et al.*, 2001). For example, some international students (Japanese) were not guided into internationalisation by the host teacher in their study-abroad journey, and they experienced some problems when they returned home, e.g. to criticize and question is not considered praiseworthy in their home culture (Greenholtz, 2003: 129). Many participants in this study experienced similar problems/culture shock after they returned to their home culture (see Appendix 27).

## 9.6 Conclusions

This concluding chapter has firstly discussed the key findings of this study; then a concept of IAC and an integrated theoretical model developed from the empirical research have been proposed, examined and evaluated; finally implications and justification of the study have been discussed.

In sum, this one-year ethnographic study is about two-way intercultural adaptation and intercultural academic identity adaptation process between British lecturers/students and Chinese students in classroom and group communication contexts. On the basis of a large amount of both qualitative and quantitative data, this study has identified both external (e.g. cultural and academic cultural distance, legitimate pedagogical culture) and internal factors



(e.g. intercultural sensitivity) that influence the two-way intercultural adaptation process. It is stressed that the intercultural adaptation experience must be understood within the particular cultural context. Chinese/international students' and native lecturers/students' sociocultural and psychological adaptation tends to vary in different contexts, stages, and among cultural interlocutors. It is hoped this study has provided conceptual clarification and theoretical synthesis of the vast and expanding field of intercultural adaptation research and has provided useful empirical information and practical implications for British institutions, researchers, teachers, students and other stakeholders.

One important strategy in Sun Tzu's Art of War 'if you know both the enemy and yourself, you will fight a hundred battles without danger of defeat' (<http://www.chinavista.com/experience/warart/warframe.html>) stresses the importance of knowing about the self and the other. The Confucian saying of 'where three people are gathered, there must be one who could be my teacher' emphasises the importance of group harmony, mutual support and openness of learning from each other. This study has proposed the concept of IAC, of which other-orientation and support is identified as the main component. Both native and non-native speakers are expected to develop an awareness and sensitivity of cultural differences, meet each other more than half way (Jin, 1992), to negotiate and construct 'alternative realities' (Stewart & Bennett, 1991) and identities, and go between cultures sensitively, so as to achieve the high level of intercultural adaptation competence and an effective intercultural communication and adaptation.

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**

FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

**An ethnographic study of the intercultural adaptation process  
between Chinese students and their British lecturers and fellow  
students in the UK**

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Tianshu Zhao

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### Appendix 1 The change of educational goals in Chinese history

	The Ancient China (20 <sup>th</sup> BC-1911)		The Republic China (1911-1949)	The Mao China (1949-1976)	The Deng China to Present (1976- present)
	Prior 1840	1840-1911			
Educational goals	All-round person, self-cultivation is focused. 'to cultivate one's own moral character, put family affairs in order, administer state affairs well and pacify the whole world'	Chinese learning for foundation, western learning as application. Training all-round persons – moral, intellectual and physical edu. Loyalty to the emperor, worship of Confucius. Advocacy of patriotism, martialism and pragmatism citizen	To seek Chinese political modernization, overthrow Qing dynasty, loyalty to nation. Freedom, equality, universal fraternity. Democratic spirit, healthy character, civics development.	'Our educational policy must enable everyone who gets an education to develop morally, intellectually and physically and become a cultured, socialist-minded worker'. all round, moral, intellectual, physical and artistic development and natural science.	'revitalizing the country through science and education', 'education should face modernization, the world and the future', in order to 'foster builders and successors with all-round development -- morally, intellectually, physically and aesthetically--for the socialist cause"
Educational philosophy and model	Confucius, Zhuxi. Private and public education	Zhang Zhidong's principle. British and American models first, then Japanese model.	Cai Yuanpei, John Dewey's pragmatism model, marxism. American 6-3-3 school system in 1922.	Marxism, Soviet theory and model, revolutionary model.	Academic model. There is distinction between keypoint and non-keypoint institutions. Two-track system: state-run and people-run schools. Vocational and technical school and general institutions develop a Chinese version of Marxism, with Chinese features.
Curriculum	Four books, five Jing, Confucian classics.	Send students abroad, establish schools. Confucian classics, scientific and technical courses.	Confucian classics were rejected, science and arts, social sciences, natural sciences, fine arts and physical culture.	Send students to Russia to study. No national exams, schools were closed for several years. Marxism, a foreign language and physical education are three compulsory courses. Social sciences was separated from natural sciences.	General curriculum, multidisciplinary subjects, Marxist theory, a foreign language and physical education.

## Appendix 2 Observations of two British primary schools

Research diary: 10 Nov 2003

I have experienced a diversity and differentiation of teaching methods since I started as a bilingual assistant (helping newly arrived Chinese students adapt to the new language, educational and cultural environment) in two primary schools in Southampton in 2002, one is M. Primary School; the other one is S. Primary School (pseudonym). The teacher at reception class in the former school often divide students into 4-5 groups (altogether 26 students), to do different games or complete different tasks. On the other hand, the teacher organized one group of selected students to do learning with the teacher. For example, once a teacher assistant organized 5 students to do eating behaviour session for several minutes by letting them take their own orders and eat artificially with plastic forks and knives. In the meantime, the other groups of students were required to do pegs inserting, brick building, painting, and playing sand and mud. Five minutes later the other group of five students were organized to do eating session. At the same time, the teacher was organizing another group of students to articulate sound 'i' and match some words with sound 'i' (Observer's diary 5 Nov 2003, M. primary school, reception class).

The teacher of the third year class in the latter school used the similar strategy. She organized one group of students to do reading, while the other groups of students were doing spelling for 10 minutes then switched to do handwriting for another 10 minutes. Even in the same group, the students used the different level of textbook, majority of students used intermediate level, some used upper intermediate level (Observer's diary 10 Nov 2003, S. primary school, year 3 class).

Therefore, I reflect the education I have received in China, especially in primary and secondary schools. Students use the same textbooks and the same materials for learning. They work at the same pace on the same quantity of material. They study the same content and work through the same curriculum on the same schedule. Teachers talk with whole groups of students, delivering the same information at the same time to everyone. And schools use the same tests for all to measure the success of the learning. This kind of sameness or uniformity may be suitable for the large size class in China and improve the efficiency of teaching, but it may bring some side effects which hinder students' creativity and diversity in thinking.

From the above observations, I conclude that the British education system emphasises diversity and individual differences in the classroom; whereas the Chinese education system stress on developing students' collectivism on the whole. This may be due to different cultural backgrounds in these two countries.

### Appendix 3 A formal access letter to the MBA program director

Dr T1 (a pseudonym)  
MBA program director  
School of Management  
Weston University

Research and Graduate School of Education  
University of Southampton  
Southampton SO17 1BJ

11 July 2003

Dear Dr T1,

Professor Christopher Brumfit, my supervisor, has suggested that I write to you as you are the director of MBA programme development for experienced graduates.

I am a research student in Research and Graduate School of Education, University of Southampton. My research project is a study of Chinese students' language and culture learning experience in British academic and social-cultural contexts and I hope to work with Chinese MBA students. It aims to explore the nature of intercultural communication between Chinese and British students, through observing and analyzing students' behaviours in teamwork in class and after class, with the ultimate goal of helping to develop Chinese students' intercultural communicative ability and improve the process of cultural socialization in the UK.

I would also like to attend some lectures next term, observing students' classroom interaction and communication behaviours, in order to get first-hand data for my research. I would be very grateful if you could consider the possibility of permitting me to attend some lectures of MBA program next term. Professor Brumfit is happy to be contacted if you would like further information about my work.

Looking forward to your earlier reply.

Best wishes,

Tianshu Zhao



## An email confirmation letter from MBA program coordinator

Dear Tianshu,

I have spoken to T1 (a pseudonym for MBA program director) about this and he has agreed that you can 'sit in' on the courses but not take part in any discussions etc. Also although you can have the School's printed pack I am unable to let you have case studies etc as there is a charge for these...

You should always confirm with the lecturer that he/she is happy for you are to 'sit in'. It is the individual lecturer's decision.

Best wishes,

T3 (a pseudonym)  
MBA program coordinator  
School of Management  
Weston University (pseudonym)

## Appendix 4 Ethical protocols of this research

Stages of research	Define problem	Research questions	Measures and procedures	Sample	Data collection	Data analysis	Representing findings
Methodological concerns in my research	Chinese MBA students may experience some differences and difficulties in their academic and socio-cultural life in the UK.	What language, culture and academic culture distances have Chinese students experienced? Any factors influencing these differences? How do they tackle these distances? For what alternative explanations must I provide?	Multiple research method, to increase validity and reliability. Participant observation, interview, questionnaire, document analysis. Informed consent before conducting research.	Around 200 MBA students and 50 MBA staff, four groups of samples (Chinese, British, non-British & non-Chinese & MBA staff). Population validity? Internal validity?	Field notes and diary, interview transcriptions, questionnaire design and some documents e.g. assignments. Will the data be sufficient to answer the question?	Will they be sufficient to reveal alternative explanations I have not considered? Will they be in a form amenable to analysis?	What other material could I collect using the same resources? Anonymity of institution and subjects, culture awareness improvement to every party concerned.
Ethical questions in my research	Whose interests are involved in this area? Is it a bias to suppose there are some problems? What are the main problems?	Who would be threatened and who would feel threatened by the questions being asked? Does my phrasing of the question or my selection of topic prejudice the problems? Do they like to recognize that they have problems? Is it a personal thing? Is the question itself misleading?	Is there a risk of damage or embarrassment to subjects? Is deception a necessary part of the procedures? Confidentiality?	Is any group excluded who ought to participate? What will be expected of the respondents? How much time and effort will it take on their part?	Will they be sufficient to cover the problems? Will they be sufficient to allow alternative explanations to be argued by interested parties how the data will be collected. multiple data collection methods will be used to supplement. How to deal with sensitive questions?	How to include participants' voices. Are personal assignments and emails analysis ethical? Coding and categories will be biased? Whether the respondents are allowed to comment on the interpretations placed upon the data.	What is the likely effect of my conclusions on research subjects and other interested parties? What additional data shall I need to counter possible objectives? Whether is it to be published, to whom and how.

## Appendix 5 Interview time and transcription details

### British students

Name	Date	Duration	Type of interview	Transcription word	Location	Recorded	Comment
B1	160304	1.30	Face-to-face	2813	pub	x	
	250304	2.00	Face-to-face	2234	pub		
	230904	1.00	Face-to-face	1948	pub		
	191104	0.50	Face-to-face	1447	cafe		
	201005	2.00	Face-to-face	2219	pub		
B2	290405	0.50	Face-to-face	1586	cafe	x	
B3	091003		email	901			
B3	260404	1.25	Face-to-face	5539	Discussion room	x	After lecture
B4	110804	1.00	Face-to-face	2381	Office building	x	
B5	120304	1.10	Face-to-face	5486	Discussion room	x	
B6	201003	1.30	Face-to-face	1903	pub		Recording failed
B7	180304	0.30	Face-to-face	684	Discussion room		Recording failed
B8	080104	1.15	Face-to-face	881	Discussion room		Tape was lost
B9	040606		email	3341			
B10	270804	1.00	Face-to-face	1552	cafe		
B11	310804	1.30	Face-to-face	5777	cafe	x	
B14	141103	1.20	Face-to-face	6720	pub	x	
B15	270404	0.50	Face-to-face	5549	Discussion room	x	
B17	310804	1.00	Face-to-face	5640	cafe	x	
B18	200505	0.30	Face-to-face	272	pub		
B24	290405	0.30	Face-to-face	343	cafe		
B27 & I14	190504	0.40	Face-to-face	3344	outside of lecture theatre	x	
B28	190504	0.30	Face-to-face	2754	Outside of the lecture theatre	x	

Note: B1-B24 were British EMBA students, B27 & B28 were British RMBA students.

## Chinese students

Name	Date	Duration	Type of interview	Transcription word	Location	Recorded	Comment
C1	171003	1.00	tele	1754			
C1	250604	3.00	Face-to-face	1709	pub	x	
C1	020804	0.40	msn	671			
C1	040804	2.00	Face-to-face	1535	pub	x	
C2	151103	1.00	tele	1687			
C2	080104	0.30	tele	306			
C2	210704	2.00	Face-to-face	3351	study room	x	
C2	250705	0.40	Face-to-face	125	Cafe		
C2	260606		email	1428			
C3	261003	1.00	Face-to-face	1282	study room	x	
C3,C1,C4 & C9	190404	0.50	Face-to-face	878	study room		Having lunch
C3 & C5	070704	0.50	Face-to-face	543	study room		Having lunch
C4	121003	0.45	Face-to-face	895	Study room		
C4	140304	0.40	Face-to-face	682	cafe		Having lunch
C4 & COI	090405	1.00	Face-to-face	1088	study room		
C5	100604	1.00	Face-to-face	4350	pub	x	
C5	240704	1.00	tel	160			
C5	180106	0.30	msn	2080			
C5	100306	0.20	msn	612			
C6	011103	0.30	tel	799			
C6	230304	0.20	tel	515			
C6	150704	0.15	msn in English	220			
C6	031005	0.40	tel	362			
C7	171003	0.30	tel	3046			
C7	090204	0.30	tel	417			
C7	270804	1.20	tel	2209			
C7	070206		Email in English	1333			
C8	280704	0.50	Face-to-face	1901	Study room		
C8	250106		Email	767			translated
C8	050206	1.00	msn	1200			
C9	231003	1.00	tel	1357			
C9	220304	1.00	tel	1560			
C9	270804	0.15	Face-to-face	679	Bus stop		
C9	210106	1.00	msn	562			
C9	250106	2.00	msn	3857			
C10	091003	0.30	tel	587			
C10	110104	0.30	tel	1333			
C10	130704	0.30	tel	1774			
C10	110106		tel	131			
C11	091003	0.20	tel	284			
C11	151003	1.00	Face-to-face	1304	Study room	x	
C11	190304	0.10	Face-to-face	103	Classroom		Breaktime of Course J.
C11	150804	0.20	Face-to-face	193	campus		
C12	071103	1.45	tel	1989			
C12	040304	0.40	tel	1077			
C12	080704	1.50	Face-to-face	3687	Study room	x	
C13	190704	2.00	Face-to-face	3328	Study room	x	
C14	271203	0.20	tel	234			
C14	150904	0.50	Face-to-face	1810	Study room	x	
C15	171003	1.10	tel	1058			
C16	011103	0.20	tel	716			
C17	101003	0.45	tel	1048			

Appendix 5 Interview time and transcription details

C18	010804	1.00	Face-to-face	1962	Study room	x	
C19	270704	1.30	tel	1037			
C20	150704	0.45	Face-to-face	1650	Study room		
C20	100306		email	779			
C21	241003	0.15	Face-to-face	231	classroom		Break time for course D
C22	111003	0.30	tel	716			
C22	040204	0.30	tel	745			
C22	200804	0.10	Face-to-face	82	pub		Pub crawl activity
C23	161003	0.45	Face-to-face	1331	Study room		
C23	190404	0.15	Face-to-face	305	campus		
C23	050804	1.20	Face-to-face	1714	Study room		
C24	180704	1.10	Face-to-face	2013	cafe		
C26	020304	0.20	tel	348			
C26	160704	1.25	Face-to-face	1790	Study room	x	
C27 & C29	311003	0.10	Face-to-face	218	classroom		Break time for course E
C27	121203	0.30	tel	661			
C27	211004	1.00	Face-to-face	2262	Study room	x	
C28	011103	0.30	tel	673			
C29	051203	0.15	Face-to-face	654	Lecture room		Break time for course E
C30	150304	0.30	Face-to-face	659	Study room		
C30	260204		email	350			
C30 & CO2	080504	2.30	Face-to-face	2074	Study room		
C31	150704	1.20	Face-to-face	3365	Study room	x	
C32	231103	0.10	Face-to-face	388	campus		
C32	230804	0.25	tel	246			
C34	211103	0.40	Face-to-face	1067	Study room	x	
C34	280704	0.20	Face-to-face	953	library		
C35	130604	1.40	Face-to-face	4701	Study room	x	
C36	111004	1.00	Face-to-face	946	Study room	x	
C37	150804	1.00	Face-to-face	1684	Study room	x	
C38	280804	0.30	tel	1161			
C38	250106	0.20	msn	639			
C39	210704	0.45	Face-to-face	1727	Study room	x	
C41	050704	0.20	Face-to-face	491	library		
CT1	090104	0.25	Face-to-face	860	Lecture room		
CT3	121003	0.30	Face-to-face	339	Study room	x	

Note: C1-C29 were Chinese EMBA students. C30-C41 were Chinese RMBA students.

## Appendix 5 Interview time and transcription details

## International students

Name	Date	Duration	Type of interview	Transcription word	Location	Recorded	Comment
I1	131103	0.30	Face-to-face	3234	Discussion room	x	
I1	181103		email	369			
I1	051203	0.10	Face-to-face	123	Lecture room		Break time for course E
I2	010404	2.30	Face-to-face	9293	cafe	x	
I4	120304	0.30	Face-to-face	1130	Lecture room	x	After class
I5	231103	0.20	tel	602			
I6	141103	0.25	tel	577			
I6	090604	3.00	Face-to-face	8186	cafe	x	
I8	160304	0.30	tel	855			
I10	070104	0.50	tel	1047			
I12	050804	0.50	Face-to-face	2814	cafe	x	
I13	051203	0.15	Face-to-face	865	Lecture room	x	Break time for course E
I17	171104	1.00	Face-to-face	3434	Study room	x	
I18	311003	1.30	tel	2039			
I18	090104	0.25	tel	346			
CT1	090104	0.25	Face-to-face	860	Lecture room		
CT3	121003	0.30	Face-to-face	339	Study room		

Note: CT1-3 were Taiwan students.

Appendix 5 Interview time and transcription details

Lecturers

Name	Date	Duration	Type of interview	Transcription word	Location	Recorded	Comment
T1	251103	0.40	Face-to-face	3090	Lecturer's office	x	
T2	281003	0.30	Face-to-face	3252	Lecturer's office	x	
T2	240206	0.40	Face-to-face	2997	Lecturer's office	x	
T4	240504	3.00	Face-to-face	16,715	cafe	x	
T5	121004	0.40	Face-to-face	3809	Lecturer's office	x	
T6	201004	1.00	Face-to-face	6677	Lecturer's office	x	
T7	180304	0.35	Face-to-face	2588	Cafe	x	
T8	171103	0.40	Face-to-face	2368	Discussion room in B2	x	
T9	181103	0.30	Face-to-face	2858	Lecturer's office	x	
T10	210604	1.00	Face-to-face	3327	Lecturer's office	x	
T10, T19 & T28	121004	0.40	Face-to-face	331	Lecturer's office		
T11	141203	0.45	Face-to-face	240	Lecturer's office	x	Recording was covered by mistake
T11	080306	0.35	Face-to-face	2180	Lecturer's office	x	
T19	010306		email	936			
T23, T19 & T9	161104	0.40	Face-to-face	656	Lecturer's office		
T26	050505	0.30	Face-to-face	569	Lecturer's office		
T27	090405	0.40	Face-to-face	699	Lecturer's office		
T28	170904		email	4100			
T29	150306	0.40	Face-to-face	1449	Lecturer's office	x	
T30	240603	0.30	Face-to-face	861	Lecturer's office		
T32	280404		email	3789			
TO1	150604	0.15	Face-to-face	160	Lecturer room		
TO2	070604	0.40	Face-to-face	1663	Discussion room in B2	x	
TO3	130404	0.30	Face-to-face	301	Lecturer's office		
TO4	240404	0.30	Face-to-face	625	Discussion room in B2		
TO6	280404		email	847			

Note: T1-T32 were MBA lecturers, TO1-TO6 were administrative and academic staff at Weston University.

**Total number of interviews and transcriptions**

Name	No of interviewees	No of interviews	Duration	Transcription word
Bs	18	23	23.23	65,314
Cs	36	86	67.37	106,198
Is	13	17	14.07	36,113
Ls	24	26	15.42	67,087
Total	92	152	120.49	274,712

## Appendix 6 Observation time and transcription details

### Time spent in the field and transcriptions of classroom/group observation

Course code	Date	Participant	Transcription	Recording	Comment
Induction	230903		321		
Induction	240903		116		
Induction	250903		667		For students 2003-2004
Induction	280904		380	1.31.05	For students 2004-2005
CA	141003	T17 & T33	1365		Whispering for help
CB	021003	T16	251		
CB	031003	T1	304	0.39.22	Difficulties in understanding jokes
CB	031003	C3 & B3 group	643	0.13.30	First meeting
CB	061003	C15 & B15	1056		Second meeting
CB	071003	C3 & B3 group	3088	1.02.45	Second meeting
CB	091003	T1	893	1.25.11	Presentation
CB	101003	T12	454		Informal T-S relationship
CB	171003	T8	2572	0.9.28	International brand debate
CC	061003	T5	316		Supply chain activity
CC	031103	T37	120		
CC	241103	T15	694		JIT episode
CC	251103	C13 & B2 group	1320		
CD	231003	T2	1351	0.35.00	Whispering episode
CD	241003	T2	495		Hovis episode C11
CD	251103	C1 & C11 group	780		
CD	291103	C9 & B5 group	414		
CD	131103	T20		0.50.47	
CD	111203	T20	136	0.12.07	Help each other after class
CE	311003	T11	968		Handout analysis
CE	071103	T11	2501	1.3.37	Team roles presentation
CE	141103	T11	5638	0.31.51	3 Chinese students were active in classroom discussion. Types of teams
CE	211103	T4	857	2.49.52	Leadership
CE	241103	CT5 & B12 group	2636		
CE	271103	T11	809	0.58.19	RMBA comparison
CE	281103	T4	530	2.02.49	
CE	071203	C30 & B26 group	860		
CE	111203	CHC groups	940		Several CHC groups' last presentation rehearsal
CE	121203	T11 T4	1844	3.24.23	Course E group presentation
CE	121203	Chinese students	619		Dinner party comment on Course E presentation
CF	120204	T4	130		
CF	190204	T6	1360		Student experience as teaching resource
CF	260204	T6	196		Exam revision
CF	040304	T14	145	2.24.54	
CF	110304	T14	1122	1.39.52	Merger debate
CF	150304	C9 & B3 group	782		First meeting
CF	220304	C9 & B3 group	1120		Second meeting
CF	230404	C10 & B9 group	3406	0.54.43	Second meeting.
CG	270204	T6	643	0.26.32	Airplane activity



Appendix 6 Observation time and transcription details

CH	T7	180304	378	1.55.55	
CH	T7	180304	432	0.26.32	Map activity
CH	T7	190304	126	2.16.10	
CI	C30	250304	538		
CI	C30	260304	104		Dislike group work
CJ	T12	120304	1097	1.17.59	Active in presentation
CL	T4	111103	105		Ask for clarification
Dissertation-writing session		180304	436	1.52.56	
CK	T39	190504	674	0.50.31	RMBA not point out lecturer's mistake
CM	T4	190504	490		RMBA
Pub crawl activity	B1	200804	123		The only social activity among EMBA
Video conference trial		260704	478		Contact with Chinese students in China through video conference with several staff at Weston Uni.
Observation as a bilingual assistant (BA)	TO10	080104	252		Observation on several local primary schools as a bilingual assistant - differentiation approach
BA	TO11	080604	467		individuality
BA	TO12	011004	439		no single right answer and uncertainty avoidance
<b>58</b>			<b>50981</b>	<b>32.08</b>	

Note: Most sessions were whole-day sessions. I spent the whole day with participants on the observation days. I had lunch with them and interviewed them after lunch or after sessions. Most of time, I continued to attend their group discussions after sessions on the same day.

There were 58 observations, the total recording time of classroom and group observation is 32.08 hours, transcription is 50,981 words.

## Appendix 7 Observation checklist and categories

There are two purposes for the classroom/group work observation:

- To compare Chinese and British students' frequency and length/duration of talk.
- To compare types of questions Chinese and British students asked (e.g. clarification, agreement or disagreement), to see if Chinese students adapted to the new academic cultural identity (questioning, challenging and independent in learning) over time.
- Expectation gaps and academic cultural identity conflicts between Chinese and British lecturers/students.

### Observation checklist

(Cs: Chinese students      Bs: British students      Is: other international students      Ts: lecturers)

- Are Cs active or quiet in classroom/group discussion?
- Can Cs follow the lecture completely?
- Can Cs express themselves clearly?
- When do Cs/Bs ask questions, in class or after class?
- To whom do Cs/Bs ask questions?
- How often do Cs/Bs/Is ask questions?
- How do Cs like the interactive approach (e.g. case study, classroom activities)?
- What types of questions do British lecturers/students and Chinese students ask?
- How do lecturers involve international students in the classroom talk?
- In which situation do Cs talk much?
- When do Cs talk the first language?
- What expectation gaps and cultural conflicts do British lecturers/students and Cs encounter during discussion?
- How different in style of presenting ideas and argument (different discourse patterns) between Chinese and British lecturers/students?
- Have Cs changed their style of communication over time?
- How do Chinese students and British lecturers/students cope with their academic cultural identity conflicts during discussion?
- Do co-nationals sit together?
- Do Cs/Bs talk to co-nationals or other nationals after class?
- What do Bs/Cs talk after class?
- Have British lecturers/students and Cs' relationship become better over time?

### Observation categories

The observation categories are based on Edwards and Westgate (1994: 85)'s Verbal Interaction Category System (adapted from Amidon and Hunter, 1967), it includes teacher/student's initiated talk and response/solicited talk.

#### Keys of types of questions/talks and observation categories

Key/code	Function of questions	Example of questions
Inf.	Ask for information	What does this mean/ any other definitions
Und.	Check understanding/ask for comprehension:	What does it mean?
Cla.	Ask for clarification:	What do you mean by...?
Con.	Ask for confirmation:	Does everyone understand?/ Are you sure?

Appendix 7 Observation checklist and categories

Opi.	Ask for opinion	What's your view then? What do you feel about that? Do you think their strategy was right?
Dis	Ask for disagreement/challenging	Why was that? Why do you think that happened?/Does anybody disagree?/ any other ideas?
Exa.	Ask for examples	Can you give us some examples?/Any others?/who else?
Sol.	Ask for solution to problem	What should they do now?
Agr.	Ask for approval/agreement	Anybody agree?

## Appendix 8 An observer's dilemma and paradox

Considering the participant observers/researcher's dual roles – 'outside role in society and inside role in the research setting' (Burgess, 1984: 47). He suggests identifying with the people (get close to participants, but maintain a professional distance which permits adequate observation and data collection). I experienced a dilemma being an insider and outsider during the field work.

As an overt observer-as-participant (with limited participation in the field and role of researcher is to the fore, Gold, 1958), I was allowed to join in any group to sit there listen quietly without expressing my opinions, and I often transferred from one group to another, with the group's consent. For example, participants formed particular groups for one specific assignment, and they would meet several times, I became the nominal member of one group during a certain period of time, I attended their meetings and would be told the time and place for the next meeting through their emails. Normally at the beginning of the group discussion, participants would make a rule for all members (including me): not to release any news about their project before they had group presentation or submit the group assignment. I agreed and obeyed their rules. They often exchanged their opinions and information before or after discussion through internal emails within the group (including me). I was thus an insider of that group during that period.

However, when I had to transfer to another group during that particular period, I felt that I was not a 'loyal' member or insider of any group, I felt sorry about my role as a researcher, though I didn't say anything about any group. I often thought my participants trusted me so much, I should stick to one group only. But as a researcher, I had to observe other groups, because I wanted to provide a holistic picture of the participants' group work behaviour from multiple perspectives.

As an overt observer-as-participant, I had this dilemma being an insider or outsider all through my fieldwork, especially at the early stage of observation and interaction with the subjects.

Meanwhile I also encountered 'observer's paradox' (Labov 1972; Cameron, 2001: 20) – the researcher/observer wants to observe people's 'ordinary talk' when they are not being observed. On the one hand, I wanted to capture as much ordinary talk as possible, to bring the reality to my research. On the other hand, it is difficult (sometimes impossible, or unethical) to tape-record the ordinary talk, especially this study involves many people's inner psychological thoughts and emotions. This is why many of my data have not been tape-recorded, I didn't want to affect the natural and spontaneous environment of talk. This kind of environment was so important for my participants to speak out their ideas without worry about being observed by a bystander. Therefore this kind of recording may be not very accurate, because it was not exactly what participants talked. I tried to retrieve from my memory as soon as I had the opportunity to jot them down.

## Appendix 9 Samples of research journals

<Extract 1>

*Case study of C2: Challenging theories and lecturers (Research Journal, 220704)*

C2 was one of the most active and critical Chinese students in the class discussion. He often tried to challenge theories and lecturers in class. He once challenged the IQ test questionnaire in Course E unit.

*When the lecturer T11 discussed the psychological theory and IQ test questionnaire, C2 argued, 'I don't think it is fair for some Chinese applicants to complete the IQ questionnaire in the job interview in some multicultural companies, because it is written in English and it is mainly based on western samples and contexts' (Field note, 071103, Course E).*

When I asked his opinion on Chinese students' critical thinking, he said Chinese students are as critical as British students, especially in the second semester.

*C2: I think Chinese students are the same with British student in this aspect. C17 once said to me, 'you are so aggressive to challenge people'. This made me recall that I once challenged T4 in Strategy unit, who said management was unable to control, I argued, 'if it is not to be controlled, we don't need to learn MBA'. Many Western students challenged him after I said so. I think we can control, we can learn some skills of how to control. I think many Chinese students like to challenge lecturers, especially in the second semester, when they are more confident and more familiar with theories (C2, 210704) (Research Journal, 220704, C2 Challenged theories and lecturers).*

\*\*\*\*\*

<Extract 2>

*Case Study of C13: Changing from quietness to activeness (Research Journal, 120304).*

I joined C13's four group work activities in the first semester.... He was relatively quiet in the first mixed group (Course B), because he felt it was difficult to express himself in English, 'I am an extrovert person, I am eager to talk when I have ideas, but I found I could not express myself clearly and fully, and could not make others understand me, but when I tried 2-3 times, and I think it is not the case, so I do not speak quite often since' (C13, 190704).

Then he approached two British students and worked with them for his second group assignment 'Course C'. He said, 'I'm sure my statistic skills are much better than them, but my English is not good, so C26 and I decided to work with them. I think we can benefit each other' (C13 & B2, 251103, Course C group work). However, this group only met once and had very little communication between British and Chinese students.

C13's next two group assignments (Course D and E) were done with Chinese only groups. He was more active in these two groups, he made a lot of contribution in the HR group presentation (the third highest mark in class). 'They adopted many examples of world-famous international companies with many figures/numbers in their

presentation (16 companies, most of them are American companies, using much updated information). He answered two questions from the audience during the question time. He looked very confident when he answered questions' (Field note, 121203, Course E presentation).

His assignment marks were not high in the first semester which was around 50 in average. 'I had many good ideas in my assignment, but I did not know how to use evidence to justify them, so I got low marks in the first few assignments...I got better marks in the second semester' (C13, 190704). Two of his assignment marks were over 70 in the second semester. Like C13, many Chinese students were not familiar with Western academic writing, they knew they should be critical, but did not know 'how' to justify their argument by evidence in the beginning of the term, and many of them got low marks (Research Journal, 120304).

\*\*\*\*\*

<Extract 3>

*Case study: C23's adaptation experience (Research Journal, 060804)*

C23 was very motivated to construct her new roles/identities. During Course E presentation question time, she was active to answer questions from the audience. She drew a graph on the white board to illustrate the company's Course E structure on behalf of her group when she answered a British student's question (Field note, 121203, Course E).

In the second semester, she was more active in participating classroom discussion and presentations. She was in the same 'client group' with C10 and two British part-time students in Course J presentation session, 'she gave some constructive comments on the customer's groups' (Field note, 120304, Course J).

She also attended some activities outside universities. Once she was invited by an MBA lecturer to attend a two-day Market Research training session outside university, and she asked many questions in the training sessions, and told me during break time, 'it gives me a great opportunity to meet people in the market research field and to see how marketing is undertaken in the UK. I really enjoy it' (Field note, 220404, Market Research training).

## Appendix 10 Semi-structured interview schedule and questions

Cs: Chinese students      Bs: British students      Is: other international students  
Ts: lecturers

### Semi-structured interview schedule

#### 1/ Preliminary remarks

- Brief self introduction
- Purpose of the research and interview
- Anonymity and confidentiality issues
- Thank the interviewees in advance for their co-operation
- Ask permission of tape-recording and note-taking
- Ask them to give a brief self introduction

#### 2/ Concluding remarks

- Thank the interviewee for time and co-operation
- Ask if there is anything else the interviewee wants to add or any questions about the research and the researcher.
- Followed up with a transcription to check when necessary

### Interview questions in the initial stage

- Can you follow the classroom/group discussions completely?
- What do you think of your oral English and classroom/group debate skills in classroom/group discussions?
- What do you think of your classroom/group work behaviour? Are you active/passive? Why?
- Do you ask when you have immediate language and academic questions during classroom/group discussion?
- When you have immediate academic problems, who would like to seek help?
- Are there any expectation gaps and cultural conflicts during classroom/group discussions?
- What do you think of your critical/independent thinking ability?
- What do you think of the teacher's roles in the UK?
- Are you satisfied with lecturer's answers?
- What kind of teaching style do you like (transmission or interactive approach)?
- What kind of lecturers do you like? Why?
- How do you deal with assignment? Do you adopt the original learning strategies in the UK?
- How do you feel when your proposals are interrupted or rejected?
- What do you think of the underlying reasons for the interruption or rejection?
- How do you think of your relationship with Bs/Cs/other Is/Ts?

### Interview questions in the second stage:

- What do you think of your classroom/group work behaviour in this stage?
- Are you satisfied with your behaviour in classroom/group discussion in this stage?
- Which aspect of your English language skills improve?
- Do you have any good/bad relationship development with Bs/Cs/Is/Ts?
- Are there any change in your written assignments?

### Interview questions in the third stage:

- What is your learning outcomes in the UK?
- Do you have any self-improvement in cognitive/affective/behavioural aspect?
- What is your general impression on Bs/Cs? (strengths and weaknesses)?
- Any suggestions for the new Chinese MBA students and lecturers/school?
- Do you have any social activities in this stage?
- Any relationship change (with British students/lecturers)?



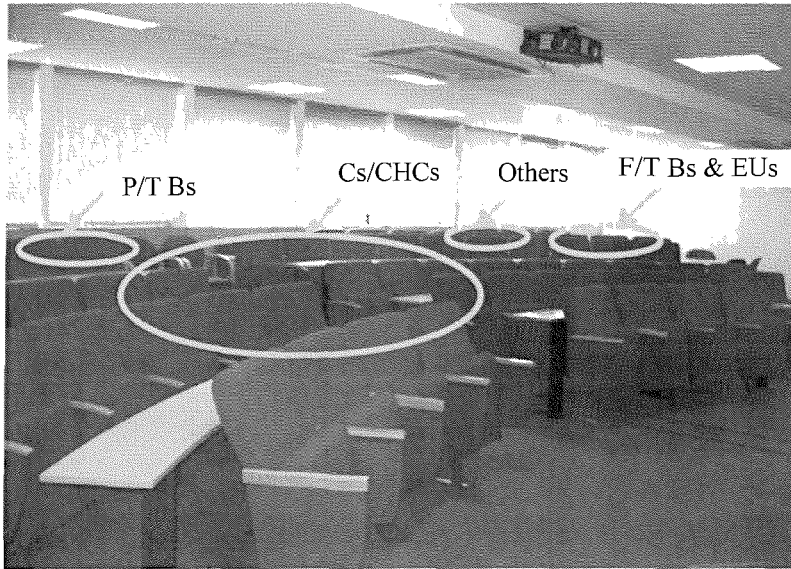
## Appendix 11 A comparison of questionnaire and interview

Consideration	Questionnaire	Interview
scope	wide respondent	limited respondent
depth	low; limited questions and answers can be asked	high; complex questions and follow-up questions can be asked
cost (time and money)	less time-consuming; cheap	time-consuming; expensive
data coding and analysis	easy	difficult
response rate	low	high
degree of misunderstanding or bias	low	high
form of questions	more closed questions	more open-ended questions
structure	more structured	less-structured
sequence and wording of questions	same	varied
sources of error	limited to instrument and sample	interviewer, instrument, coding and sample
emphasis on writing skills	high	low
validity	low	high
reliability	high	low
Interaction	low	high

(Modified from Cohen and Manion (1994: 272)'s summary of advantages and disadvantages of questionnaire and interview)

## Appendix 12 EMBA and RMBA classroom seating

### The seating pattern in EMBA lecture room



From left to right side

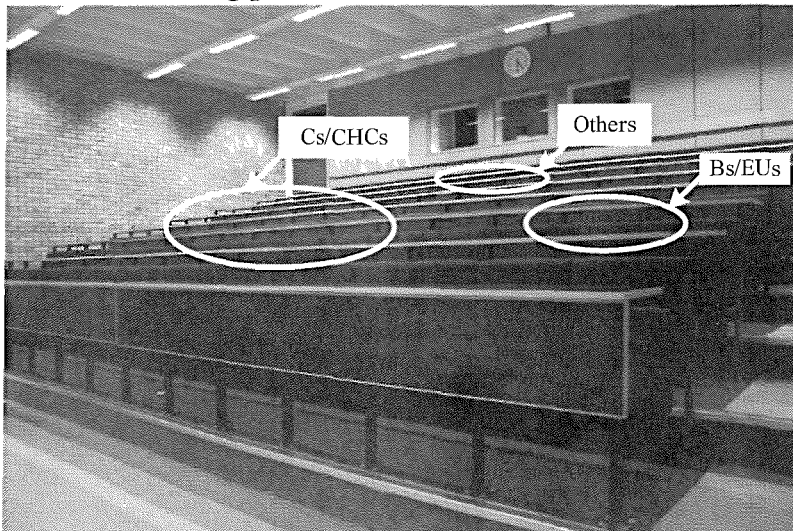
Back left: Part-time British students (P/T Bs)

Front and middle: Chinese and Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) students (Cs/CHCs)

Back in the middle: Other students (Others)

Back right: Full-time British students and European students (F/T Bs & EUs)

### The seating pattern in the RMBA lecture room



From left to right side

Front left and middle: Chinese students & CHC students (Cs/CHCs)

Back in the middle: Other students (Others)

Front right: British students and some European students (Bs/EUs)

Interpretation:

Interestingly, EMBA and RMBA students' seating/location is relatively fixed (unwritten rules). For example, in EMBA classroom, British full-time students sat in the back right corner of the lecture room. British part-time students sat on the back left corner, except one or two British students sat in the first row occasionally. Majority of CHC and Chinese students sat in the front and middle of the lecture room. Many CHC students were mixed with Chinese students, though some of them had their own national groups, e.g. some Taiwan students, some Japanese or Thai students sat together. Some European students sat together with British students. During break time, most students communicated with their co-nationals.

## Appendix 13 Field note of Course E classroom interaction 141103

Date/Time: 14 Nov 2003, Fri. 10:52-11:24am (32 minutes)

Unit/Sample: Course E / EMBA

Session: Groups and teams.

Venue: Lecture room 3000, Management School Building

Number of students: 76

Facilities: power point and handout.

The selected 32-minute classroom interaction is on the topic of types of teams, the discussion is based on the slide 9.8 – 9.10).

### Classroom interaction in Course E session (Field note 141103, Course E)

Time	T's talk (no/type/length)	Initiated talk		Solicited talk	
		Cs	Bs	Cs	Bs
10:52	introduction				
10:54	Inf, pro				exa. B6, 5s.
	Inf, pro				B2, exa. 2s.
10:56	Inf, pro				B1. exa. 10s.
10:57	dis, pro				B12 exa.3s
	cla, opi				Bx opi. 60s
10:58	agr				B6 exa 10s
10:59	agr				B7 exa 15s
11:00	brief summary				B12 com. 2s
11:01					11com. 3s
11:02	further inf pro.			C9 exa 10s.	
11:03					B14 opi 1m
11:04	opi				
11:05	move to next topic				
11:06	inf, prv.				B7 joke 1s
					B23 30s exa
11:08					B12 exa, 60s.
11:11	infor	C10 exa 30s	B14 inf 2s	C10 exa 28s	
11:12			B12 inf 2s	C10 exa 58s	
11:13	exa.		B14 exa 30s		
11:14		C2 dis.1s	B15 dis joke 1s		
		C2 dis. 12s	Bx com 1s		
			B15 inf 1s		
11:15		C7 opi, 5s			
			I6 com 1s		
11:16			B12 opi. 5s		
			Bx 2s		
			Bx 2s		
11:17	appr		B15 com 15s		
11:18	exa.				
			B12 com 4s		
11:19	infor				B13 com 2s
11:20-24	summary				
Total turns	24 times, 24.14 min.	3 times, 48 sec.	11 times, 1 min 5 sec.	3 time, 1 min 36 sec	13 times, 4 min 23 sec.

The above table is summarized into a table below:

Students	Total talk (turns/time)	Initiated talk (turns/time)	Solicited talk (turns/time)	No of speaker (total 76/23Ns+53NNs)
Chinese	6 / 2.24 min	3 / 48 sec	3 / 1.36 min	4 / 39 (10%)
British	24 / 5.28 min	11 / 1.05 min	13 / 4.23 min	10 / 23 (43%)
Other	2 / 4 sec	1 / 1s	1 / 3 sec	2 / 14 (14%)

Based on Edwards and Westgate (1994: 85)'s Verbal Interaction Category System (adapted from Amidon and Hunter, 1967).

(Notes: T: lecturer Cs: Chinese students Bs: British students

Und: ask for understanding cla: ask for clarification inf: ask for information

Dis: showing disagreement cha: challenge theories/teachers Agr: showing agreement

exa: give examples Ns: native speaker NNs: non-native speaker)

#### The total length and frequency of British and Chinese talk

	Total turns	Total time
Chinese students	6	2.24
British students	24	5.28

#### The total turns of the lecturer and students

	Total turns	Total time
Students	32	7.56 min
The lecturer	24	24.14 min

#### Summary

Firstly, this extract shows that Chinese students were more active and challenging than they were seven weeks ago. Four Chinese students were quite active in giving their examples and opinions. They had more interactions with British lecturers and students. The nature of their classroom talk was mainly about giving examples, expressing opinions and showing disagreement, rather than checking understanding and asking for clarification. They had better classroom performance.

Secondly, the classroom talk was still dominated by British students. There were 76 students in total who attended this session (30% native, 70% non-native). 43% of British students talked in class, but only 10% of Chinese and 14% of other international students talked in class. British students' talks were longer than Chinese students, and they took more turns than Chinese students.

Thirdly, the teaching method was quite interactive. The lecturers asked a lot of provocative questions and tried to involve students to contribute and share their experience.

## Appendix 14 The final diploma mark analysis

A specific example can be given below to show how I used comparison method to do student participants' final mark analysis.

1/ Comparing Chinese/CHC students' general academic performance with those of British students in two MBA programmes.

2/ Comparing Chinese students' general marks in the first semester and second semester, to see their academic performance change, when they became more familiar with British academic culture (e.g. have their own ideas, to be critical thinking) and academic writing skills.

3/ Comparing EMBA and RMBA Chinese students' final marks (RMBA is better).

4/ Comparing individual Chinese student's assignment mark change in two semesters, to see if their academic writing improved.

5/ Comparing literacy- and numeracy-based subject marks, to see how Chinese language/communication skills and socio-cultural distance influence their academic performance (numeracy-based subject is better).

6/ Comparing female and male marks (female's performance is better).

7/ Comparing Chinese students' specific course (e.g. Course E) marks with those of British students, e.g. Course E presentation incident did influence Chinese students' general performance.

The purpose of comparing EMBA and RMBA students' assignment and exam performance is to explore whether they have achieved better exam and assignment marks over time,

### *A comparison between EMBA and RMBA Chinese students*

All Chinese MBA students passed the diploma marks (the average mark before writing dissertation). 4% of EMBA and 14% of RMBA Chinese students got distinction marks (average diploma marks are above 68 percent), 39% of EMBA and 52% of RMBA Chinese students achieved merit marks (average diploma marks are above 60 percent) (see Table 1 below).

Table 1 Percentage of Chinese students' distinction/merit marks

	EMBA	percent	RMBA	percent
distinction	1	4%	3	14%
merit	11	39%	11	52%

Both EMBA and RMBA Chinese/CHC students had the least good performance in the MBA programmes. EMBA and RMBA Chinese students' diploma marks are 1.36 and 0.50 lower than the average respectively. EMBA Chinese students had bigger gaps with British students in marks (10.04 percent), especially in Course E module (14.18 percent). And RMBA Chinese students tended to have better performance than EMBA students, their gap with British students is smaller (4.26 percent). RMBA Chinese students had better marks than British students in two subjects: Course N (2.14 percent higher than British) and Course O (1.55 percent higher than the average, 0.47 percent higher than the British).

### *A comparison between Chinese and British students*

Both EMBA and RMBA Chinese students had better marks in numeracy-based subjects

(e.g. EMBA Chinese marks of Course D and Course C are 0.41 and 0.43 percent higher than the average respectively; RMBA students' Course N is 1.88 percent higher than the average). Chinese students had relatively less good marks in literacy-based subjects (e.g. EMBA Chinese students' Course E marks is 1.91 than average, 14.18 lower than British students; RMBA Chinese Course P mark is 4.90 lower than average, 15.29 lower than British students).

#### *A comparison between assignment and exam performance*

Both EMBA and RMBA Chinese students had much better performance in exams than assignments in the first semester. For example, Table 2 (five core units, four in semester 1 and one in semester 2) shows that EMBA Chinese students' assignment mark is 1.55 lower than the average, but their exam mark is only 0.24 lower than the average among five core units. The same as RMBA Chinese students, Table 3 (six core units, 3 in each semester) indicates that their assignment mark is 3.62 lower than the average mark, and 8.83 lower than British students, but their exam mark is 1.55 higher than the average, only 1.13 lower than British students, with the same courses. This shows that the main difference between RMBA Chinese and British students is in assignment marks.

Table 2 EMBA Chinese students' assignment and exam change in two semesters

EMBA	Sem1		Sem2	
	assi.	exam	assi.	exam
Total	62.45	56.65	53.13	57.3
UK	68.79	65.61	60.00	69.86
China	60.90	56.41	51.71	54.79
CHC	61.68	52.55	54.07	52.92

Table 3 RMBA Chinese students' assignment and exam marks in two semesters

RMBA	Semester 1		Semester 2	
	assi	exam	assi	exam
Total	64.84	58.70	66.74	54.81
UK	70.05	61.38	71.05	60.00
China	61.22	60.25	66.63	54.00
CHC	63.03	58.82	67.88	49.63

#### *Assignment/exam mark change over time*

There is no significant improvement in EMBA Chinese students' assignment and exam performance in the second semester. Table 2 shows that EMBA Chinese students' assignment marks were only a little bit better (0.13 percent rise) than they did in the first semester, and their exam performance was degraded by 2.27 in the second semester, it may partly due to exam paper error, partly due to unfamiliarity with the subject (Course F is much Western philosophy-based, similar to RMBA's low mark in Course P).

Since there was only one core module in Semester 2 for EMBA students, it was not easy to compare their assignment and exam improvement over time. Therefore, I also compared ten assignments in two semesters (5 in each semester), to see EMBA Chinese students' assignment improvement. Table 4 shows that EMBA Chinese students did not have significant improvement in their assignment marks (0.30 lower than semester 1). Though many Chinese students got relatively higher individual assignments marks for some particular subjects, e.g. some of them got over 80 percent, e.g. C2 for his Course S, C13 for his Course T, C20 for his Course Y. This implies their language improvement and more familiarity with the Western academic writing and academic culture (e.g. critical and independent thinking, having their own ideas).

Table 4 Chinese EMBA students' individual assignment comparison in two semesters

Assignment course	A	B	D	E	C	F	G	J	H	I	Sem 1	Sem 2
Total	63.70	59.28	63.20	59.08	68.25	53.13	66.72	56.13	61.08	55.39	62.70	58.49
UK	68.14	62.86	69.86	70.29	72.14	60.00	70.14	67.67	64.67	73.00	68.66	67.10
China	62.57	57.46	62.86	56.18	67.11	51.71	66.23	53.05	59.36	53.29	61.24	56.73
CHC	67.46	58.35	64.49	56.99	66.87	54.07	65.41	57.68	59.04	55.26	62.83	58.29

RMBA Chinese students tended to have some improvement in assignment performance, but not in exam performance over time. Table 3 shows that RMBA Chinese students' assignment mark has improved by 3.51 percent, but exam mark degrades by 2.36 percent in the second semester. The reason for RMBA students' assignment improvement may be due to their language improvement, familiarity with the academic writing and the British academic culture (e.g. critical and independent thinking, having their own ideas). The degrade of exam marks may due to the low mark of Course P (a philosophy-based course).

Since both EMBA and RMBA students' exam marks degraded, and since exam marks consist 50% and 70% of the total marks of each module in EMBA and RMBA class, therefore, both EMBA and RMBA students did not have significant improvement in their general performance in the second semester.

### *Gender differences*

EMBA Chinese female students had better performance than male students. Table 5 shows that EMBA female diploma mark is 1.61 percent higher than the one of male students. EMBA female students are better in both assignment and exam, especially in exam (4.99 higher than male students).

Table 5 Chinese EMBA male and female student marks

EMBA	Diploma	B	D	E	C	F	A
Total	58.96	61.93	61.14	55.82	61.18	57.07	62.57
Male	58.39	61.89	60.28	55.78	60.28	56.17	62.83
Female	60.00	62.00	62.70	55.90	62.80	58.70	62.10

Table 6 shows that Chinese RMBA female students' diploma mark is 0.06 lower than the one of male students. However, RMBA Chinese female students have relatively better exam marks than Chinese males.

Table 6 Chinese RMBA male and female student marks

RMBA	Diploma	Eco	Stats	Mar	Fin	RM	Ris	IS	MO	Str	HR	ComS	CorS
Total	61.05	59.90	60.00	59.67	54.19	70.86	64.19	68.14	65.24	61.33	63.90	57.38	59.62
Male	61.15	61.00	64.13	58.00	51.13	69.13	67.50	69.88	65.63	60.63	63.13	56.13	57.88
Female	60.99	59.23	57.46	60.69	56.08	71.92	62.15	67.08	65.00	61.77	64.38	58.15	60.69

### Discussion

There is bigger gap in total marks between EMBA Chinese and British students, but smaller between RMBA Chinese and British students. It may be because of more balanced proportion of international students in the RMBA class (There are 28 nationalities, and Chinese students consisted of 20% of the class; whereas 47% of Chinese students in EMBA class); the second reason may be due to work experience differences (British students' average age is 39 in EMBA class, 7 years older than Chinese students, and 57% was upper intermediate managers; whereas 53% of Chinese EMBA students were lower



intermediate managers. In RMBA class, most British and Chinese students had little work experience.

There are several possible reasons for the mark differences. First, it might be due to Chinese students' unfamiliarity with the writing style and assignment requirement, and they might be unfamiliar with the sociocultural contents of the case studies as well. Second, it might be due to lecturers' different marking criteria and unclear requirements of assignments. Third, it might be due to course differences. Chinese students tended to have better marks in numeracy-related subjects than literacy-based subjects. For example, both EMBA and RMBA Chinese students have lower marks in Course E, F, P and I, which were more Western philosophy-based courses.

There are two possible reasons for Chinese students' better performance in exam than in assignment in the first semester. Firstly, exam took place after Christmas holidays, many Chinese students worked very hard during revision periods, whereas assignment deadline is much shorter and they said they did not have a good understanding of the theories during their assignment writing period. Some students said they were good at exams, they used their previous exam strategies (such as read handout and books carefully, made detailed revision notes and prepare collectively) in exams. The other reason is that written assignments may require higher communication/writing skills, many Chinese students were not familiar with the Western academic writing and assignment requirements, and they were not good at structure and having their own ideas in assignments in the beginning of their study, therefore they may get less good marks in their assignments.

## Appendix 15 Two field notes of numeracy-related sessions

### Field note for Course C. 061003, by T5.

Date/Time: 06 Oct 2003, 6-9pm

Unit/Sample: Course C / EMBA

Session: Supply chain management

Venue: Lecture room 3000, Management School Building

Number of students: more than 70

Facilities: the lecturer used power point, whiteboard, handout, and some colorful cards and papers for group work.

The first part of this session was about supply chain management. The lecturer wrote a supply chain process on the white board, and separated students into five groups (factory, distributor, wholesaler, retailer and end customer group), to simulate a supply chain management in the real situation. Each group needs to finish some specific tasks according to the written instructions.

Factory → distributor → wholesaler → retailer → end customer

I found Chinese students were very active in this task-based group work. They were busy with calculating and forecasting their stocks, budget, or orders; they asked questions or exchanged ideas with their mixed group members. They spoke and laughed a lot during group work, they seemed very relaxed in this session.

I asked C3's impression on this session during break time, he said, 'very exciting and enjoyable, I have a better understanding about supply chain management in this way, this is the first time I feel so relaxed in the lecture room', 'why?', 'I like this kind of teaching method and also I feel more comfortable with this subject'.

I interviewed the lecturer T5, who thought Chinese students were more 'home with' the numeracy-based subject: 'I think it is one of subjects they (Chinese students) are much more home with...I found it (Course C) is the subject they are forthcoming, asking questions and talking about it' (T5, 121004).

'C13 is very happy with Course D (a numeracy-based), when he sat with his self-selected Course D group (six Chinese students only) in class for a quick discussion, he said to the group, 'I've just begun to have some feeling of doing MBA, I feel excited as soon as I see numbers and figures'. C1 and C12 agreed' (Field note, Course D group discussion, 241003).

### Field note for Course D, whispering episode, 231003, by T2.

Date/Time: 23 Oct 2003, 9:00am-4:30pm

Unit/Sample: Course D / EMBA

Session: Numeracy and problem-solving, information for decision-making

Venue: Lecture room 3000, Management School Building

Number of students: around 70

Facilities: the lecturer used power point, OHP, whiteboard, handout, and textbook

## An observation of Course D session

Time	T's question (no/type)	Initiated interaction		Solicited interaction	
		Cs	Bs	Cs	Bs
9:00-9:50	Calculation and discussion in small groups				
9:51-10:05	5 inf, 2 und	1 cla	1 clar, 1 exp	3 inf, 2 exp	2 inf, 2 with exp
	A lot of whispering				
10:06-10:15	3 inf, 2 und			2 inf, 1 exp	1 inf, 2 exp
	Many students were whispering, especially Chinese students. The lecturer said, 'Ok, it is the solution'. The whispering voice was raising, they seemed not satisfied with the result or not quite understand. Solution sheets were distributed to students. 'Ok, we have to switch to part two after break'.				
10:16-10:40	Coffee break				
10:41-11:42	The second part of the lecture, information for decision-making. The lecturer kept talking, less questions and answers, less whispering. The students took notes, read textbook and listened. The handout is mainly based on the specific textbook. Most students have bought the book. The lecturer often told students the specific page number. The lecturer listed figures on the white board and illustrated the data. A lot of whisperings, some were checking understanding, some shared books. The lecturer said 'can we have one conversation?', when he found students whispering in class.				
	exp	0	3 cla	1 exp	0
11:43-12:35	The lecturer asked students to do exercise on page 148-149, one Chinese student asked which page, the lecturer repeated, then one British student declared 'it's furniture'. The lecturer said 'sorry, it's page 184-185, it is half hour discussion in groups'. A lot of whisperings, the lecturer was a little bit unbearable and said 'you are so rude'. One minute later, C9 asked a question, T2 did not answer, instead he said, 'I just replied the same question two minutes ago, because you were busy with talking to each other, I won't answer again'.				
	4 inf, 2 und	1 cla	3 cla	4 inf, 1 exp	3 inf, 1 exp
Total turns	18	2	8	14	11

## A comparison of Chinese and British talk in a Course D session

	Total talk	Initiated talk	Solicited talk
Chinese students	16	2	14
British students	19	8	11

## Summary:

1/ Course D is a numeracy-related subject, mainly characterized by a teacher-centred and textbook-focused teaching style. The lecturers' questions are mainly focused on facts and figures, 'what the profit margin do we have?' 'what about...', 'How about labour hour?', 'How does the number come from?'. Students are asked to calculate costs in small groups (3-5 members). Both British and Chinese students were relatively quiet in class. Their solicited talks are mainly about giving calculation results, '852.20', 'three thousand', with short explanation. The lecturer wrote the answers on the board, students copied onto their notebooks.

2/ Chinese and British students' turns of talk are similar. Their talks are mainly on the purpose of clarification and understanding. Chinese students tend to be more active and confident than British students in this numeracy-related unit. Their solicited talks are more than British students, and they take more turns in answering questions than in other units.

3/ Chinese try to help each other by whispering, which is disruptive to the lecturer and other students to some extent.

## Appendix 16 Field note of Course E 071103

Date/Time: 07 Nov 2003, Fri. 9:00am-12:30pm

Unit/Sample: Course E / EMBA

Session: Team and individuals

Venue: Lecture room 3000, Management School building

Number of students: 81

Facilities: the lecturer used power point, OHP, whiteboard, flipchart, handout, case study reference.

### Chinese students' talk in Course E class

Time	T's question (no/type)	Initiated talk		Solicited talk		comment
		Cs	Bs	Cs	Bs	
9-10:40		Group discussion				
10:41-11:00	3 und	1 und	0	6 inf, 1 inf Jap	7 inf, 4 exa	most of the solicited talk from Cs are bullet points
11:01-11:30	2 und	1 cla	1 cha	1 agr, 1 agr Jap	5 agr, 1 dis	
11:31-11:50		Break, handouts were distributed				
11:50-12:30	5 cla	0	1 dis	1 cla	4 cla, 2 exa, 1 dis.	the nature of the lecture is mainly interactive and communicative
12:30-13:35		Lunch break				

Notes: T: lecturer Cs: Chinese students Bs: British students

Und: ask for understanding cla: ask for clarification

inf: ask for information Dis: showing disagreement

cha: challenge theories/teachers

Agr: showing agreement exa: give examples

The above table can be summarized as a table below:

#### Classroom interaction in Course E session

	Total turns	Initiated talk	Solicited talk
Chinese students	10	2	8
British students	26	2	24

#### Summary:

Chinese students were generally quiet and less challenging in this selected session. British students took 26 turns in class, whereas Chinese students took 10 in total. Many of Chinese students' turns were solicited talk - by answering the questions rather than raising questions or arguing. And their talk was mainly during brainstorming activity, maybe because this activity did not require students to take long turns, they just simple made some bullet points.

The nature of Chinese students' classroom talk in this session was mainly for clarification and understanding, their questions were 'which company?', 'what does it mean by...?'. There was no disagreement or challenge from Chinese students in this selected session.

## Appendix 17 Field note of Course E 271103 for RMBA students

(Note: EMBA and RMBA students had a similar course (Course E), taught by the same lecturers).

Date/Time: 27 Nov 2003, Thu, 11am -12:40am

Unit/Sample: Course E / RMBA (weeks 7-12)

Session: Individuals at work.

Venue: Lecture room 3001, Management School Building

Number of students: 58

Facilities: the lecturer used power point, whiteboard and handout

T11 taught Course E in both streams, at nearly the same time with similar contents, but in different teaching methods. There were few interactions in RMBA classroom. I noticed that T11 asked more factual and information-related questions in RMBA class, e.g. 'who are internals?', 'who are type A?', 'Anyone can give examples of value change?' During break time, T11 told me, 'it is quite different, in EMBA class, you can't stop them; but here you have to push them. I have to adjust my teaching style to accommodate them by asking direct questions'.

There was only one verbal communication from Chinese students during 55 minute selected session. Four Chinese students raised their hand silently in response to the lecturer's question 'who are internals' and 'who are type A?'.

55 minutes classroom discussion, from 11:10am -12:05pm.

Time	T's question (no/type)	Initiated talk		Solicited talk	
		Cs	Bs	Cs	Bs
11:10			1 cla		
11:12			1 inf		
11:23					1 exa
11:30			1 cla		
11:32					1 inf
11:36					1 exa
11:37				1 exa	
11:40					1 exa
11:41	Who are internals (inf)			2 hand up	2 hands up (2 int)
11:52			1 cla		
11:53					1 con
11:54	Who are type A? (inf)			2 hands up	3 hands up (3 int)
11:55	Anyone disagree? (dis)				3 dis & exp
12:00	Anyone can give examples of value change? (inf)				(1 Greek exa)
12:05	Any globalization change? (inf)				(1 Greek exa)
Total turns	9	0	4	1	8

Notes: T: lecturer Cs: Chinese students Bs: British students

Und: ask for understanding cla: ask for clarification inf: ask for information

Dis: showing disagreement cha: challenge theories/teachers

Agr: showing agreement exa: give examples

The above table can be summarized as a table below:

### 55-minute Classroom interaction in Course E session (RMBA, 271103)

	Total talk	Initiated talk	Solicited talk	Non-verbal
Chinese students	5	0	1	4
British students	17	4	8	5

## Appendix 18 Episode lists

Table 1 Strategies adopted by Cs & Ts in the classroom communication context

Stage 1	Theme	Participants	Strategy (Cs/Ts)
Episode 1	'The lecturer did not tell us what 'JIT' meant'	C28 & T15; C16 & T14; C6 & T14	Asking co-nationals after class/not providing explicit instructions (separation/separation)
Episode 2	Why Chinese students whispered in class?	C9 & T2; T11; C22 & T17; C34 & T39	Asking co-nationals in class by whispering/frustration (separation/separation)
Episode 3	Asking 'the single right answer' after class	T1; T30; C9 & T2	Asking lecturers after class/frustration (separation/mixed)
Episode 4	'I was interrupted'	C6 & T4; C12 & T34	Asking lecturers in class/not providing enough time and space (integration/mixed)
<b>Stage 2</b>			
Episode 1	Four Chinese students were active in the HR classroom discussion	C9, C10, C2, C7 & T11	Active participation in class/frustration (integration/mixed)
Episode 2	HR oral presentation marking incident: 'we don't mark efforts, we mark outputs'	Majority of Chinese students and T2, T4, T11, T19, T6, T7	active participation/frustration (mixed/mixed)
<b>Stage 3</b>			
Episode 1	C13 began to dominate the classroom talk	C13 & T14	Active participation in class/provoking (integration/integration)
Episode 2	C17 challenged the lecturer	C17 & T4	Challenging in class/challenging (integration/integration)
Episode 3	Why did Chinese students have different classroom behaviours in different sessions?	Majority of Chinese students & T6, T7, T4, T14	Mixed behaviours and strategies by both sides

Table 2 Strategies adopted by Cs & Bs in the group communication context

Stage 1	Theme	Participants	Strategy (Cs/Bs)
Episode 1	Product line debate	C3, C6 & B3,B4	Integrating/integrating
Episode 2	We are excluded	C12, B12 & I1	Avoiding/dominating
Episode 3	They are taking control	C15 & B15	Avoiding, compromising/dominating
<b>Stage 2</b>			
Episode 1	B8 was criticized by two CHC women	C10 & B8	Integrating/integrating
Episode 2	They did not ask our opinion	C13 & B2	Avoiding/avoiding
Episode 3	How to tell him our disagreement	C9 & B5	Avoiding/avoiding
Episode 4	We vote for the presenter	C6 & I4	integrating/integrating (Cs/Is)
<b>Stage3</b>			
Episode 1	I enjoyed the email communication in our group	C10 & B9	Integrating/integrating
Episode 2	That's fine as long as it is good for the group	C6 & B1	obliging/integrating
Episode 3	I was quieter in this group	C9 & B3	Integrating/dominating
Episode 4	I did try, but I failed	C23 & B6	Integrating, avoiding/dominating

Note: Cs: Chinese students      Is: International students  
 Ts: lecturers                      Bs: British students

## Appendix 19 Different interpretations of MBA terminologies

i) Chinese students had some difficulties in understanding some ‘new’ Western managerial terminologies like ‘JIT’, and they tended to have different interpretations (or misinterpretations) of some ‘old’ concepts like ‘Finance’, due to different socio-economic contexts. For example, ‘Accounting’ and ‘finance’ are two basic concepts in managerial field, their meanings were quite different between the UK and China.

<Extract 1>

*C1: I learned that ‘accounting’ includes financial accounting and managing accounting. Financial accounting (zuo zhang 作帐) is the first and basic role, keep records. Managing accounting (caiwu guanli) involves analysis, budgeting, and risk control. In China, we tend to emphasise the role of financial accounting rather than managing accounting. And Chinese students’ understanding and practice of accounting is mainly focused more on the first role. As to the term ‘Finance’, Chinese concept of finance tends to focus on finance (rong zi 融资) (e.g. stock market and security), with little consideration of accounting. But the Western concept of finance is a combination of accounting and finance. When we did the group assignment, B6 found that our interpretation was different from his, so it took some time to make sure everyone understand the meaning of the word first (C1, 250604).*

ii) Some Chinese students were not familiar with some English terminologies/concepts, but they might be familiar with their equivalent Chinese meanings, since they studied the subject in Chinese. Below is a field note about how Chinese students felt confused about some vocabularies in their case study discussion.

<Extract 2>

*I attended a group of six Chinese students for Finance case discussion in class. C11 asked C1, ‘What’s ROE?’, ‘it is zichan jingzhi huibao (资产净值回报), return on equity’, C11 said, ‘Ok I see’; a few seconds later, C11 asked again, ‘What’s quick asset ratio?’, C13 answered, ‘sudong bi (速动比)’ (Field note, 241003, Course D).*

iii) Chinese students tended to lack familiarity with the socio-cultural contexts of the UK and background knowledge of case studies. Below is an excerpt of a field note of Course D.

<Extract 3> ‘Is Rank Hovis McDougall a flower shop?’

*Students were asked to match five companies with the ratios provided. They had to know two basic things – the basic financial concept/terminologies, and the nature of the company and the ratio of each items. The Five companies are a contractor, a hotel, a distiller, a bakery, and a food retailer. There are only five companies’ names on the handout. The lecturer told students briefly about the five companies, ‘Invergordon Distillers a manufacturer of whisky in Scotland. Rank Hovis McDougall is a flour miller...’.*

*(During group discussion in class)...C13 asked C26 in Chinese, ‘is Rank Hovis a flower shop?’, C26 answered, ‘no, it is flour for baking, f-l-o-u-r, like grain, not flower’. ‘Ok, I see’. C11 said, ‘Hovis, a big brand, I often buy Hovis in ASDA’ (Field*

note, 241003, Course D).

C13 made a funny mistake, he regarded 'a flour miller' as 'a flower shop'. It seemed due to his listening and vocabulary inefficiency, he misheard the lecturer's saying 'Rank Hovis McDougall is a flour miller' as '... is a flower shop'. However, it may be also due to his lack of knowledge of the company's background. By contrast, C11 was quite familiar with this brand, since she often bought its bread in the supermarket. C11's real experience helped her understand the case study well.

iv) Unfamiliarity with the social meaning of the words and social practice. Below was a field note of a group discussion and some interview quotes.

<Extract 4>

*British students tend to play the scaffolding role in group discussion. C26 summarized six features of the E-bike product using six S, which are Save, Safe, Sanitary & Silent, Simple, Slim, Supportive. C26 showed this to B4 before discussion, since both of them were in the same subgroup – product perspective. When C26 told his 6S to the group, he said, 'B4 told me better not use 'sanitary', because it is possibly related to lady's pad' or something like that'. Everyone laughed. C26 continued, 'I don't know this before, I mean it should be good for the environment'. B4 said smilingly, 'I think this is language difficulty again' (Field note, 0701003, C3 & B4, group work in Course B).*

<Extract 5>

*C11: I have some problems in my daily interaction in the first two months. I couldn't understand what the native speaker said sometimes. For example, when the cashier in ASDA supermarket asked me 'Do you want cash back?', I had no idea about what she meant at all. I understood every single word but did not know their social meanings, because I was not familiar with this social practice, we seldom use credit card in our daily life in China (C11, 151003).*

<Extract 6>

*C22: I was impressed by diverse expressions of English words. For example, 'to let' means to rent the house, 'cheers' means 'thanks'. Our way of speaking English seems very bookish and formal (C22, 111003).*



## Appendix 20 A summary of responses of four questionnaires

The total population of this study is 228 (184 students and 44 academic staff). 66 questionnaire responses were received (the response rate is 29%), 55 responses are regarded as viable in analysis.

### Section I Background Information

#### Q 1-3 respondents' age, gender, class (EMBA or RMBA), tuition payment and job position.

Figure 1 & Table 1 indicate the percentage of questionnaire respondents, 33% of respondents are Chinese, 16% of British, 40% of Non-British and Non-Chinese (it will be called international group hereafter), and 11% of respondents are lecturers.

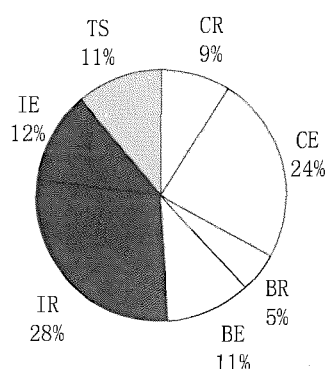


Figure 1 percentage of questionnaire respondents

CR: Chinese RMBA students    CE: Chinese EMBA  
BR: British RMBA            BE: British EMBA  
IR: International RMBA      IE: International EMBA  
TS: lecturers

Table 1 percentage of questionnaire respondents

	No	%
Chinese (Taiwan included)	18	33
British	9	16
International	22	40
Lecturer/staff	6	11

Table 2 indicates respondents' gender differences. 67% of student respondents are male (33 males). The teachers' gender is balanced.

Table 2 Respondent's gender

	Cs	Bs	Is	Ts
male	11	8	14	3
female	7	1	8	3

Table 4 and Figure 1 show respondents' percentage of different streams of MBA programmes (EMBA and RMBA). 72% of Chinese respondents were EMBA, aged between 26-35 (see Table 3), 49% of them paid privately by themselves (Table 5); 45% of British respondents were part-time students, aged 36-45, paid either by sponsor (11%) or themselves; 77% of International respondents were RMBA students, 90% of them aged 25-30, 68% of them paid privately by their family.

Table 3 Respondent's age

Age	Cs (%)	Bs (%)	Is (%)
25 and under	11	33	63
26-30	39	0	27
31-35	33	0	5
36-40	17	11	5
41-45	0	33	0
46 and above 46	0	11	0
No comment	0	11	0

Table 4 Respondents' percentage of EMBA and RMBA

	Cs (%)	Bs (%)	Is (%)
RMBA student	28	33	77
Full-time EMBA student	72	22	19
part-time EMBA	0	45	4

Table 5 Tuition payment

	Cs (%)	Bs (%)	Is (%)
Paid privately by myself	78	56	23
paid privately by family	22	22	68
Paid by sponsor	0	11	4.5
others	0	11	4.5

Table 6 demonstrates that most of Chinese and British respondents were intermediate managers, whereas most international respondents were junior and lower intermediate managers. This is related to their age and work experiences, since most Chinese and British respondents were EMBA (especially British respondents, 45% of them were part-time students who were in relatively higher position (11% were CEO - chief executive office).

Table 6 Respondents' job position

	Cs (%)	Bs (%)	Is (%)
Junior manager	22	11	18
Lower intermediate manager	17	22	14
Upper intermediate manager	17	33	7
Executive manager	11	0	11
Chief executive officer	0	11	0
others	33	22	14

#### Q4 Nationality

There is a big variety of nationality among questionnaire respondents. International respondents are from 13 countries, with 6 Greek, 4 Indian, 2 Lebanese and other countries. Of 18 Chinese respondents, 67% is from China, with 50% of them from big cities such as Beijing and Shanghai; 23% is from Taiwan;

#### Q6 & 7 Chinese students' IELTS score and the time to study English

Table 7 shows Chinese respondents' English test scores prior to starting their MBA course, 55% of them did not reach the minimum English language requirement (IELTS 6.5 or TOEFL 600), therefore, they had to attend 4-week or 8-week pre-session course before the MBA course.

Table 7 IELTS or TOEFL test score

English Test Score	%
IELTS 5.5 (or TOEFL 530) and below	33
IELTS 6.0 (or TOEFL 560)	22
IELTS 6.5 (or TOEFL 600)	39
IELTS 7.0 (or TOEFL 620)	6
IELTS 7.0 (or TOEFL 620) and above	0

Table 8 shows that 78% of Chinese respondents began to learn English from middle school (at the age of 12-13 years old), 11% of them started from nursery and another 11% from primary school. All four Taiwan respondents started learning English from middle school, 2 achieved 6.5 IELTS test, 2 scored 5.5. This shows that there is no significance difference in terms of starting time of English learning and English level between Mainland Chinese and Taiwan students.

Of two respondents who started learning English from nursery, both got 6.5 IELTS; of two respondents who started from primary school, one respondent achieved 7.0, one 5.5. This shows that students who began learning English since nursery or primary school, are more likely to get higher marks in English tests.

Table 8 A comparison on the starting time of learning English and English test score:

	%	Age started	IELTS score
nursery	11	Below 6	6.5
primary	11	6-7	5.5 & 7.0
middle school	78	12-13	57% below 6.5

Table 9 The English test score of students who began learning English from middle school.

IELTS score	No	%
5.5	5	36
6.0	3	21
6.5	6	43

#### Q5 & Q 11 First degree & work experience

There is a big variety of respondents' first degree (about 20 subjects), 20% of them studied social science, 16% studied management, 27% of them studied engineering, and 29% studied other options that was not in the list.

Table 10 Respondents' first degree

First degree	Cs %	Bs %	Is %
social sciences	28	13	18
science	17	13	5
humanities	0	13	0
engineering	17	13	41
management	22	0	18
education	06	0	0
law	0	0	0
medicine	6	0	0
others	33	50	18

Table 10 indicates that the respondents' prior work experience varies largely as well (about 20 sectors). 7 (14%) worked in finance and foreign trade respectively, 6 (12%) IT, 5 manufacturing, 15 (31%) worked in other options which are not in the list.

Table 11 Respondents' previous work experience

	Cs	Bs	Is
Finance	0	4	3
IT industry	3	0	3
Tele-communication	2	1	0
Foreign trade	5	0	2
engineering	0	1	2
manufacturing	2	1	2
publishing	0	0	0
education	0	2	0
government	0	1	0
other	6	5	4

Lecturers' response to the previous work experience is quite variable. Six lecturers work experience covers 7 different sectors.

Table 12 Lecturers' work experience

	No
Finance	1
IT industry	1
Tele-communication	0
Foreign trade	0
engineering	1
manufacturing	1
publishing	0
education	2
government	1
other	1

## Q6 General learning objectives.

### Chinese learning objectives and outcomes

Table 13 Chinese views on learning objectives and outcomes

	Obj.	Out.
Qualification	83	78
Intercultural experience	72	83
Co-national friends	11	67
Intercultural friends	39	50
English improvement	83	83
Professional improvement	83	72
Career prospects	78	56
Self improvement	72	89

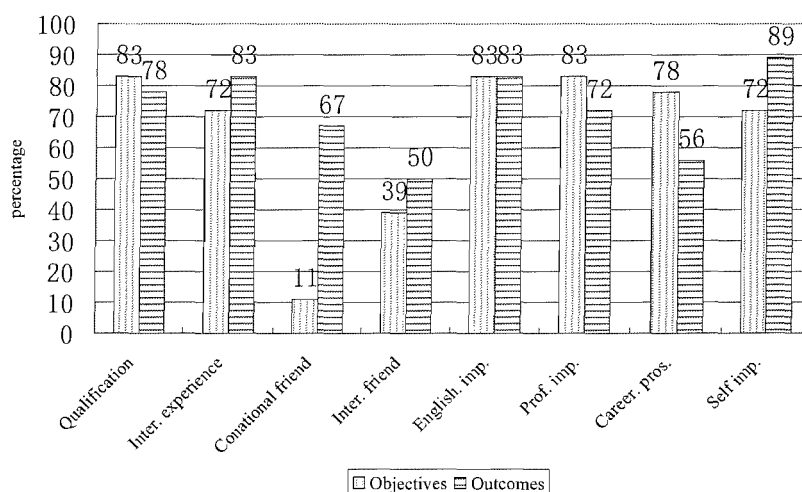


Figure 2 Chinese views on learning objectives and outcomes

Figure 2 shows that Chinese students' 'self improvement' increased in the end of their study, compared with their 'career prospects' and 'professional development', which degraded over time. In sum, Chinese students' one-year adaptation is generally a process of self-development. After overcoming the initial linguistic and socio-academic shock/struggles, they adjusted successfully and began to appreciate their increased independence, freedom and responsibility on their study. They became more confident and self-assertive as their studies progressed. This finding conforms to Coleman (2002, 2004) and Mitchel *et al.* (2005)'s findings that studying abroad is a self improvement experience in their independence, self-reliance and self-awareness development. Therefore, I conclude that intercultural encounters are potentially positive experience, which provides an opportunity for critical self-reflection and self-awareness, strategic adaptation and consequently personal growth. This finding supports some researchers' positive views on culture shock as a process of self-development. For example, Adler (1975: 22) views culture shock as self growth, 'in the encounter with another culture the individual gains

new experiential knowledge by coming to understand the roots of his or her own ethnocentrism and by gaining new perspectives and outlooks on the nature of culture...Paradoxically, the more one is capable of experiencing new and different dimensions of human diversity, the more one learns of oneself’.

Table 14 Different views on learning objectives (choosing ‘agree’)

Objectives	Cs	Bs	Is	Ts
Qualification	83	78	64	83
Intercultural experience	72	33	77	50
Co-national friends	11	22	0	0
Intercultural friends	39	22	55	17
English improvement	83	89	32	67
Professional improvement	83	78	82	67
Career prospects	78	78	86	83
Self improvement	72	78	68	50

Table 15 Different views on learning outcomes

Outcomes	Cs	Bs	Is	Ts
Qualification	78	78	73	83
Intercultural experience	83	78	77	67
Co-national friends	67	44	36	67
Intercultural friends	50	56	86	33
English improvement	83	89	59	67
Professional improvement	72	89	73	67
Career prospects	56	89	64	83
Self improvement	89	78	77	67

### Q11 & Q12 experience working in a multicultural environment and living in a foreign country

Of 49 student respondents, 50% of them have never worked closely with people from other countries before they started the MBA course. Especially British students (89%) had no this experience. This may explain the reason for their miscommunication during their group work.

Of 49 student respondents, 51% of them have never lived in an Eastern or Western country before they started their MBA course. This also implies that there will be some cultural learning and integration difficulties for these students.

Lecturers’ experience working with international people is variable. Lecturers’ experience living in the Eastern country is variable as well. 67% of them have never lived in any Eastern country.

Table 16 Experience working in a multicultural environment

	Cs %	Bs %	Is %	Ts %
never	50	89	36	33
One year or less	22	11	0	0
1.1-2 years	0	0	0	0
2.1-5 years	17	0	5	33
5.1-10 years	11	0	5	0
10 years above	0	0	0	17
No comment	0	0	55	17

Table 17 Q12 experience of staying in an Eastern/western country

	Cs %	Bs %	Is %	Ts %
Never	56	78	36	67
6 months or less	17	22	0	17
6.1 months – 1 year	11	0	0	0
1.1-2 years	11	0	5	17
2.1 – 4 years	6	0	0	0
4.1 – 6 years	0	0	0	0
More than 6 years	0	0	5	0
No comment	0	0	54	0

## Section 2 Language Issue

### Q1 time spent in writing an individual assignment

Most of students completed their individual assignment within 12-48 hours. In this time range, Chinese students' percentage grows bigger as time increases, British students' tend to spend less hours than Chinese students. And also lecturers tend to think students spend less to complete an assignment. Chinese students and international students tend to vary a lot individually.

Table 18 Time spent in writing an individual assignment

	Cs %	Bs %	Is %	Ts %
Less than 12 hours	5.5	0	27	0
12-24 hours	17	22	23	33
25-36 hours	22	56	14	17
37-48 hours	28	22	9	33
49-60 hours	11	0	14	17
61-72 hours	11	0	4.5	0
More than 72 hours	5.5	0	4.5	0
No comment	0	0	4	0

### Q2 the percentage of speaking English in spare time.

This question concerns Chinese students and other international students spent time speaking English in their spare time. 39% of Chinese students spent less than 20% of their spare time speaking English, whereas 32% of other international students spent more than 80% of their time. This may relate to large number of Chinese students in 2003-2004, and they tend to speak Chinese with each other most of the time.

Table 19 Q2 percentage of speaking English in spare time

	Cs %	Is %
less than 20%	39	4.5
20-40%	28	18
41%-60%	17	23
61%-80%	17	18
more than 80%	0	32
No comment	0	4.5

Q2 As to percentage of speaking English with Chinese-only group, both lecturers and Chinese students think Chinese students speak English less than 20% in such groups.

Table 20 Percentage of speaking English with Chinese-only group

	Cs	Ts
less than 20%	11	3
20-40%	2	1
41%-60%	1	0
61%-80%	2	0
more than 80%	1	0
no comment	1	2

### Q3 Competence in using English in academic and social contexts

Both Chinese and British students thought Chinese students have better communication behaviour in social contexts than in academic situation. Other international students thought the other way, lecturers thought there was no difference. Chinese students' views on their English ability are higher than what lecturers and other students thought. Only 33% of lecturer thought Chinese students were capable in academic and social contexts, 50% of lecturers adopted a neutral stance.

Table 21 Views on Chinese students' English competence in different contexts

	Chinese	British	International	Lecturer
Academic	56	44	27	33
Social context	67	56	23	33

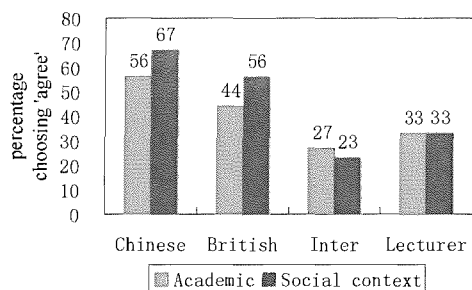


Figure 3 Views on Chinese students' English competence in different contexts

**Q4-A View on importance of language aspects for the MBA study**

Table 22 Chinese views on importance of language aspects

Importance	Chinese	British	International	Lecturer
Listening	89	89	73	83
Speaking	72	78	73	83
Reading	89	89	77	83
Writing	83	89	68	50
Pronunciation	67	56	41	67
Grammar	78	67	45	67
Vocabulary	83	78	55	83

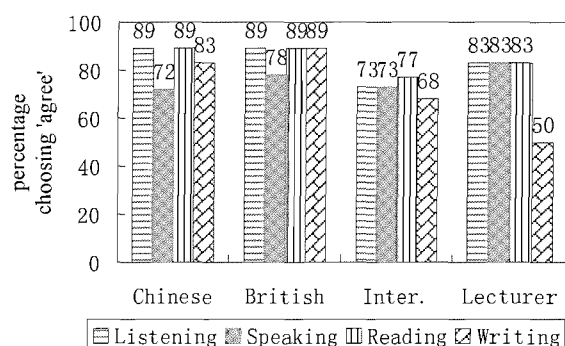


Figure 4 Chinese views on importance of language aspects

Chinese students thought speaking is less important than listening and reading; whereas lecturers thought speaking is equally important as listening and reading. The other groups of students tend to think speaking less important than reading and listening.

**Q4-B Views of Chinese students' competence in English language aspects**

Table 23 Views of Chinese students' competence in English language aspects

Competence	Chinese	British	International	Lecturer
Listening	72	56	41	33
Speaking	39	44	14	17
Reading	67	78	41	50
Writing	33	44	23	33
Pronunciation	50	33	9	17
Grammar	44	22	9	0
Vocabulary	28	44	14	17

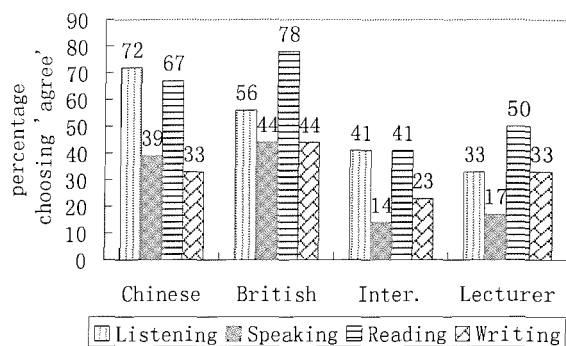


Figure 5 Views of Chinese students' competence in English language aspects

Figure 5 shows that Chinese students were less good in writing and speaking skills, but much better in listening and reading skills. Chinese students' views on their listening skills and pronunciation are much better than what the other three groups thought.

**Q5-A & B Competence of Chinese students' language competence over time – at the beginning and at the end of the MBA course**

Table 24 Competence of Chinese students' language skills at the beginning and at the end of the MBA course

	Chinese		British		International		Lecturer	
	Begin	end	Begin	end	Begin	end	Begin	end
Listening	33	94	11	56	23	45	34	17
Speaking	22	61	0	67	9	27	17	17
Reading	67	83	22	78	18	50	50	33
Writing	17	78	22	78	14	36	33	0
Pronunciation	61	67	11	44	5	18	17	0
Grammar	67	72	0	44	5	18	0	17
Vocabulary	28	61	0	67	14	36	17	17

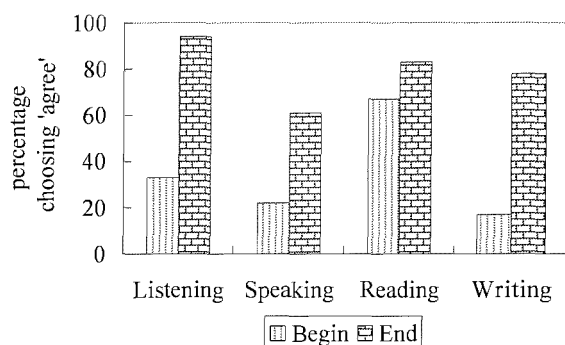


Figure 6 Competence of Chinese students' language skills at the beginning and at the end of the MBA course

Figure 6 above shows that Chinese students' four aspects of English have improved over time, especially listening and writing skills (rise by 61% respectively). The figure shows that Chinese students' speaking skill improved by 39% in the end of their study, though it was still the least aspect in which Chinese students felt confident. Figure 6 also shows that reading skill was the strongest aspect (67%); whereas speaking (22%) and writing (17%) were two weakest aspects for most Chinese students in the beginning of their study (question 5 A & B, section 2, Chinese questionnaire).

**CQ7 Chinese students' views on their language competence in different stages**

Figure 7 indicates that Chinese respondents' confidence in using English increased gradually over time, with percentage from 17% before Christmas to 44% to dissertation writing period.



Table 25 Confidence of using English in different stages

	Agree %
Oct to Christmas	17
Christmas to Easter	33
Easter to mid May	39
Mid May to Sep	44

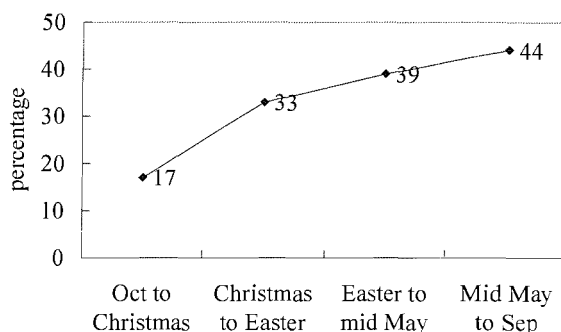


Figure 7 Confidence of using English in different stages

### Section III Academic Studies

#### Q1 views on seeking help

Table 26 Different views on seeking help

	Chinese	British	International	Lecturer
Lecturer In Class	22	67	50	50
Lecturer After Class	33	44	45	34
Conational In Class	44	67	18	50
Conational After Class	56	44	27	33
Other In Class	17	44	32	17
Other After Class	6	22	41	17
Work By Myself	33	56	41	50

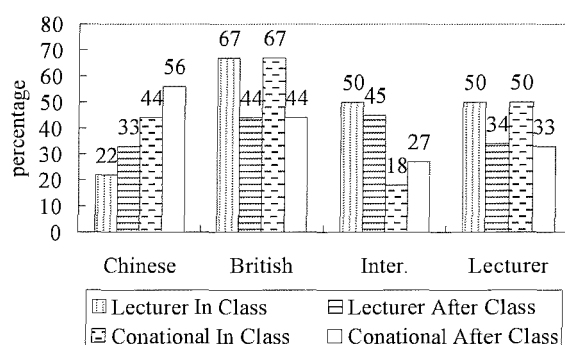


Figure 8 Different views on seeking help

The questionnaire response shows that Chinese respondents adopted various strategies in classroom interaction, their top three strategies are asking conationals after class (56%), ‘asking conationals in class (44%), and ‘asking lecturers after class’. Only 22% of Chinese respondents chose ‘asking the lecturer in class’, which is the last strategy they used, and this is what they are expected in the new learning environment. Therefore, most Chinese students did not meet the requirement of this new student role.

British respondents mainly used two strategies – asking lecturers in class (67%) and asking conationals in class (67%). Other international students’ two top strategies are ‘asking lecturers in class’ (50%) and asking lecturers after class (45%). Half lecturers thought Chinese students adopted the strategy of ‘asking lecturer in class’ and ‘asking conationals in class’.

**Q2-A Views on attributes of a good written assignment**

Table 27 Different views on attributes of a good assignment

	Chinese	British	International	Lecturer
Understanding	94	89	91	83
Communication	89	78	86	67
Structure	94	89	100	83
Reference	56	89	77	83

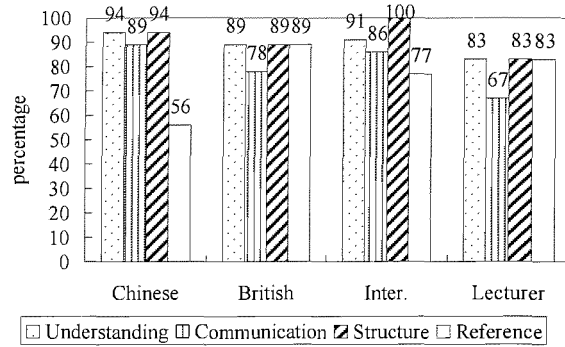


Figure 9 Different views on attributes of a good assignment and presentation

All four groups of respondents have similar ideas about a good assignment. They all thought understanding, structure, analysis skill and communication as the very important aspects of assessing a good assignment. Whereas Chinese students and international students tend to regard reference as less important.

**Q2-B Views on attributes of a good oral presentation**

Table 28 Different views on attributes of a good presentation

	Chinese	British	International	Lecturer
Understanding	94	89	86	83
Analysis	67	89	86	83
Communication	100	78	86	83
Structure	83	78	95	83
Reference	33	44	59	33

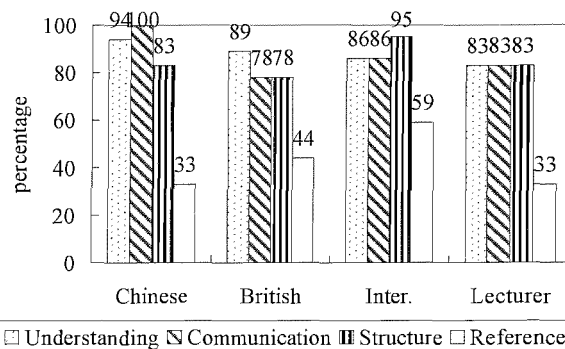


Figure 10 Different views on attributes of a good presentation

Lecturers and students have similar views on attributes of good presentation, however, 100% Chinese students thought communication as the most important skill to be a good presentation, compared with other aspects, and this is contrasted to British students, who thought ‘giving example’ (100%) more important than communication (78%). Again, international students emphasise the structure particularly.

**Q3 Views on attributes of a good postgraduate**

Table 29 Different views on attributes of a student role

	Chinese	British	International	Lecturer
Classroom participation	56	100	55	50
Group participation	56	100	64	33
Good mark	67	78	50	84
Communication	83	100	82	84
Subject knowledge	78	89	55	100
Preparation	83	89	41	83
Good listener	83	100	64	84
Empathy	61	78	55	67
Challenge theory	72	89	45	100
Challenge lecturer	61	78	32	100
Respect lecturer	61	56	50	33

Being a good listener (83%) and good preparation (83%) for the class are two top choices for Chinese students, whereas British lecturers more emphasised the role of challenging theory and lecturer (100%). Chinese students thought respecting lecturer is as important as challenging lecturer. Whereas, lecturers thought challenging theory and lecturer are two top important roles for students.

It is interesting to notice that students distinguish challenging lecturers from challenging theory, the percentage of challenging lecturer is slightly lower than challenging theory. This may be due to their respect for the lecturer.

100% British students strongly agree that classroom participation is an important student role, whereas only about half Chinese and international students thought it is important. It is surprising to find that only 50% of lecturers held the same view as Chinese students (56%) in terms of classroom discussion. This may imply that the MBA course is intensive course, some lecturers only had two whole-day lecture for the subject, they tend to emphasise knowledge delivery rather than involving students' participation; the other reason may be due to international students' less active participation, therefore, lecturers' views changed gradually. Some lecturers said they changed their teaching strategies according to situation, since they found most international students remained quiet, and they had to do more lecturing rather than arranging classroom discussions.

**Q4 views on attributes of a good lecturer**

Table 30 Views on attributes of a good lecturer

	Chinese	British	International	Lecturer
Subject knowledge	94	100	77	83
Research ability	22	56	59	17
Business experience	78	100	95	83
Class organization	56	100	91	83
Fair attitude	89	100	91	100
Availability	78	67	73	67
A friend after class	33	22	45	17
Communication skills	94	100	91	100
Challenge theory	67	67	68	100
Challenge students	56	89	68	100
Equal relationship	44	44	64	33
Empathy	78	71	33	17

All four groups of people thought communication skills, fair attitude are very important for a good lecturer. Chinese students thought subject knowledge (94%) is very important for a lecturer, whereas lecturer respondents thought challenging theory and students (100%) are more important than the lecture's knowledge. Chinese respondents thought empathy (78%) is second important aspect of a lecturer, whereas lecture respondents tended to think empathy is the least important compared with other aspects (only 17% agreed). Chinese students' percentage on class organization, challenge theory and students are relatively lower than other three groups, this may imply that they value obtaining knowledge from lecturers more than challenging and interacting with lectures, and this accords to their responses to question 3 – views on attributes of a good student, they respected lecturers and challenged

less than other groups of students.

### Q5 Views on academic performance

Table 31 Views on academic performance

	Chinese	British	International	Lecturer	
				agree	neutral
Classroom behavior	22	89	55	0	80
Group discussion	67	100	86	0	83
Individual assignment	72	78	77	50	50
Oral presentation	39	89	64	0	67
Exam	50	56	68	33	67

Table 31 Chinese students' views on academic performance

Classroom behavior	22
Oral presentation	39
Exam	50
Group discussion	67
Individual assignment	72

The Chinese respondents thought that their best performance was in individual assignment (72%) and group discussion (67%). They thought they had less good performance in classroom behaviour and oral presentation. This is related to their responses to question 4 and question 5 in Section 2, they were less confident in their speaking skills, therefore, they appeared to be quieter than other students. However, they viewed their group discussion performance much better (67%) than their classroom discussion, this may imply that Chinese students were much confident in small group discussion than the whole class discussion. This shows a potential of group discussion as a good approach to improve Chinese students' communication/debate skills and construct their roles/identities in the new learning environment. Lecturers' responses to Chinese students' performances remained neutral, this may be because some subjects were only assessed by individual assignments, however, their views on Chinese students' individual assignment were lower than what Chinese students thought about themselves. This may imply that lecturers generally thought Chinese students had less good academic performance and gave them lower marks than Chinese students expected.

## Section IV Social contact and relationship

### Q1 Chinese students' interaction with non-Chinese students in spare time

None of British respondents lived in the hall of residence. 22% of Chinese respondents have half hour to one hour interaction with non-Chinese students. 17% speak little English in the hall of residence. Other international students' English speaking time is longer than Chinese students.

Table 32 English speaking time spent in hall of residence

	Cs	Bs	Is
never	0	0	4
10 minutes or less	17	0	18
11-30 minutes	11	0	28
31 minutes- 1 hour	22	0	9
1.1-2 hours	11	0	9
more than 2 hours	0	0	9
not applicable	39	1	23

### Q3 interaction between lecturers and MBA students

#### Q3.1 interaction with lecturers – professional contact

Table 33 Professional contact between students and lecturers

	Cs %	Bs %	Is %	Ts %
never	33	22	23	0
1-2 times	28	33	37	50
3-4 times	39	11	27	33
5-6 times	0	0	4	0
more than 6 times	0	33	9	17

As to individual professional contact between lecturers and students after class, four groups of respondents thought they had 1-2 times of contacts in the whole year. Some British students had more personal contacts with lecturers than other students (more than 6 times). Chinese respondents claimed that they had personal contact with lectures no more than 4 times in the whole year study.

### Q3.2 Interaction with dissertation supervisor

Table 34 Interaction with dissertation supervisor

	Cs	Bs	Is	Ts
never	0	0	0	0
1-2 times	3	2	3	0
3-4 times	5	3	7	0
5-6 times	6	1	7	3
more than 6 times	4	1	4	2
no comment	0	2	1	1

However, Chinese and international students tended to have more contacts with dissertation supervisors than British students (most of them met their supervisors 5-6 times). This may imply that they were becoming more confident in contacting lecturers after their course or they were more uncertain about writing a dissertation.

### Q3.3 interaction with personal tutor

Chinese recent graduate MBA students had less contact with their personal tutor than other international students, most of Chinese students had met their personal tutor 1-2 times in the whole year.

Table 35 interaction with personal tutor

	Cs	Is	Ts
never	0	1	0
1-2 times	3	5	1
3-4 times	1	8	0
5-6 times	1	2	0
more than 6 times	0	1	0
Not applicable	13	6	4

### Q3.4 personal contact between lecturers and students after class

Table 36 Personal contact between lecturers and students after class

	Cs	Bs	Is	Ts
never	44	44	50	33
1-2 times	22	0	32	17
3-4 times	28	44	18	0
5-6 times	6	0	0	0
more than 6 times	0	11	0	0
Not applicable	0	0	0	50

44% of Chinese and British students, and 50% of international students had no personal contact with lecturers after class.

## Q4 willingness of contact with people and regular contact with people

### Q4-A willingness of contact

Table 37 Willingness of contacting with different groups of people

	Cs	Bs	Is
Chinese	39	67	32
British	67	67	45
Other international	56	67	68
Lecturer	50	44	36

67% of Chinese students were more willing to contact with native speakers.

#### Q4-B Regular intercultural contact with different groups of people

Table 38 Regular contact with different groups of people

	Cs	Bs	Is	Ts
Chinese	61	33	32	0
British	19	56	24	0
Other international	39	44	55	0
Lecturer	11	22	9	0

The figure shows that three groups of students all thought they had more contacts with their conationals than with other groups. Chinese and international students tend to have the least contact with British students, however, there were more contacts between Chinese and international students.

#### Q5 Personal change in different aspects

Table 39 Intrapersonal change in the following three aspects

	Cs	Bs	Is	Ts
Cognitive	61	67	82	67
Affective	50	67	82	17
Behavioral	72	78	91	50

Four groups of respondents all thought affective factor (emotion and attitude) changed slower than the other aspects of intrapersonal factors. This implies that their knowledge about the target culture might increase and their behaviour might be more appropriate for the new learning environment. However, their attitude and emotion might remain relatively slow pace of change.

#### Q6 Intercultural relationship change over time

Table 40 Interpersonal relationship change over time

	Cs	Bs	Is
Lecturer	17	22	14
British	28	67	32
Chinese	72	67	41
Other international	50	67	68

70% of Chinese respondents thought they had more relationship with their co-nationals, only 28% of Chinese respondents thought they had regular relationship with British students over time.

#### Q7 Confidence working with people from different cultures

Table 41 Confidence working with people in different stages

	Cs	Bs	Is
Oct to Christmas	22	11	41
Christmas to Easter	56	44	59
Easter to mid May	67	67	77
Mid May to Sep	61	56	82

Questionnaire response shows that all three groups of students' confidence in working with people from different cultures increase gradually, especially in the third stage. However, during dissertation period (after the 6<sup>th</sup> month), Chinese and British students' confidence of working with other nationalities dropped, it may be because they had little interaction with other students after the course.

**Q8 views on home culture and target culture****Q8-A views on home culture after return**

Table 42 Views on home culture after return

	Cs	Is
First month	44	36
Second month	44	45
Third month	22	27

**Q8-B views on the target culture after return**

Table 43 Views on the target culture after return

	Cs	Is
First month	44	32
Second month	44	36
Third month	17	18

Majority of Chinese and other international students tended to have less satisfaction about home and target culture in the third month.

**A summary of open question responses of four questionnaires**

The following findings are based on four groups of respondents' comments on the open question 'general characteristics of Chinese and British students'. Four main categories are grounded from the questionnaire data.

**1/ quiet vs active, polite vs arrogant**

Chinese students were described by majority of four groups of respondents as 'quiet', 'reluctant to ask', 'need to be more active', 'unwilling to speak out', 'shy', 'very reserved', 'somehow conservative', 'very polite', 'cautious', 'friendly', 'very respectful', 'less confident', 'language barrier'.

British students were described by majority of respondents as 'active', 'willing to participate', 'keen to get their own points of view across', 'happy to debate and question', 'demand explanations if they don't understand', 'able to express themselves most clearly', 'competent', 'competitive', 'independent', 'confident', 'aggressive', 'arrogant' (8 times), 'snob', 'manipulative', 'self-satisfied superiority', 'feeling of superiority', 'not friendly', 'unfriendly with non-British students'.

The first category: quietness vs. activeness

	<b>Chinese characteristics</b>	<b>British characteristics</b>
Cs	'need to be more active', 'somehow conservative', cautious, easy going, 'lack of enough self-confidence', polite, respectful, 'not listen to others', 'self-centred', 'snobbish', 'aggressive'	Active (conservative) 'arrogant' 3, confident 2, independent 2, 'independent and confident', Respectful/polite 3, 'Respect others', 'not friendly'
Bs	Shy, less confident (not assertive), introspective, friendly 3	Active 'Very keen / quick to get their own points of view across in group discussions', 'able to express themselves most clearly during lectures', confident, assertive, helpful
Is	Quiet 3, not expressive, shy, conservative, 'very reserved, cautious', 'very polite', 'very big communication problems' 'could not put ideas into words', 'bad English - communication problem', 'have a problem communicating or expressing what they feel, probably due to the language barrier'	Active 2, Confident 2, expressive, 'very confident and participate actively in class', Snob 5 (self-satisfied superiority, manipulative, politic, feeling of superiority, Arrogant 5 (competitive, 'Unfriendly with non-British students' 2 (not friendly, 'A bit arrogant' 'Not that friendly' 'Friendly and use polite language'.
Ts	'don't tend to question', 'reluctant to ask questions for clarification', 'Quiet in class environment - unwilling to speak out in large groups', less confident, Polite ('Very respectful to the academic tutor')	'happy to debate and question', 'demand explanations if they don't understand', 'Much more willing to participate in class discussion', confident, 'Respectful to academic tutor', aggressive.

Cs: Chinese students Bs: British students Is: Other international students Ts: British lecturers

**2/ less challenging vs challenging**

Most Chinese students were described by respondents as less challenging and less critical, whereas most British students were described as the opposite.

Category 2: less challenging vs challenging

	Chinese characteristics	British characteristics
Cs	Less challenging/critical 2 ('limited to existing thought', 'Unwilling to challenge others')	challenging & aggressive 2 (competitive, creative, competent) 'Like to challenge everything'.
Bs	Structured, 'learning lists or sets of rules about a particular subject (this reflects the language barrier as much as any cultural difference)'	Challenging 'Happy to debate with lecturers, rather than find out what the lecturer thinks', Innovative.
Is	Less challenging (critical, 'not creative')	Independent, clear thinking, with good ideas, Structured ('high degree of attachment to rules'), stuck with old ideas
Ts	less critical/challenging ('struggle to think critically', 'find it hard to criticise ideas / theory or other students', 'Tendency to accept academic material uncritically', structured (systematic) 'Tendency to prefer very specific tasks and goals in academic work'	critical/challenging 'Tendency to reject knowledge unless of demonstrably immediate practical value', 'clear thinking', general aversion to mathematics ('tendency to avoid and disdain quantitative material, or any material that requires too much disciplined thinking')

### 3/ stick to their own cultural group

Both Chinese and British students were described that they tended to form their own groups and there was little interaction between these two groups. One Chinese student mentioned that Chinese students tended to be more collectivism-oriented, whereas British students more individualism-oriented.

Category 3: stick to their own cultural group

	Chinese characteristics	British characteristics
Cs	'Collective', 'Prefer group activity', 'nationalism'	'Individualistic', independent
Bs	Own group 'will chat in their own languages to each other during lectures', 'will always sit together as a group'	Own group 2 'Meritocratic allocation of work within small groups', 'In general there would be clustering during lectures with people from the same cultural background tending to stick together in groups'
Is	Form their own groups 2 (do not make friends from other countries, they prefer to work with people from their country, 'Do not make friends from other cultures', 'they talk in Chinese with fellow Chinese students, which might limit their development. 'don't like other nationalities', 'are inclined to stay among their own people'	Form their own groups 3 ('Generally stuck together in their British/American-only groups', 'do not cooperate with other cultures', 'Would be better if they mingle and socialise with other students in MBA class', 'very few British students in our batch did mix around with others so there was not too much interaction'.

### 4/ hardworking and motivated

Chinese students were described as 'hardworking' by majority of respondents. Their motivation tends to be more instrumental rather than integrated. Since they were commented as 'much more interested in their marks', 'too serious on work and marks'.

Category 4: hardworking and motivated

	Chinese characteristics	British characteristics
Cs	hard working, diligent,	serious
Bs	Hardworking 2 Interested in their marks 2 ('focused on achieving the objective') 'MUCH more interested in their marks than UK students I came to know'	less conscientious, diligent
Is	Hardworking, diligent, 'Too serious on work, marks' 'Sometime stubborn on ideals'	industrious

These open-question responses are only regarded as a supplementary data resource from the participants, the findings from the questionnaire are found to be in line with qualitative finding to some extent. For example, B1 had many interactions with Chinese students, he commented in the questionnaire as follows:

B1: 'By the time of the strategy exam in May/June, it was flattering that several European students were included in the revision group hosted by C12' (B1, 201204, Questionnaire).

He expressed his nostalgic feelings in the end of the extra comments:



B1: *In my office I've got 5 pictures of MBA groups...They give me the fondest memories of the MBA journey! It's such a shame that I can't just call them up and meet for a Pearl Harbour dinner or just a drink in the Stile - in the end, we can't overcome the geographical distance. Just hope to see more of them again for graduation'* (B1, 201204, Questionnaire).

As to how to integrate British students with international students, I8 commented in the questionnaire:

*It would be better if they (British students) mingle and socialise with other students in MBA class....A mechanism for improving networking between MBA students is critical; The strength of the class should be appropriate and a well balanced mix of students from different cultures should be maintained'* (I8, 210205, Questionnaire).

## Appendix 21 Transcription of Course E discussion 141103

### Keys to transcripts:

T11 a British lecturer  
C2, C7, C9, C10 are all Chinese students.  
B12, B14, B15...are all British students  
Bx is an unrecognized British student  
I6 is a non-Chinese international student (European).  
xxx unrecognized part of interaction due to big-sized lecture room.  
( ) description of non-verbal aspects of communication  
// overlapping  
(0.1) short pause

(In this Course E session, the lecturer asked students to set some examples to explain types of teams they have experienced. C9 gave an example of her team that was randomly selected.

\*\*\*\*\*

*T11: ...anybody else would like to comment on self-managed team who has not leader or manager, self solved strategy that has worked or has not worked?*

*C9: Our team xxx we don't have leadership.*

*T11: In this unit?*

*C9: Yeah.*

*T11: Have you appointed any leader?*

*C9: No.*

*T11: Ok, so there is not a natural leader in your group so far, there might be by the end of today but we don't know that (some students laughed, including T11).*

*C9: (laughing) probably.*

*T11: And there is no type of personality or person who come forward to work as a leader, so you would actually call yourself self-managed work team, would you, it is interesting to know how you are going to absorb e those decision making, leadership type, right, we've got five minutes or two days to do this, we've got to do, it is interesting to see these people who pursue leadership type skills but you don't have a leader. It is quite interesting, you know, just different view.*

*C9: (laughing) (some laughter from audience).*

*T11: Yeah (B14 hands up)*

... ..

*T11: Ok, some guys called xx funny names but they are very interested in trust in virtual team in 1996 to 1998, they are only MBA students, but they are good enough and they use it in virtual situation in different countries and in different cultures... Yeah (B12 raised his hands)*

*B12: //I worked in a technology company, we have teams in the UK and Germany looking for particular problems. We also some parts in Japan, and we were using instant messaging techniques, just to communicate on immediate issues, but also if you knew someone was online and you submitted ... far more responsible for commitment...*

*T11: Yeah, good, thanks B12.*

*T11: (C10 raised her hand) Yeah*

*C10: I worked for my previous company, we found that working in virtual team is very*

difficult, we only talk each other...

T11: So you only talk to each other by email, but had you met each other before, at any stage?

B11: Have you ever met each other before at any stage?

C10: No.

T11: No (someone laughs) and you produce

C10: From my own experience

B14: C10, can I ask, did you, you form any opinions about people based on emails?

C10: Yeah, and I think for introverted person, it works well, we actually communicate well and help each other xxx

T11: Yeah, that's interesting, isn't it (B12 put up his hand)? Yeah, go on.

B12: Can I ask a supplementary question? When you form an impression on a person through email, do you actually correspond to your impression when you actually physically met them?

C10: Some people do, other people don't xxx. I don't know how to express it very well, but my feeling is emails work very well in certain circumstances, yet it sometimes can produce anxiety xxx.

T11: It certainly reduces anxiety for people who aren't very good face-to-face, do you get what you see, do you create a kind of stereotyping, according to the way they talk to you through email, and your expectation is completely shut away when you actually meet them.

B12: xxx

T11: Yeah, xx does it happen to you?//

B14: //Yeah, xx while definitely, when an email starting with personal thing or with capital letter (laughing) or shouting at you, you could interpret in a different ways, you just dislike this person.

T11: Academics tend not to, non academics, they use 'dear T11' 'dear so so', we just go with 'Hi' or 'John', you give an impression that we have got no time, I'm sure you come across//

T11: (B15 hands up) //Yes (0.1) B15.

B15: xx I just think can we send an email sitting next to you (some people laughed)?

T11: How dare you, oh no, how sad is that! How dare you, no (laughing from students)

B6: I would accept this kind of phenomenon.

T11: Yeah, I can understand because I can't be bothered to go up a flight of stairs and talk to Julia you can go to her and ask her to do something for me.

C2: I don't think//

T11:// Really, I can understand, I need to send an email to remind her to do it for me, that's different, 'hello I am here, just give me...//(laughing)

C2: //I don't think it is necessary to send an email to the person next to you. That costs money. I was in a company (0.1) The good thing is if you write through email, and obviously later when you read the email and you can just simply forward the email to the other person, we are a bureaucratic country//

T11: //I am supposing it depends on the nature of why you send email to people next to you, I think B15 is just saying, he was just doing it as a personal thing, rather than for task-related reason, would you, B15?

B15: xxx

T11: Yeah (C7 raised his hand, B12 cleared his throat).

C7: Sometimes, we send emails for keeping record, just because my boss forward to others, you can copy to others//

T11: //Yeah, but if it's to do with the task or to do with the project you are working on, and

*you need to use it later for information, I can understand it. I thought it was just like 'hi, how are you', a sort of personal thing when you send it to the person next to you*

*I6: Anyway talking about something personal should not use company's facility.*

*T11: No, you shouldn't (some applauded and laughed) very good, yeah, B12 (B2 raised his hand).*

*B12: I think a very common thing, but I send email, I mean people have conversation, you get a particular conversation, you have to be very wary of people confirming the conversation by email, the way the people use it. Sometimes it is disgusting if it comes back really late.*

*T11: Actually I've got a very good example, I just thought of it (I12 hands up). Go on*

*I12: xxx people are not allowed to send email on Fridays*

*T11: I got a hundred emails...email free Friday, no email on Friday*

*Bx: xxx*

*T11: Email free day, I just silly, no, is it really bothering me*

*B15: So I think email free day, people don't use, whether it is verbally or in writing, actually, it is ridiculous, got an email, because some email immediately response//*

*T11: //Immediate response*

*B15: Exactly xxx*

*T11: That's right, exactly. So I'm just telling you that the cleaners in this place have been less than proactive lately for one reason or another. I got an email about the changes of bin ladies or bin people. People were going to come around and change the bins in the middle of the day. Anyway, I got this email stating this was going to be happening, as I got the email, I said 'Ah, while I've got this email, I'll write to them and complain about, it is never clean. What's this sort of policy of university, there is a big note on our door. Anyway, I just wrote back, it is courtesy, I said 'thank you so much for replying, I really appreciate this', I don't like to shortcut them, she shortcut, what she think how identity thus might be, she took it, look back about...sorry just show you how these sort of non-verbal things going on. Yes, B15.*

*B15: Just out of interest, have you ever heard of anyone being specifically trained in the use of email xx the other thing*

*T11: No, I notice even in test OB test, email paralanguage, these sort of dots and smiles and all that does anybody use those? (someone laughed).*

*B12: I am very reluctant to do it xx//*

*T11://So you are really being funny, you are not being sarcastic, I should (laughing)*

*B15: xxx*

*T11: Sorry*

*B15: A couple of months ago, a company got rid of some of their staff by texting them, someone came in xxx (some local students still whispered).*

*T11: (sssh) Ok, we got to move on, so advantages of teams are human needs, increase commitment, knowledge skills, more flexible for certain types of task, diversity of views someone called social facilitation....*

## Appendix 22 C7's dilemma of expressing positive self-assessment

(This is selected from C7's individual assignment for Course A, 281003. C7 used to work in a Western company in China).

The foremost barrier I observed that exists between Chinese and Western nationals is located on the psychological level. Chinese tend to have a severe difficulty in expressing positive self-assessment to others. The best example I could illustrate this comes from my own personal experience:

After working for xx (his/her company's name) for more than one year, I felt strongly it was now the time for a pay raise. I had had this thought for some time. Apparently, the company had not given me a raise from their own initiative. So I needed to ask for it. But this immediately made me aware of the great dilemma I was in: I would be able to ask my boss for a raise but I knew that I would have to praise myself to some degree because that is what my boss would expect to hear so that he could give me the raise. That, however, was exactly where the problem for me was rooted. As a legacy of the Confucian traditions of the country, Chinese are taught from early childhood on to never praise themselves, not even to accept praise from others without expressing some objection. So how could I sell my good performance to my boss?

I figured I would have to make a move, take the initiative, by being totally open and explain the psychological mechanics to my boss. This is exactly what I did. I approached him and explained my thinking and my inner struggle within a 20 or 30-minute conversation. The result was gratitude on the part of two people: I got my raise and my boss expressed gratitude for teaching him a cultural lesson in private. As a long-term result, the behaviour of xx (his/her company's name) towards its Chinese staff changed, too, because the foreign expatriate managers were able to assess local staff better.

This resolution of a personal problem I had early on in my 'international' career helped me a lot later on. Explaining the ways of thinking to the others in direct communication, offers an excellent chance to bridge the often-invisible gap, and it is a joint responsibility and effort to adapt to the other side.

## Appendix 23 Key skills of the MBA programmes

Active participation in classroom and group work discussion, the communication skills, critical and independent skills, teamwork or group work skills are emphasised in the MBA programmes at Weston University as well as in Subject Benchmark Statements for MBA (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/masters/mba.pdf>). Below are selected expectations from the student handbook for MBA students.

The MBA programme aims to help students to ‘evaluate business and management problems in a critical and analytical manner’, and ‘demonstrate key skills in communication, problem-solving, presentation, use of communication and information technology, self-management and research (Student Handbook 2003/2004, MBA for Experienced Managers: 9)

Teamwork refers to your ability to work productively as part of a team. This may include the ability to:

- i) Take responsibility and carry out agreed tasks
- ii) Take initiative and lead others
- iii) Negotiate, asserting your own views but respecting others
- iv) Evaluate team performance (MBA Student Handbook 2003/2004 for Experienced Managers: 13).

Communication refers to your ability to express ideas, analysis and opinions with confidence and clarity. This may include the ability to:

- i) use appropriate language and form when writing and speaking
- ii) present ideas using appropriate media (e.g. text, data, charts, mathematics)
- iii) listen actively and critically
- iv) persuade rationally
- v) present data in an appropriate and clear manner using information technology appropriately (MBA Student Handbook 2003/2004 for Experienced Managers: 13).

Expectations on classroom and group participation:

Tutors expect all students to have come prepared for case discussions, and an active contribution in class from all students. Your views and critical comments on other students’ contributions will be encouraged through ‘cold calling’ from time to time (MBA Student Handbook 2003/2004 for Experienced Managers: 12)

## Appendix 24 Two Taiwan students were quiet in a mixed group

CT5 & B12, 241103, Course E 1:16pm – 2:20pm

This group is allocated by course lecturer, consisting seven people, 3 native speakers (2 British), 2 Taiwan students and 2 other nationalities. It's their first meeting. The assignment is about a report for a department store's personnel teams. I was rejected by B12 to tape-record their group discussion, since he felt not comfortable being recorded. This made it difficult to capture their original conversation, but I tried to make as detailed notes as possible. Two Taiwan students were generally quiet in the meeting. B12 & B13 rejected to be interviewed due to their pressures in the MBA studies.

The extract of the field note is between 1:16-2:20pm.

Time	Name	No of talk	Length of talk	sug	exp	agr	disa	ques	joke
1:16-1:38 (22 mins) Topic – customer and culture (17 was 10 mins late)	B12	19	6	5	7	2	3	1	1
	B9	7	2	1	2	3	1		
	CT5	4	2	1	1	2			
	CT2	1	1						
	I1	15	7	4	3	5	1	1	1
	I7	4	2	1			1	1	
	I3	2	1	1			1		
1:39-1:56 (17 mins) Topic -support	B12	4	5	1	1	2	4	1	
	B9	5	3		1	2	1	1	
	CT5	1	1	1					
	CT2	0							
	I1	7	3	4	1	2			
	I7	4	2	1		1	1	1	
	I3	7	4	2		1	4	1	
1:57-2:20 (23 mins) Topic- environment and structure (13 left)	B12	11	8	4	2	3			
	B9	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	
	CT5	2	1	1		1		1	
	CT2	0							
	I1	5	2	1	1	2	1		
	I7	7	9	3	2		2		
I3	0	0							

(sug: suggestion; exa: example; disa: disagreement; ques: question)

### Frequency and length of each member's talk

Name	No of talk	Length of talk	suggestion	explanation	agreement	disagreement	question	joking
B12	34	19	10	10	7	7	2	1
B9	14	6	2	3	4	2	2	
CT5	7	4	4	3	3	0	1	
CT2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	
I1	27	12	9	5	9	2	1	1
I7	15	13	5	3	1	4	2	
I3	9	5	3	0	1	5	1	

### A comparison of British and Chinese students' talk

	Frequency of talk	Length of talk
British	48 times	25 mins
Chinese	8 times	5 mins

The total duration of group interaction was 64 minutes (1:16-2:20pm). The total frequency of two British students' talk was 48 times, whereas two Taiwan students' talk was only 8 times. The length of British and Taiwan students' talk was 25 minutes and 5 minutes respectively. So from the number and length of talk, two Chinese students were much quieter than two British students....Further more, I found neither B12 asked two Taiwan students if they could follow the conversation, or Taiwan students asked B12 to speak slowly or repeat.

I1 was not happy with two Taiwan students' quiet and equal contribution in this group. He/she thought two Taiwan students were 'reluctant contributors' and they did not have a good relationship as well.

*'...certain members would not equal their investment in time and effort....In order to reduce the stress caused at meetings where some members actively participated while others observed, and to avoid a potential scene of conflict, after only the second meeting, it was decided that further contributions would be made virtually...Morale, team spirit and cohesion remained low as a whole...Relations between members of the team as a whole remain at that initial polite level, indicative of a civil relationship but not a friendly one'* (I1, 121203, individual assignment, Course E).

One of British students B9 thought there was 'mistrust' among this group's members, and some members '*generalised a suspicion that the Asian members were deliberately concentrating on individual assignments at the expense of the group*' (B9, 121203, individual assignment, Course E).

Two Taiwan students found difficult to follow native students' fast-paced conversation, and they were not happy with native students' dominating and lack-of-care working style.

*CT2: B12 speaks too fast, I could not follow him, he did not care if we could follow or not...I feel shy to ask* (Field note, CT5 & B12, 241103, group work for Course E).

*CT5: They kept on a very fast-paced discussion, I felt very difficult to follow and interrupt...I was not quite happy with their framework actually...they did not ask my opinion...they had already decided* (Field note, CT5 & B12, 241103, group work for Course E).

### Summary

Native students tended to dominate group discussion and showed little care and support to two Taiwan students' involvement. Taiwan students did not make efforts to negotiate their talk in group work. Later, native students suggested having a 'virtual' group communication by sending emails between group members. There were less communication and more misunderstandings between native and CHC students.



## Appendix 25 Transcription of Course E presentation interaction

### Keys to transcripts:

B8 = British student  
 C10 = a Mainland Chinese student, I10 = a student from East Asia,  
 TW1 = a student from Taiwan  
 Q/B1 = Question from British student 1. Q/B2 = questions from British student 2,  
 Q/B3 = questions from British student 3.  
 Q/T = question from one of lecturers  
 (x) = someone's name is mentioned in the talk.  
 (0.2) = pause, about 2 seconds.  
 (.) = short pause  
 // // = overlapping  
 [ ] = a word or a chunk is not recognized  
 () = describe people's behaviours and context.

(The audience was laughing, applauding and joking when the group members - five Asian women and one British man B8 stood in front of the lecture room, before they were ready for answering questions from the audience, after B8 finished the presentation on behalf of the whole group).

*Audience 1: It's so hard (laughing)*

*Audience 2: Put in the middle (laughing)*

*Audience 3: We really need photographs (laughing)*

(B8 moved and stood in the middle of the ladies, the presenters and audiences were all laughing).

*B8: Sorry we're just posing (laughter from audiences and team members) If I can take any questions from the floor, I'll direct to people relevant.*

*Q/B12: I'm interested in the issue of personnel director and //change//*

*B8: //Yes//*

*Q/B12: Hm could you explain why you select personnel directors and why select one person to cope with change?*

*B8: I believe, well, initially we thought of who can we selected change agent. We need someone who is new, who knows the company, and knows the industry, someone who will be undoubtedly to change. Now the personnel director has just been installed in the position. He knows the company well. He sees the success of the company. What we want to do is to try to get a whole, what we don't want to do is threaten the company. Change is very painful and transformational change is very painful, however what we don't want to do is to bring in someone from outside, we are, on the slide (he pointed to the chart on the screen), we are not actually at the bottom, it can go a lot worse. So what we need to do is to install someone at this, someone who the people trust. Further to that, we didn't want just personal director, we wanted to bring in external staff, either management consultant, or from other companies, that have been through similar process. So this person has got backup, knowledgeable backup that we can actually build //on//*

*C10: //Can// I add something? (C10 looked at B8 and the other team members) Yes, the reason why we, I think B8 forgot to mention something (laughing from audience). Well, have, we'll have the change sponsor, which is either CEO, who knows or any acceptable director who can help (B8 helped her to turn the power point to the page she's talking) Ok*

*Sorry. (C10 changed her position with B8, she stood in front of the screen and pointed to the diagram) and underneath him there will be change programme manager and project manager. The personnel manager only takes care of human aspects, because we implement teams. Human problem has to be tackled, it's very important problem and we have to tackle very subtly. We believe that external director has to be expertise to do this (whispering from audience) and just help people to overcome fears.*

*Q/B12: So to just sum up what you said is that change is essentially a human process, but to try to overcome the perception of change only comes from the HR department.*

*C10: Yes //thank you//*

*B8: //Absolutely// That is the idea bringing people in positions of non-executive directors, that experienced people in direct position with the sole purpose of the change.*

*Q/B2: You obviously want people to buy-in to this, but what do you think about the idea that if they don't, you take them out and shoot them.*

*B8: Although this is a drastic action, it may well be necessary, what you have to do is look at the change agent and get them to actually bring the team together. Their sole job, we have programme manager to attack their change. We need these people to actually build on the current situation as it is, we will recruit by diversity because we need to build this company into a new adaptive company... Change is inevitable. If we don't change we are dead, and if we are dead no one //will have a job//.*

*Q/B2: //You'll also// have conflicts, how to manage it?*

*(I10 wanted to say something, she looked at B8)*

*B8: Well (nodded at I10, when he found I10 was looking at him with a smile).*

*I10: We also discussed training plan which was not covered in the presentation (she giggled). HR team should provide different training for different levels. For example, local manager will be given lots of authority. Low level employee with high quality service, for this level we provide ownership, take off customer information. Middle level training adapt to the changing.*

*B8: I think change would only be successful if by training.*

*Q/B14: Concerning the Far East, how many employees on shop floor feel, because they do day-to-day shop work, how staffs react to the change?*

*TW6: I may answer this question (TW6 started in a very low voice, then raised her voice) because in local shop, local people have more pressure than top manager. We need to employ new entrepreneurial environment to encourage them, then employee will have more ideas created, to create good communication, with top level to allow low employees to express a lot, even more complaints took, to make the company good.*

*C10: Can I add something, first of all we employ low level employees, by coach or immediate by participate empowerment. Gradually they will feel the change, they will have reaction, if we are continuously doing this, we'll employ involvement.*

*Q/T: How will the communication be achieved? (a question from T4, stood up from the right corner of the lecture room, his voice couldn't heard very clearly).*

*B8: (B8 walked to T4's direction a little bit) There are many ways. One way is communication, communication between upper level and lower level is basically zero. What we'll have to do is to install some means, some have been discussed free phone telephone for example. What we need is we need to show that they are work, so in a monthly magazine will show articles actually published by low level employees are been taken into account. This needs to happen immediately. We need to have 'open house' or 'tour hall'. We need to actually listen to people their ideas to take on board. This process is*

*probably going to be the slowest of all because change can happen but these people can still work as they have done. This needs to adapt, what we need to do is basically educate from the top down, especially the shop manager to actually trust them and get them in making decisions. I don't deny this is an extremely difficult position, people have been quite happy to work for this company at the shop floor level because they are told what to do because they are just going to do their job and go home, however what we want to instill in them is a xxx (this word is not recognized) that if you want to make something happen, you can argue with me, argue with the shop manager, come up with new ideas. I think we basically have to start that tomorrow. Even if there was no transformational change and just incremental change, that has got to happen. But we propose transformational. Any further thoughts? (asking for his group members)*

*C10: I think change is from both direction (should be directions – researcher added), from senior to junior, then the other way around, from top first.*

*I10: Company should change its behaviour and look to a new vision, starting the trust of the employees.*

*B8: I think the leadership comes to this. If we have a leader, say like CEO, people will trust the CEO, we need to install trust from every single level. Leadership should occur throughout (someone applauds). Any more questions? (looked at the audience with a smile)*

*(Big applause from audience).*

## Appendix 26 B2's first mixed group work experience

There were 12 people from 7 countries in this Course B group (1 British, 2 European, 4 Chinese and 5 CHC students). Chinese student C17 had different opinions in this group. Some people argued with him (including some Chinese students). The team leader B2 adopted a compromising strategy to solve the disagreement.

*B2: I tried to balance it, I gave C17 an opportunity to speak his ideas, 'what did you mean', and I agreed to put some of his ideas in the assignment. But personally, I thought C17 didn't really know what we were talking about, it didn't fit our discussion (B2, 290405).*

C17 was quite impressed with B2's democratic attitude to the group members.

*C17: I think B2 in our group did very well, he listened to and respected others' ideas, he is democratic and tolerant, he knows how to balance the relationship between the task, group and individual (C17, 101003).*

Meanwhile, C10 took an initiative to write a 1500-word report at the early stage of group work. B2 also adopted some of her ideas in the final draft of the group report. Both Chinese and British students felt happy with their equal contribution in their first group interaction.

*C10: B2 could listen and adopt different ideas. I am happy B2 adopted some of my ideas in the final report. The main part was written by him (C10, 091003).*

*B2: The first was the first, I was very happy with that one, we did very well. I was the leader, everyone contributed a lot...Everyone in our group has tried our best. Though some Chinese students are not good at English, they collected much important information' (B2, 290405).*

### Summary

The above quotes show that two Chinese students managed successfully to gain equal opportunities and adapt to the new academic identity (actively participating and challenging) in group interaction; British student B2 adopted a patient and compromising attitudes towards Chinese/CHC students' contribution, he gave C17 an opportunity to speak and argue, and put two Chinese students' ideas in the assignment. B2's democratic attitude made him more popular among Chinese students. One of reasons for this group's happy experience may be due to B2's previous experience working with East Asian students in recent years.

In sum, the British student B2's tolerance and patience and Chinese students' motivation and efforts of contributing to the group discussion brought a successful group communication and relationship experience.

## Appendix 27 A case study of C8's reverse culture shock

Many Chinese EMBA students encountered a reverse culture shock after they returned to China. C8 was one of them. Unexpectedly I received his email letter which was written in Chinese in February 2005 - five months after he returned to China – soon after the Chinese New year holidays.

*'I have been in a gloomy state of mind recently, it is kind of psychological struggle. I remember that you mentioned a kind of state (re-entry culture shock - researcher) when someone returns to one's home culture in your questionnaire, I am not sure whether my state is a general thing. Compared with my classmates, I am a lucky dog, started to work as soon as I came back, everyone said I am doing a very good job. But my feeling is opposite; I feel I am very depressed. I often thought about the possibility of going back to the UK. Everything in China become not as good and lovely as I just came back. I have been tired of the complicated relationships between people, intense competition environment, unfair treatment, boring routine job and flashy social culture. I have to consider how to flatter my boss, how to deal with hierarchical relationship, how to take care of my family and friends every day. I felt very energetic in the first few months when I returned, now my energy has gone, the only thing left is the repeated routine (he wrote this word in English). I think I encountered a psychological 'break down', living is like dying, I feel my passion for pursuing the career and achieving my dreams is getting weak.....maybe I have had too high expectation on the life and job back home...'* (C8, 160205, email).

## Appendix 28 Field note of Course F 110304

**Date/Time:** 11 Mar 2003, 9:00am-4:30pm

**Unit/Sample:** Course F/ EMBA

**Session:** mergers and acquisitions

**Venue:** Lecture room 3000, Management School Building

**Number of students:** about 70

**Facilities:** the lecturer used power point, whiteboard and handout

(It was the first time for this lecturer to give students handout after students complained about it in the last semester).

T14 often asked students' opinions and followed up with 'why', then he made a brief comment. He walked from left to right, when the student raised questions or gave examples, he would go near to the student and followed up with his 'why?'.

Classroom interaction in Course F session (from 9:03- 9:34am)

Time	T's talk (no/type/length)	Initiated talk		Solicited talk	
		Cs	Bs	Cs	Bs
9:03			B3 2s. inf		
9:05	pro. Why		B12 exa. Vodafone, £1000 per customer. 15s		
9:08	Carry on		I6 exa. 12s. newspaper ad. in Germany, dis		
9:10	exa, investment bank takes over		B2, 3s, exa. SRB changed the culture		
9:15	Inf. What? Do you know about it?	cla. 2s.			
9:18	Inf. Who's chosen?				B12 inf 2s
9:20					inf 4s
9:22	Inf. Anything about this				inf 2s B7
9:24	pro. Why? (draw a graph and point to the board)				inf 2s
9:25	pro. Why?				opi 12s
9:26	Inf. Tell us about it. What's happening? How long?				exa. 1.5m
9:28	Pro. Why? But you have to be very careful		exa, 60s		
9:29	Agr. Carry on. pro. How does it matter significantly? Pro. Why?	C13, exa 1m 56s.			
9:31	opi		Interrupt, dis 2s	C13 opi 6s	
9:32	inf. What about position of Safeway? What else? (draw a graph and explain)			C13 exa 30s	
9:33			app. 1s		
9:34	com. So that's Morrison				
9:34			B6 30s exa		
Total turns	23 times	1 times, 1 min 58 sec.	7 times, 2 min 05 sec.	2 time, 36s.	6 times, 1 min 27 sec.

The above table is summarized into a table below:

#### Classroom interaction in Course F session

	Total talk (turns/time)	Initiated talk (turns/length)	Solicited talk (turns/length)	No of speaker
Chinese students	3 / 2.34 min	1 / 1.58m	2 / 36 sec	1
British students	13 / 3.32 min	7 / 2.05 min	6 / 1.27 min	5

#### Comments:

1/ The teaching style is quite interactive, the lecturer plays the role of the facilitator by asking many provocative and challenging questions, such as ‘Why?’, ‘Anything about it?’, ‘What’s happening?’, ‘How does it matter significantly?’, ‘what about position of Safeway?’, ‘What else?’, to facilitate students develop their arguments and move the classroom discussion further.

2/ As usual, British students dominated the classroom talk; they took more turns and made more initiated talks and interruptions to express their opinions. Though only one Chinese student C13 talked during this 34 classroom interaction, however, he tended to dominate the discussion on a particular topic – merger issues of Morrison company. His interaction time with the lecturer is 2 min 34 sec. Four British students’ total talking time is 3 min 32 sec.

3/ C13 is quite familiar with British companies, he gave many facts and figures in his examples; he tried to support lectures and classroom discussion with his own opinions and arguments. For example, C13 argued ‘Morrison used a specific strategy to survive in the British supermarket by taking over Safeway. There are three big players in British supermarkets, Tesco takes 27% of the total market, Asda 17%, Sainsbury 16%. Safeway only takes 7%, Morrison 9%. But when Morrison took over Safeway, they became 16%. They have made some changes to survive and they have very big distribution channel’.

## **Appendix 29 Samples of questionnaires**



## Welcome to the Questionnaire for MBA Students From Mainland China & Taiwan

Dear friends,

My name is Juliet Tianshu ZHAO, a research student in the School of Education, University of Southampton. I am conducting a research project investigating the language and culture learning experience of MBA students, especially those from Mainland China and Taiwan in the British academic and socio-cultural contexts.

The aim of this questionnaire is to gain your experiences and views on language use, academic study and social contact between you and British and other MBA students and staff during your MBA study in the year 2003-2004 in the UK.

The questionnaire takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. Each response shall be treated in the strictest confidence. I would be very grateful if you could take the time to complete the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your understanding and cooperation!

Yours sincerely, *TIANSHU ZHAO*

SECTION 1

SECTION 2

SECTION 3

SECTION 4

If you have any questions about this study, please do contact  
TIANSHU ZHAO  
School of Education, University of Southampton

# Questionnaire for MBA Students from Mainland China and Taiwan

## Section I Background Information

**Instructions:** The following questions concern your personal background, please choose the appropriate answer of each question in the blanks where indicated, or rate each one on a scale.

1. Are you:  Male  Female  no comment

2. Were you:

3. Please indicate your age:

4. Where are you from:

5. Which of the following options best describe your undergraduate degree prior to an MBA:

6. How much was your IELTS / TOEFL score before you started pre-sessional/MBA study:

7. When did you start to learn English in mainland China/Taiwan:

8. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following reasons as to WHY you chose to study an MBA in the UK ?

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
8.1 to obtain qualification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
8.2 to experience an intercultural environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
8.3 to make friends from my own culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
8.4 to make friends from different cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
8.5 to improve English language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
8.6 to improve professional knowledge and skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
8.7 to improve career prospects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
8.8 to improve myself/become a more capable person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
8.9 other (please specify) <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

9. How was your tuition paid?

10. How long was your work experience prior to starting the MBA course?

11. What industry/sector had you ever worked in prior to starting the MBA course? (you may choose more than one)

- Finance  IT industry  Tele-communication  Trade  Engineering  
 Manufacturing  Publishing  Education  Government  Others

12. What was the highest position you held in your previous/current job prior to starting the MBA course?

13. Had you ever worked closely with English-speaking people in mainland/Taiwan prior to starting the MBA course:

14. Had you ever stayed in English-speaking countries prior to starting the MBA course:

# Questionnaire for MBA Students from Mainland China and Taiwan

## Section II Language Use in the Academic and Daily Life

Instructions: The following questions are about issues of language use, please choose the appropriate answer or rate each one on :

1. Approximately how many hours did you usually spend to complete an individual assignment (including research, reading and writing)?

2. Approximately what percentage of your spare time did you speak English during your MBA study?

3. When you had a group discussion with students only from mainland China and Taiwan, what percentage of time did you speak English ?

4. How **CONFIDENT** did you use English in the following situations during your MBA study. Please rate:

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	not comment
4.1 in academic situation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.2 in social contact	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

5. Please rate how **IMPORTANT** and how **CONFIDENT** you think that the following language skills/aspects were in your postgraduate study in the UK?

	not at all	How Important					not at all	How Confident				
5.1 listening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.2 speaking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.3 reading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.4 writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.5 pronunciation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.6 grammar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.7 vocabulary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

6. Please rate how **CONFIDENT** you were in the following language skills and aspects at the beginning and end of MBA course in the UK?

	not at all	Beginning of MBA					not at all	End of MBA				
6.1 listening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.2 speaking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.3 reading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.4 writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.5 pronunciation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.6 grammar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.7 vocabulary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

7. Please rate how confident you were in using English at the following stages of the MBA study.

comment	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no
7.1 October to Christmas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
7.2 Christmas to Easter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
7.3 Easter to mid May	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
7.4 Mid May to September	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

# Questionnaire for MBA Students from Mainland China and Taiwan

## Section III Academic Studies

**Instructions:** The following questions concern academic performance and assessment, please rate each one on a scale.

### 1. When you had immediate academic questions during a lecture, what were you most likely to do?

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
1.1 ask the lecturer <b>in</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.2 Ask the lecture <b>after</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.3 ask classmates from your own country <b>in</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.4 ask classmates from your own country <b>after</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.5 ask classmates from other countries <b>in</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.6 ask classmates from other countries <b>after</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.7 work it out by myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.8 other _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

### 2. Please rate the criteria of a good assignment and a good presentation for the postgraduate study in the UK.

	not at all		Assignment		absolutely		not at all		Presentation		absolutely	
2.1 good understanding of the subject/topic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.2 good analysis and application	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.3 critical evaluation of theory and concepts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.4 good use of examples to support analysis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.5 good speaking/writing skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.6 good structure and coherence of ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.7 innovation and creative ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.8 good decisions and recommendations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.9 appropriate reference to relevant literature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.10 good visual layout (diagram/table)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.11 other _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

### 3. Please rate the relative importance of the following attributes of being a good postgraduate student in a British university.

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
3.1 a good contributor to class/group discussion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.2 good cooperation in group work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.3 good marks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.4 good communication/language skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.5 good subject knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.6 preparing well for the lesson	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.7 good listener and reflector	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.8 empathy towards other students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.9 challenge theories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.10 challenge the lecturer's ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.11 respect lecturers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.12 other _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

### 4. Please rate relative importance of the following attributes of being a good lecturer in a British university.

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
4.1 expert in the subject	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

4.2 outstanding research ability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.3 sharing his/her own work experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.4 good organization of the class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.5 fair and unbiased attitude and behaviour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.6 approachable and quick response to students' enquiry after class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.7 a friend outside class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.8 good communication/language skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.9 challenge theories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.10 challenge students' ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.11 equal relationship with students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.12 empathy towards students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.13 other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

**5. Please rate how confident/competent you were in the following academic aspects in your MBA study in the UK.**

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
5.1 classroom performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.2 group discussion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.3 individual assignment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.4 presentation skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.5 written exams	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

# Questionnaire for MBA Students from Mainland China and Taiwan

## Section IV Social Contact with Different Groups of People

Instructions: The following questions concern social life, please choose appropriate answer, or fill in the blank where indicated, on each one on a scale.

1. If you lived in the halls of residence, approximately how often per day did you talk with flatmates not from Mainland and Taiwan?

2. If you lived in a flat/house with British landlord or tenant during term time, approximately how often per day did you talk with them?

3. This question relates to your contact with MBA lecturers/staff during your MBA study.

3.1 How often did you have professional contact (e.g., tutorial, supervision) during term time (exclude dissertation supervision) on an average?

3.2 How many times did you see your dissertation tutor for supervision on an average?

3.3 If you were a RMBA student, how many times did you see your personal tutor on an average during your MBA study?

3.4 How often did you have personal contact (e.g. having coffee/lunch, home visit, trip) with MBA lecturers/staff during MBA study on an average?

4. Please rate how much you would like to contact and how often you had regular contact with the following groups of students/lecturers in your spare time in the UK.

	Like to Contact					Regular Contact					
	not at all				absolutely	not at all				absolutely	
4.1 Chinese students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.2 British students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.3 non-British non-Chinese students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.4 MBA lecturers/staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

5. To what degree did you change in the following aspects during your MBA study?

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
5.1 knowledge about other cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.2 attitude/motivation to learn about other cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.3 skills to work more effectively with people from other cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

6. To what degree did you change in your relationship with the following groups of people during your MBA study.

	worst	worse	the same	better	best	no comment
6.1 with British lecturers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.2 with British students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.3 with Chinese students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.4 with non-British non-Chinese students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

7. Please indicate your degree of confidence in studying/staying in a new culture and working with people from other cultures (e.g. academic study, knowledge about other cultures, relationship with others etc), at the following stages of the MBA course.

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
7.1 October to Christmas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
7.2 Christmas to Easter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
7.3 Easter to mid May	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

7.4 Mid May to September

8. This question relates to your change of satisfaction with your home culture(C1) and host culture (C2). Now that you have come back to your home culture (C1), after you studied and stayed in a host culture (C2) for a year, what is your feeling of this re-entry (re-adaptation) process? Please rate your degree of satisfaction to C1 and C2 after you went back home.

	Satisfaction to C1					Satisfaction to C2				
	not at all			absolutely		not at all			absolutely	
8.1 the first and second month	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
8.2 the third and fourth month	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
8.2 the fifth and sixth month	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

9. Please indicate the extent to which you are satisfied with the following outcomes/achievements through MBA study in the UK.

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
9.1 obtaining the qualification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
9.2 experiencing an intercultural environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
9.3 making friends from my own culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
9.4 making friends from different cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
9.5 improving English language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
9.6 improving professional knowledge and skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
9.7 improving career prospects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
9.8 improving myself/become a more capable person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
9.9 other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

10. Please describe two typical characteristics of Chinese students/people, in relation to their behaviour or way of thinking.

10.1

10.2

11. Please describe two typical characteristics of British students/people in relation to their behaviour or way of thinking.

11.1

11.2

12. Your any further comments/ideas on any aspect of this topic would be very much appreciated:

## Welcome to the Questionnaire for British MBA Students

Dear friends,

My name is Juliet Tianshu ZHAO, a research student in the School of Education, University of Southampton. I am conducting a research project investigating the language and culture learning experience of MBA students, especially those from Mainland China and Taiwan in the British academic and socio-cultural contexts.

The aim of this questionnaire is to gain your experiences and views on language use, academic study and social contact between you and Chinese and other MBA students and staff during your MBA study in the year 2003-2004 in the UK.

The questionnaire takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. Each response shall be treated in the strictest confidence. I would be very grateful if you could take the time to complete the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your understanding and cooperation!

Yours Sincerely, *TIANSHU ZHAO*

SECTION 1

SECTION 2

SECTION 3

SECTION 4



# Questionnaire for British MBA Students

## Section I Background Information

Instructions: The following questions concern your personal background, please choose the appropriate answer of each question in the blanks where indicated, or rate each one on a scale.

1. Are you:  Male  Female  no comment

2. Were you a :

3. Please indicate your age:

4. Where did you live whilst studying for your MBA :

5. Which of the following options best describe your undergraduate degree prior to starting the MBA course?

6. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following reasons as to WHY you chose to study an MBA.

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
6.1 to obtain qualification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.2 to experience an intercultural environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.3 to make friends from my own culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.4 to make friends from different cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.5 to improve professional knowledge and skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.6 to improve career prospects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.7 to improve myself/become a more capable person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.8 other (please specify) <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

7. How was your tuition paid?

8. How long was your work experience prior to starting the MBA course?

9. What industry/sector have you ever worked in prior to starting the MBA course? (you may choose more than one)

Finance  IT industry  Tele-communication  Foreign trade  Engineering  
 Manufacturing  Publishing  Education  Government  Others

10. What was the highest position you held in your previous/current job prior to starting the MBA course?

11. Had you ever worked closely with people from East-Asian countries in the UK prior to starting the MBA course?

12. Had you ever stayed in any East-Asian countries prior to starting the MBA course?

# Questionnaire for British MBA Students

## Section II Language Use in the Academic and Daily Life

Instructions: The following questions are about issues of language use, please choose the appropriate answer or rate each one on :

1. Approximately, how many hours did you usually spend to complete an individual assignment (including research, reading and writing)?

2. Approximately how many hours do you think that Chinese students spend to complete an individual assignment (including research, reading and writing time)?

3. How competent do you think Chinese students? English was in the following situations? Please rate:

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
3.1 in academic situation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.2 in social contact	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

4. Please rate how **IMPORTANT** you think the following language skills/aspects were for your Chinese classmates in the postgraduate study in the UK and how **COMPETENT** you believe them to be?

	not at all	How Important					not at all	How Competent				
					absolutely						absolutely	
4.1 listening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.2 speaking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.3 reading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.4 writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.5 pronunciation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.6 grammar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.7 vocabulary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

5. Please rate how competent you think Chinese students were in the following English language skills at the beginning and end of MBA course in the UK?

	not at all	Beginning of MBA					not at all	End of MBA				
					absolutely						absolutely	
5.1 listening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.2 speaking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.3 reading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.4 writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.5 pronunciation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.6 grammar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.7 vocabulary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

# Questionnaire for British MBA Students

## Section III Academic Studies

**Instructions:** The following questions concern academic performance and assessment, please rate each one on a scale.

### 1. When you had immediate academic questions during a lecture, what were you most likely to do?

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
1.1 ask the lecturer <b>in</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.2 Ask the lecture <b>after</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.3 ask classmates from my own country <b>in</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.4 ask classmates from my own country <b>after</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.5 ask classmates from other countries <b>in</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.6 ask classmates from other countries <b>after</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.7 work it out by myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.8 other _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

### 2. Please rate the criteria of a good assignment and a good presentation for the postgraduate study in the UK.

	Assignment					Presentation				
	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely
2.1 good understanding of the subject/topic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.2 good analysis and application	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.3 critical evaluation of theory and concepts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.4 good use of examples to support analysis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.5 good speaking/writing skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.6 good structure and coherence of ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.7 innovation and creative ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.8 good decisions and recommendations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.9 appropriate reference to relevant literature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.10 good visual layout (diagram/table)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.11 other _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

### 3. Please rate the relative importance of the following attributes of being a good postgraduate student in a British university.

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
3.1 a good contributor to class/group discussion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.2 good cooperation in group work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.3 good marks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.4 good communication/language skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.5 good subject knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.6 preparing well for the lesson	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.7 good listener and reflector	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.8 empathy towards other students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.9 challenge theories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.10 challenge the lecturer's ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.11 respect lecturers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.12 other _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

### 4. Please rate relative importance of the following attributes of being a good lecturer in a British university.

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
4.1 expert in the subject	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

4.2 outstanding research ability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.3 sharing his/her own work experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.4 good organization of the class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.5 fair and unbiased attitude and behaviour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.6 approachable and quick response to students' enquiry after class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.7 a friend outside class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.8 good communication/language skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.9 challenge theories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.10 challenge students' ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.11 equal relationship with students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.12 empathy towards students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.13 other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

**5. Please rate how confident/competent you were in the following academic aspects of your MBA study in the UK.**

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
5.1 classroom performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.2 group discussion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.3 individual assignment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.4 presentation skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.5 written exams	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

# Questionnaire for British MBA Students

## Section IV Social Contact with Different Groups of People

Instructions: The following questions concern social life, please choose appropriate answer, or fill in the blank where indicated, on each one on a scale.

1. If you lived in a flat or house with Chinese students during term time, approximately how often per day did you talk with them?

2. This question relates to your contact with MBA lecturers/staff during your MBA study.

2.1 How often did you have professional contact (e.g., tutorial, supervision) during term time (exclude dissertation supervision) on an average?

2.2 How many times did you see your dissertation tutor for supervision on an average?

2.3 How often did you have personal contact (e.g. having coffee/lunch, home visit, trip) with MBA lecturers/staff during MBA study on an average?

3. Please rate how much you would like to contact and how often you had regular contact with the following groups of students/lecturers in your spare time in the UK.

	Like to Contact					Regular Contact				
	not at all				absolutely	not at all				absolutely
3.1 Chinese students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.2 British students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.3 non-British non-Chinese students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.4 MBA lecturers/staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. To what degree did you change in the following aspects during your MBA study?

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
4.1 knowledge about other cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.2 attitude/motivation to learn about other cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.3 skills to work more effectively with people from other cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

5. To what degree did you change in relationship with the following groups of people during your MBA study.

	worst	worse	the same	better	best	no comment
5.1 with British lecturers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.2 with British students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.3 with Chinese students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.4 with non-British non-Chinese students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

6. Please indicate your degree of confidence in working with people from other cultures (e.g. academic study, knowledge about other cultures, relationship with others etc) at the following stages of the MBA course.

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
6.1 October to Christmas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.2 Christmas to Easter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.3 Easter to mid May	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.4 Mid May to September	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

7. Please indicate the extent to which you are satisfied with the following outcomes/achievements through MBA study.

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
7.1 obtaining qualification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
7.2 experiencing an intercultural environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

7.3 making friends from my own culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.4 making friends from different cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.5 improving professional knowledge and skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.6 improving career prospects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.7 improving myself/become a more capable person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.8 other <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. Please describe two typical characteristics of Chinese students/people, in relation to their behaviour or way of thinking.

8.1

8.2

9. Please describe two typical characteristics of British students/people in relation to their behaviour or way of thinking.

9.1

9.2

10. Your further comments/ideas on any aspect of this topic would be very much appreciated:



University  
of Southampton

## Welcome to the Questionnaire for Non-British and Non-Chinese MBA Students

Dear friends,

My name is Juliet Tianshu ZHAO, a research student in the School of Education, University of Southampton. I am conducting a research project investigating the language and culture learning experience of MBA students, especially those from Mainland China and Taiwan in the British academic and socio-cultural contexts.

The aim of this questionnaire is to gain your experiences and views on language use, academic study and social contact between you and Chinese and other MBA students and staff during your MBA study in the year 2003-2004 in the UK.

The questionnaire takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. Each response shall be treated in the strictest confidence. I would be very grateful if you could take the time to complete the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your understanding and cooperation!

Yours sincerely, *TIANSHU ZHAO*

SECTION 1

SECTION 2

SECTION 3

SECTION 4

# Questionnaire for Non-Chinese & Non-British MBA Students

## Section I Background Information

Instructions: The following questions concern your personal background, please choose the appropriate answer of each question in the blanks where indicated, or rate each one on a scale.

1. Are you:  Male  Female  no comment

2. Were you a :

3. Please indicate your age:

4. What is your nationality:

5. Which of the following options best describe your undergraduate degree prior to starting the MBA course?

6. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following reasons as to WHY you chose to study an MBA in the UK.

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
6.1 to obtain qualification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.2 to experience an intercultural environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.3 to make friends from my own culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.4 to make friends from different cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.5 to improve English language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.6 to improve professional knowledge and skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.7 to improve career prospects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.8 to improve myself/become a more capable person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.9 other (please specify) <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

7. How was your tuition paid?

8. How long was your work experience prior to starting the MBA course?

9. What industry/sector have you ever worked in prior to starting the MBA course? (you may choose more than one)

Finance  IT industry  Tele-communication  Foreign trade  Engineering  
 Manufacturing  Publishing  Education  Government  Others

10. What was the highest position you held in your previous/current job prior to starting the MBA course?

11. If you are an European student, had you ever worked closely with people from East-Asian countries in your country prior to starting the MBA course?

12. If you are an European student, had you ever stayed in any East-Asian countries prior to starting the MBA course?

13. Had you ever worked closely with people from English-speaking countries in your home country prior to starting the MBA course?



# Questionnaire for Non-Chinese & Non-British MBA Students

## Section II Language Use in the Academic and Daily Life

Instructions: The following questions are about issues of language use, please choose the appropriate answer or rate each one on a sca

1. Approximately how many hours did you usually spend to complete an individual assignment (including research, reading and writing)?

2. What percentage of your spare time did you speak English during your MBA study?

3. How competent do you think Chinese students? English was in the following situations? Please rate:

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
3.1 in academic situation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.2 in social contact	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

4. Please rate how **IMPORTANT** you think the following language skills/aspects were for your Chinese classmates in the postgraduate study in the UK and how **COMPETENT** you believe them to be?

	not at all	How Important					absolutely	not at all	How Competent					absolutely
4.1 listening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.2 speaking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.3 reading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.4 writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.5 pronunciation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.6 grammar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.7 vocabulary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

5. Please rate how competent you think Chinese students were in the following English language skills at the beginning and end of MBA course in the UK?

	not at all	Beginning of MBA					absolutely	not at all	End of MBA					absolutely
5.1 listening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.2 speaking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.3 reading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.4 writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.5 pronunciation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.6 grammar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.7 vocabulary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

# Questionnaire for Non-Chinese & Non-British MBA Students

## Section III Academic Studies

**Instructions:** The following questions concern academic performance and assessment, please rate each one on a scale.

### 1. When you had immediate academic questions during a lecture, what were you most likely to do?

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
1.1 ask the lecturer <b>in</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.2 Ask the lecture <b>after</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.3 ask classmates from your own country <b>in</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.4 ask classmates from your own country <b>after</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.5 ask classmates from other countries <b>in</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.6 ask classmates from other countries <b>after</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.7 work it out by myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.8 other _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

### 2. Please rate the criteria of a good assignment and a good presentation for postgraduate study in the UK.

	Assignment			Presentation		
	not at all	somewhat	absolutely	not at all	somewhat	absolutely
2.1 good understanding of the subject/topic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.2 good analysis and application	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.3 critical evaluation of theory and concepts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.4 good use of examples to support analysis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.5 good speaking/writing skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.6 good structure and coherence of ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.7 innovation and creativity of ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.8 good decisions and recommendations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.9 appropriate reference to relevant literature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.10 good visual layout (diagram/table)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.11 other _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

### 3. Please rate the relative importance of the following attributes of being a good postgraduate student in a British university.

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
3.1 a good contributor to class/group discussion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.2 good cooperation in group work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.3 good marks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.4 good communication/language skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.5 good subject knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.6 preparing well for the lesson	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.7 good listener and reflector	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.8 empathy towards other students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.9 challenge theories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.10 challenge the lecturer's ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.11 respect lecturers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.12 other _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

### 4. Please rate relative importance of the following attributes of being a good lecturer in a British university.

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
4.1 expert in the subject	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.2 outstanding research ability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

4.3 sharing his/her own work experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.4 good organization of the class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.5 fair and unbiased attitude and behaviour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.6 approachable and quick response to students' enquiry after class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.7 a friend outside class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.8 good communication/language skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.9 challenge theories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.10 challenge students' ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.11 equal relationship with students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.12 empathy towards students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.13 other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

**5. Please rate how confident/competent you were in the following academic aspects of your MBA study in the UK.**

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
5.1 classroom performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.2 group discussion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.3 individual assignment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.4 presentation skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.5 written exams	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

# Questionnaire for Non-Chinese & Non-British MBA Students

## Section IV Social Contact with Different Groups of People

Instructions: The following questions concern social life, please choose appropriate answer, or fill in the blank where indicated, on each one on a scale.

1. If you lived in the halls of residence, approximately how often per day did you talk to your Chinese flatmates?

2. If you lived in a flat or house with Chinese students during term time, approximately how often per day did you talk with them?

3. This question relates to your contact with MBA lecturers/staff during your MBA study.

3.1 How often did you have professional contact (e.g. tutorial, supervision) during term time (exclude dissertation supervision) on an average?

3.2 How many times did you see your dissertation tutor for supervision on an average?

3.3 If you were a RMBA student, how many times did you see your personal tutor on an average during your MBA study?

3.4 How often did you have personal contact (e.g. having coffee/lunch, home visit, trip) with MBA lecturers/staff during MBA study on an average?

4. Please rate how much you would like to contact and how often you had regular contact with the following groups of students/lecturers in your spare time in the UK.

	Like to Contact					Regular Contact					
	not at all				absolutely	not at all				absolutely	
4.1 Chinese students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.2 British students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.3 non-British non-Chinese students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.4 MBA lecturers/staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

5. To what degree did you change in following aspects during your MBA study?

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
5.1 knowledge about other cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.2 attitude/motivation to learn about other cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.3 skills to work more effectively with people from other cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

6. To what degree did you change in your relationship with the following groups of people during your MBA study.

	worst	worse	the same	better	best	no comment
6.1 with British lecturers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.2 with British students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.3 with Chinese students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.4 with non-British non-Chinese students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

7. Please indicate your degree of confidence in studying/staying in a new culture and working with people from other cultures (e.g. academic study, knowledge about other cultures, relationship with others etc) at the following stages of the MBA course.

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
7.1 October to Christmas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
7.2 Christmas to Easter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
7.3 Easter to mid May	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
7.4 Mid May to September	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

8. This question relates to your change of satisfaction with your home culture(C1) and host culture (C2). Now that you have come back to your home culture (C1), after you studied and stayed in a host culture (C2) for a year, what is your feeling of this re-entry (re-adaptation) process? Please rate your degree of satisfaction to C1 and C2 after you went back home.

	not at all	Satisfaction to C1				absolutely	not at all	Satisfaction to C2				absolutely
8.1 the first and second month	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
8.2 the third and fourth month	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
8.3 the fifth and sixth month	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

9. Please indicate the extent to which you are satisfied with the following outcomes/achievements through MBA study in the UK.

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
9.1 obtaining the qualification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
9.2 experiencing an intercultural environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
9.3 making friends from my own culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
9.4 making friends from different cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
9.5 improving English language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
9.6 improving professional knowledge and skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
9.7 improving career prospects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
9.8 improving myself/become a more capable person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
9.9 other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

10. Please describe two typical characteristics of Chinese students/people in relation to their behaviour or way of thinking.

10.1

10.2

11. Please describe two typical characteristics of British students/people in relation to their behaviour or way of thinking.

11.1

11.2

12. Your further comments/ideas on any aspect of this topic would be very much appreciated:

## Welcome to the Questionnaire for MBA Lecturers and Staff

Dear lecturers and staff for MBA programme,

My name is Juliet Tianshu ZHAO, a research student in the School of Education, University of Southampton. I am conducting a research project investigating the language and culture learning experience of MBA students, especially those from Mainland China and Taiwan in the British academic and socio-cultural contexts.

The aim of this questionnaire is to gain your experiences and views on language use, academic study and social contact between you and Chinese and other MBA students during your MBA teaching in the year 2003-2004.

The questionnaire takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. Each response shall be treated in the strictest confidence. I would be very grateful if you could take the time to complete the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your understanding and cooperation!

Yours sincerely, *TIANSHU ZHAO*

SECTION 1

SECTION 2

SECTION 3

SECTION 4

# Questionnaire for Lecturers and Staff for MBA Programme

## Section I Background Information

**Instructions:** The following questions concern your personal background, please choose the appropriate answer of each question in the blanks where indicated, or rate each one on a scale.

1. Are you:  Male  Female  no comment

2. Are you a :

3. Do you teach on:

4. Please indicate your age:

5. What is your nationality:

6. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following reasons as to WHY Chinese students chose to study an MBA in the UK.

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
6.1 to obtain qualification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.2 to experience an intercultural environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.3 to make friends from their own culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.4 to make friends from different cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.5 to improve English language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.6 to improve professional knowledge and skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.7 to improve career prospects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.8 to improve oneself/become a more capable person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.9 other (please specify) <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

7. How long have you been teaching or working in higher education?

8. What industry/sector have you ever worked in prior to starting the MBA course? (you may choose more than one)

Finance  IT industry  Tele-communication  Foreign trade  Engineering  
 Manufacturing  Publishing  Education  Government  Others

9. Had you ever worked closely with people from East-Asian countries prior to working with MBA students in 2003-2004?

10. Had you ever stayed in an East-Asian country prior to working with MBA students in 2003-2004?

# Questionnaire for Lecturers and Staff for MBA Programme

## Section II Language Use in the Academic and Daily Life

Instructions: The following questions are about issues of language use, please choose the appropriate answer or rate each one on :

1. Approximately how many hours do you think that Chinese students would spend to complete an individual assignment (including research, reading and writing time)?

2. What percentage of the discussion time do you think they would speak English in a group with Chinese students only?

3. How competent do you think Chinese students? English was in the following situations? Please rate:

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
3.1 in academic situation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.2 in social contact	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

4. Please rate how IMPORTANT you think the following language skills/aspects were for your Chinese students in the postgraduate study in the UK and how COMPETENT you believe them to be?

	not at all	How Important				absolutely	not at all	How Competent				absolutely
4.1 listening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.2 speaking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.3 reading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.4 writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.5 pronunciation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.6 grammar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.7 vocabulary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

5. Please rate how competent you think Chinese students were in the following English language skills at the beginning and end of MBA course in the UK?

	not at all	Beginning of MBA				absolutely	not at all	End of MBA				absolutely
5.1 listening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.2 speaking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.3 reading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.4 writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.5 pronunciation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.6 grammar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.7 vocabulary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>



# Questionnaire for Lecturers and Staff for MBA Programme

## Section III Academic Studies

**Instructions:** The following questions concern academic performance and assessment, please rate each one on a scale.

**1. This question is for lecturers only. When Chinese students had immediate academic questions during a lecture, what were they most likely to do according to your experience/opinion?**

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
1.1 ask the lecturer <b>in</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.2 Ask the lecture <b>after</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.3 ask classmates from their own country <b>in</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.4 ask classmates from their own country <b>after</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.5 ask classmates from other countries <b>in</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.6 ask classmates from other countries <b>after</b> class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.7 work it out by oneself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
1.8 other _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

**2. Please rate the criteria for a good assignment and a good oral presentation for postgraduate study in the UK.**

	Assignment					Presentation				
	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely
2.1 good understanding of the subject/topic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.2 good analysis and application	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.3 critical evaluation of theory and concepts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.4 good use of examples to support analysis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.5 good speaking/writing skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.6 good structure and coherence of ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.7 innovation and creative ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.8 good decisions and recommendations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.9 appropriate reference to relevant literature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.10 good visual layout (diagram/table)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.11 others _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

**3. Please rate relative importance of the following attributes of being a good postgraduate student in a British university.**

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
3.1 a good contributor to class/group discussion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.2 good cooperation in group work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.3 good marks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.4 good communication/language skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.5 good subject knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.6 preparing well for the lesson	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.7 good listener and reflector	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.8 empathy towards other students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.9 challenge theories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.10 challenge the lecturer's ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.11 respect lecturers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.12 other _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

**4. Please rate relative importance of the following attributes of being a good lecturer in a British university.**

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
4.1 expert in the subject	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

4.2 outstanding research ability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.3 sharing his/her own work experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.4 good organization of the class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.5 fair and unbiased attitude and behaviour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.6 approachable and quick response to students' enquiry after class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.7 a friend outside class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.8 good communication/language skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.9 challenge theories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.10 challenge students' ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.11 equal relationship with students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.12 empathy towards students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.13 other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**5. *This question is for lecturers only.* Please rate how competent Chinese students were in the following academic aspects of their MBA study in the UK.**

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
5.1 classroom performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.2 group discussion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.3 individual assignment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.4 presentation skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.5 written exams	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Questionnaire for Lecturers and Staff for MBA Programme

## Section IV Social Contact with Different Groups of People

Instructions: The following questions concern social contact issues, please choose appropriate answer, or fill in the blank where indicated, or rate each one on a scale.

1. This question relates to your contact with international students during their MBA study in the year 2003-2004.

1.1 If you were a lecturer, how often did you have **professional contact** (e.g. tutorial, supervision) with them during term time (excluding dissertation supervision) on an average?

1.2 If you were a dissertation tutor for international students, how often did you see them for dissertation supervision on an average?

1.3 If you were a personal tutor for RMBA students, how often did you see them during their MBA study on an average?

1.4 How often did you have **personal contact** (e.g. having coffee/lunch, home visit, trip) with international students during their MBA study on an average.

2. Please rate how much you would like to contact and how often you had regular contact with the following groups of students in your spare time.

	Like to Contact					Regular Contact				
	not at all				absolutely	not at all				absolutely
2.1 British students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.2 Chinese students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2.3 non-British and non-Chinese students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

3. This question relates to intrapersonal change (change of oneself). To what degree did you change in the following aspects during the period when you worked with MBA students and staff.

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
3.1 knowledge about other cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.2 attitude/motivation to learn about other cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.3 skills to work more effectively with people from other cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

4. This question relates to interpersonal change (change of relationship with others). To what degree did you change in relationship with the following groups of people during the period when you worked with MBA students and staff.

	worst	worse	the same	better	best	no comment
4.1 with British lectures/staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.2 with lecturers/staff from other cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.3 with British students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4.4 with international students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

5. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following outcomes/achievements that Chinese students have achieved through MBA study in the UK.

	not at all	somewhat	more or less	to a large extent	absolutely	no comment
5.1 obtaining the qualification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.2 experiencing an intercultural environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.3 making friends from their own culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.4 making friends from different cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.5 improving English language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.6 improving professional knowledge and skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.7 improving career prospects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.8 improving oneself/become a more capable person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.9 other <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

6. Please describe two typical characteristics of Chinese students/people, in relation to their behaviour or way of thinking.

6.1

6.2

7. Please describe two typical characteristics of British students/people in relation to their behaviour or way of thinking.

7.1

7.2

8. Your any further comments/ideas on any aspect of this topic would be very much appreciated:

Submit

Reset