Chinese student experience of home-based TNHE and study abroad options: A comparative case study of two MA TESOL programmes provided by an English university in partnership with a Chinese higher education institution

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Table of Contents

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Abstract

This thesis is a comparative study of two MA TESOL programmes offered to Chinese students by a research-intensive university in the United Kingdom. One of the programme is based in the UK with students attending during the week while the other is based in a Chinese university working in partnership with the UK university and students attend the programme during the weekends

The two cases were purposefully chosen against the background of cross-border higher education to investigate whether and how learning differs for learners in the different styles of cross-border higher education. In addition to the student perspective, the voice of the UK university is included to provide an understanding of the programme establishment and provision. Using a qualitative approach and methods of documenting, observation, and interviews, as well as a theoretical push-pull framework with both extrinsic and intrinsic motives, an expansive learning theory, and cultural intelligence mode, the study seeks to first understand how learners study in each learning context before comparing the two cases.

The emphasis is on - 1) the educational context of each course; 2) the learners' learning motivations and expectations on each course; 3) students' learning experiences and outcomes; and 4) comparing how the courses impact the learners' learning outcomes.

According to the findings of this study, students made the decision to register on each of the different programmes based on their personal contexts, which influenced their motives and expectations. Regardless of the differences in details, they all present academic and vocational learning orientations. Despite being in different countries with different delivery styles, the two programmes have course routines that share British educational characteristics in terms of goals and values. This enables learners, regardless of location, to continue similar learning experiences and achieve personal growth. Learners in both cases are positively encouraged to develop professional knowledge and skills while being challenged to adapt to course routines due to the various cultural factors. Their learning routine combines studying on an MA TESOL course whilst studying to be a qualified learner in the UK learning culture. Despite the learners' personal growth in professional and cultural competence, this study suggests a culturally oriented scaffold for the learners in the implementation of cross-border higher education.

List of Tables

List of Diagrams

List of Abbreviation

CBHE: cross border education

HE: higher education

TNHE: transnational higher education

UKHE: UK higher education

CA: Cultural-adaptation mode

CQ: Cultural intelligence mode

ELT: Experiential learning theory

Chapter 1 Introduction

This thesis is a comparative case study of two groups of Chinese students following an MA TESOL programme in contrasting contexts. One of the MA TESOL programmes in this research is a transnational higher education (TNHE) programme, located in China. It was established by GW University in China, and a research-intensive British university in northern England (known as the UK-China Programme). The other programme in this research is a traditional academic degree course, located in and supplied independently and entirely by the British university (known as the UK Programme). A detailed introduction of these cases is highlighted in Section 2.5.1.1 - Case Sampling. The study focuses on the students' integrated learning experiences (their motivations, experiences, and outcomes of learning on the MA TESOL courses), together with the course provisions, with the aim of investigating the differences and overlaps between study abroad and study at home, from the perspective of Chinese learners. The current study research draws on understandings in the field of Chinese students in cross-border education, as well as students learning experiences in TESOL education, to show how the two groups of Chinese students precede their learning individually by involving themselves in TESOL course routines, during which their learning activity is expanded and cross-cultural learning behaviours are identified. The participants' learning outcomes of personal development or personal growth are reflected here. This is a combination of a variety of the programme's impact on students' knowledge and competency.

In this chapter, firstly, I will first provide a brief introduction of the research background in which this study is conducted (Section 1.1) and then move on to the statement of the key problem addressed by this research, as well as its purpose and significance. Following this is a section outlining the research questions, and then the chapter concludes with an overview of the thesis structure.

1.1 Background of the Study

Driven by globalization in recent decades, internationalization has become an increasingly important strategy employed in higher education (HE). As a complex process rooted in a specific social context, it is largely shaped by socio-political, economic, and cultural factors. Under globalization and internationalization circumstances in higher education, the mobility of students and academic resources (for example, curriculum, teaching staff, and teaching material) between countries and regions has increased. Cross-border higher education (CBHE) has developed as a practice involving institutions and individuals in higher education internationalization. Students are moving from developing countries to developed countries for qualified education because a better higher education predicts greater competitiveness in the labour market and career opportunities. On the one hand, prestigious universities increase student recruitment, attracting more international students to study in their campus. On the other hand, these universities tend to export their education to other countries where local universities are less competitive in the global market. Many phrases (for example, joint degree, branch campus, cooperation programme, twin programmes, and transnational education) have been used to describe the different styles of exporting higher education to its import countries. Thus, the export institutions strengthen their impacts, gain economic benefits, and enhance the extent of university internationalization by providing education cross-nationally. The universities and students of import countries benefit from a range of advanced education resources so that their competitiveness is enhanced in the trend of HE internationalization. In brief, CBHE involves two main forms: students travelling across national borders, and academic resources breaking boundaries between nations.

As a Chinese teaching staff who has gained many years of work experience in teaching and management at a Chinese University in the southwest of China (an undeveloped region), I have seen universities and students in this region have increasingly taken part in CBHE in recent years(my role in this

research will be introduced in 3.4.1). Chinese universities have built connections with institutions in America, Britain, Australia, and other inner-circle countries. With the imported research and curriculum resources from these countries, transnational higher education programmes have increased rapidly in China over the last two decades. This means a number of home campus Chinese college students are now able to access to courses originating from prestige universities in developed countries. In addition, meanwhile the number of Chinese students who travel abroad for academic degree education has dramatically increased. The learners involving into CBHE believe qualified education from prestige foreign universities ensures them career competitiveness of technical ability, knowledge, practical skills and cross-culture capability. Such a prosperous phenomenon raises me a question: what is the difference between studying abroad and studying a transnational programme at home, according to CBHE discourse?

The question implies a student perspective in understanding CBHE, which is concerned with education quality issues in higher education internationalization. Education quality, in particular, is one of the key issues raised by participants in CBHE. In the case of traditional study abroad, institutions want to maintain their prestige by through qualified teaching, whereas international students want to improve their competitiveness through study abroad. In the aspect of transnational higher education, education resources are supposed to be advanced, ensuring the developmental benefits for the universities and students in import countries. Therefore, education quality has been frequently discussed by academic research from different perspectives: management and policy, leadership, teaching and learning, learning process and outcome, quality and employment of graduates, and student satisfaction. Among these perspectives, the student voice is believed to provide a legitimate insight into CBHE practice, in that the students themselves are one of the main players participating in and paying for CBHE.

As Chinese students play an important part in the international student community of higher education in developed countries, some research has focused on Chinese students studying abroad. Their motivations, experiences, and outcomes of their experiences during their short stays have been investigated. Cultural adaptation is the most frequently discussed topic in this type of research. Chinese learners are challenged by foreign cultures both socially and academically, and as a result, they grow personally and become more cross-culturally competent as a result. However, this type of research lacks an education lens. The students are sojourners with a mission of academic learning, and their personal growth featured with discipline education is insufficiently discussed due to the samples and purposes of those studies.

Although there is a significant amount of research in the field of international education (for instance, one style of CBHE), research focusing on Chinese students' perspectives of studying a foreign programme at home (for instance, the other style of CBHE) is rare. Existing literature generally focuses on the motivations and developing processes of the INHE in China (Huang, 2007), including its costs and benefits (Yang, 2002), and management and regulation regarding issues of this process (Huang, 2006). The lack of research draws an unclear picture of how Chinese students learn on CBHE courses in China. Furthermore, due to a lack of evidence in the two styles of CBHE for Chinese learners, some assumptions which might promote CBHE quality cannot be discussed. For example, if study abroad has raised cross-cultural issues, does this mean they will disappear if the course is offered transnationally in China? If Chinese learners gain personal development as a result of overcoming cross-cultural challenges, what will they gain if they study a transnational course in China? If the distinctions between the two styles of CBHE are unclear, how can Chinese learners decide wisely which course to take and why, how can importing and exporting institutions work to maintain education quality, and how can they figure out the rationale behind each strategy of

promoting CBHE (e.g., increase exporting or expanding recruitment at the home campus, programme contextualization, or authentic teaching)?

1.2 Statement of Problem and Research Questions

The questions above call for answers to a fundamental question: whether and to what extent Chinese learners are benefited equally between two styles of CBHE? (A detailed research purpose is in section 2.6.) In this study, two MA TESOL programmes were specifically chosen (one located in the UK and the other in China). Academic education in both programmes is provided/dominated by the same British university. This enables the comparison to be meaningful rather than comparing apple and pear. The purpose of this study is to answer the fundamental question by exploring how Chinese students learn differently between two styles of CBHE in the form of course contexts, learning motivations, experiences, and outcomes. The research will illustrate a picture of how a group of Chinese students initiate and proceed with their learning in TESOL course abroad and at home. Based on which, a comparison is conducted to understand what and how CBHE works in the TESOL context, with its shared and unique features, benefitting Chinese learners.

The research questions are:

(1) What strategic objectives and approaches underpin the establishment and provision of the two programmes?

(2) Why were students motivated to enrol on these particular programmes?

(3) How do the programmes compare and contrast in course provisions and the learning experiences of students?

(4) According to the key stakeholders, how effective have the programmes been in satisfying student expectations in the quality of course delivery and providing personal growth opportunities?

The stakeholders in this research refer to programme providers (course leaders, coordinators, teaching and admin staff) and students who are learning on the sample programmes. The relationship between the RQs is a sequence, commencing with a policy perspective, explaining why/how the two programmes are set up (RQ1). Then it moves to student perspective, explaining the motivations to enrol, expectations and experiences of learning on the courses (RQ2 and 3). The RQ4 is an evaluation of learning outcomes based on a comparative perspective of the different stakeholders.

A theoretical framework consisting of different theory stances is employed to investigate the research questions. A push-pull frame, together with an intrinsic-extrinsic frame, is applied to analyse Chinese learners' motivations and expectations of enrolling on different courses. To understand the learning experiences and outcomes in the two cases, theoretical lenses of cultural intelligence mode (CQ), cross-cultural adaptation mode (CA) and experiential learning are employed.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis: Overview of Chapters

This section outlines the structure of the thesis, with an overview of the chapters. Chapter Two is the literature review, which starts from a broad topic of institutions under the INHE context, briefly introducing the practices of universities in the UK and China, with the definitions of a variety of terms used in the INHE. It then narrows down to empirical research regarding Chinese students in CBHE, their motivation for learning, experiences, and learning outcomes. The focused discipline of the cases in this research is TESOL education. Its provision and development against the background of INHE has been presented in this chapter. Empirical studies focusing on Chinese students on TESOL have been reviewed. At the end of this chapter, various gaps in the previous research have been analysed, shedding light on the research purpose and questions for this study. A theoretical framework applied in this research follows the research questions, guiding the potential of how these questions will be answered.

Chapter Three is the methodology which introduces how the research is conducted. It starts with the philosophy underpinning the research, linking the diagram of social constructivism with my research questions. It then explains how the qualitative multiple-case comparative study is designed in this research. The data collection follows, which involves the various methods (document analysis, interview, and observation), a pilot study, and the issues which arose during the process of collecting data. My role is explained in the section of the rigors of the research, together with strategies to improve the quality of this research. The data analysis section illustrates how the data are analysed manually as well as with software. The themes are developed with specific considerations. Research ethics are applied in this research, and issues encountered in the field are explained specifically.

Chapter Four outlines the findings of the UK-China case. It firstly introduces the MA TESOL course (its establishment, contents, and provision), and then explains how a group of Chinese learners are motivated to go on the course, proceeding it, and achieving personal development. Their learning experience is illustrated by two main learning activities: attending modules and completing assignments. The encountered challenges, feelings, comments, efforts and outcomes of learning on the course are described. This concludes with a summary answering the research questions relevant to the UK-China case.

Chapter Five describes the findings of the UK case. In addition to the introduction of the case context, this chapter illustrates how Chinese learners initiate and proceed with their learning on the MA TESOL course. The themes are the same in both the UK and China cases, but the evidence is different. This chapter ends with a summary that answers research questions that are relevant to the UK case.

Chapter Six is a discussion linking the findings shared between the two cases with a theoretical framework. The discussion aims to respond to the fundamental question of this study: whether, and to what extent, Chinese learners benefit equally between these two cases, which are different styles

of CBHE. It highlights the similarities of the findings between the two cases, and explains how these similarities contribute to the personal development for learners in the two cases.

Chapter Seven presents the conclusion of this thesis. It starts with the research conclusion in terms of its significant findings, contributions, and implications, and then concludes with a reflection on conducting this research (for instance, my personal transformation via this PhD experience).

1.4 Impact of COVID-19 on the research:

When the COVID-19 spread in the world, my research was at the last stage of data collection. The worldwide pandemic forced me to reduce the numbers of informants, and adjust the field work plan (e.g., some interviews were combined/prolonged, some observations were cancelled). The details will be introduced in relevant sections in the methodology chapter. In addition, the pandemic hindered my working progress and learning effects as an international PhD student who was studying in an UK campus. I lost physical learning environment in which libraries and offices were closed. I lost daily talk with international colleagues, and cross-cultural learning community. I lost the chance to pop in my supervisors' offices and have some informal talks with them. These things really depressed me and undermined my engagement with the study.

Chapter 2 literature review

This section briefly reviews the current studies from the general topic of globalization as a background of higher education (HE) to a narrow area of Chinese students studying abroad in the TESOL programme.

By using the keywords 'globalization and HE', 'HE internationalization', Chinese university in HE internationalization', cross-border learning' and 'transnational HE', a range of related books and articles have been found in the database (e.g. university library; google scholar; British Council and Chinese national journal papers). I briefly focus on the literature (books and journal papers) which were published after the year 2000 in that the phenomenon of cross border higher education in China has developed rapidly since then. The literature has provided necessary backdrop for this research in terms of 1. Introducing how cross border higher education (CBHE) has developed in light of globalization and higher education internationalization; 2. Clarifying some terminologies employed by this research; 3. Introducing outlines of CBHE in China and UK which include its activities, strategies and goals. The literature has justified the focus of this research which is to understand the Chinese students' experiences in CBHE from a micro perspective which is in contrast to a macro perspective of policy/governance.

The research focus leads the scale of literature searching narrow down gradually. By using the keywords, in the same database as above, 'Chinese students in UK'; 'international students experience in HE'; 'overseas students in the educational exchange programme'; 'overseas students in English language course'; 'ELT/TESOL programme in UK', around 28 journal articles including books and others drawing on the reference or citations in the literature are used to build outlines of the current research exploring international students experience in the UK. Based on the literature which published within around 10 years recently, I try to classify them into two categories: Chinese students studying abroad and international (Chinese) TESOL students studying abroad. Then I review the literature by the

subthemes of expectations, experience and outcomes related to the Chinese students studying abroad.

There are three purposes for this chapter. Firstly, introducing the academic background against which the research topic come from. The second is to summarize the contributions and limitations of the previous research related to Chinese students and Chinese TESOL students' experience of studying abroad in the context of CBHE. The third is to clarify the research purpose and research questions. The forth is to discuss the conceptual framework which will be employed in my research.

2.1 Background: cross border higher education (CBHE) in the context of globalisation and internationalization

2.1.1 Higher Education (HE) in the context of globalization

In the recent three decades, globalization combined with knowledge economy brings deep impacts all over the world in the dimensions of politics, culture, economy and ideology. Globalization is flows of capital, people, information, culture and so on, which moves along forms of global high-way which has broken the borders between nations (King, 2004, p.48; Teichler, 2004).In addition, knowledge based economy highlights the role of knowledge as an engine of economic development for nations. Knowledge, information, sentiments and data have become important resources which are viewed as international in their essence and not contained by territorial constraints anymore in a global age.

University with its functions of producing and distributing knowledge has been challenged. The first challenge is to keep academic competitiveness by attracting qualified academic resources including academic staff, students, materials and financial resource which move internationally. The second challenge is to meet the demands from labour market and government both of which need qualified graduates to enhance economic performance under the context of globalization. They encourage and require HE to expend

science and technology base for innovation and commercialization and to cultivate well-educated people as 'human capital' in order to reach higher levels of global 'value chain'(King, 2004, p.130). These demands partly overlap the expectations from individuals who enrol in higher education institutions. The students want to have cross-cultural capabilities, be adaptable and flexible apart from subject knowledge which enable them to deal with the global issues in the employment and professional development.

Internationalization in HE is considered as a key strategy for responding to the influence of globalization. It has been adopted by universities across the world with the main task of integrating an international or intercultural dimension into functions of HE (Foskett and Maringe, 2012, p.1). In light of discussions related to the contents of INHE for a university, curriculum internationalization, student internationalization and education programme mobility are three main activities in INHE (Foskett and Maringe, 2012, p6; King, 2004; Tsiligiris et al., 2021).

Curriculum internationalization involves a shift of producing knowledge from national market oriented to international market oriented. Universities are driven to revise course design, build curriculum system, develop teaching and academic administering, assist learning experience and apply various assessing in a specific subject. The courses are expected to benefit both local students and international students by adding international or multicultural horizon into the knowledge and its delivery.

Student internationalization, from the perspective of universities, involves sending local students to study abroad and attracting international students to enrol. Such sending-attracting activities boost cultural exchange in the environment of the HE. Students get the cross-cultural ability from not only class study but also campus living.

Education programme mobility means HE courses provided by different universities have been imported and exported across the world. Generally

speaking, institutions in developed countries (e.g., OECD countries) are exporters while the ones in developing countries are importers (Van der Wende, 2007; Rumbley and Altbach, 2016; UNESCO, 2008; Altbach and Knight, 2007).   HE courses have been exported into host countries via different approaches with the purpose of magnifying the impacts of exporter universities at the international level. The importer universities tend to believe the exporter universities are advanced so that they want to adopt the advanced in terms of teaching and managing (Tsiligiris et al., 2021). Meanwhile increasing number of students enrolling into such programmes have brought economic benefits for both exporter and importer universities (Tsiligiris et al., 2021; Foskett and Maringe, 2012, p.159)

From student perspective, the globalization has involved them into the situation where they have opportunities of working globally while they are required more competence and competitiveness in labour market. They have to internationalize themselves (Foskett and Maringe, 2012).For the students in developing country, for example China in this research, the main approach of individual internationalization is to study in prestigious universities of developed countries(e.g., US, UK). The Chinese learners tend to believe that studying in those universities means good education quality and proves potential of personal competence. A degree from a western prestigious university has a premium and is well rewarded in the labour market (UNESCO, 2008).

Thus INHE has been enhanced by the interaction between these activities. Education programme mobility and student internationalization in universities have increased the opportunities for students to study in a foreign course whilst curriculum internationalization enables the education programmes to move widely across the world and attract more students. Under such context, Cross-border education has become a fast growing phenomenon in INHE.

2.1.2 Cross-border higher education and transnational higher education: difference and applications in this research

Although Cross-border and transnational higher education are used alternatively in many research (Abe and Wiseman, 1983; Huang, 2003; Knight, 2007, 2005; Yang, 2008), they have different focuses. According to the Global Alliance for Transnational Education(Heffernan and Poole, 2005, p. 224), European Centre for Higher Education (Gu, 2009) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Mok and Han, 2016), transnational higher education refers to all types of higher education study programmes, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. TNHE focus on the situation in which the place where the students study and the university which awards the degree are located in different nations. It highlights the movement of education provision across countries (Knight and Mcnamara, 2017). This explanation denotes a key characteristic of TNHE that students are able to receive the education from another country without leaving their home places. International transfer refers to education resources and providers rather than students, and it is based on the collaboration between countries of providing (exporters) and receiving (importers). These features are also highlighted in the definitions given by government education departments of China and UK, which is distinguished from traditional overseas study programmes in which students move across nations and are recruited and cultivated by foreign institutions independently.

Cross-border HE involves wider education elements movement, e.g., programmes, course materials, teaching staff and students. It indicates two forms of HE under the context of INHE (UNESCO, 2008; Garrett and Verbik, 2003): students move from domestic to foreign countries, such as traditional study abroad; HE programme from one country is provided in another country, which is called transnational higher education(TNHE). The latter means the students don't have to travel abroad. This study has adopted cross-border

higher education (CBHE) as it covers the forms of the two cases: UK programme is overseas study and UK-China programme is a course moving across boundaries between UK and China (TNHE).

In the framework of General Agreement on Trade in Services, there are four modes of CBHE which indicate how HE have been provided internationally (UNESCO, 2008). These modes are not exclusive to each other as a separate thing, rather, they may overlap or complete each other. In other words, one CBHE programme might involve more than one modes depending on it provision reality. The modes relevant to my research are: 1. Education consumption is abroad where the students cross the national borders. It is applied in full time study abroad, exchange programmes between different universities, joint degree provided by two universities. 2. The presence of programme provider in host country can be in the forms of branch campus, twinning and franchising arrangements between universities. 3. Representatives in host country to provide the programme are academic mobility, teaching staff moving from home country to host country and teaching there as part of an academic partnership. In this research, the UK programme falls into the mode one, and UK-China programme has the features of mode two and three.

With the development of INHE across the world, CBHE as a phenomenon has pervaded in both exporting and importing countries. Gu (2009) proposed a framework of four dimensions to understand the goals and motivations of developing CBHE in different countries. The four dimensions are: generating economic revenue, boosting capacity building, developing human resources and promoting international understanding. CBHE is expected by nations and institutions to increase economic profits, enhance the performance of HE system, providing qualified graduates and extend the impact at international level. It has denoted the goals of CBHE, no matter for exporting or importing countries, have covered the all four dimension but with difference in each dimension between exporting and importing countries due to their different

contexts. Drawn on this framework alongside other literature, the next section will introduce the CBHE between UK and China.

2.1.3 CBHE between UK and China

2.1.3.1 CBHE in the UK

UK as the second player among the international education exporters (the first player is the US) emphasizes gaining economic profits as a predominant goal of its CBHE (Gu, 2009; Hou et al., 2014; Wilkins and Huisman, 2010; Altbach and Knight, 2007). Exporting HE programmes and recruiting international students are two main strategies in the dimension of generating economic revenue. The institutions in UK have been suffering from insufficient public funding due to the HE massification. Therefore it tends to consider the self-funding international students as an effective alternative financial source (Foskett and Maringe, 2012, p.159). HE became one of the top five sectors generating the largest export income for the UK in 2004(Tysome, 2004). In 2007–2008, 368,970 international students registered in UK HE institutions and this number kept growing (Universities, 2010) meanwhile, keeping growing tuition fees for overseas students leads directly to obvious financial benefits for both universities and the country. At some UK universities, the income generated from international students has exceeded the fee from local students or the income from research and government grants (Bolsmann and Miller, 2008).

The rest three dimensions have found evidence in different literature but no research (maybe unnecessary) tried to sequence them, i.e., which dimension is sub-predominant as a purpose of developing CBHE. So the following of this paragraph aim to introduce the evidence in each dimension without focusing on how much role they have played in the expectations of CBHE. In the dimension of developing human resource, CBHE aims to cultivate qualified graduates who are competent in global employment. The international alumni has been highlighted by the institutions. In addition, the alumni community has been perceived as a strong social network offering potential to develop

professional mobility and cooperation between UK and other countries (Hou et al., 2014). In the dimension of boosting capacity, UKHE institutions expect to increase the cultural diversity of campus and enhance the rank in different league tables by recruiting international students. In addition, the CBHE has increased the extent of internationalization for the institutions in term of curriculum provision, management and student service (Bolsmann and Miller, 2008; Lasanowski, 2009). In the dimension of promoting international understanding, universities in the UK could maintain an influential position on the world stage and gain political and cultural benefits through CBHE (Fernandes, 2006; Hou et al., 2014). The students' testimonies of positive learning experience and career development are expected to enhance the international reputation of UKHE. The exported courses would increase the opportunities of academic communication between UK and other countries.

2.1.3.2 CBHE in China

China perceived as one of the biggest market of HE in the world has involved into CBHE by two main forms: Chinese students study abroad and building TNHE programmes with institutions of developed countries. Chinese youth as an important party plays roles in the CBHE. More and more Chinese students are willing to be awarded an academic degree by a foreign prestigious university for not only the perceived qualified education but also the expectation of becoming more competitive in the labour force market. The graduates who are professional and responsive to both constraints and possibilities of transnational flows and networks will have plenty of prospective career opportunities (Foskett and Maringe, 2012, p.160). Studying in an internationalized curriculum is considered as a route to become such persons and gain the most desirable jobs (King, 2004, p.135). For this purpose, some Chinese students choose to travel abroad and study in a developed country. UK is one of the most popular destinations of overseas learning for them. With the family income increasing in the recent decades, more Chinese students are able to study abroad for a higher education course with the financial support from their parents. Chinese student has become the biggest

group of international students who study in the UK HE institutions (UKCISA, 2013). In addition, with the development of HE cooperation between China and developed countries, some Chinese students choose to study TNHE programmes without travelling abroad. According to the statistics published by Ministry of Education in China (MoE) in 2013, there were 450,000 students who have registered in TNHE programmes. This number was 1.4% of the population who registered in all types of HE in China in that year. Therefore, CBHE (study abroad and TNHE) has become an approach of personal internationalization for the Chinese students, through which they expect to enhance competitiveness via a perceived qualified international HE course (Hou et al., 2014).

TNHE is called Sino-foreign cooperative education in China. It has been defined by Chinese State Council (2006) as: the activities of launching education institutions/programmes that aim at enrolling Chinese citizens, by foreign education institutions and Chinese education institutions jointly within China.

China as an importing country against the background of INHE, the TNHE activities have developed rapidly in scale and scope since 2000(Yang, 2008). UK as one of the main partners (US, UK and Australia) has involved into the process of developing TNHE with China. According to the four modes of CBED in General Agreement on Trade in Services framework (in 2.1.2), the TNHE between China and the UK mainly falls into mode two and three. In specific, UK universities recruit students and deliver course in China by setting up branch campus (e.g., University of Nottingham, Ningbo, China), franchising programmes, twinning programmes (e.g., students learn the entire course in China), and articulation programmes (e.g., 3+1 undergraduate course with three years learning in China and one year learning in the UK) (Hou et al., 2014; Gu, 2009).

In an overall, TNHE has been seen as a positive component of Chinese HE according to the policies and regulations published by Chinese government.

Its functions and goals could be analysed by the framework of GU (his four dimensions of analysing goals of TNHE: generating economic profit, improve capacity, develop human resource, and promote international understanding). In contrast to the UK who takes generating economic profits as predominant goal of TNHE, China pays less attention to the economic benefits than to other dimensions (Gu, 2009). The dimension of improving capacity has been valued in terms of Chinese HE performance (Gu, 2009). TNHE is expected to enhance the diversity and integration of national HE system, the international competitiveness of Chinese HE institutions and quality of HE provision (Zhou, 2006). Chinese universities, by participating in the TNHE, are supposed to build academic capacity in terms of teaching practice modernization, quality assurance standards, programme and curriculum development, academic management and governance matters (British Council, 2013). In the dimension of developing human resource, university staff and students are expected to be benefited from the imported programmes. Especially for the Chinese academic staff, they are expected to take advantage of the advanced academic resource of the partner institution in order to develop academic capabilities (Hou et al., 2014). Moreover, qualified staff from foreign partners are encouraged to transfer to Chinese institutions teaching and doing research (Gu, 2009). In the dimension of promoting international understanding, TNHE in China is much more a matter of working on the world stage and cooperating in research on a reciprocal basis (Rastall, 2009, p.7).TNHE is expected to facilitate Chinese institutions to enter into international academic community. The opportunities of academic communication between Chinese and foreign universities could be increased (Hou et al., 2014).

In light of the Chinese policy statements of TNHE, the practices and activities of TNHE along with the goals of TNHE for China, Cooperation and partnership have been perceived as a critical principle of TNHE in the Chinese context. Cooperation has linked the imported HE with the local HE, extending the possibilities for the local partners to engage into education innovation where

Chinese institutions learn world-leading experience from their partners' curriculum materials, manage expertise, teaching approaches and research experience. Chinese institutions are encouraged to explore appropriate approach of collaboration, by which the Chinese HE will be benefited mostly from the imported HE (MoE, 2013)

He (2016) analysed the policies related to TNHE which have been established by Chinese government since 1995 with the purpose of shaping the implied criteria of approving TNHE programme by Chinese government. This analysis has found a TNHE programme tends to be seen desirable by the Chinese government if it meets the following three characteristics: 1. The programme is cooperated with high-ranked European partners; 2. The programme is affiliated with a Chinese university rather than having legal person status; 3. The programme is offered in the fields of IT, science or engineering. This conclusion on one hand has reinforced the principle of cooperation of TNHE in China. On the other hand it has implied the cooperation with stronger partner in developed nations is more promoted. Hou et al., (Hou et al., 2014) have described the imbalance development of TNHE where collaboration tend to take place between the research intensive Chinese universities (i.e., 985/211 universities in China) located in developed regions (e.g., eastern and coastal provinces) and the world top 100 universities of developed countries in that both export and import players want to find qualified partners and keep prestigious.

Under the growing phenomenon of CBHE between UK and China, more and more Chinese students enrol in UK HE courses either geographically located in UK or based in China as a TNHE programme. The increased student number and distance between the two countries have risen education quality issues (Gu, 2009; Altbach and Knight, 2007). The governments and institutions of China and UK have taken some activities to guarantee the education quality, although they are all lack of experience of controlling the quality of CBHE courses (Gu, 2009; Hou et al., 2014). Student satisfaction

has become one of the important indicators which impact the education quality evaluation (Hou et al., 2014). It gives rise to the importance of student voice in understanding their learning experience of CBHE. The student experience, as explained by Rodney, is how a student views his/her life in a learning institution. It reflects the perceptions of students of the academic and non-academic services offered by the institution to help them successfully navigate their educational pursuits (Foskett and Maringe, 2012, p.155). Some researchers argue that the individuals' experiences are valid in their own right, and individuals' perspectives form the truth of an event (Montgomery, 2010, p.15). The Chinese students in CBHE are the ones who purchase HE with a price higher than in non-CBHE whilst they are also the ones who will apply the education outcomes of CBHE into resolving problems and dealing with the uncertain in their future careers in a global context. Therefore, their voice would provide a hands-on perspective and evidence for other CBHE players (i.e., policy makers, institutions, staff and potential candidates of CBHE) to review the CBHE provision, which is also a stance on improving the quality of CBHE.

However this topic has not been sufficiently discussed in CBHE field. Researchers (Yunyun and Te, 2016) has reviewed the literature published in both international and Chinese national journal paper in the field of CBHE in China. It has revealed that most literature focus on: 1. the overview and trends of CBHE with its features and challenges; 2. policies, regulations and governance of CBHE; 3. the institutional management in CBHE partnership (e.g., bi-linguistic teaching and learning, interaction between Chinese and foreign partners, staff and students management). The stance of Chinese students are under reached. So this research, employing a micro-perspective, will place students at the research focus to understand whether/to what extent the CBHE enables students to develop themselves effectively, and how this process has been proceed.

2.2 TESOL programmes in globalization: trends and challenges

The English language has been highlighted in the process of globalization as it becomes a worldwide communication tool in industries, business and cultures. English language education has prevailed as a part of a national education strategy in non-English speaking countries whilst fluent English has been considered competitive competence of individuals in labour markets. TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) programmes at master level originated from inner-circle nations meet the increasing demands for qualified English education and competent teachers in expanding circle nations.

The inner-circle nations almost overlap the ones who are prestigious options in the global higher education market for international students, e.g. The UK, US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. TESOL programmes provide the universities in these countries with opportunities to extend internationalization in terms of attracting more overseas students and establishing offshore institutions/programmes in other countries. In other words, TESOL programme as a specific example which gets universities in exporting and importing countries involved into the CBHE practice. The activities of CBHE in the field of TESOL have its characteristics which implies potential challenges and adjustments for the course provision.

First of all, the student of MA TESOL programmes has changed. Increasing number of non-native English speaker (NNS) students enrol in such programmes with diverse academic ability and limited teaching experience, which is in contrast to the situation in the past when a majority of students were native speaker teachers with English teaching experience. (Hasrati and Tavakoli, 2015). The NNS students tend to be less confidence both in English and class teaching when they study in an English native speaker environment (Kamhi-Stein, 2000; Lee and Lew, 2001). They have an extra requirement for upgrading English proficiency in terms of vocabulary, writing, reading and

speaking apart from other academic contents (Kamhi-Stein, 2000; Lee and Lew, 2001; Phakiti and Li, 2011). Meanwhile, they require more classroom teaching practice than the one currently provided by the courses (Baecher, 2012; Uzun and Gritter, 2016) because the students want to practice the skills of applying the learnt theory into real class teaching.

Furthermore, new challenges have developed in course contents which have to be changed in responding to students' needs, staff research interests and core knowledge and skills in the field. The US and UK offer two-thirds MA TESOL programmes of the world with the former being more than the latter. Among the programmes in these countries, teaching methods/strategies and elements of linguistics are the two knowledge fields most frequently covered and satisfy international students (Stapleton and Shao, 2016). The relevant practicums are common in the USA while the importance of writing a dissertation for achieving the professional requirement of MA TESOL programmes is exclusively emphasized in the UK. A majority of the TESOL staff consider research training is significant for learners to shape in-depth approaches to understand TESOL and to carry out classroom-based research which could develop their professional knowledge (Hasrati and Tavakoli, 2015; Stapleton and Shao, 2016).However, Stapleton and Shao(2016) have argued that social and cultural contents should be included into TESOL in order to benefit the international students because both education and language have been influenced by social contexts and cultural elements.

Additionally, In order to attract overseas learners continuously, achieving the balance between keeping education quality and avoiding high fail rate is still a challenge for all the programmes (Hasrati and Tavakoli, 2015). The challenge could be understood in to two ways. The first is in the situation of the cross border provision of TESOL programmes. How to assess the learning outcome of the students who study TESOL in another nation if their learning is limited due to the geographical issues. If employed the assessment same as the home university, whether it is fair for the learners who study in branch

campus where the course is provided not the same as home university. The other way to understand the challenge is in the aspect between NNS students and native English speaker (NS) students. As the former are increasing in TESOL course and the English language matters too much in TESOL, there is voice that keeping the evaluation approach which is applied for NS students has been inappropriate since the majority students of TESOL consist of NNS under the context of INHE.

Last but not least, TESOL programmes are evaluated by various focus and approach. A number of research focus on separate elements of the programmes with the aim of assisting the lecturers to evaluate the effectiveness of different pedagogical technologies, approaches, models, materials for student learning (Uzun and Gritter, 2016; Chowdhury and Le Ha, 2008). Some studies argue that course provision involving the objectives, contents, teaching-learning processes and assessment plays significant roles in the education outcome for language learners (Er, 2006). Peacock (Peacock, 2009) introduced an overall perspective to evaluate a TESOL programme, considering a programme as an integrated experience for a trainee. It argues the effectiveness of a programme should be valued comprehensively based on all its components rather than on a single course element. Kiely and Rea-Dickins (Kiely and Rea-Dickins, 2005, pp.161-162) argue that student satisfaction evaluation of teaching has been utilized as a management tool to estimate the overall outcome of a programme in a couple of countries since the 1990s. However, the relevant empirical research in TESOL field is limited. Researchers (Uzun and Gritter, 2016) specialized the comprehensive outcome of a TESOL programme into its contribution to personal and professional development in a case study in Turkey. It, from the perspective of teacher students in TESOL programmes, concluded that trainees achieved more professional development than personal development through TESOL training, and the trainers impact the learning outcome more than the course design does.

Although plenty of studies have elaborated that learners developed their professional identity, emotion and pedagogical competence after TESOL education (Nguyen and Walkinshaw, 2018; Baecher, 2012; Uzun and Gritter, 2016; Chowdhury and Le Ha, 2008; Shahri, 2018; Green, 2013), a number of research focusing on the feedback from expanding-country learners have illustrated the contextualization of TESOL programme is far insufficient. There is a gap between what has been taught in the programmes and how the knowledge and skills will be implemented in another context (Nguyen and Walkinshaw, 2018; Baecher, 2012). Some international learners expressed the theories or methods based on student-centered, practice-oriented, small class size and democratic classroom environment are incompatible with the nations which are hierarchy societies and emphasize exam-oriented education (Baecher, 2012; Nguyen and Walkinshaw, 2018; Uzun and Gritter, 2016; Chowdhury and Le Ha, 2008). Therefore, NNS students in TESOL programmes tend to encounter identity struggling and negotiations between home education discourses and local TESOL education in western countries (Ilieva et al., 2015).

2.3 Chinese students studying abroad: general insights

In light of the research focus mentioned before, this sections covers the research within the realm of Chinese students in CBHE which includes study abroad and learning TNHE programmes based in China. The purpose is to outline the knowledge in this field. The Chinese students rather than students of other nationalities are decided as the scope of literature searching with the considerations of: 1. The object of this research is Chinese student; 2. Chinese student as one of the biggest groups of international student in INHE has attracted a plenty of research interests which have already developed some knowledge regarding with Chinese students in the context of CBHE, which makes further research necessary and possible; 3. Chinese student influenced by Chinese culture has its own characteristic. It is uncertain that the knowledge of international students from other nations could facilitate effectively in terms of identifying what has been investigated and what has not

regarding with Chinese students in the CBHE. However, it does not mean the reviewed literature are exclusively focusing on Chinese students. The literature has been reviewed if either Chinese students are research participants or they are parts of a group of international student participants involved in research. The selected research contexts are either in UK/US/Australia higher education or in TNHE between China and these countries. This is because the literature exclusively focusing on UK or UK-China is limited. So the scope has been extended to covering three nations which are the biggest global HE exporters and partners with Chinese institutions in TNHE. It is worth noting that the research regarding with Chinese students learning in China-based TNHE programmes are very rare, which is in contrast to plenty of research of Chinese students study abroad.

In this section, the literature will be organized by three themes: motivations/expectations for CBHE, experience in CBHE and outcome of CBHE. These three themes have been decided since they are the most popular topics discussed in the research regarding with student voice in CBHE. Some research just focus on parts of them while some focus on the all. In addition, in light of a sort of logic way, the three themes constitutes a logic flow to understand the student stories in CBHE. Student motivation and expectation could be seen as a context which initiates the decision of going to a CBHE programme, and will impact forthcoming CBHE experience. How students undergo CBHE programme will influence their learning outcomes. Hence from the bottom-up and insider perspective and mainly focus on students' opinions, a range of research related to the experience of Chinese students in CBHE have been explored. These studies supply holistic views and brief outlines of the Chinese students whose motivations, experience and outcomes in the sojourn period were observed and explained

2.3.1 Motivations and expectations of learning in CBHE

The students' thoughts and activities that initiate overseas study or TNHE play important role for understanding their experiences of CBHE. Therefore

students' motivations (why they enrol in a CBHE programme) and expectations (what they want to obtain) of CBHE as two themes have been explored in the literature. Although the research on Chinese students' abroad experiences is not uncommon, the exploring of their motivations and expectations for CBHE are not sufficient. Especially, the motivations and expectations for one site TNHE course (students learn in China without travelling abroad) learning have not been found in the scope of literature of this research.

Pull-push framework by McMahon has been employed widely to analyse why the students are motivated to study CBHE courses (Wilkins and Huisman, 2010). Push factors are those features which are relevant to student home country and initiate their decisions to study a course provided by another country. They includes the availability of HE, lack of facilities in certain subject areas, national economic strength, political factors, increasing income levels(McMahon, 1992, UNESCO, 2008). Push factors mainly influence the student's decision of whether to study abroad, but their influence on the decision of which particular country/ institution as a study destination are less than pull factors (Davis, 1995; Wilkins and Huisman, 2011). Pull factors are relevant to the destination country/institutions. They function to decide a destination country/institution, from the perspective of student, which is more desirable than other places for studying and living. It includes: the knowledge a student has of a particular country/institution, the education quality of an institution, the extent to which its education qualification are recognized in the student's home country and internationally, reputation and ranking of a university, tuition fees and living cost, the commercial value of a foreign degree, the prerequisite for registering into an university(Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002; Wilkins and Huisman, 2011; UNESCO, 2008).Pull-push framework has been critiqued as it values the external factors but overlooks a student personal context, e.g., personal socioeconomic status, age, gender, aspiration for the future career(Li and Bray, 2007).

A group of Chinese students express the expectations of studying in the higher education institutions in the UK in a study (Schweisfurth and Gu, 2009): obtaining a higher degree or qualification; enriching themselves for a better career; improving English and learning knowledge. The willingness reflects a desire to improve the students' career opportunities by considering the abroad experience as an investment in human capital (Gu and Schweisfurth, 2006). Another research certifies that personal growth, professional development and intercultural growth are the most three critical reasons for young people's determination of participating in an abroad learning programme (Soumava and Kakoli, 2015). The Chinese internationals also express expectations for both host peers and teaching staff in an American institution with hoping the former to assist social and cultural issues and the latter to support academic issues (Heng, 2017).

A few of studies explain the categories, sources and features of the internationals' expectations. One (Pitts, 2009) has classified students' expectations into four categories: academic/language expectations; social expectations; culture/value expectations; travel/cultural expectations. It has clarified five types of sources influencing students' expectations: host and home universities; home and host families and co-students. Rodney argued (Foskett and Maringe, 2012, p.154) that the students' expectations in overseas learning are volatile as the students review them based on their accumulated experience in the process of adaptation in the host country. This is echoed by the empirical study conducted by Pitts, M.J (Pitts, 2009), which indicated that students' expectations tend to be consecutively adjusted by the students themselves, depending on the interactivities between their behaviours and abroad environment.

2.3.2 Chinese students' CBHE experiences

2.3.2.1 Review of findings

A number of the research have studied the Chinese students' abroad experiences against background in which these Chinese learners are full time

university students based in foreign countries, e.g., the UK, USA and Australia (traditional study abroad). Qualitative (i.e., open-ending survey, interview, observation, focus group, diary) and quantitative (i.e., questionnaire, survey) methods have been employed by these research with predominant of the former.

Knowledge regarding with Chinese students study abroad in higher education institutions have been explored in two main categories: socio-cultural and academic lives in a foreign country, and the adaptation into new cultures. Chinese internationals have encountered a wide range of issues both from social lives and academic learning since they arrived in a new country. Some students think the psychological and physical struggles to live in a foreign country are overwhelming academic learning (Gu and Maley, 2008). Issues in terms of life style, language and social life challenge the Chinese learners. Cultural shocks are inevitable for them and give rise to negative feelings such as anxious, lonely, self-doubt, stressful and so on (Brown, 2009; Brown and Holloway, 2008a; Brown and Holloway, 2008b). They feel difficult to make local friends (Gu, 2009; Gu et al., 2010). Friendship tend to be built between the internationals rather than with home students (Montgomery, 2010, p.79). Teacher-student relationship is confusing for the Chinese youth since the perceptions of teacher's role are different between the UK lecturers and Chinese learners. (Edwards and Ran, 2009). In the aspect of academic learning, several pieces of empirical research show that Chinese students have learning shock due to different teaching and learning styles, less proficiency of English language and misunderstanding of plagiarising at the early stage of their study (Smith and Zhou, 2009; Gu, 2009). They were not good at independent learning, epistemology knowledge and writing essays (Smith and Zhou, 2009). They feel difficult to study effectively through group working which is a traditional teaching style in the UKHE (Edwards and Ran, 2009; Littlewood, 2009). Other works provide insights of the UK teaching staff on Chinese learners' academic performance. The lecturers think these learners are reluctant to initiate communication and express their opinions in

a class (Gu and Maley, 2008) and they rarely ask for help or use support system when they feel difficult although they are hardworking (Smith and Zhou, 2009). The Chinese youngsters are always trying to find a right answer to every question rather than building their own knowledge. The students' maturity effect much of their study as well. The younger youth behave inferior in self-discipline and independent learning compared with postgraduates (Gu and Maley, 2008).

Meanwhile, however, most students in the research present adaptation into new environment by overcoming various difficulties. Researchers (Brown and Holloway, 2008a) have explained adaptation journey of international students into three stages. The first stage is featured with shock of arrival in which the internationals are challenged by language, academic study and social network. They have negative feelings such as anxious, lonely, self-doubt, stressful and so on (Brown, 2009; Brown and Holloway, 2008a; Brown and Holloway, 2008b). In the second stage, the internationals are doing self-exploring and self-evolving, which result in new self-understanding. The negotiation between new self-understanding and new cultural environment gives rise to adaptation. In the third stage, the sojourners return their motherland with culture-adjusted self which implies a new journey of cultural adaptation. It is stressed the students' adaptation are various according to personal reasons, which echoes the argument of Qing Gu that factors such as the backgrounds and goals of the learners, their motivations for learning, the settings for the interaction influence the Chinese learners' adaptation (Gu and Schweisfurth, 2006). Furthermore, the studies have also explicated that the nature of the social relationship as a sort of social capital plays important role in the adaptation. Positive support from universities' teaching staff and peer social network improve the student adaptation in both academic and culture (Gu, 2009; Schweisfurth and Gu, 2009). Pitts (2009), from the self-adjustment perspective, views that the students have an ability of expressing and assessing their stress risen by unfamiliar environment, and they are able to adjust their thinking ways by different types of daily talks (e.g. introductory talk

from the university, advice, complaint and so on) and then they alter their behaviours correspondingly in order to make themselves adjustment in a new context.

Numbers of research show most Chinese individuals are able to get personal growth (summarized as below) by overcoming challenges in their overseas lives.

(1) Personal independence: most of the students could get along with their loneliness and control over the stress in a foreign country, and they developed self-responsibilities in both academic and life (Gu and Schweisfurth, 2006; Gu, 2009; Gu et al., 2010; Brown, 2009; Gu and Maley, 2008).

 (2) Intercultural competence and refined self-identity: Most of the students have got an ideological refining based on the cross-cultural ability which means they can manage intercultural situations, communicate with 'others' and felt positive to new cultures. (Schweisfurth and Gu, 2009; Gu et al., 2010; Gu, 2009; Brown, 2009; Gill, 2007). Furthermore, the Chinese Students got competence and identification of being citizens in the global community and held confidence in their future development after the abroad experience (Montgomery, 2010, p.146).

(3) Academic learning: the Chinese youngsters, from perspectives of both students themselves and their lecturers, have made progress in terms of language ability, avoiding plagiarising, class involvement and independent learning (Gu and Maley, 2008; Schweisfurth and Gu, 2009; Gu, 2009; Gu and Schweisfurth, 2006 ; Gu et al., 2010). The Chinese learners are able to adapt into new learning traditions and achieve requirements (Dai, 2018; Dai and Garcia, 2019).

(4) Profession competence: The Chinese students get the competences which are beneficial to profession careers: broadened worldview; intercultural

awareness; communication skills especially in linguistic ability; efficacious and confident professional ability (Gu and Schweisfurth, 2015).

Unlike big bodies of research conducted regarding with the topic of Chinese students traditional study abroad, one of the styles of CBHE, research in the other style of CBHE, the TNHE programmes, are little. Kun Dai (Dai, 2018; Dai and Garcia, 2019; Dai et al., 2019) conducted empirical research focusing on a group of Chinese undergraduates who learn TNHE courses in universities in Australia. The courses are collaborated between China and Australia. These learners from different majors have completed parts of their TNHE courses in their Chinese universities. They then move to the universities in Australia for completing the rest parts of the TNHE courses. Focusing on their academic learning experiences, the research employed Kim's cultural adaptation mode and experiential learning theory to explore how the Chinese students undergo academic learning in the foreign partner universities of TNHE programmes. The significance of this research is explicating the challenges risen from cross-system education (Chinese HE and Australian HE) encountered by the students in TNHE. These challenges echo with the findings of previous studies. However, not all the students in this research felt struggling. Some of them enjoy the Australia education style and feel being benefited. The author argues that the learners have become intercultural learners in addition to subject learners in the process of adapting into Australian HE tradition. They have to change learning approach and appreciate independent learning, which is a sort of learning for them. As a result, they get a sense of belonging to the Australian HE culture, which means they have achieved adaptation while enhancing the ability of cross educational cultures. This research has also revealed that some students failed to adapt into the new education context, which provides different evidence with acknowledging that not every individual in a foreign context is able to move from culture shocks to getting adaptation. However, the research has not answered what are the personal outcomes for those learners who underwent the TNHE but were unable to adapt it.

Manning (2021), by both quantitative and qualitative methods, conducted a study focusing on a one-site TNHE master course (located in Hong Kong and students study there) collaborated by two universities in the UK and Hong Kong. This research is unique in that it aims to explore the impacts of a China-based TNHE course on Chinese students. Constructivism learning theory which believes learning happens through people's active involvement into their learning process has been employed to explore academic learning experience of a group of Chinese learners who study financial related courses in this TNHE master programme. Transferable academic skills has been conceptualized to facilitate the constructivism learning theory for the purpose of understanding to what extent   this programme has developed the students' competence in terms of academic skills, employability and intercultural awareness. It concludes that the students had positive experience of learning this course, acquiring subject-focused knowledge, and academic skills (e.g., critical thinking, academic writing and research, creativity, and using numbers) and cross-cultural communication experience. However these participants feel lack of a belonging sense with the western provider of the course although they have opportunities of contacting with its teaching staff. The students expressed interest in gaining more intercultural engagement. These conclusions provide insights into understanding the outcomes of academic learning experience regarding with a specific major of TNHE course, which adds knowledge into this field in addition to cultural perspective adapted by a majority of research. However, due to the scope of the research, it has not covered the students' learning process in which the course elements and activities have leaded to foregoing impacts.

2.3.2.2 The employed Theories

Empirical research mentioned above suggests student abroad experience tends to be a subject topic regarding with students' feelings and behaviours in terms of academic study, social and cultural adaptation and identity change. The cross-cultural adaptation framework by Young Yun Kim (Kim, 2001, 2012, 2017) has been widely employed by the foregoing research to understand the

essence of the abroad experiences for internationals. The framework highlights the stress-adaptation-growth dynamic mode shared by most internationals' sojourn experiences. It argues an individual tends to feel stressful if he/she goes into a new culture which is different from his/her home one because this individual is challenged by unfamiliar social norms, information, codes and activities. Then the individual has to figure out the new situation and strategies to overcome the challenges, through which the individual is able to adapt into the new culture. The process of adaptation would provide the individuals with opportunities to strengthen themselves and cooperate with people from other cultures. The individuals who finally adapt into new environment would get an overall personal growth in terms of getting new knowledge and skills, changing attitudes, extending identity, and undergoing transformations psychologically and physically.

The cross-cultural adaptation in Kim's mode suggests an evolutionary process in which individuals keep interacting with new environment. Every unfamiliar cultural tradition implies a new process of adaptation and potential competence development for individuals. Kim defined this process as "the entirety of the phenomenon of individuals who, upon relocating to an unfamiliar sociocultural environment, strive to establish and maintain a relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationship with the environment" (Kim, 2001, p. 31). Thus, it rises a focus of interest regarding with the mechanism behind the adaptation process. In other words, if the adaption process is seen as a negotiation between individual's internal structure and external environment stress (Sahlins, 1964, p. 136), then how it is achieved?

Experiential learning theory has been applied in a piece of CBHE research conducted by Gill (2007), which argues that the young people who study in a new cultural context are able to combine the new cultural elements with their old experience and knowledge, thus develop the knowledge and experience for adapting into the new context. Therefore the student's abroad experience has been seen as a learning process during which the Chinese youth achieve

cultural adaptation by learning activities. Meanwhile, the experiential learning guides the Chinese youth to develop cultural competence which enables them get along with issues in the new learning environment. This empirical research suggests, based on the cross-cultural lens, facilitative theoretical tools are needed to reach an in-depth understanding of Chinese internationals' experiences, i.e.,1) why Chinese learners are challenged in a new environment; 2) how their adaptation process is influenced by the external factors; 3) what the mechanism behind the adaptation process by which the learners are able to achieve personal growth; 4) in a specific context, for example a TESOL CBHE programme, what learner's specific competences are improved? These considerations shed light on my research theoretical frame which will be introduced in section2.7.

2.4 International (Chinese) TESOL students studying abroad: the evidence

This section intends to introduce the Chinese/international students' experiences in TESOL courses in some western countries since the year 2000. The research in this area is limited and most of the previous ones investigated partial experience of the international students rather than a holistic study. Through employing questionnaire, interview, focus group, diaries and observing methods, the TESOL students' abroad experiences have been investigated as below:

2.4.1 The expectations

The students required academic improvements in language proficiency, teaching skills and methods (Johnson, 2001; Li and Tin, 2013; Copland, et al., 2017), and they asked the course contents to meet the demands of their working places and education tradition (Baecher, 2012). Students stress academic strength of a course in terms of the academic resource and support, the degree title, the teaching staff, the course content (Copland et al., 2017). Specifically, the reputation both of the western university and the programme

are emphasised considerably by Chinese students because of the positive influence on their employment (Copland et al., 2017).

2.4.2 The academic experiences

On one hand, the students felt anxiety and challenging in grasping subject knowledge and assignment completion (Lee and Lew, 2001; Tseng, 2013; Phakiti and Li, 2011). On the other hand, the learners expressed specific preferences related to programme contents, teaching styles and the assessment approaches.

2.4.3 The outcomes

The learners in most studies expressed that the programmes were invaluable for improving both English language level and teaching ability (Copland et al., 2017; Lee and Lew, 2001 & Li and Tin, 2013). However, some of the participants expressed the weakness of the courses in contextualizing contents for their oncoming work countries (Li and Tin, 2013; Baecher, 2012).

Comparing the research in general experiences of Chinese students studying abroad with the ones in MA TESOL programmes, in a summery, the students' expectations have partly overlapped in the aspect of developing profession related knowledge and skills. They aim to get a higher academic qualification which boosts their career.

For students' experiences, some TESOL research has probed further in whether the course design is beneficial for students' learning, and how their pedagogical knowledge and skills of English education were enhanced. However, what and how the sociocultural elements influenced students' learning experiences were rarely investigated.

As an evaluation of the student learning outcome, either by satisfaction questionnaire or by the strengthen-weakness survey, it has been considered as a kind of responding to the learners' expectations in TESOL research. Although people in TESOL research have positive feelings which result from

their expectations being met, extra positive results beyond their expectations have not been discussed.

2.5 An overall comments to previous research: contributions and potential gaps

By reviewing research in the realms of Chinese students study abroad, Chinese students study in local based (in China) international higher education programme and the Chinese students in MA TESOL programmes, the findings of these studies and the approaches they are theoretically framed have provided insights into my research:

1. Abroad experience functions as a trigger of transformation for individuals, those mentioned transformations are becoming global citizens, gaining cultural ability (understanding others from other perspective, re-understand self by other cultures, adaptation into cultural diversity), increasing self-efficiency, being able to communicate cross-culturally.

2. The abroad experience are an adaptation process in which individuals encounter challenges and shocks resulting from unfamiliar contexts of sociocultural living and academic learning. The personal growth encompassing knowledge, attitudes and skills takes place once the individuals overcome these challenges.

3. Academic learning have been discussed from two perspectives. One is cultural perspective which indicates the challenges and outcomes for the Chinese learners who study in a new education system. The other is competence perspective which explores how and to what extent CBHE has benefited the learners in terms of academic knowledge and professional competence.

4. Some research has implied a process-oriented perspective viewing the abroad experience as a learning process in which the individuals learn

different norms and information of a new culture, Based on the new learnt, individuals are able to learn more until adapting self into the new culture.

However, some gaps have also been identified as below:

1. The comparison research is rare. All the research almost focused on the students who are in one of the styles of CBHE (e.g., study abroad). Lack of evidence presenting the differences between learning in different styles of CBHE, e.g., study abroad VS study in TNHE course. This suggests a cross-case comparison in terms of course provisions, student experiences or learning effects. In addition, a perspective of within-case comparison is rare, although some studies regarding with student learning satisfaction tend to compare learning expectations with learning outcomes. Such studies might take a risk of evaluating the course quality by a single perspective due to lack of voice of course.

The lack of comparison research might because it is difficult to find appropriate samples. The samples in the previous research were mix of students from different courses or majors, which is less possible and necessary to compare them. However, a comparison perspective is believed necessary because it implies an important aspect of evaluation the INHE: whether one international programme is able to equally benefit students who study it in different locations. If yes/no, in what aspects? Those results are beneficial for both the students and the programme providers. For the students who have intention to participate into an international course provided by a western university, they are able to make decision more reasonably of learning at home or abroad based on their personal resource (e.g., time, money) and specific expectation of the learning(e.g., teaching process, language improvement, campus experience, classmates). For the course providers, through comparison perspective, they are able to be well informed the essence of the course for the students regardless geographical factors. They are also able to improve the course with an awareness of its context, knowing what aspects and to what extent the programme need adjusting.

2. The voices from the universities are rare in the previous investigations. The big body of CBHE studies focus either on state policy, the macro level, or on personal level, the micro level. How a university provides education products in the context of CBHE has been inquired insufficiently. However, it needs to be revealed. Being a middle position in the INHE, a university, regardless in importing or exporting countries, takes the responsibilities of meeting the requirements from market and government who needs qualified graduates to deal with globalization competitions on one hand. It also has to keep steps with the INHE development by increasing its capacity and education quality on the other hand. So how a university manages these external and internal issues will impact the provision of CBHE courses in terms of setting educational goals, building approaches of course delivering, designing course contents, recruiting students, and conducting teaching, learning and assessment. These things have deeply involved into student experience and learning outcomes. Therefore universities' opinions would provide insights into understanding in what aspects and how CBHE is supposed to benefit Chinese learners.

3. The perspective of understanding student experience are not sufficiently integrated. Some are segmented, focusing on one aspect of the student experience (e.g., making friends, or class learning) instead of the holistic picture. Some are before-after research, focusing on the difficult situations at initial stage of living in a new culture and the transformations the individuals made after adaptation. These research have valued the outcomes of study abroad regardless the process of how these transformations have taken place. Some research employed a process-oriented perspective by the cultural adaptation lens. They view study abroad for the learners as a cultural adaptation process where the individuals move from being stressful to feeling ease, getting a sense of adapting into new environment whilst developing themselves as global citizens. Although process perspective has been valued, the focus has been placed on stress rising factors as research start point regardless those non-stressful facts. In addition, it has not covered those

cases which failed to adapt into new contexts, which is at a risk of implying those persons failed to get development because of not adaptation. Due to the situations mentioned above, student integrated experience of CBHE has not been understood sufficiently. In specific, few research has illustrated the context of a CBHE programme, why the learners enrol it and how they proceed it. The specific activities and thoughts regarding with the process of academic learning need more investigations.

4. Theoretical framework to study international student in the phenomena of CBHE calls for complementation between different stances. A good example, as discussed in 2.3.2.2, experiential learning theory together with cross-cultural adaptation mode is employed to further explain the mechanism behind cultural adaptation process. This will promote the trials which investigate student experience in a specific CBHE context via theoretical triangulation.

In the light of the gaps mentioned above, this research takes a comparative perspective to investigate a group Chinese learners' experience in two specific TESOL courses. It involves comparison cross cases (e.g., between the two programmes, what/how the course provisions are different/same, what/how the student have learning experiences differently/same), and within-case (e.g., the contrast between two stakeholders: the course providers and learners). Thus, this research has to include the voices of university/programme, uncovering the considerations and intensions underpinning course design and delivery. As TESOL cases are employed, the student general cross-cultural adaptation will featured with discipline characteristics. That means the student experiences could be researched in specific contexts of academic learning (not a general socio-cultural experience). This firstly justifies the comparison (same subject in different styles of CBHE). Secondly, it enables the investigation to further explain why/in what aspects the Chinese learners feel stressful in a specific learning environment, and how their cultural adaptation are involved with their academic learning. Therefore, a theoretical

triangulation in this study (in section 2.7) is supposed to interpret the Chinese student learning experiences from different theoretical perspectives.

2.6 Research purpose and questions

The research purpose is to answer whether and to what extent Chinese learners are benefited equally between two styles of CBHE (i.e., study abroad and study a TNHE course at home)? It calls for an understanding of what and how Chinese learners are benefited in each MA TESOL course. This purpose is underpinned by a range of research questions. The research questions firstly raise from the literature. In the literature in the field of international higher education, international students (especially Asian or Chinese students) as research interest have been explored in motivation study, experience study and outcome study. Some research focus on the mechanism of empowering Chinese students to go to cross-border education. The learners' motivation and expectation have been investigated by various frameworks. A great body of research is interested in the students' abroad experience where the academic learning and social life are proceeded. These research has revealed quite a few challenges encountered by the students in the process of adapting themselves into western culture. Those challenges are involved into social life (e.g., making friends, homesick, asking for help, cross-cultural communication) and academic learning (e.g., learning approach adaptation, plagiarism, academic reading and writing). The research with this interest have also investigated the process of how Chinese students overcome the challenges and the approaches employed in this process. The personal outcome of study abroad as the third topic has been explored in the previous studies. The outcome sometimes has been illustrated as a part of the research which investigated the learners' abroad experiences. In these cases, the outcome usually appears as various personal transformation in terms of cultural identity, thinking ways and behaviour. In some other cases, the personal obtains via study abroad, as an individual interest, have been evaluated qualitatively and quantitatively.

The contributions made by the literature shed light on my research. They have outlined different parts of the general topic of study abroad but little research have covered the whole process from deciding to study in a CBHE programme to learning the programme and to get some results from the individual perspective, This inspired me to do an integrated research. Students' thoughts before going to a CBHE programme would be the starting point of my research questions. Previous papers have indicated the Chinese learners are not going to a course provided by a western university with empty brain. They have certain ideas about the course and these ideas influence their learning. So it is necessary to understand what motivated the Chinese learners to study a CBHE course. The learners' motivation and expectation would provide a context to better understand their following experience of learning the course and how they are impacted by it. The integration of expectation, experiences and outcomes together service my research topic, illustrating a holistic picture of Chinese students studying a MA TESOL programme.

The integration perspective also calls for a specific pedagogical context in this research. Although the previous studies have investigated the challenges encountered by the Chinese learners due to cross cultural adaptation, there seems lack of a specific education circumstance where the learners are facing with a task and having concrete difficulties to complete this task. The reason might be the sample students in these research were from different courses so that it is difficult to specify a challenging situation for all of them. In my research, however, it is in its interest to integrate the introduction of MA TESOL programme into research questions, which aims to provide a concrete background to understand the interaction between the learners and their education objects. The integration perspective services to understand the holistic story in each MA TESOL course and its learners, which would also provide evidence to compare the different programmes.

Therefore, the research questions are developed as below:

(1) What strategic objectives and approaches underpin the establishment and provision of the two programmes?

(2) Why were students motivated to enrol on these particular programmes?

(3) How do the programmes compare and contrast in course provisions and the learning experiences of students?

(4) According to the key stakeholders, how effective have the programmes been in satisfying student expectations in the quality of course delivery and providing personal growth opportunities?

2.7 Towards a conceptual framework for the research

Different theoretical stances have provided insights into understanding the research questions.

Push-pull and extrinsic-intrinsic motivation theories for the students' motivation and expectation. Push-pull framework has been applied in a large number of studies who focused on why and how the international students were motivated to register in a CBHE course. It is also employed in this research to identify the evidence of the Chinese learners going to a specific MA TESOL programme. As mentioned in 2.3.1, this framework is critiqued as it tends to overlook the learners' personal contexts in decision making. In specific, pull-push framework focus much on the factors related with the CBHE itself. Its disadvantages and advantages of education in home and host countries are seen as motivations or inhibits for students who choose a university or a course. However, it explains less of the factors related with the learners themselves: the circumstances in which the learners are deciding to go to a CBHE; how their personal factors get involved into the process of making decision; the personal expectations of learning a CBHE course. Therefore, this research employs Intrinsic-extrinsic framework as a complementation. Intrinsic motivation (Legault, 2016) highlights the meaning of doing a thing itself. It refers to engagement in an activity that is inherently

satisfying or enjoyable for an individual. An individual does something just because he/she likes to do it. In contrast, extrinsic motivation (Legault, 2016) highlights the outcome of doing a thing. It refers to the performance of activity that is contingent upon the attainment of an outcome that is separable from the activity itself. In other words, the activity is seen as an instrument to obtain other things. An individual motivated by extrinsic motivation engages into an activity in order to attain other outcomes. Intrinsic-extrinsic framework will be employed as a complementation to explore the student personal context (biography status, attitudes, values, experiences) and expectations (what are expected to be achieve/obtain through learning MA TESOL) for the MA TESOL programmes.

Kim's cross-cultural adaptation theory combined with other conceptual stances is applied to inquire student learning experiences and outcomes in this research. As introduced section 2.3.2.2, the three-stage of cross-cultural adaptation mode (stress-adaptation-growth) is widely used in studies regarding with student sojourners in INHE. It suggests a process in which student sojourners interplay with new culture from incapably to proficiently. However, the mechanism behind the cultural adaptation mode seems lack of explanation, which gives rise to some un-answered questions of cross-cultural adaptation. For example, whether the Chinese learners adapt at the same extent with the same performance in a cross-cultural context, if not, what the reasons behind the different extents of adaptations. Therefore, cultural intelligence mode (CQ) is employed in this research, which facilitates Kim's mode to understand the learners' experiences from cultural perspective.

Cultural intelligence (CQ) mode developed by Linn Van Dyne (Rockstuhl and Van Dyne, 2018; Ng et al., 2012; Van Dyne et al., 2010) aims to explain individuals' capability to function effectively in cross-cultural context. CQ is conceptualized as a multidimensional competence which equals with but different from IQ and EQ. Four qualitatively different dimensions have been identified as different sets of capabilities to understand cultural intelligence:

motivational CQ (being interested into other cultures, motivation to learn different cultures, confidence in cultural context); cognitive CQ (cultural knowledge); metacognitive CQ (reflective metal process for acquire cultural knowledge, learn how to learn); behaviour CQ (act appropriately in a cross-cultural context). Each factor equals with other factors and is a part of CQ. CQ model is an aggregate construct where the four factors have individual contents of each and they together facilitate the cultural effectiveness for the persons who are in a new cultural context (Van Dyne et al., 2012). Cultural effectiveness is explained by Linn Van Dyne as a result of CQ. It involves making decisions in a given cultural context, cross-cultural adaptation and task performance which means strive to achieve specific goals in another culture (Ng et al., 2009). In light of this point, CQ model implies evidence which indicate the enhanced intercultural competence for an individual. In addition, the four dimensions of the CQ model provide tools to understand how individuals' internal factors get involved into the cross-cultural adaptation. The four dimensions are suggested to be a cyclical process with four steps (from motivation, cognition to metacognition and behaviours) toward to an overall improvement of CQ (Rockstuhl and Van Dyne, 2018; Ng et al., 2012). Therefore, it is seen as a both process-oriented and product-implied framework for analysing cross-cultural phenomenon. In this research, CQ mode as a facilitation parallel to Kim's mode, is expected to improve the understanding of cross-cultural experience in terms of 1) why the learners feel difficult in specific circumstances; 2) how they response to these challenges; 3) to what extent they are/not able to handle these situations.

Experiential learning theory(ELT) argued by David Kolb aims to understand how students learn from information processing perspective(McCarthy, 2010).It defines learning as the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience(Kolb et al., 2014). It therefore values learners' active engagement in learning activities (Smart and Csapo, 2007). The diagram1 illustrates Kolb' four-stage learning model. It has conceptualized learning into two dimensions of grasping experiences and

transforming experiences, each with two polar opposite categories. Thus, learning is developed as a cyclical process composed of four stages-experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting. Kolb argues learners can enter the learning process at any stage, for example, building experience of doing a learning task, or thinking of a theory. However, learning is not completed unless all the four stages are undergone by the learners.

Diagram 1: Experiential learning mode adapted from (McCarthy, 2010)

The four stages of learning process in ELT also imply different learning abilities or trends for individuals in different learning contexts. For example some learners are good at learning from applying their experiences into practice while others might get used to learning from reflection on experience. Thus the learning model is also applied to understand learners' approaches to learning

In this research, the stances of ELT are borrowed for understanding the experiences of the Chinese student in TESOL context from learning perspective, which is a complementation for cultural perspective argued by

Kim. The Chinese learners in this research share a purpose of academic study, which is different from other sojourners who might work/travel in other cultures. So how these learners conduct their academic learning in a new context equites with a learning process whereby specific learning tasks are allocated, and learning strategies need to be employed to achieve learning goals. Students are all from TESOL courses in this research, which provides ELT feasibility of investigating their academic learning experience in a detailed way: 1) what are the concrete experiences of student daily learning; 2) how the learners deal with learning tasks allocated by TESOL courses; 3) what are the impacts on the learners via involving into academic studies of TESOL in the context of CBHE.

In light of the theoretical stances discussed above, a theoretical triangulation framework is shaped for this research. Conception of push-pull factors is complemented by intrinsic-extrinsic motivations so that the external and personal contexts are investigated, which sheds light on student motivations and expectations in CBHE. Cross-cultural adaptation theory by Kim provides cultural insights into the student dynamic experience of learning on CBHE programmes. The three-stage adaptation mode (stress-adaptation-growth) suggests a process-oriented perspective which links individuals' cross-cultural experience to an outcome of personal growth. Cultural intelligence mode with four dimensions (motivation, cognition, metacognition and behaviour) is employed to further explain the mechanism behind cultural adaptation via persons' cultural competence development. The experiential learning theory as a complementary tool, from learning perspective to investigate the students' academic learning experiences in TESOL discipline, specifically focusing on what/how the experiences are obtained and transformed by the learners in the course contexts. The diagram 2 illustrates how the combined conceptual framework underpins this research and answers RQs. Each programme will be analysed by this frame. Then an integrated learning experiences (involving programme information, student motivations, and learning experiences) of each programme will be indicated, answering research questions in each case.

Finally a comparison will be conducted to answer the fundamental question of this research: whether and to what extent Chinese learners are benefited equally between two styles of CBHE in TESOL field?

Diagram 2: The theoretical framework of this research

Chapter 3 Methodology

In this chapter, I discuss how the research will be guided by the research questions and conducted in accordance with the procedures, data collection methods, and data analysis strategies. Furthermore, the research's credibility and ethical implications are discussed.

This research will be underpinned by the following questions:

(1) What strategic objectives and approaches underpin the establishment and provision of the two programmes?

In each case, the research will focus on the opinions held by the programme leaders regarding the reasons and purposes for establishing the programme, the expected values to be imparted to the students, and the tactics used to achieve them.

(2) Why were students motivated to enrol on these particular programmes?

From the learner's perspective in each case, this question aims to explore the expected benefits for their profession by studying the programme, and the perceived strengths of the programme when they decided to enrol on it.

(3) How do the programmes compare and contrast in course provisions and the learning experiences of students?

The course provision here will be described in terms of location, curriculum design, qualified teaching, and other academic supporting resources. The students' programme experiences will be described within a case and compared across cases.

(4) According to the key stakeholders, how effective have the programmes been in satisfying student expectations in the quality of course delivery and providing personal growth opportunities?

The key stakeholders here refer to a group of people consisting of students themselves, programme leaders, and teaching staff, who play prominent roles in the process of personal growth in the programmes. This question will be used to investigate these people on each programme as an overall outcome, which will be described within a case and compared across cases.

3.1 Research Design

According to the research purpose and questions, methods used in the studies, as mentioned in the literature review, this is a qualitative, multiple-case and comparative study which aims to build understanding of what/how CBHE benefit Chinese learners in its different styles of provision. A qualitative study is appropriate when the research seeks to make sense of a group of people's perceptions about an issue or phenomenon in social settings. Talking directly with people and listening to their stories and opinions is the only way to gain a thorough understanding of the issue (Creswell, 2013).

Social reality, according to social constructivism, is the social construction of people within a social context. Individuals must interpret their activities in order to create their own social world. As a result, multiple social realities may exist as individuals interpret their various experiences from different perspectives (Blaikie, 2007, p. 115). In my research, the students themselves are the subjects who have undergone the programme learning and, therefore, have their own rights to interpret/construct the meanings of their programme experiences for themselves. The research topic will therefore be explored from the student perspective, an insider view. Social constructivism that asserts an individual's experience has been shaped through a range of their own activities in their personal context and social context. In the other words, in my research, the student experience of being a student on a CBHE course should be understood in a more comprehensive context where the programme provision and teaching staff play roles in the students' academic learnings, their social lives are interweaved in a bigger social context, and their biography features and expectations for the programme constitute the

personal contexts. Describing these contexts and the interactions between them and the learners will obviously contribute to understanding the impacts of CBHE on learners.

This study is a comparative case study with two cases. Case study as a methodology approach is frequently linked with comparative research. Researchers believe it is dispensable to carry out case study to explain similarities and differences between units for comparison (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014, Crossley and Vulliamy, 1984).   Education researchers think case study has power of explaining a given context in deep by detailed observation and description (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014; Crossley and Vulliamy, 1984). A multiple-case study is a more desirable approach to understand abstract conceptions in the real-life phenomenon (Yin, 2009, p.32), and it has advantage to verify the extent to which behaviour observed in one context is generalizable to another (Crossley and Vulliamy, 1984). In this research, the personal growth of a group of Chinese students in each case has been presented from descriptions of their motivations and expectations for their master education, as a start point, to their real-life academic and social lives on the programme, as an integrated process, then to their perceptions of the meanings behind these experiences. The case study enables the research to interpret the impact of master education on Chinese individuals in a specific situation of CBHE.   Meanwhile, the two cases in this study are expected to investigate CBHE with wider perspectives (e.g., perspectives of study abroad and TNHE, perspectives of programme and student) than in a single case. In a multiple-case study, the literal and theoretical replications should be considered (Yin, 2009, p.54), so that the two cases are investigated using the same approaches and steps. As Yin (2009) stated, each case is a complete study with its own facts and conclusions. This study will use the same methodology in both cases (Hantrais, 2009), and will be designed to investigate RQs separately in each case and then compare them cross cases.

The comparison research design is for interpretive purpose of understanding

impacts of CBHE in different contexts. It firstly involves a cross-case comparison between study abroad and TNHE. They are equivalent sectors in CBHE with similar functions by which the Chinese learners are able to access advanced education products of western countries. But the two sectors are different in their contexts, in specific, the geographic locations. Learners go abroad and study in a foreign campus while learners study a foreign course in their home country in TNHE. The equivalence and difference between the two things build the prerequisite/grounds for comparison, which is prerequisite for a comparative research design (Bray et al., 2014; Phillips, 2006). The comparison will uncover the divergences and significant convergence existing between the two cases in terms of their education provisions and impacts on the Chinese learners. Such cross-case comparison widens the understandings of CBHE which has different provision styles in varied location contexts.

This research also implies a comparison within each case between course provision and student learning experience. Researchers (Bray et al., 2014) conceptualize location dimension for education comparative study into seven levels in an education context, from macro global level to micro individual level. These locations are not disjoint in an education environment, rather, they are mutually shape each other. The comparison cross the levels is believed to achieve comprehensive understanding of an education phenomena (Bray et al., 2014). So, in this research, the within-case comparison takes place cross levels of school, classroom and individual in each course, and suggests an evaluation perspective for course/learning effects of whether the Chinese learners achieve what they are expected to. The diagram 3 indicates the comparison between cases and within cases in this research. Employing same data collection methods (will be discussed in 3.2) in each case, this study at first will organize findings of each case and shape a within-case comparison as a respectively complete story, and then it will go to a cross-case comparative analysis for the similarities and differences between the cases. This research is a case-oriented instead of variable-oriented comparative study. The units of cross-case comparison are the programmes

sampled as cases. The components which constitute each case suggest the specific focus for comparison within and cross cases. These focus results from negotiating between literature, the research questions and themes of findings in both cases. Due to the possible different characteristics of the two sample courses (e.g., locations, modules, teaching staff, student numbers and backgrounds), the scales of investigation in each case are not entirely same. For example, student participants in one case is more than in the other, or times of field observation are different between the two cases. Therefore, on one hand, this research is covering the scales which are indispensable for developing an integrated story of each programme whilst it is trying to keep equivalent between the items of investigations in the two cases, although they might not same quantitatively and qualitatively (e.g., modules taught by UK staff were observed in both cases but their times are different). However, on the other hand, it should acknowledge the different scales of the cases undermine the direct comparable judgements between the two cases. To what extent the two cases are similar/different cannot be measured due to lack of standardised tools.

Diagram 3: The research design

In addition to the methodological diagrams and approaches introduced above underpinning this research, it calls for a detailed design for conducting the comparisons in this research (i.e., compare what and how). The approach of education comparison in curriculum (Bray et al., 2014) together with the

research focus (in each research question) of this study shed light on the focuses of comparison and their data source for this research. These focuses are expected to draw a thick description for each case, and a comparison cross cases could be reached. This approach starts with the purpose of the research, which influences the components to be investigated in a curriculum. Thus, the possible data source for these components are suggested. In the context of this research, it employs interpretive perspective to analyse and explain the impacts of CBHE on the Chinese learners. In each course, it is a dynamic process and interaction between course provisions and student learning activities. Therefore, the knowledge of each programme needs cover a wide range of aspects. In specific, they are 1) ideology that impact the course design/establishment; 2) course plan and pedagogical objectives; 3) course implementation; 4) student experience (motivations/expectations, learning experience and outcomes). These aspects respond to the foregoing multiple levels of an education context (i.e., from school to individual), and provide specific focus for comparison within/cross cases. These aspects are also clues for research methods of collecting data in this research. In the rest of this section, the research timeline and sampling are explicated. Then data collection methods as an individual section follows them in order to avoid too much complicated subtitles in this section.

3.1.1 Timing of data collection

There are two stages of data collection in this research (table 2). The first stage took place from April to May 2019. The students (in both cases) and Chinese staff (in the UK-China case) as participants were interviewed. The student participants are those who registered in 2018. Each participant (staff and student) was interviewed once. The student interview employed phenomenon techniques, meaning one interview contains three themes: expectation, experience, and outcome (discussed in 3.2.3). As the student participants were just finishing teaching sessions when they joined the interviews, the reflection of the programme learning was mainly focused on.

The second stage of data collection was carried out from October 2019 to July 2020. The students (in both cases) and the UK staff (in both cases) as participants were interviewed. The student volunteers this time were those who registered in 2019. Each staff participant was interviewed once, whilst each student volunteer was visited three times, focusing on one theme each time. There were three themes in total, the same as in the first stage (expectation, experience, and outcome). It should be noted that due to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, some student participants postponed their interviews or divided one interview into two or three parts, and some requested that the second and third interviews be combined. As a result, data collection was completed in July 2020, and some student informants were interviewed twice or more than three times. However, all the data collection was finally completed, and the data are believed to cover all of the research questions.

Table 1: Data Collection Stages in the Research

Data collection stage	Case	Data Collection	Participants
Stage One **April to October 2019**	UK case	Phenomenological interview with learners	Two learners registered in 2018
		Documentary analysis	
	UK-China case	Phenomenological interview with learners	Five learners registered in 2018
		Interview with programme Chinese staff	Three staff
		Documentary analysis	
		Class observation	Three times
Stage Two **October 2019 to July 2020**	UK case	Phenomenological interview with learners	Six learners registered in 2019
		Interview with staff	One staff
		Class observation	Twice
	UK-China case	Phenomenological interview with learners	Six learners registered in 2019
		Interview with programme UK staff	Three staff
		Class observation	Nine times
Note: Student participants in each case consist of those who registered in 2018, and those who registered in 2019. Staff interviews include programme leaders, administrators, and lecturers.			

This study is primarily a cross-sectional design with longitudinal features. The two cases, in particular, are individual stories with their own data. The comparison made between the two stories, based on the research questions, with no regard for time factors. However, time factors matter in each case because participants who registered in 2019 were unable to describe their programme learning experiences and reflections when the interviews were conducted for the first time, in September 2019. As a result, these participants will have to wait a little longer before the programme experience data can be provided.

3.1.2 Sampling

Case sampling

Yin (2009) argued the typical characteristics of a selected case should be emphasized in a case study approach. Additionally, the cases are seen as comparators in two contrast contexts, so that the diversity and uniqueness resulting from different education contexts can be identified (Hantrais, 2009, p.50). Therefore, the two cases in my research have been selected purposefully with the consideration of the research purpose of comparing the impact of CBHE education on Chinese students. As discussed in the literature chapter, the two most popular options for Chinese students who are willing to get involved into personal internationalization are learning abroad and TNHE programmes, as two styles of CBHE. The two MA TESOL programmes are defined as the cases for this research, separately representing the two typical types of CBHE, with the UK-China programme falling into TNHE type, and the UK programme falling into the traditional study abroad type. The shared characteristics are that they have the same majors and they are provided by the same UK university whereas the contrast characteristic is that they are located in different countries. The investigations into these two cases are meant to provide an opportunity to gain a better understanding of CBHE.

Additionally, accessibility has also impacted the decision of sampling in my research. I am a PhD student studying at the School where the UK MA TESOL programme is based, which makes it possible to access the programme providers, the teaching staff, and other students. It is also possible for me to be introduced to UK-China programme, the other case, to carry out the research there.

The first case is the MA TESOL TNHE programme, which is collaboration between two universities: GW University in China, and a British university in the UK. This is a TNHE programme that has been successfully running for over ten years. This programme requires a one-year academic year for the recruited Chinese students to study at GW University in China. The

curriculums are supplied and taught by teaching staff from both universities. The UK university teaching staff spend approximately four months teaching students in person in China. GW University is a top-level Chinese university that specialises in language teaching and research. The Chinese government prioritises the development of universities. International collaboration with other world-class leading universities is encouraged as an effective approach to develop the Chinese universities into world-class institutions.

The other case is the MA TESOL programme, which is a traditional taught postgraduate education in the UK provided independently and entirely by the UK university, a member of the Russell Group and a top 100 university in the world. The English language education and research at this university's School of Education are competitive and ranked among the top 50 in the world. Chinese students apply for the programme on their own and are chosen based on the university's recruitment standards. Registered students must complete their studies in this university in the UK in one year.

Respondent sampling

The participants in this research consist of students and staff in each programme. The target student population includes the Chinese students who registered for the programmes in 2018 and 2019 separately.   Due to the data collection time (introduced in 3.1.1), students who registered in 2018 are expected to provide more information about their reflections of learning on the MA TESOL programmes than students who registered in 2019, while students who registered in 2019 are expected to provide more details about their motivation to the programmes.

Purposeful sampling are employed for recruiting student participants. Purposeful sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for uncovering plenty of data relevant to a study (Patton, 2002). This strategy is applied for recruiting the learners via class observations in the field universities. Through the class

observation, it is expected to find participants who are actively engaged into class activities, or have interactions with lecturers, e.g., ask/answer questions, or seem not be interested in the observed modules. In addition, four factors are considered to determine the participants - 1) Total number of students enrolled in each programme. Each academic year, there are approximately 28 students in the China-UK programme and approximately 15 students in the UK programme; 2) Participants' diverse personal backgrounds (for example, gender, working experience, and professional status); 3) The amount of time and energy that I have available for data collection; and 4) Students' desire to share their CBHE stories in this research, which is the most important factor.

Owing to the class observations, I get opportunities to access to the learners in the two cases, introduce my research and invite the learners who are in my interest. It should notice, due to longer time of immersing in the field work for UK-China case than for UK case in 2018, the participants recruited in the former site are more than in the latter site. With these considerations in mind, there are eleven (11) participants in the UK-China case, five (5) who registered in 2018, and six (6) in 2019 (Table 3). In the UK case, eight (8) participants were recruited, two (2) of whom registered in 2018 and the others in 2019 (Table 4). This number of respondents will provide sufficient information for the research even if someone withdraws during the process. Participants with varying ages, gender, and professional backgrounds contribute unique perspectives to each of the research questions.

Table 2: Learner Participants in UK-China Case

Name/year of registration	Gender	Career statues
Lee/2019	F	Lecturers in universities
Nan/2019	M	
Gui/2019	F	
Feng/2018	F	Teachers in secondary schools
Mao/2018	M	
Zhou/2018	M	
Mei/2018	F	
Cheng/2019	F	
Fei/2019	F	
Niu/2019	F	
Jia/2018	F	Teacher in language training center
Total in number:	**11 persons**	**Eight (8) average working years when entered onto course.**

Table 3: Learner participants in the UK Case

Name/year of registration	Gender	Career status
L/2018	F	Teachers in secondary schools
T/2019	M	
Ji/2019	F	
M/2019	F	Teachers in language training centers
Lin/2018	F	
X/2019	F	
V/2019	F	
Y/2019	M	
Total in number:	**8 persons**	**Five (5) average working years when entered onto this course.**

Snowballing strategy is employed to recruit staff participants who are programme providers, coordinators, and teaching staff (Table 5). In my research, the gatekeepers in the two programmes are programme staff. So, with this start point, more staff, including programme leaders, designers, and lecturers, as well as others who can supply the information needed by the research, are introduced and interviewed. It should notice, only one staff (Ely) in the UK case is interviewed, which is contrast to the UK-China case with five staff. That is because the block-down due to Covid-19, which constrained me to interview other staff in person. I felt it was very challenging to invite and interview new participants online because we did not met each other before. How to initiate a fresh meeting with a fresh participant online makes me nervous. In addition, I was not confident to invite people to join an academic

study in that time because I did not know what difficulties that person might endure and whether the invitation at that moment is an offensive interruption for others. So I stopped the idea of increasing staff participants in UK case. Although Ely is both lecturer and programme leader who is able to answer interview questions from perspectives of teaching and managing, the small number of staff in the UK case might undermine the richness of data regarding with UK programme provision.

Table 4: Programme Staff as Interviewees on the Two Courses

Programmes	Ids of interviewees	Programme Provision Roles
UK MA TESOL	Ely	Programme manager and teaching staff
UK-China MA TESOL	Mycroft	Programme builder (UK staff)
	Mike	Programme manager and teaching staff (UK staff)
	Kate	Teaching staff (UK staff)
	Nan Sheng	Programme coordinator and teaching staff (Chinese staff)
	Qiang	Programme Admin manager in China side

3.2 Data Collection Methods

As stated before (in section 3.1), four aspects of each course has been identified for investigation. Linking these aspects with specific course contexts, the focus of data collection has been developed. Document analysis, class observation and interview (with phenomenological features) have been employed to collect the data. Table 6 presents how the research questions are answered by methods which aim for specific focus. The detailed explanation of how to apply each method in this research will be discussed in the rest of this section.

Table 5: Research Methods

Methods	Supposed to answer RQs	Main purpose	Focus of data in each course
Document analysis	RQ1	To provide information regarding the context and content of the two MA TESOL programmes and to support schedule of the interviews.	Course history and establishment, goals of collaboration, modules delivery, assessment and requirement, learning objectives, course policies.
Observation	RQ1;RQ3; RQ4	1. Access to and recruit participant. 2. Get the context of TESOL lessons. 3. Focus on the teacher-student classroom activities and experiences. 4. Develop issues which will be discussed in the interviews.	Communications between student themselves and teachers, the way they proceed learning/teaching in campus, module teaching, classroom layout, learning materials, group discussion, engagement, language used, class activities, teaching and learning styles in UK and Chinese classes respectively.
Interview with Leaders	RQ1	1. To gain information regarding the factors, motivations, and goals behind the programmes' establishment. 2. To understand what the programme is expected to deliver to its learners. 3. To present the strategies applied to develop the students' programme experience, assist their learning performance, and meet other demands. 3. To understand the issues arising from document	The motivation and context of programme establishment, features of the course, rationales underpinning course/module design/provision, values believed by the course, expectations for the learners, rationales of assessment methods.

		analysis and class observations.	
Lecturers	RQ1	To understand what the lecturers are generally concerned with when teaching in China, how they assist students to study, and what they think of the students' experiences.	
Students (phenomenological interview)	RQ2; RQ3; & RQ4	1. To describe sample students' expectations for undergoing the programme and for the outcomes of programmes. 2. To describe sample students' experiences in the programmes. 3. To illustrate how the sample students perceive and reflect their experiences.	Motivations and decisions of entering the course, personal background, expectations of learning outcomes, activities of learning modules and doing assignment, challenges, strategies to overcome challenges, perceptions about the course provision(teaching, modules, supports) , social lives, personal obtains and transformations.

3.2.1 Document analysis

The document analysis in this research supplies information regarding the context and content of the two MA TESOL programmes, and supports the development of interview questions about course provision. In the UK-China programme, three official documents at university level are collected, as outlined below:

Programme Self-Assessment Report: this document is required by the Chinese government every five years. According to this document, the Chinese government is aware of how the programme has progressed and the impact that it has had. The latest report that could be collected this time was the one completed in May 2013 and sent to the China Academic Degrees & Graduate Education Development Centre (CDGDC), a department within

China's Ministry of Education. The report was written by the GW University, summarizing the programme provision from 2008 to 2013. It explains the history and establishment of the programme, its goals, features, and advantages, and the two co-operators' responsibilities in the programme's academic and admin affairs. It also introduces the course content and various statistics of programme staff, for example, academic degree, and number of teaching staff. The report reveals how the programme's education quality was managed and achieved through collaboration between the two universities.

Student Handbook: this handbook provides detailed information for registered students for their academic study. The main part of the document relates to course content and academic requirements. The aims and contents in each module are explained more specifically here than in other documents. It also reveals the learning outcomes that students are expected to achieve by completing the programme.

Prospectus: This is a one page document that serves to briefly introduce the programme in terms of what it is and what prerequisites candidate students must meet. It is the first and most official document that all candidates must read before enrolling in the programme. As a result, its information is important for understanding students' expectations for their upcoming studies.

I choose these three documents to be analysed in my research as they could partly answer research questions 1 and 3 from different perspectives. Firstly, the Prospectus and Student Handbook describe what should happen in the programme and how the students should proceed in their studies. Moreover, the Programme Self-Assessment Report explains what has happened in the programme, and the education results in the past. Additionally, as a government required assessment report, it illustrates the programme's strategic objectives and the extent to which they have been achieved, which is unique among other documents.

Two documents for the UK MA TESOL programme were collected online: the prospectus and the student handbook. They provide office university information about the course, including prerequisites for candidates and how it is delivered (modules, class teaching, assessment, expected education outcome). Unlike in the UK-China case, where the educational objectives of the course and each module are introduced in the Student Handbook, the UK course provision and educational objectives were found through links in the Student Handbook, which indirectly involved other official documents.

It should be noted that the programme establishment documents for both cases were not found because of the length of time that had passed since they were first documented, and due to personnel changes. . It is unclear who or where these documents are kept. However, the data for the establishment of UK-China programme was gathered by interviewing key participants in this process. The UK MA TESOL programme was set up quite long time ago (more than 30 years), and neither the programme establishment documents nor their creators could be located, and therefore, the data were collected around the programme provision.

3.2.2 Observation

In this research, ethnographic observations in TESOL module lectures are conducted in both cases. The purpose is firstly to get access to the students and recruit participants. Secondly is to help me (an outsider of TESOL) build pedagogical sense of TESOL classes, on which some interview questions about specific teaching-learning activities are developed for later inquiry. The third as the main purpose of the observation is to provide information about teaching-learning activities in specific contexts (i.e., modules), which is related to programme provisions and students' academic experiences. Such information contributes to answering RQs1.3, and 4.

Observations took place in classes taught by UK and Chinese staff separately (in the UK-China case) and classes taught by UK staff (in the UK case). This enables the comparisons within and cross cases, for example Chinese

teaching VS UK teaching, or UK teaching in different courses. Table 7 and 8 introduce the observations in the two cases. At least two classes (each lasts 50 minutes) are needed in one of the modules of each cases (this is the lesson gotten from the pilot study) so that the purpose of observation could be achieved. However, the numbers of observations are not the same between the two cases, with more numbers in the UK-China case than in the UK case. This firstly is because the delivery of classes in the UK-China case is condensed on weekend per week. It enables me to observe different modules and multiple classes within one day. I was welcomed to visit the classes as much as I will, so I was greedy for the opportunities of staying with the participants in the field. The second reason is due to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, the provisional modules planned for the UK case were not observed. This might lead to a limitation of describing course provision of the UK case.

I played a non-participant role in each observation, taking field notes on- 1) how the lecturer organizes teaching, for example, teaching methods, materials used, techniques including encouraging practice, and providing immediate feedback; 2) how the Chinese students respond and perform, for example, joining discussions, asking and answering questions, interaction with classmates, preparing for assignments; and 3) the differences between lecturer-student interactions in various situations. These three items are specified into a range of focus of observation (in table 6), which imply the key words in field notes for thematic analysis, and inspire me to discuss with informants in our interviews.

Table 6: Class Observations on UK-China MA TESOL Course

Module Information	Lecturer	No. of Observations	Tasks
Academic Writing (a provisional module)	Kate (UK staff)	Three observations with each being one class which lasts about 50 minutes.	1. Introduce myself 2. Meet Kate and learners 3. Gain an overview of the teaching contents 4. Develop questions for later interviews with Kate and learners, based on observations 5. Find and invite potential participants for my interviews
Context and Teaching (a core module)	Kate (UK staff)	Three observations with each being one class which lasts about 50 minutes	
Second Language Acquisition (a core module)	Nan Sheng (Chinese staff)	Three observations with each being one class which lasts about 50 minutes	1. Meet Nan Sheng and invite to be teaching staff interviewee 5. Target learner interviewees' learning in class 6. Develop questions for later interviews with Nan Sheng and learner interviewees, based on observations

Table 7: Class Observation in the UK MA TESOL Course

Module Information	Lecturer	No. of Observations	Tasks
Language Acquisition and Context (a core module)	Ely	Twice with each being one class which lasts about 50 minutes	1. Introduce myself 2. Meet Ely and learners 3. Gain overview of teaching content 4. Observe learners' class behaviour, and communication with lecturer and other learners, e.g. ask and answer questions, and group discussion, etc. 5. Develop questions for later interviews with Ely and learners based on the observations;

3.2.3 In-depth interviews

A phenomenological approach was chosen to conduct interviews with students because it is often used in a study that describes the common meaning for several individuals of their experiences of a concept or a

phenomenon and leads to a composite description of universal essence that includes not only what the experiences were but also how people went through them (Creswell, 2013). Person in context, person's life world, and intentionality (the meaning of experience for a person) are three key concepts of this approach that aid in understanding the essence of experience for an individual. In the works of Seidman and Bevan, these three concepts are rephrased further and utilised purposefully in the interviews of research. Table 9 shows how each concept functions in the interviews conducted by Seidman and Bevan, as well as how they relate to my research.

Table 8: Phenomenological Interview Elements

Key Concepts from Phenomenology	Seidman's Description of Interview Focus	Bevan's Description of Interview Focus	Interview Focus in my Study	Sub-items in each interview's focus
Person in context	Focused Life History	Contextualisation	The student's lifeworld in context; understanding the student as a person.	Students' backgrounds/lifeworld; Motivations to enrol in a programme; Expectations for the programme experience and study outcomes;
Person's life world	The Detail of Experience	Apprehending the Phenomenon	The student's experience in detail	Academic and sociocultural experiences; Confronted challenges/difficulties; Strategies to overcome these.
Intentionality	Reflections on Meaning	Clarifying the Phenomenon	Meaning/reflection on their experiences in a programme	Perceptions of what they underwent; Transformations taking place on students; Future aspirations and trajectories.

People's experiences, in particular, could be understood through interviews that start with a participant's personal background of who the people is and how they became involved in a phenomenon (person in context). The interview then moves towards people's detail of experience, which describes specific details in an individual's present experience (person's life world).

Finally, the interview covers how a person reflects on their experiences (intentionality). The phenomenological interview aims to connect life history with current events, and leads to a perception by which a participant understands the present experience over their longer lifetime.

One of the purposes of my research is to understand Chinese students' experiences in the two TESOL programmes. The phenomenological interviewing consists of three interviews per participant in each case (Bevan, 2014); Seidman, 2006). These three interviews function differently in understanding students' experiences in the MA TESOL case.

The purpose of the first interview is to build up the context of what made the students want to join the programmes initially (Seidman, 2006, P.17). I use narrative questions to plumb a range of constitutive events or factors (for example, working experience), which leads to their decisions, trying to explain their motivations behind the programme learning, and the expectations for their learning results. The first interview is a starting point which provides the context in which the participants' forthcoming experiences are situated (Seidman, 2006, P.17).

The second interview focuses on the concrete details of the students' present experience in the programmes (Seidman, 2006, p.18). The data from the first interview and class observations facilitate the second interview in terms of providing contextual information and developing relevant issues which are probed in depth. Descriptive and structured questions are used to investigate the participants' academic and sociocultural experiences. Descriptive questions (for example, time, frequency, place, people, and event) aim to illustrate the participants' experiences so far. The structural questions enable these experiences to elicit clarity after description (for example, what do you mean by…? Could you talk more about your choice in that situation (Bevan, 2014)? Descriptive and structural questions complement each other and add depth and quality to information (Bevan, 2014). The second interview builds

an apprehension of the students' experiences, not only through their experience descriptions, but also their interpretations of these situations.

Based on the two previous interviews, the third interview asks respondents to reflect on the meaning of their overall experience (Seidman, 2006, P.18). It includes not only satisfaction with and gains from the programmes, but also the emotional and intellectual understanding between their previous expectations/situations and current outcomes/situations, for example, would you discuss changes that have occurred with you since joining the MA TESOL programme? The third interview combines the contextual information with detailed experience and leads to meaning construction. Meaning construction is a process from specific experiences to the essence of phenomenon, which presents idiosyncratic elements of experiences (Bevan, 2014). In the other words, the participants'' experiences vary and are presented in a variety of ways, and they will not continue after the programmes are completed. As a result, students' perspectives on their experiences over time, rather than just during the programme, will be more profound and stable. This research also aims to shed light on the phenomenon of the programmes. As a result, the third interview, focusing on the future, will present students' perceptions of their transformations on the programmes (Seidman, 2006), for example - '...you mentioned earlier that writing essays was difficult for you; what will happen if you overcome this difficulty?'.

It should be noted that the interviews with students who registered in 2018 were conducted once for each person, rather than three times, due to time constraints. However, each interview covered the three key concepts of a phenomenological interview, and each person's interview time was relatively long (around two hours). It should admit such all-in-one interview provides data not as rich as by three-time interview. Because of limited time, I have to make priorities for our (informants and me) talk. For example more time is allocated to reflections on the programme than on learning motivations and experiences. Thus, possible rich data might be uncovered. In addition, due to

my insufficient knowledge about the informants' personal contexts and learning experiences, it is challenging to ask in-depth questions for reflections on the course.

The other type of interview in this research focused on programme staff in both cases. In each programme, at least one programme leader, a core module are required to be interviewed, with each participant will being interviewed once. The themes for leader interviewees are mainly based on the document analysis, which need be interpreted in terms of how the programme was built in the context INHE, and how its contents are implemented in order to satisfy Chinese learners' needs. These interviews will shed light on understanding the programme from its backgrounds to its practices, from the documents to the activities. Interviewing the teaching staff in each programme is based on the classroom observations, and contributes to explaining their views regarding the learners' study, and how they facilitate the learners to improve their learning performance.

All interviews are semi-structured to provide sufficient openness for participants to tell their stories and to focus in order to prevent deviating from the topic in the research area (McCracken and David, 1988; Seidman, 2006). Each interview was timed to be around 60 minutes (Seidman, 2006, P.20), allowing sufficient information to be collected without participants becoming impatient. All the interviews were audio recorded with participants' permission, and notes were also taken. The interviews were conducted in the respondents' first language, and so both the English and Chinese languages were used in this research.

When conducting interviews in the field, the plans were not always adhered to. The first adjustment is that in the UK-China case, four of the learners (Nan, Cheng, Nui, and Fei were required to combine the second and third interviews into one interview because they were too busy to arrange two times for our meeting. I agreed this requirement and extended the interview time duration

(up to two and half hours) so the data could be collected while the informants did not become tired due to having breaks in the interviews.

Another issue is that the second and third interviews (learning experiences and learning outcomes) tend to overlap. Some students responded spontaneously to reflections on the stated experience. Reading papers, for example, is described as quite challenging because the theories involved are very new for the learners. Later, gaining theoretical knowledge via academic reading was summarized by the participant. I did not stop it because I felt that the flow is more important than the planned sequence of interviews. Such reflections based on various segments of experience provide data for learning outcomes in specific aspects (for example, understanding theories) and clues of a reflection on the overall programme. Because these reflections can demonstrate students' personal development, the third interview for some learners is a summary or detailed reflection on their previous interviews. Although the boundary between the second and third interviews is not always clear, I do not believe the third interview is removable. Instead, the third interview, which serves as an overall reflection on the entire learning experiences, is critical in summarizing and generalizing personal development through learning on TESOL course.

3.2.4 Linking observation with interview

Observation and interview as different methods of data collection complement each other in this research, which responds to methodological triangulation (Hantrais, 2009). First, the two different methods facilitate each other to investigate a same focus from different perspectives. For example, the observation investigate student learning activities from the perspective of behaviours while interview does this from the perspective of narratives. There might be discrepancies between what people do and what they say, which leads the research to go deep on these tensions. There also might be consistencies found by the two methods (e.g., critical thinking is valued in both

staff interview and module teaching). Then the convergent become reliable evidence to shape relevant argument.

In addition, observation and interview provide different forms of data in order to constitute a whole picture of the case under investigation. For example, for the theme of student academic learning, the observation focus on the classroom-context data while the interview has a wider scope which beyond classroom learning. Thus the two methods reach a data complementary (Hammersley, 2008). A comprehensive understanding of student academic learning could be achieved.

3.2.5 Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried out before the formal data collection (table 1). This pilot consists of one class observation and two interviews, all of which took place at the UK university. The observed class is an optional class taught by a UK lecturer. Two student participants were interviewed – one of whom was a graduate of the UK-China programme, and the other of whom was a graduate of the UK programme.

Based on the pilot, some changes to the methodology were made. One option is to re-design the class observation outline. The previous plan was to separate the teacher's behaviours and the students' activities in a table. The planned items in the table were ordered from the beginning to the end of a class, e.g., learners' behaviours when a class is starting, or lecturer's actions in the middle of one class. It has proven to be less useful and unnecessary. After adjustment, I give up a structural observation outline and shift to taking ethnographic field notes. I am describing a class, e.g., the classroom layout, the devices used for teaching/learning, how a topic is illustrated and move to another one, the dialogues/interactions between different students and lecturers. Such adjustment enables me to gain an overview of the class instead of segmental points, by which some interview questions (e.g., why you did…in…, what do you mean by saying…to…?) could be developed. Another adjustment is to increase the numbers of class observation. One observation

on one class is not enough to recruit sufficient participants. At least two observations on two classes are needed. In addition, classes taught by different lecturers contribute diversity to the data.

Another adjustment is to place priority of student interview on academic learning instead of focusing both social lives and learning experiences, because the amount of time for interview is too limited to cover the both topics equally. They are both large topics with a large amount of data that require in-depth conversation to explore. The pilot participants have vivid memories of how they studied in MA TESOL, what impressive experiences inspired them, and how they transformed a little as a result of this type of learning. Their narratives on one hand, influence the focus of interview to shift on academic learning. On the other hand, they inspire me to adjust interview questions for programme staff. In specific, I did not think the linkage of interviews between student and staff before the pilot. I planned individual interview outlines with different focus for students (e.g., how they are learning on the programmes) and for the lecturers (e.g., what do they want the module to benefit the students). However, the pilot study enables me to develop interview questions for the staff in the light of some insights from the data of student interviews, vice versa. For example, 'why writing essay is valued as assessment method and any alternative options?' is a question for staff based on the students' narratives about doing assignment. Thus, the comparison between the two different stakeholders becomes specialised and outstanding.

Table 9: Pilot Studies

Pilot time	Data Collection Methods	Class/Participants	Adjustment for formal data collection as outcomes of pilot
March-2019	Class observation	One class in UK	Adjust observation outline; Increase the observations; Add informal chats with students
	Phenomenological Interview	One graduated student from MA TESOL Studies in the British university	Make predominant items in interview
		One graduated student from UK-China MA TESOL	

3.3 Research Rigour

3.3.1 Researcher's Role

In social constructivism, social reality is constructed by social actors' experiences and not confined to a single reality. Researchers are lead to understand the reality by listening to participants' subjective views on their experiences. This is a co-constructed process in which the researcher's own values will engage with the participants' perspectives and help to shape the meaning of the participants' experiences. As a result, the researcher's role influences how participants' experiences are understood.

My role in this research is both as an outsider and an insider. I am firstly an outsider for the TESOL discipline. I am neither an English teacher nor a professional in TESOL education. This brings to mind a limitation in my understanding of the discipline knowledge, especially knowledge of linguistics. It is difficult for me to connect participant narratives with subject knowledge in interview, and to gain a deeper understanding of how learners perceive a piece of discipline knowledge. For example, when a student participant says that he finds it difficult to connect the theoretical stances of error with how they

teach oral English in a Chinese middle school, because I don't know anything about oral English education in middle schools in China or the theories of error in TESOL, I can't ask him why and what he finds difficult. To avoid this limitation, I keep in mind my research purpose and focus on the education aspect of TESOL, for example, how it is provided, and how learners gain access to the learning object. Thus, I distract my attention from linguistic knowledge, and am able to explore the students' shared essence of learning behind the subject. This is seen as an advantage of being an outsider of TESOL.

I am also an outsider of CBHE in China, specifically, I lack practice in participating in a transnational course. This has limited my understanding of the integrated practice of building and continuing cooperation with foreign universities, for example, how to negotiate between government policies, universities policies, partner's context, and students' needs. Therefore, my research focuses on the educational aspect of course provision under a collabourative context. Specifically, how the two partners play together in order to ensure programme quality for the learners. Thus, I am able to build deep and concrete knowledge on this point via interviews with course staff. Being an outsider of the programme benefits me by providing insights into the taken-for-granted experience of the course provision. For example, despite the fact that the programme is run through a work division between staff from China and the United Kingdom, I find there is few routine for the two sides in which they can discuss the state of students' learning and how to improve it together. Meanwhile, as a Chinese student studying abroad, I am an insider. Prior to my PhD, I spent many years working in a Chinese university, and therefore, I am well-versed in the learning environment at a Chinese university (for example, education norms, and academic traditions). I also know the characteristics of how Chinese learners study on university courses in China. On the other hand, I am a PhD student in a UK university. This brings me direct and specific experiences of Chinese students studying under the UK higher education context. I am able to understand learners' narratives from

their perspective, regarding exposure to a UK education culture. This insider role gives me advantages in study but also exposes me to bias. I may focus on evidence that aligns with my experience regardless of others. As an example, focusing on the contrasts in learning cultures between China and the UK may obscure the rationale, benefits and contributions to learning outcomes of the UK learning culture. To avoid this limitation, via formal interviews and informal chats with staff interviewees and other UK colleagues, I asked the UK staff why and how they carry something out in a certain way, with the purpose of understanding UK education culture from UK staff members' perspectives. In addition, I added an interview question for every respondent, 'Would you like to discuss anything else on this topic that has not been covered already?' in order to ensure the respondents' opinions were fully covered.

3.3.2 Validity of qualitative research

The triangulation in terms of theory, participant perspectives, and methodology was applied to achieve the validity of this research. As discussed in Section 2.7, theoretical triangulation is applied to answer the research questions. Furthermore, the research incorporates different perspectives from students and programme staff, allowing the findings to be comprehensive and free from of bias from a single perspective.

Moreover, the methodological triangulation, facilitation, and complementarity are also used to increase the validity of the research (Greene et al., 1989; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2012). The programme provision is illustrated by document analysis, interviews with staff, and observations. The students' experiences and perceptions of the programme are explained by observation and in-depth interview. Answering each RQ by more than two methods ensures sufficient information has been explored. Furthermore, using the document analysis as a starting point makes it easier to create interview outlines and observation schedules because it uniquely provides official statements of the course provision. The observations and

interviews were connected and combined. The observations provided the opportunity to gain access to the participants, and develop an environment in which TESOL teaching and learning can be observed together. This facilitates interviews with teaching staff and students by providing a unique first-hand source of the course provision. Information from observations enables the questions of interviews to be down-to-earth and integrated. Some questions, such as 'when you said I in a class…what do you mean?', 'I saw…in the class, how do you think of it?' were asked to my interviewees after class observations. The interviews provide an in-depth understanding of the information gained from observations. The three phenomenon interviews with students are combined with observations during the fieldwork. The interviews with staff develop systematic understanding of the course in terms of its context, processes, and outcomes.

In order to avoid interpreting data out of its tract, I used some techniques in the data collection and analysis. In the interviews, I shared my understandings of a piece of their narrative which confused me. The purpose here is to clarify my understandings of that data, ensuring it is not distorted. Taking notes is also helpful to remind me what the participant was actually talking about. When the transcripts were translated, I preferred to check with the participants on which English words were appropriate to express the meanings of the data. As they were English teachers, they were able to provide reliable advice in translating their data. In data analysis, I discussed the interpretations and themes of data with my supervisors and peers (avoiding revealing participants' identities) in order to enhance the effectiveness and objectivity of the data analysis.

3.4 Data Analysis

3.4.1 Transcription (interviews with staff and students)

Once the data was collected at each stage, I completed full transcriptions. I listened to the recording at least three times to ensure as much accuracy as possible. If no recording existed, I transcribed the data from my field notes. Each interview includes a variety of perspectives and accounts on the various topics discussed. I transcribed them in the order of the conversation, even though people would jump from one topic to another and then back during conversations. This will keep me from overlooking some of the information provided by the interviewees. The transcripts will be identical to the languages used by the respondents in order to reduce discrepancies between what the reader sees and what the interviewees intended to say as a result of longer translating times. I will then give the transcripts to the respondents to make sure the content is identical with what they expressed in the interviews. The transcripts were typed up in Word documents, which are machine-readable.

3.4.2 Translation (interviews and document analysis)

Transcripts will be written in either English or Chinese for the original data. In the process of coding and analysing, NVivo was used to work out the transcripts, and Word documents for the Chinese language, therefore eliminating any discrepancies in the coding process.

However, in order to analyse different codes in various themes and represent the findings in the discussion and interpreting the results, translation from Chinese into English is necessary. I use both literal translation and functional translation in order for the readers to can obtain the message as close as possible to the original source (Newmark, 1988, P.39). The literal translation is applied in translating factual information which keeps the same meaning, word-by-word, with English, for example, the name and some content of modules or academic activities. The functional translation takes priority in my translation in that Chinese and English are different in structure and function which can distort the message from the source language, if focusing on the

equivalence of form and word-by-word (Su-Ju, 2006). The functional translation pays attention to the equivalence that the relationship between the receptor and message should be the same as that between the original receptor and the source language message (Nida, 2001). I therefore sometimes change the form of the source text, but preserve the message of source language by covering language context and cultural elements. As Dr. Nida suggests (Nida, 2001), I tested the translated text with persons who represented it in the intended audience. Therefore, two externals to the study who are English native speakers and fluent in English and Chinese will be invited to read the written text to ensure its correctness and equivalence.

3.4.3 Coding and developing themes

Before discussing how the data in this study are analysed, it is important to note that data from various sources (documents, observations, and interviews) are transcribed/translated and analysed together in each case, answering RQs through data triangulation.

The data analysis in my research is both deductive and inductive (Seidman, 2006, p.117). Deductive firstly means the data are reviewed around my research purpose and RQs. The irrelevant data are excluded. The data are grouped differently and sequenced with the guidance of the RQs. In addition, deductive also means that the data analysis is influenced by previous literature. The themes that appear in previous studies, and the conceptions highlighted by the theoretical framework, enable me to be sensitive to some of the data. For example, study difficulties and, communication with teaching staff are frequently identified in empirical research and relevant to cross-cultural theory. When my data appeared to be relevant to these themes, it was highlighted and coded. The interview questions were crucial in deductively coding my data. The key words and focus of each question imply potential themes, guiding me to find the most relevant data from answers to each question.

Inductive means the data analysis is developed and achieved by what has been collected. My research is a case study. A process-oriented and integrated story of each case should be presented by its own data. In other words, it is the data itself that can tell what of the learners' experiences of continuing the learning in the context of the programme practise. In a UK-China course, for example, the learners' diverse comments on module teaching shape a theme of effective teaching that combines the benefits of UK and Chinese teaching styles. This is unique for this case. Another example is the data present insufficient cross-cultural social life in the UK case, which is seen as a part of the integrated story of this case, although it is unexpected. The combination of deductive and inductive insights supports a comprehensive understanding of each case, within the frame of the RQs, and with individual characteristics.

Coding and developing themes are the biggest challenge in the data analysis. The machine coding (Nvivo) combined with manual coding was applied in my coding process (Seidman, 2006, p.126). Nvivo was mainly used for marking the transcripts and grouping different citations as descriptive categories. I read through the transcript to get an overall understanding, and then wrote some memos with a short phrase in lines. For the interviews with students, I usually wrote a short summary for each student's story with their profiles and significant data. Those memos and the words from the transcripts helped to generate codes. The summaries and codes were grouped and developed into different themes relevant to the RQs. The themes were developed from specific to broad by grouping similar themes together. For example, difficulties initiating a topic and being unable to understand the assignment requirement have evolved into a theme of a gap between attending modules and completing assignments.

Constant comparison analysis and thematic analysis were carried out (Seidman, 2006, P.125; Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2008; Flick, 2002) as both can be used in analysing different types of qualitative data and identifying

patterns of information from data, which was supportive to code and develop themes from my data. These methods not only assisted with comparing data between different codes and themes, but also with analysing the correlations between them. A typical example is the students' personal development being tightly related to their learning activities. Critical thinking is a part of the learning process whilst it is a competence enhancement for learners.

However, some difficulties really challenged me in analysing the data and shaping the findings. Some data can be coded with various codes and still sound reasonable. Then, in such circumstances, deciding on an appropriate code becomes quite difficult. My strategy is to write down every code that I believe is appropriate. Later on, when developing themes, each written code was placed in a category with other codes and reviewed as a whole. The goal was to see which categories of data could be interpreted better than others. For example, the data indicates that students find it difficult to begin working on an assignment. The codes could be: lack of ability, lack of learning autonomy, lack of support, or unfamiliarity with the assignment requirement. The codes of lack of ability and unfamiliarity with assignment requirements are then found to be appropriate in the category of gap between attending classes and doing assignments. In addition, how to present findings of learning experiences by themes is quite challenging. I was initially inspired by previous research, planning to demonstrate the findings by themes such as positive experiences, challenges, and strategies of overcoming challenges. However, it makes the findings unclear and segmental. For example, academic reading as a challenge, although it is stated that some students feel quite challenged while others do not, and although it is stated that the degree of difficulty changes, from very difficult to being able to read quickly, it remains unclear why reading is discussed by learners, in what pedagogical situations they feel difficult, and why it relieves. Finally, in my research, I discovered that concrete events, rather than abstract conceptions, comprise the students' learning experience in each MA TESOL case. My research firstly needs to illustrate an integrated story of Chinese students learning on a MA TESOL

programme: the specific pedagogical context, and the concrete education activities. Through which, the abstract conceptions (for example, the challenges) become understandable for the readers. It is possible to see how these ideas emerge and evolve throughout the whole learning process. As a result, the findings regarding what/how the learners actually went through the course routine become dynamic, allowing the evidence supporting learners' personal transformation to be identified. As a result, I finally used the students' main educational activities (attending modules, completing assignments) as themes to illustrate their learning experience, revealing the complex interactions between learners and pedagogical context. Such themes allow for a comparison of the two cases' concrete and rationale.

Although attending module classes and completing assignments are shared themes of the two cases, the findings are organized and presented with individual characteristics according to data of each case. Specifically, take completing assignments as an example. Students in the UK-China course prefer describing how they move towards completing assignments, therefore the sub-themes of their learning experiences in this case are developed in to a process-oriented style, from start point to completion of the first essay. The learners in the UK programme prefer introducing their learning experiences in a summary/reflection style. They tend to highlight their impressive issues/situations of writing essays, and follow with their feelings/comments towards that situation. Thus the sub-themes are organized in an issue-comments style, illustrating the diverse feelings, strategies, and action in those issues.

The difference in data preferences between the two cases could be attributed to my interview questions (for example, 'Can you talk about your experience of completing assignments?' instead of being overly structured - 'What is it and how do you carry it out?'), giving the participants plenty of space to talk about what they want to say. The second reason might be the time of conducting interviews. When interviewing on the UK-China programme, the

learners were just starting their first essays of the first module. As a result, the interviews were like a live show, overlapping with the learners' writing processes. The learners completed two assignments while interviewing in the UK case As a result, their narratives tend to reflect on and summarise a life period in the past.

Writing essay as assessment method gets much data in both cases. Lecturers justify its effectiveness and feasibility in evaluating student performance. Almost half of the data about learners' academic learning is relevant with writing assignment. However, It is challenging to analyse assessment methods because the assignments in the two cases are different (i.e., different topics, requirements, structures and for different modules). The strategy is first to describe and organize the data. Thick description of case is fundamental and indispensable for a comparative research (Crossley and Vulliamy, 1984). In each case, the data analysis aims to describe the context of assignment (e.g., for what module, requirements and directions, how/why the assignment is decided to be assessment method, scaffold to support the learners)via data from document and staff interviews, and the process of doing it companying with challenges and strategies via data from observations and student interviews. Then, a within-case comparison is shaped to identify the gaps between perspectives of programme and student. Base on which, thus, a cross-cases comparative analysis is conducted to investigate convergence through the divergence. In specific, an explanation of why the learners in both cases feel challenged by doing assignment, although different contents, become the center of analysis. A comparative analysis under the cultural lens and experiential learning theory build deep understandings of Chinese learners on TESOL programmes against the background of CBHE.

3.5 Ethical implications

3.5.1 Access to research settings

The fieldwork took place at both GW University in China and the British university in the UK. I emailed the individuals in charge in the two cases separately through the various gatekeepers. In the email I introduced myself and the research, outlining what I will do in the research settings precisely and politely. I answered related questions and asked for permission to carry out the research and abide by the regulations of each research setting.

3.5.2 Access to participants

In each case, I approached the students through the programme staff (lecturers and admin staff at GW University and a programme leader at UK university) who allowed me carry out class observations. The class was an ideal setting for me to meet the students in person and introduce myself and the project. I first contacted the staff by email to introduce myself and the project. Before agreeing to be interviewees, more communication developed based on their interests and questions relating to the research. The process of accessing the participants in the two programmes went smoothly. I was welcomed and supported sufficiently. In both cases I was allowed to observe more classes than those originally planned in the consent form, if I needed more data. Extra conversations were built in addition to the planned interviews when some data needed to be clarified and explained. The two courses recognised and appreciated the potential implications of the research.

I distributed an information sheet about the project to all prospective participants and gave them three days to decide whether they wanted to participate. The prospective participants were informed by the information sheet about what they were required to do, the types of data that would be collected from them, and how the results would be applied. The individuals serving as samples were informed that they are free to withdraw from the study at any time prior to the completion of data collection at each stage.

3.5.3 Informed consent

The consent form consisted of a set of statements intended to make prospective participants aware of the commitment of both parties (the researcher and the participant) who agreed to participate. On the occasion of introducing the research, I sent the consent form together and information sheet to the prospective participants, asking them to sign in. The consent forms formally confirm their voluntarily participation in the project. There is a section of the consent form where the statements suggest that audio-recorded interviews will be used for accurate transcription. If the participants refused to accept this condition, note-taking will be used instead.

3.5.4 Ethics in the field

When I collected data in the field, some unexpected ethical issues arose, which I had to deal with. The first was photographs in class observations. Prior to going to the field, I did not plan to use imagines in my data, however, during class observation for the China case, I discovered that the classes were quite different between Chinese lectures and UK lectures, and therefore photos would be useful to demonstrate such differences, at which point I decided to take photos of class teaching. I submitted an immediate application to the lecturers, and was approved on the condition that I sign a consent form. As a result, a new consent form for the use of photos was created, and I distributed it to all of the students in the UK-China case. The students had the option of agreeing with a signature, or declining to sigh it. Fortunately, all of the learners agreed that I could take photos in the class and use them for my research. I did not do the same thing in UK case because there was no way for me to explain my intention to each learner. The breaks between classes were too short to collect consent signatures from students.

Another ethical issue took place in the process of interviewing student participants. They tended to see me as a senior student, who was more experiential and proficient in UK education culture. They preferred to ask me questions about how to understand and respond to UK learning in our

interviews. For example, most students asked me questions like, 'Do you think I should ask my tutor… ', or 'how can I deal with the issue…?' In such situations, I usually avoided answering such questions immediately by suggesting that the question would be discussed after our interviews. As a result, the interview data follows the interviewees' real practices and feeling without any external intervention. As a researcher I needed to avoid influencing my participants with my personal opinions or values, even though I was asked questions.   For example, in this research, participants asked me questions like, 'How can I adapt into this course? ', where I made sure that I did not offer suggestions such as, 'This course prefers…you might try…', etc. However, on the other hand, I could not pretend that I did not see participants who were overwhelmed by the learning challenges. One participant, for example, felt that she could not continue the course because her writing is "full of comments." Instead of remaining depressed, I advised her to read all of the comments and seek assistance from her tutors. I still believe it is difficult to strike a balance between impacting interviewees and saving someone who is standing at the edge of a cliff, so to speak.

3.5.5 Data protection

Anonymity was applied for all participants in this research. I asked the participants for their preferred pseudonyms to be used in the study so that their names would not appear in this research. Exposure of their professional position or staff title in the interviews could easily distinguish their identities, so I used 'a programme officer' uniformly instead of their exact title such as the Vice Director of the programme. In the same vein, I used 'a lecturer' instead of 'the lecturer of the Vocabulary Teaching Module', for example.

In addition, the collected data was protected by the policies of my university. The data (sound record of interviews, transcripts, field notes) were uploaded to OneDrive and protected by my account username and passcode. The data recorded on paper documents was locked and secured in my personal study room. Even though there were various academic events where PhD students

discussed their research and shared their opinions, I avoided revealing the row data at all times. I discussed themes, interpretations, and other interesting findings without revealing the identities of my participants or their data.

Chapter 4 The UK-China MA TESOL programme

The aim of this chapter is to present the integrated story of the UK-China MA TESOL programme. The storyline overlaps with the structure of this chapter, which is formed by six main themes: context of the programme, its establishment, its provision, students' motivations and expectations of registering on this course, their experiences of learning on it, and the outcomes of these experiences. These themes are developed by linking the RQs with the collected data, with the aim of answering each RQ relevant to the UK-China case. The six main themes are the titles of the main sections in this chapter. Each is underpinned by a range of sub-themes relevant to this section. The first three sections (4.1, 4.2, and 4.3) answer RQ1, introducing a pedagogical context where a group of Chinese learners study. Section 4.3 also partly answers RQ4 by analysing the programme's educational objectives and values. Section 4.4 answers RQ2 by analysing the motivations and expectations of the Chinese participants. Section 4.5 answers RQ3 and RQ4, presenting the learners' experiences of attending module classes, completing assignments, their peer learning community, and the challenges arising from learning on the course. Section 4.6 answers RQ4 by analysing how the learners are impacted positively and negatively by this course. This chapter concludes with a summary of a brief outline of Chinese learners on the UK-China MA TESOL programme, answering all RQs together.

4.1 Context of the UK-China Programme

This section introduces the programme in terms of its entry, teaching, assessment and graduation, which are based on the data mainly from documents obtained. The section aims to provide necessary information before discussing its establishment and provision. It also outlines a basic education context where the learners will proceed with their learning activities. Bear in mind that before starting to read the following section, the most important context of this programme is that it is located in a Chinese university in southern China, and that it is a collaboration with that Chinese university

and an English university, and the students study entirely at the Chinese campus.

4.1.1 Admission and graduation

This programme has been approved by the Ministry of Education of China as a China-foreign-country collaboration education programme, which began to recruit students in 2003. Up to the time of the current data collection, this programme has been running for 16 years, with a maximum number of 30 students being recruited each year.   All students are required to have at least two years' teaching experience.

The prospectus clearly highlights that students are required to achieve some pre-requisites for entering the programme, as follows - 1) an IELTS score of 7.0, or passing the GW entrance exam together with an academic writing test examined by the University of Leeds, with a minimum score of 60 in each; 3) to be a current English teacher with at least two (2) years teaching experience; 4) hold a bachelor's degree relevant to English Language.

The programme adopts the University of Leeds' credit system. In each academic year, a maximum 30 Chinese students are enrolled in this programme, who are required to gain a total of 180 credits within one year, with 120 credits for four core modules, and 60 credits for their graduation thesis. The University of Leeds will issue a MA TESOL degree to those learners completing 180 credits.

4.1.2 Academic schedule and modules

This is a one-year full time course with face-to-face teaching, commencing in October and concluding in September of the following year. Since 2017, learners have been required to attend class each weekend (Friday to Sunday) from October to December and from March to May, as most of the learners are in employment and are required to work during the week.

Teaching sessions are shared by teaching staff from both universities. Table10 shows how the teachers are equivalently involved in module teaching.

Table 10: Modules and Participation of Teaching Staff on the Programme

Teaching Staff	Participation	Core Modules	In-Session Lecturers	Total Teaching Hours	Career Title of Teaching Staff
From UK	4 persons	1. Approaches and context in TESOL 2. Oral and written skills for TESOL	1. Academic writing 2. Research methods	96 hours	All doctors with senior job titles
From GW	3 persons	1. Introduction to second language acquisition 2. Language testing	1. Statistics	84 hours	All doctors with one senior and two middle job titles

Some practical factors impact the module design. Specifically, the number of modules and how they are shared between the two institutions are decided by some practical considerations. The first is the financial factor. The modules are designed to include four core modules instead of core modules with a range of optional modules, because more modules will lead to more credits, which mean a higher tuition fee which might be too much for a student's budget. The second factor is that frequent travel between the UK and China is less possible for most UK staff members, and would increase costs, so the four modules are shared by staff in the two universities. The educational strengths of each institution play an important role as the third factor in designing and sharing module content. Each institution has its own teaching advantages the UK university is good at, and has more experience in, classical TESOL modules, (for example, oral and written skills in English), and it is eager to contextualize TESOL in the Chinese context (for example, approaches and context in TESOL); GW has a strong tradition in second language acquisition, and its English test research is at the top level in China.

4.2.1 Motivations from the two partners

4.2.1.1 Motivations of the England partner in a joint programme

In the interviews with programme leaders and staff, they talked about the social, historical and personal context of starting and continuing this programme. Through these data, some motivations instead of objectives have emerged.   These motivations explain explicitly how university in England considered setting out a joint programme with a Chinese university.

From the UK side, although transnational education is mainly encouraged by western government policies and some research in terms of its potential economic benefits, the potential academic benefits for an institution or a discipline and staff motivation to travel abroad are essential in the implementation of international education.

Academic factors have been mentioned by both leaders of the England partner. First of all, TESOL contextualization is a challenge in discipline development. It is often criticized that what students learn from TESOL abroad is not always suitable to their contexts in their own counties. Therefore, the collaboration with a Chinese partner enables the programme to be located in one of its purpose contexts and deliver content with local-characteristics. The students are able to connect what they have learnt more with their own situations. A joint programme, such as this one, is a good trial that may remove professional or feasibility barriers in TESOL education.

Furthermore, as one of the leaders, Mike, stated, "As education researchers, we need to keep one foot in field and close to practice." A programme located in China sends TESOL education and research from the United Kingdom to another non-English speaking country where the majority of the population is learning English. The understanding of teaching English as a second language is close to its widespread practice, in which a group of Chinese teachers bring their fresh pedagogical experience from various working places. This is a significant potential first-hand research source for TESOL educators

and researchers in UK, ensuring that relevant research is grounded and keeps one foot in the field.

Intrinsic motivation should not be ignored in building the programme. All participants expressed their passion and curiosity to teaching in China.

'A short period of travelling teaching in China every year brings an exotic feeling to me', Mike (the UK leader) informed me. He is exposed in an environment and culture that is different from that of the UK. There are numerous opportunities to interact with locals. Another British employee named Kate used the phrase '100% being here' to describe the period in which she has rare connections with UK, and is on her way to becoming a native. The UK staff members are pleased to teach students in China because they believe the Chinese learners are highly motivated and extremely hard working.

4.2.1.2 The Chinese university's motivations for participating in the joint programme

The context of the programme establishment has to rely on the collected documents, as well as interviews with current staff members. The discourses/statements relevant to the purposes of building the programme appear from time to time, but they are not explicit and direct. Interviews with Chinese staff have revealed how they think about the programme and how they keep it running. Based on the data from the documents and interviews, those that have been highlighted and believed by the Chinese partner have been summarized as cooperation expectations.

Competitiveness of organization and individuals

A Chinese leaders stated that the human capital (for example, teaching ability and theoretical knowledge of English education) of Chinese English language teachers in higher education needed to be developed at the beginning of the 21st Century. A number of the teachers have bachelor degrees as their final

degrees, which was not sufficient for either their career improvement or university development. Hence, this programme aims to increase these teachers' academic levels with a master education. In light of this goal, the majority of learners in the early years were teaching staff from various Chinese universities. It implies that both the Chinese university and individuals have a desire to develop and improve their academic competitiveness.

Importing advanced education resources

The reputation of the UK institution in the world higher education league table has been highlighted as a key factor in the collaboration. Its prestige and excellent academic performance have been repeated and highlighted in many sections of the documents. For example, the Programme Assessment Report states:

> The England University is an international prestigious university with a long history, and its academic performance is within the top 15 among the universities in the UK, according to Times League Table.

This indicates the England partner is viewed as a foreign unit which involves various developed teaching and research resources. The UK academic mode is valued and predominant in the cooperation.

> […] Importing and applying advanced educational resource from a foreign country is the core of the programme. (document, Programme Self-Assessment Report)
>
> […] In view of the prominent academic position of the UK institution in the field of TESOL, all courses in this project are based on the British mode. (document, Prospectus)

This is emphasised in the documents which are prepared for different readers suggesting that both the Chinese university and the students are more interested in the comprehensive strength of the foreign partner as a collaborator.

Educational and social benefits

A general goal of the programme, as well as the rationale for introducing prestigious foreign partners in Chinese higher education, is to benefit Chinese teachers and the development of a district's English education. The following is stated in the Programme Self-Assessment Report:

> The education purpose of this programme is to foster high qualified Chinese English language teachers and to promote Chinese English language education reform.

In the same document, it has also stated the English teachers who have been trained by this programme have developed their abilities, which has further benefited local English language teaching.

> ...with the aim of promoting the quality of Chinese English language teachers, the programme, by taking advantage of its partners, has fostered a number of English teachers who are excellent with developed English teaching theories since it started in 2003. It has considerably contributed to the English education for Chinese higher schools and universities, especially in the ZhusanJiao District' (ZhusanJiao means a region covering three developed provinces in the south of China. It is one of the top richest regions in China).

The Chinese partner expressed two expectations revolving around the general goal of this programme. One is that the programme's content is suitable for teachers in the Chinese context. What they are learning is required by their teaching environment as well as their own students. The programme's delivery directly benefits their teaching practise.

> The programme should be close to the reality of English teaching in China and effectively improve the teaching ability, theoretical level, and the research competence of its learners. (Nan Sheng, the Chinese coordinator)

The other expectation is the teachers' comprehensive developments in practice and academic abilities.

> Those learners in the programme have had sufficient English teaching experiences while they lack theoretical knowledge. So the programme aims to theorize their experiences or systematize their disjointed theories. (Nan Sheng, the Chinese coordinator)

In a summary, although the economic benefits have been highlighted in previous research about CBHE, it does not seem to be the main motivation

for the two partners to build this programme. Instead, the academic consideration and passion for involving in cross-cultural experience has been revealed for the programme importer, the UK university. The motivation of the Chinese partner, according to the programme importer, is very similar to that of the literature, for example, meeting the demand for advanced educational resources. Furthermore, the data suggests that advanced educational resource are those which are suitable for the Chinese context and capable of supporting Chinese education development.

4.2.2 Approaches applied in the programme's establishment

Despite the fact that each partner has motivations and expectations for the programme, its implementation is complicated, for example, where and how did the two partners begin? What strategies did they use to overcome difficulties?

In my case, the builder of the programme (Mycroft) was also the first leader. In bridging the two partners, Mycroft plays a critical role as a global educator. Leaders of international education programmes, as well as classroom teachers and scholars with international credentials, contacts, and research agendas, are all examples of global educators (Schattle, 2010). Mycroft had plenty of years admin and academic working experiences in both partners of this programme before it was created in 2003. His familiarity with the two contexts provides a rapport between the two universities in collaboration. The two partners started to communicate and build collaboration when Mycroft was in charge of international affairs in the England partner institution. Since this start, Mycroft has continued his powerful role in building the programme. One of the most important strategies is to have insight into different organization cultures in the two partners, and take advantage of them. According to Mycroft, the admin management hierarchy has fewer layers in the UK university than in China. The England partner institution enjoys more autonomy in decision making. Specifically, the institution is able to decide with whom it wants to cooperate and in what way. Thus, Mycroft has had sufficient

space to figure out the bigger picture of the programme, and carry it out without many admin procedures.

Apart from the UK routines in developing the CBHE course, Mycroft recognises that senior social networks, as another strategy, plays an important role in Chinese organizational culture. He has a strong Chinese social network that includes some Chinese individuals who are either in decision-making positions in various different departments or powerful enough to influence a decision. The decision to build this programme was initially made based on direct communications between Mycroft and these individuals.

> I had good relationship with some big names in power at that time [before programme establishment] in China. One day when we [Mycroft and some big names] were chatting, saying something about education, I initiated the idea of co-building a MA TESOL course between China and UK. They showed great interest and encourage me to propose it. Then I knew this thing was starting. (Mycroft, the programme builder)

This strategy suggests that Mycroft is correct in his assumption that China is a top-down society with a long power hierarchy distance in its administrative system. Each detail of the joint course's construction should be reported to the university's upper administration or, in some cases, a local education department. People in relevant administrative departments are rarely able to make decisions independently, and have no idea of how or what to do to get this course started. Mycroft explains further:

> The information flow was usually slow and the system was blocked due to each part in this procedure being rarely able to make decisions independently. Everyone tended to do what their boss told them to do. The communication and cooperation between different departments are poor. And I think it is understandable because if the big picture is hidden, how can people know what they should do.

The senior social network functions are powerful for removing blocks and coordinating various departments to smooth the process of programme building.

'…if I met difficulties, I returned to those senior friends, saying, 'oh, the things are stopped because….', and those people have ways to resolve the problem, and the system is working again. Then I could continue with it. (Mycroft, the programme builder)

Meanwhile, as a scholar in the TESOL field, Mycroft has his personal understanding and passion of the development of TESOL education. He believes that locating TESOL in China is a good trial responding to critics in the discipline's field, through which TESOL education will be better contextualized. Due to both his admin and academic professions, he played a unique role in setting up the programme and keeping it running.

In addition to Mycroft, the UK staff members participating in this programme also constitute the global educators. They move between nations, bringing different experiences, knowledge, and values to the course design, teaching, and management. Their contributions ensure a dynamic and sustainable programme.

Reciprocal cooperation, according to a Chinese programme leader, is an important strategy in the programme's development and implementation. One of the programme's partners is not being taken advantage of. Instead, both universities, or even China and Britain, have been benefited from the collaboration. Qualified personnel have helped the Chinese university become more competitive and well-known. It has progressed in terms of internationalisation. There has been an increase in international communications and academic activities. The joint programme is a good start and example for other upcoming transnational collaboration taking place in GW. A number of Chinese English language teachers have graduated from the programme, and now contribute to English education in their local communities, using what they have learnt.

It is also very interesting to hear Chinese staff talking about the benefits of this transnational programme for the university in England. Broadening the England institution's impact on a large scale of English language education in China is thought to be a more meaningful benefit. Many students from different

regions of China study on this programme, and they receive a package of knowledge as well as the institution's values, commitments, and teaching and research objectives, which they then pass on to their own students.

The supply-demand relationship has a clear impact on course establishment. It is acknowledged that the human capital improvement of staff became necessary in maintaining and developing a university's competitiveness. The Chinese partner university expects to develop an academic degree of its own staff as a number of them only had bachelor degrees many years ago when the programme was established. Furthermore, as one of China's top five universities for foreign language studies, this university hopes that its employees will receive a high quality education. Therefore, importing a western education programme meets the Chinese partner's demands.

> In the beginning years of this programme, a majority of its learners were staff in our university. Over time, the number of staff from other universities increased. The course was very popular among them [university staff] because of its reputation and quality. Most learners have upgraded academic degrees and their professional careers have been benefited from learning it. (Nan Sheng, the Chinese coordinator)

After some years, targeted potential learners from universities became less and less as teaching staff with a master degree has been mainstream in most Chinese universities. The academic schedule had to be adjusted from weekdays to weekends in 2017 in order to appeal to more students who were in employment and worked throuhgh the week (Monday to Friday). This adjustment is seen as an approach to increase the accessibility of the programme to more potential learners. Since then, the numbers of learners who work in other education organizations (for example, high schools, training centres, officers in local education departments) have increased in this programme.

4.3 Programme Provision

The course provision is analysed by course objectives and strategies to achieve them, as one of the research's goals is to show how a piece of education experience affects its learners. The programme's objectives here are concerned with its education purpose, i.e., what the learners are expected to obtain through their learning in the programme. Finally, some distinctive approaches are explored that achieve the education objectives in the process of the course provision.

4.3.1 Programme objectives

The Student Handbook illustrates the specific objectives and outcomes which are anticipated to be achieved by the learners, indicated in three sections. One section outlines the objectives of each module, explaining what the learners should be able to do after studying the specific module. Another section covers the learning outcomes which are seen as a general summary of the objectives of all modules. There are nine learning outcomes subject-specific ability involving many areas such as concepts, information, techniques, approaches, and principles, etc. The last sections discuss five transferable skills which are more comprehensive beyond the discipline learning.

On the other hand, the perceptions of the programme education objectives from the perspectives of the staff who teach and manage this programme are outlined. Interviews have added to the documents, not only in terms of what they are supposed to deliver to the students, but also in terms of why they should be delivered.

In this discussion, the anticipated outcomes mentioned in the documents together with the interview data are grouped into three themes which indicate the educational goals developed from very specific subject knowledge to broad application. One theme is TESOL-discipline related, whereas the other themes are based around research, and developmental skills. The first type

means the competences which are closely relevant to the knowledge and techniques in TESOL, and usually applied in language education practice. The second type is research oriented ability. Although this still relates to TESOL, it highlights more academic functions by which the learners are expected to carry out their own research. The last type is developed from the former, and could be used in many areas beyond TESOL. It is seen to be beneficial to the learners' further developments in both research and other professions.

4.3.1.1 TESOL-discipline related objects

These outcomes mainly arise from specific module objectives, including knowledge of theories and concepts (for example, second language acquisition theories, theories of oral and written English, context features, task design in English learning, features of L2 learning theories, EFL instruction, general considerations in English tests, specialist knowledge/information/concepts/techniques relevant to the discipline), relationships (for example, contextual features and the work of TESOL teachers and learners, SLA theories, and TEFL classroom practice, assumptions of teaching oral/writing English in a context and language learning in a classroom, relationships between principle, design and practice in all areas of study), approaches and methods in language teaching (for example, major approaches to English teaching and learning, issues/approaches in language evaluation).

In addition, the linkage between theories and practice is mentioned. Learners are expected to be able to apply the learnt knowledge into their own teaching activities relating to a specific module, for example, conceptualize ways of addressing the challenges faced by the programme learners in their teaching context; relate SLA theories to classroom practice; design, adapt, and evaluate language learning tasks; observe in-class use of tasks for oral and written skills; evaluate and use language tests for a given purpose, context, and test takers; write test items; evaluate tests with regard to validity and

reliability; and provide both theoretically and practically motivated responses to TESOL issues.

4.3.1.2 Research-oriented ability

Some statements of the programme's objectives related to carrying out academic research in the English education field. This is known as research ability which emphasises the understanding and utilization of techniques, approaches, and procedures in discipline research (for example, analyse and evaluate TESOL data; demonstrate techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship; formulate ideas/hypotheses and develop/execute plans by which to evaluate these; evaluate current research and scholarship in the discipline; improve skills necessary to undertake a higher research degree). It could be interpreted that the course emphasises the characteristics of the discipline research through learning specific modules. The ability to conduct research is seen as a development and generalization from understanding specific issues in each module.

All of the interviewed UK staff members emphasized academic writing and critical reading as essential objectives for all the learners in this programme. Academic Writing is an ability to express complex ideas in a reasonable academic way. This includes how to present, discuss and debate ideas, a certain standard of academic expression, for examples, essay structure and use of language. Critical reading contributes to writing. Learners are able to gain professional knowledge in or across the discipline/s through extensive reading. Moreover, they could learn from reading in terms of academic standards and language expression. Likewise, writing ensures that reading more focused and deep.

The development of research competency will advance learner engagement in professions beyond teaching in the classroom. Learners are able to successfully communicate with peers, experts, or authorities in relevant disciplines, not only understanding what others say but also making their own voices heard. Presenting and publishing their works beyond national borders

become possible for the learners once they have advanced with English language, together with western academic writing styles which are commonly accepted in the academic field.

> Most publications are written in English, so if Chinese learners want to publish their research, I think it is necessary to learn how to write it in the correct way. (Mike, the UK leader of the programme)

4.3.1.3 Developmental skills

Developmental skills are stated in a way that is beyond the scope of knowledge in specific disciplines, as well as the techniques to improve assessment performance. However, while they are often mentioned by the UK staff participants, they are rarely mentioned by Chinese staff participants. Kate and Mycroft believe that developmental skills have broad and deep impacts on a learner's thinking way.

> This course is like opening the learners' minds and adding something into it, then everything has changed. (Kate, a UK lecturer)

> Learning the course provides just a chance, rather than a guarantee, to acquire such skills. They [developmental skills] are a wonderland of master education, initiating a transformation in the rest of the learner's life. (Mycroft, the programme builder)

Mycroft emphasises the importance of having full access to the course. He believes that graduating from the programme with only a piece of degree paper is of limited value. These learners are expected to have full access to the whole programme. This means first they can first understand one thing from different perspectives. The second step is to begin mind transformation through self-reflection, such as teaching roles, identity shifts, and different understandings of language education. There are three stages of self-reflection: 1) break free from previous perceptions of English teaching; 2) review previous experiences through different perceptions of roles, going back to where you started and thinking about what you did; 3) gain new understanding/different ideas about what you did before and what you will do

after. Self-reflection enables an individual to self-correct and achieve a sustainable learning ability in their professional life.

In addition, these learners are expected to be able to develop professional confidence in their own capability. Mycroft explains that learners' inner confidence is based on their understanding of what and how. The 'what' means the learners are able to make judgements and decisions about applying a specific theory or approach into teaching practice. The 'how' means that the learners are able to propose their own teaching strategies by combining relevant theoretical knowledge with specific context.

The confidence implies a possibility of a successful exchange between a person and a stance. An individual becomes a positive knowledge utilizer and creator rather than a passive consumer or receiver. The knowledge is understood and constructed in the nature of a learner's self and their home society.

Critical thinking

In the student handbook, verbs such as 'critique', 'evaluate', or phrases such as 'critically to engage in', and 'creatively to evaluate' are used frequently to express learning objectives and outcomes. They all suggest a value underlying the programme's requirements for programme learners, who are expected to formulate their own understanding of the knowledge rather than accept that which is taught to them.

Independent learning

In this programme, two features of the course delivery make independent learning necessary. One is the programme provision characteristics decided by time and geographical distance which requires students to learn more independently. During the one year duration, the students will have been in a classroom for only 18 weeks, three days per week. They are provided with sufficient time to self-study. In addition, the students and teachers are not

located within a same geographical areas, and are connected via writing materials, for example, email, reports, and essays. In this distance-like education situation, the learning becomes quite individual as a student has to understand the feedback upon which make their own improvements. They need to extend reading, enrich understanding in the field, and correct arguments according the advice of the lecturers.

The other factor involving independent learning is the gap between attending class and completing assignments/dissertation. All of the staff point out that attending class does not mean being qualified to write an assignment. Learners have to strengthen their knowledge and cognition through various self-learning activities in order pass the course.

> It is impossible for a student to graduate through mere class learning. A MA TESOL degree is hard for most students. They have to devote much to achieve the requirements of the course. In the past, almost every student has felt that it is difficult to complete the course as it is really a full-time course with the equivalent standards of those at Leeds. Leeds has never decreased its requirements for students, even though they study entirely in China. (Mike, the UK leader of the programme)

Critical thinking and independent learning are often connected. Critical thinking is required for making independent decisions in academic issues, and vice versa. Some suggestions in the Handbook encourage the students to read the topics that interest them or are included in their reading list. Rather than understanding all of the knowledge in the discipline, learners are expected to pick up the pieces of knowledge that interest them.

> We expect the learning could inspire and refresh the learners' teaching experiences, and enable them to find some specific points which they are really interested in and want to explore more. They could go further following these points by their own research. (Kate, a UK lecturer)

Thus, a student should decide their own field of study, searching for more knowledge and shaping their own deep understanding. It is a learning process which could be necessarily completed by the students themselves.

> Jelly is a former graduated student. I remember her very well, when she was in my module she read the article in the reading list and found its reference, through which, she found another relevant article and read it and finally she had

her own comments on these articles and connected them together in her own way. As a lecturer, I did not say - 'Look here, this is probably interesting, that is more relevant.' She did these by herself, jumping from one piece of reading to another to another…, exploring and choosing appropriate studies for her topic, and she connected them all by herself. I think this is basic independent learning in my opinion. ' (Kate, a UK lecturer)

TESOL discipline knowledge, research-oriented abilities and developmental skills involved in the education purposes of the programme benefit not only in-programme learning, but also post- programme careers. Programme staff members believe the learners who obtain these abilities would go through their master experiences with desirable results, and their career would benefit. Mycroft explained his expectations of the education goals:

> I hope what they have learned in the MA could be transferable to their classroom practice. Their own learners will benefit in the future. They would become better educators, not only teachers, they would become leaders, school managers, so some of the knowledge and skills they have learnt in the MA could be transferred to their work context.' (Mycroft, the programme builder)

This narrative suggests a life-long learning ability by which learners are able to carry out self-education, learning how to proceed with a challenging task, regardless of whether they are classroom teachers or education managers.

4.3.2 Approaches of course provision

In this section I discuss how the programme's education objectives are realised. It focuses on the approaches and strategies applied in the process of course provision, by which the two institutions negotiate and work together in order to provide a qualified education product.

4.3.2.1 Global education and domestic resources combined

A general outline of the two collaborators' responsibilities in course delivery has been formed from the data (Table 11). Despite the labour division, Qiang (a Chinese admin of the programme) says it is difficult to say there is always a clear line where responsibilities are divided equally between the two universities. The issues appearing in the collaboration are discussed between the two institutions in the provision process. The university in England issues

the master diploma, and is predominant in academic affairs (for examples, explanation of overall education standards, student academic/scores management, monitoring educational quality). Meanwhile GW is responsible for logistics and administration (for example, place of study, hardware, and student management). Student recruitment is carried out by both of the universities together, while graduations are decided by Leeds, according to its criteria. Teaching is shared between the two partners who also individually appoint module lecturers. The module assignment is assessed primarily by the lecturer/s of each module. The dissertation employs a double assessment, being marked by the two partners separately. Despite these, Qiang told me that as a joint programme, the labour division between different parties was not always clear and precise, and therefore, the two institutions often discuss this in order to make a decision. For example:

> The student recruiting takes place in China and is implemented by GW. And then the two partners decide together on admissions based on candidates' performance in their prerequisites. (Qiang, a Chinese admin of the programme)

Synergizing advanced teaching groups upon global education resource mobility is an important approach to provide a qualified course. As a joint programme, the British academic resources have moved trans-nationally. The tangible resources include teaching and learning materials, as well as teaching staff, which provide direct and specific options for what should be learned/taught. Moreover, intangible resources co-exist with tangible resources. These include values, commitments, and approaches of how to learn/teach, and refer to the general understanding of higher education from a western perspective. Both tangible and intangible resources have been imported, taking a primary position in designing, delivering, evaluating, and guaranteeing course quality. In some literature, international educational resources are usually seen as developed, and boost local education. In my case, British education is seen as a valuable hard currency, playing a critical role in attracting Chinese students. The prestige of the UK university is strongly valued by the Chinese partner. 'A world well-known academic degree

is a passport to anywhere' - a phrase which is frequently emphasized by Nan Sheng, a Chinese staff member.

Table 11: Roles of Both Partners in Course Provision

Institutions	Academic Management	Logistics and Admin	Teaching	Other Issues
The UK university	Predominant		Sharing	Discussion and Collaboration
GW		Predominant		

Based on the academic schedule and module information (see Table 1), it is suggested that the two institutions have devoted excellent teaching staff into course delivery. Each of the teaching staff members has at least a doctor title, with some of them having senior career titles. The advanced teaching group exemplifies a value mentioned in the Self-Assessment Report, which is the use of advanced educational resources and increased participation of UK staff.

> Putting emphasis on teaching in the cooperation, introducing high-quality resources of foreign education, especially its core modules, and increasing the number of British lecturers who participate in teaching on this programme, ensure the quality of education on the programme.' (document, Programme Self-Assessment Report)

Every year, UK staff travel to and teach in China, which is a huge help in course delivery (they usually travel to the Chinese campus twice per academic year, one is October and November, the other is March and April, usually two UK staff each time, a total of four people). They maintain the mobility of educational resources across national borders. This is a significant distinction from the majority of joint programmes in which lecturers are provided by the local partner, and the remote international partner, usually a western one, provides the learning materials and awards degrees based on evaluating learners' final performance.

In my case, each module taken by the UK partner is taught by two lecturers, which enriches the module content from different perspective on the one hand,

and on the other hand, staff members sharing a module are more capable of improving teaching through group work.

> It is very advantageous that we have two lecturers in one module, because we could talk and make changes or decisions together where the contents need to be adjusted. We prefer to make our class desirable and assessable. (Kate, a UK lecturer)

The programme's authenticity is ensured by in-person instruction. What the programme provides is consistent with the values of the British university. It also increases the number of opportunities for learners and British lecturers to interact and understand one another.

This is seen as a benefit to teaching and learning. It is good at language theory and testing for the Chinese player. These modules are taught by experienced and well-known Chinese lecturers.

> Our collaboration is seen as an alliance of the strong. The University of Leeds is absolutely at international top level. Our faculty has the most excellent English language major in China…our partner knows our strengths well in the field of English language education. We are glad to send well qualified staff to teach this programme. In fact, all of them had taught relevant majors for at least ten years before they joined this programme. (Nan Sheng, the Chinese Coordinator of the programme).

4.3.2.2 Two types of education values underpinning education approaches

In order to make the education objectives accessible to the trainees, the programme handbook presents a range of education approaches shared by lecturers from both sides. These include class teaching, tutorials, and supervisions. However, the way that these approaches are applied in the teaching process reflects various education values from the culture of the two institutions. These education values are seen as the common essence influencing a teaching fellow from their culture, in which one education approach possibly has been illustrated differently among people from different cultures. In this section, based on the interviews and class observations, I discuss different education values from the China and UK perspectives separately.

Education values believed by the Chinese institution

Education is product-oriented in China, which means that the outcome is the only thing that matters. . Obtaining a degree paper is regarded as the most significant advantage in student recruitment, as well as a major source of inspiration in the process of learning where challenges must be overcome. Most of all, the product-oriented perspective affects Chinese staff members' perceptions of assignments. Assignments are seen as the final evaluation. Each assignment is a separate and independent test. Therefore the Chinese staff members do not become used to reading students' drafts and providing feedback before the final assignment submission. Meanwhile, they write less detailed comments about the student's work, as they feel that comments are a sort of summary of evaluation of a piece of a work, instead of a scaffold supporting the student's improvement.

In addition, Chinese education is characterised as content-based. Module teaching is usually based on specific textbook/s, with the aim of imparting existing knowledge. Teaching mainly consists of telling students about concepts, definitions, theories, and approaches, as well as uniformly imparting concrete contents to the students.   The students are seen moving between lectures and textbooks, taking notes and underlining content in textbooks.

The Teacher-centred role is the third Chinese education value that has been spotted in this programme. It does not imply that a teacher is in a better position to strictly order the students. Instead, the Chinese staff in my case exhibit parent-like characteristics. On the one hand, they manage students and organise curriculums in a way that resembles parental authority. They are in the centre of the classroom, leading teaching-learning activities.   During my observations, I notice that students are seated theatre style, row by row, while the teacher stands and teaches at the front of the classroom. All of the teachers are good at imparting, explaining, and repeating. Teaching is usually based on a thick textbook, and plenty of information is shown on slides. I notice that the Chinese lecturer talked for over 90 per cent of the time in each

class, whilst the students rarely spoke or discussed anything. The students took notes and occasionally read their textbooks in the quiet environment. The observations gives me an impression that the teachers are eager to share everything they know with the students in order to help them improve their studies. An interview with Nan Sheng echoes this sentiment:

> The biggest challenge for the learners is how to meet UK academic demands. This is my opinion based on many years teaching in this programme. Most students feel nervous to learn it as it is the first time for them to be involved in a China-foreign-country cooperation programme. In the first module, they have almost no idea of how to learn it or even start to learn it, and most students find it hard to listen to a class taught by a native speaker. My class covers all the key points of the textbook. I want to tell them more, so they can feel a bit easier. (Nan Sheng, the Chinese coordinator of the programme)

On the other hand, just as parents love all of their children and tend to give more attention to the weaker ones, the Chinese staff members are willing to provide extra assistance to students who perform poorly. In particular, if a student is having difficulty with their dissertation, a Chinese staff member will usually supervise the student for longer than the time allotted by the university. Students would communicate with Chinese supervisors via phone calls, face-to face appointments, emails, or Wechat.

> We actually have no limitation times in tutorials or supervision. If the student asks, we will arrange a meeting or answer their questions immediately. Generally speaking, most of the slow learners are supervised by Chinese lecturers. They would be failed if supervised by British lecturers who provide only three remote supervisions (Qiang, a Chinese admin of the programme).

> The British lecturers usually prefer to have a set amount of fixed hours for each student in dissertation supervision, and most supervisions/communications are via emails. Students are less likely to be allowed extra supervision time. However, we don't follow the supervision hours in our practice. Learners who have more difficulties in their learning could be supervised with more hours, which are sometimes in person. I think it is beneficial for them. These trainees tend to become less stressed when meeting us in person if some issues cannot be explained very well via emails.' (Nan Sheng, the Chinese coordinator of the programme).

The Chinese staff members are relatively familiar with the British education style and the programme requirements, and they also understand the traditional Chinese education mode and its impact on Chinese students. As a result, Chinese staff members serve as interpreters, explaining and

interpreting Britain's education style and requirements to the students in a way that Chinese students are accustomed to. Specifically, some strategies have been carried out by the Chinese staff members. One is the pre-session orientation, in which a leader emphasizes the programme's learning requirements before the semester begins, such as a sense of deadlines, information on plagiarism, giving up thinking in the traditional Chinese ways, with no excuses, and understanding and respecting rules. These pre-session talks hint to the learners that what they previously perceived may be challenged by the upcoming experiences.

Another way is in-session reminders, which means the Chinese staff members continuously explain and highlight the UK's academic style, with specific examples in their module teaching. They may also become story tellers, informing current students about previous students' experiences of failure (for example, failed assignments, failed graduation, and plagiarism).

Thirdly, there is interval support, which occurs between the first and second module when students tend to become much more frustrated and confused. Chinese staff members arrange an informal meeting with all students, during which time they can answer their questions and encourage them to be confident. In addition, a trainee who has recently graduated from this programme is usually invited to the meeting, sharing their own experiences and discussing this with current learners. Qiang, a Chinese staff member explained that the meeting can often become more productive with communication between new students and the alumni.

> It is quite often that a number of learners break down in the first module. They are hesitating about whether to continue or not. They feel confused and lost where a research-oriented study is required although they are experienced teachers. So we offer some help, and give them confidence.(Qiang, a Chinese admin of the programme)

Education values of the English institution

In contrast, the UK style views education as process-oriented where gradual improvements in the learning process are highlighted. Each assignment aims to expose students' weaknesses, and facilitate them to develop in the next assignment until they are qualified and reaching dissertation level which is a challenge for most students.

> I am trying to explain why we have four modules followed by a dissertation, what the difference is between a module assignment and a dissertation. The obvious difference is that it is about a sort of ability to study more or less by yourselves. Over the modules, their ability increases. It is a learning process, like a new bird learning to fly. I try to give a sense of the differences between their current learning and the final requirements of the programme.' (Kate, a UK lecturer)

In a process-oriented education, some pedagogical tools and techniques play important roles through which lecturers are able to supervise their students' learning processes. One of the main strategies is that draft-feedback precedes an assignment. Students are required to submit a draft regarding to their assignment, and teachers will provide feedback for each draft. This suggests an in-process interval during which the teacher is able to monitor how the learning is progressing before the final result is produced. The feedback assists the learner to understand where they need to improve and where a job is well done. It saves the students from going in the wrong direction at an early stage.

Another technique of the process-oriented style is commenting on each assignment. A student receives their final score for their assignment in each module, as well as detailed comments on that assignment at the same time. The purpose of these comments is to facilitate the student to make further improvements in their next assignment or in their dissertation. There is an ability gap between the requirements of a module assignment and a master dissertation. Thus, assignments are seen as an opportunity for students to practice and prepare for their final challenge.

The third tool demonstrates a process-oriented style which is to deliberately design a good start for learning. Mycroft believes that unless previous learning stereotypes are broken, learning will become extremely challenging (for example, depending on authorities). Mycroft states, 'An appropriate chance of doing this is at the start of the programme. So opening the mind and learning to be critical are two of main tasks in the first module, which is called Approaches and Context in TESOL'. Furthermore, some academic standards (for example, citing and quotations, and plagiarism) which the students are required to follow are also delivered by the British lecturer in the first module. The students are expected to understand the levels of behaviour expected on the course from beginning of their study.

> I think the programme has to start from the point of where we don't tell you the answers. We implement Approaches and Context in TESOL in the first module where actually you can hear many different ideas, theories. You will see that for some things, there is never a right answer. You begin to think about your own world, your own learners, own school, and not be afraid to disagree with anything, as long as you know why you disagree.   (Mycroft, the programme builder)

Teachers also play a role in systematically considering the four modules as a whole. When they teach a single module, they have to think carefully about what to deliver in that module, the relationship of this module with others, and how this module functions in achieving the educational goals of the whole programme. Thus, the four modules are not separate items, but are connected elements in a learning process.

> My mind can see micro and macro levels when I am teaching. I mean, I know what I should be teaching in this module itself, and how this module is connected with other modules and fits into the whole programme. Like a system. How could we only think about one module individually? For example, when I taught the third module, I knew students were at the middle of the academic year. I included a small amount of data collection in the teaching, which prepares them for their final dissertation which requires deeper or large data. (Kate, UK lecturer)

The process-oriented value implies another education philosophy - learning by doing, which means students are supposed to learn something by actually doing it themselves. This education philosophy has been identified from Kate's

narratives, who explains her thoughts about asking students to carry out an assignment:

> I guess the students feel confused at the beginning, when they see Part 1, Part 2 in this task (note: Part 1 is to write a reading summary, and Part 2 is to describe a challenge in the learner's teaching practice). They may think that they are two different things, Part 1 as a whole, and Part 2 as a whole. But I think it is only when they start to write, that things become clear for them. Carrying out this task helps them to see that the two things are connected, and how they connect. I think when they finish the first assignment, they know how to get ideas from their readings. (Kate, a UK lecturer)

> The learners have to practice their critical thinking skills. They read academic articles, pick up and reorganize segments, and make sense of their connections whilst they are illuminated by these activities, and will achieve a personal understanding of a piece of knowledge. (Kate, a UK lecturer)

These narratives demonstrate that the British lecturers do not believe that students can learn everything by simply telling them. They prefer to let the students complete a task and learn from it. As Kate stated above, she believes that learners are capable of perceiving something and developing their own strategy for writing a topic while completing the assignment.

UK education is also conceptual-based, as introduced by Mycroft. There are no specific textbooks in teaching. Instead, a suggested reading list with books and journal papers tends to be very popular. Students are advised to read widely. The UK lecturers prefer to inspire various perspectives in understanding a topic or theme. The learners are encouraged to reflect on a teaching practice critically rather than repeating something from a book.

> Our first module includes the process of being critical - not to think just because Professor X said this or the book said that. That does not make any sense for my style of teaching, or for my learners, my colleges. When I relate what professors and books say to my own teaching and start to think, the answer would be yes, partly, or no, and then which part could be used to be useful for me, and what I can ignore, rather than embracing everything and just repeating the knowledge. (Mycroft, the programme builder).

> I avoid too much talking in my class because it's not helpful for students' critical thinking skills when they just keep listening to me. And also, I asked the students to read some articles, even though I rarely suggest that the author of an article provides the correct answer. I try to make my students see there is no such thing as a correct answer. In addition, when my students come to complete their assignments and are confronted with a large number of articles on the reading list, they must decide for themselves which one is relevant?'(Kate, a UK lecturer).

Process-oriented, learning-by-doing, and conceptual-based learning styles give rise to a student-centred learning environment in which teachers serve as scaffold builders, guiding and assisting learning. Learners must accept responsibility for learning. They must develop their own understanding of an academic topic/theme. They are no longer told what to do, but instead, they are encouraged to make their own decisions.

Mixture of education styles in the programme provision

As a joint programme, located in China with a western academic style, it contains distinct values, commitments, and teaching and research objectives from two different cultures. The combination of educational styles from the UK and China becomes a distinguishing feature, making the programme provision dynamic.

From the perspective of education, the content-based style mainly assists learners in the discipline knowledge framework while the conceptual style stimulates critical thinking and building own knowledge. Parent-like teacher role provide weaker students with a life-saving straw, while student-centred roles make life-long learning possible for the learners. Product-oriented education applies assignments as an effective evaluation tool in contrast with process-oriented learning, which underlines in-process intervals equally.

It is worth mentioning that, throughout the interviews with course staff in the two universities, I had a strong feeling that although the Chinese education values are inevitably involved in the course, they impact the course delivery process (teaching approaches, and supporting students, etc.) rather than the course educational objectives (what learners are expected to achieve). British culture is predominant in the programme, which may be because: 1) the academic business of this course is predominated and evaluated by the UK University. The assignment is graded using the UK University's criteria, which

means that the students must adhere to UK academic standards despite having modules taught by Chinese academic staff. 2) Chinese staff in this programme show a high level of respect for the UK academic requirements. They say they are 'proud of this course because of its quality,' and they attribute the quality to the fact that 'we [Chinese staff] believe that Leeds' academic education is really good, so we are willing to develop our learners to achieve its educational objectives.' Apart from module teaching, the lecturers of the two parties also participate in discussions with the aim of promoting course accessibility for the students. At the end of the first module, UK staff members usually share their general feelings of the students' academic performance in a meeting with the Chinese staff members. The function is to talk about the advantages and weaknesses in the students' learning. Discussion will take place about various students who are presumed to have more difficulties than others in reaching course goals. Those students will be purposefully cared for by the Chinese staff members, preventing any failures as much as possible. Such a discussion implies that both coordinators realize their distinctive strengths in an educational tradition. They are willing to utilize these differences in order to develop a complementary force for strengthening the course provision.

Allocating supervisors is another occasion where the mixture of education styles benefits the students. The decision of supervision for each student depends on not only his/her interest but also in which way the student would be benefited most.

> 'Students are informed to think about their preference of supervisors in advance. In staff meetings we mainly consider a question for each student. Does the UK style or Chinese style benefit the student, in order to complete a dissertation? We often respect the students' decisions as they know their needs clearer than us. If a student does not have a clear trend, we will discuss this together. (Nan Sheng, the Chinese coordinator of the programme)

> Some students prefer UK supervisors as they think being supervised by a UK lecturer is a unique advantage of a cooperation programme compared with other Chinese master programmes. A few of the students think it is less difficult to communicate with a Chinese lecturer. They could be effectively supervised by the mother-tongue if English does not work well. (Qiang, a Chinese admin of the programme)

Again, when writing dissertations, the parent-like teacher role in the Chinese education tradition functions with assisting weaker students. In contrast to UK staff members, Chinese lecturers are more flexible with in supervision times and methods.

> British lecturers usually prefer to have a certain amount of fixed hours for each student for dissertation supervisions, and most supervisions and communications are via emails. It is less likely that students will be allowed any extra supervision time. However, we don't follow specific supervision hours in our practice. Learners who have difficulties in their learning can be supervised over more hours, which are sometimes in-person meetings. I think this is beneficial for them. These trainees tend to become less stressed about meeting us in person as some issues cannot be explained well via emails. (Nan Sheng, the Chinese coordinator of the programme)

However, when a British higher education style was launched into the Chinese context, challenges appeared. Although the programme staff of both UK and China hope that the students will benefit from this programme, they have different education perceptions which inevitably stop both players (UK and Chinese institutions) from always running in line with each other in the process of course provision. Take education strategies as an example – the British partner really highlights the functions of writing comments for drafts and assignments, while GW does not think this is very helpful for improving students' learning compared with in-person meetings. The British staff members are used to communicating by writing and tend to prefer to point out students' weaknesses and correct them by writing comments. They believe that each student should be allowed equal supervision time. However, the Chinese partners prefer oral guidance. They believe a student will come to them if they have questions to ask. They believe some students do need more support, and are flexible with various supervision methods, more than writing comments. The lack of understanding of education values behind the two cultures undermines the education complementarity which should benefit the education outcome. In fact, Mycroft feels that this is the main weakness of the collaboration:

> There are rare mechanisms or routines where the two institutions have chances to sit down and discuss together, sharing their education strategies, opinions of making it better, etc. (Mycroft, the programme builder)

When readers connect the inconsistency of course provision between the two universities with the data discussed above (i.e., Chinese staff respect and are willing to follow LS education norms), they may wonder why they are contradictory. I believe one reason is that the Chinese staff do not ensure the rationales behind the provision strategies, despite their confidence in the Leeds education quality. They may be unsure whether or not these strategies work well to promote students' learning, and why. This also gives rise to a relevant issue of how staff members deal with contradictions and conflicts in working contexts with bi-cultural features. Interviews with staff members included a question- 'What would you do if you had different or even conflicting opinions or actions with another partner?' The two players gave differing answers.

The Chinese side said:

> I firstly value whether I am respected by my partner in that conflict, if yes, I would like to negotiate with them, doing discussions and communications until we reach the same page.

However, the UK side answered:

> Well, I think we should follow the rules of course provision, if something is inappropriate, I will point it out and make it under the frame of the rules. But yes, I feel that it would not be easy for me, I mean, asking a partner directly to do or not to do something.

The answers imply different working cultures between the two countries, and also suggest, for the staff in this programme, that cross-cultural ability should also be needed if they wanted to collaborate effectively. They have to adapt into a working culture that is different from their home universities.

4.3.2.3 Contextualized course provision

Contextualization has characterized course provision. Modules are taught close to English teaching practices in China. The UK lecturers think that their teaching should be locally featured rather than internationally featured. They

prepare themselves with some knowledge of how English teaching takes place in China. Mike said that he tended to read some journal papers regarding English education in mainland China in advance of teaching modules. The teaching is to inspire the learners to critically look into language teaching under the Chinese educational context, rather than inputting standard theories or techniques which are used in English native speaking countries. The group work is around the Chinese context, and often goes further into specific parts of China.

> The students are encouraged to go close to their own teaching contexts, China is actually too big, I would like to see how they [the learners] think about teaching English in Guizhou, or in Sichuan, in a classroom there. (Mycroft, the programme builder)

The modules are taught by Chinese lecturers who are familiar with language education in China. The topics and cases in classes all relate to the Chinese context. Specifically, the Testing and Language Statistics modules are broadly suitable for current English teaching, where most Chinese students have to prove their English ability by passing a range of exams. Scores are critical in evaluating the performance of both learning and teaching. Learners who come from the front line of teaching, via the two modules, are able to learn how to design an exam and analyse it.

Apart from the module contents, teaching students according to their aptitude, present another aspect of contextualization. An example of this is module one taught by two UK lecturers. The assignment was initially an essay where the students needed to relate one or two issues of their teaching to the literature, and develop their own ideas of resolving the issues. However, the students found it difficult to connect content from books with their real teaching issues, and figure out a research topic. They were also confused about generating an argument based on literature reading. So the British lecturers adjusted the assignment, dividing it into two parts with less challenges. Part one is a reading summary containing five papers. Part two is a description of a problem with their working conditions. The two parts are thought of as scaffolds, which learners are expected to connect and complete an assignment. The UK

lecturers do not insist on the same assignment in the institution in England, and instead, they try to find ways that are suitable for the trainees to achieve goals. This case indicates the lecturers also continue to learn from their teaching experiences ion this programme.   They reflect on these experiences and make pedagogical adjustment with the purpose of improving the accessibility of the course. For example, Mike and Kate introduced the UK lecturers who adjusted the requirements of assignment to make it more accessible:

> […] in the last year, the students have been required to discuss a problem in their teaching practices, carry out a literature review, and propose solutions for this problem. The result was awful as many learners were unable to understand what they were expected to achieve. So this year we are breaking down the whole assignment into two tasks: critical summary and solution. It is expected that the learners understand what they are expected to do. (Mike, the UK leader)

> The titles of the assignment in the last year were quite difficult for the students. We have restructured the assignment this year. We are asking them this year first to write summaries, as we noticed that before, many of them did not use the readings provided to them for their assignments, and they didn't realise the connections of read various items and then mentioning it. So we had to strongly encourage them to obtain the references and make connections between reading and writing, as well as learning how to summarize how to paraphrase. (Kate, a UK lecturer)

The social connections between staff and students in the programme have been noticed spotted in the field work, with staff members getting along with the trainees in a less hierarchical way. Three or four graduates revisited programme staff members at GW on a friendship basis.

> Some of the former students would visit us each year. We would talk about our lives instead of academic learning. I am always very happy to know when someone has had a baby, ore received promotion in their career, or that a former student then goes on to do a PhD after graduation. (Nan Sheng, the Chinese coordinator of the programme)

Some of the Chinese elements play roles in the student-teacher relationship. One is the Chinese social media Wechat group chatting function, a WhatsApp like social interacting tool, with is used as an online community where both

staff and students can talk, send and read messages, ask and answering questions, and send best wishes on festivals, for example.

> We [British lecturers] don't share personal social media accounts with students [in the UK]. But we do this here because I find that WeChat is a powerful tool to communicate with others in China. Formal and informal working issues and social topics can be discussed and even resolved via WeChat. I am able to build connections with students very soon and close [to them]. (Mike, the UK leader)

Dinner culture is another Chinese element which functions well in closing the emotional distance between individuals. It is used both between the teaching and programme staff of both countries as well as between staff members and learners. I was invited to join four or five meals during the field work. I found at these dinners, people show their natural characteristics and open their hearts. They become real person for one another. It strengthens friendships between the two institutions and fosters deeper understandings between the lecturers and students.

> I've discovered that that the dinner culture fosters deep connections between people. Going for dinner creates a strong bond between the teacher and the learners. It is important and very nice as I was able to get to know them individually, and they then become more real to me. I also think it is a good way, in an informal setting, to get to know them and make them feel less intimidated by a foreigner. (Kate, a UK lecturer).

4.4 Chinese learners' motives for registering on UK-China MA TESOL course

4.4.1 Personal context playing critical role in decision making

UK-China programme learners have worked in different education organizations: middle or high schools, private middle or high schools, language institutions, and universities. Some are leaders in their working places. They are experiential teachers with an average of eight working years experience (the shortest is three years and the longest is 20 years.). I have divided them into three groups by their professional status.

These participants are university teaching staff (Gui, Lee, and Nan). In addition to teaching, they must perform administrative or student management

duties at their workplaces. In particular, Gui and Lee resigned their jobs in order to attend this programme. Gui worked as a university lecturer for an international NGO that runs a variety of language education programmes in various countries. Nan is a vice professor with a master's degree from a Chinese university.

The second group is the largest in this research, consisting of six (6) English secondary school teachers. They work in the top local schools. Nui is the youngest, and switched to teaching college English for two years. Cheng studied on a master's programme at a Chinese university before joining this course. Four of them (Feng, Mao, Mei and Cheng) travel hundreds of kilometers to attend this programme every weekend. These teacher learners are fully occupied by daily work in their schools. Having their own students upgrade into good colleges and universities with a competitive examination score is their responsibility. Around this purpose, their daily work includes teaching, testing, extra tutoring for weaker students, preparing and conducting exams, analyzing exams, and communicating with students' parents. Some of them are leaders of English education in their schools, and therefore they have to design and organize teaching schedules and activities, train other teachers, evaluate teaching performance all over the school, and conduct teaching reform. Their usually daily working hours are usually 7am to 7pm.

The last group has one teacher called Jia, who has worked in a well-known language training center for around six (6) years. She teaches English for young learners who want to pass the IELTS and TOEFL English test. Her working goals are centered around teaching for examinations. She needs to design teaching materials, and prepare exercises for students with different English abilities. She also has to summarize various exam skills or short cuts for students to pass their exams successfully.

Having been teachers for many years, these participants have developed strong teacher beliefs. The data shows that these learners have a passion for language teaching or broad education professions. They believe that it is a

field for prosperous development in China. Three participants went on to say that one of the most important responsibilities of a teacher is to keep learning and improving. Teachers should improve their knowledge and skills, as well as engage in lifelong learning activities that benefit their students. These beliefs motivate them to pursue advanced knowledge and stay up-to-date and current.

In their teaching career, these participants say they are still challenged by bottlenecks. Some of them feel that their teaching abilities are plateauing. Some are challenged by new tasks, such as using more difficult teaching material than they have previously. Others discover a gap that prevents them from advancing in their career development, for example, Fei says she needs a master's degree if she wants to be a teacher trainer in her school. Other challenges were mentioned, such as conducting teaching reforms, balancing between teaching English and teaching how to carry out English exams, and writing publications based on teaching experiences. Job dissatisfaction was identified in two informants' narratives. They spoke about the poor academic atmosphere in their working places, unacceptable interruption in teaching caused by the institutions' admin systems, and stable but boring jobs. A master's degree is a prerequisite for finding new jobs.

Learners are motivated to upgrade themselves through a formal education course due to the strong teacher beliefs and career bottleneck. However, some practical issues make their decision 'not easy'. Most schools in China do not allow teachers to study without working. Attending a master's course often suggests that the teacher must resign from their job. These participants have worked for many years and have accomplished achievements in their careers. Resigning would mean giving up the benefits, achievements, and experiences of their current job, and starting over again. Furthermore, in today's fierce competition in China, a master's degree is neither an overwhelming advantage nor a guarantee of regaining their current career positions once they return to job hunting. Fei explained:

> Going to a master's course has been my dream for quite a long time. However, for most programmes, I have to quit my job if I want to register on them. I cannot do that. I love my job and my school. I am afraid that I would not find such a good job again, even with a master degree. Job hunting nowadays in my city is highly competitive. Many English language masters cannot find a job, even in primary schools. I am not young anymore, which is also a disadvantage in job hunting.

Moreover, most of these learners have families. They are responsible for taking care of family members and also financial support. They must carefully consider the cost implications of undertaking a master's degree in terms of money and time. Therefore, as set out above, a general context of dilemma has been shared with these participants, in which they are eager to refreshing themselves by undertaking a master's course on the one hand, and on the other hand, they are limited by the practical issues arising from work and family commitments. Considering this dilemma, these learners made the conscious decision to register on the UK-China MA TESOL programme.

4.4.2 Decision making: push-pull factors

The push factors here have been identified by explaining what and why other options are excluded by the informants. Study abroad was never thought about by these informants who believed a traditional master's course delivered by a Chinese university is another option. However, the disadvantages of Chinese masters courses as push factors have stopped the participants. Full time campus study, which is required by most Chinese master education, pushes participants to find other programmes with a flexible schedule. Course duration is another factor. A domestic programme usually takes three years, which is too long for in-service teacher learners, who prefer to look for programmes with shorter academic years. The National Entrance Examination for the Masters Course in China is another factor that pushes these learners away from their Chinese master courses. The examinations, especially in two particular subjects, Politics and Second Foreign Language, are said to be too difficult and far out of the reach of learners, as mentioned by informants. 'Limited options' is the term used by informants to describe how few master courses are accessible for them.

In contrast, these informants believe that the UK-China programme is the best master's programme for them. Friends and colleagues are regarded as the first source of information about this course. Their previous participation in this programme as alumni is convincing. As enticing factors, the programme's well-known benefits entice candidates to apply.

The UK-China programme has both a desirable academic schedule and a convenient home location for these learners: one-year study time, and teaching at weekends, which theoretically allows learners to keep their jobs while studying. This is the most attractive factor for these learners. Four interviewees hold the opinion that they would not register on this course if its schedule was teaching on weekdays.

Moreover, participants believe that the education quality of this course is high, because it is a legal collaboration programme approved by the Chinese government. The programme's diploma is officially acknowledged, and the prestige and educational quality of the two partner universities is also highlighted by these informants.

The academic degree issued by Leeds is highly valued by all participants, 'Han Jin liang gao' is a Chinese phrase used by most of the participants to describe this certification. It means the quality of the diploma is higher. Some participants also use 'Ying tong huo', which means a very strong currency highlighted for its permanently stable and high value in a society. It is often used in Chinese discourse to describe the high quality and prestige of an education certification. These two phrases have shown that learners appreciate and are motivated by the Leeds, as it is broadly valued in the labour market, and they believe it would verify their professional abilities with its authority.

The two universities collaborate on the course provision approach. Students are able to enjoy the sufficient educational resources of the two universities in terms of learning materials, teaching staff, and education culture. Teaching in

person, especially with the British lecturers flying over to teach on modules, is highly valued by most of the participants. The learners view this as a precious opportunity to learn in the British education style, and communicate with English language experts.

A brief summary of the motives under the push-pull frame is that Chinese learners are faced with a dilemma between upgrading their academic degree and practical issues (cost of resigning from their job, economic burden, and family issues). The personal context deprives the possibility of studying abroad for these learners. The disadvantages (academic schedule and bar of entrance) of studying domestically push learners to look for other options, while the advantages of the UK-China course pull these learners by optimal academic schedules, qualified quality, and collaborative provision.

4.4.3 Course expectations

The difficulties encountered in teaching practices (as previously discussed in Section 4.4.1) could be viewed as the starting point for intrinsic motivations to learn on this course. The students want to use what they've learned to solve these problems. Obtaining theories and skills related to English language teaching and learning, in particular, are valued by all participants as a powerful tool for overcoming challenges in teaching practice.   Some of them want to learn advanced theories and teaching skills that will allow them to teach higher level English, such as teaching IELTS/TOEFL. Some other informants emphasize the essence of theories. They stated that previous knowledge was limited to understanding some definitions in English teaching, which was insufficient to be applied in teaching practice. They require systematic knowledge, such as the process by which individuals acquire a language through a teaching approach, as well as the correlations between various theories. Thus they are able to reflect on their experiences, and deepen the understanding of various teaching approaches (how these theories were originated, developed, and why). This sort of essence of knowledge enables

these informants to adapt their knowledge from books into their classroom teaching.

Five informants mentioned being involved with theoretical knowledge and reflecting on teaching experience. Reflection is viewed as a process guided by theoretical knowledge that aims to generate new insights into teaching and learning. Zhou states:

> I think reflection is necessary for me. It helps me to have a different understanding of teaching experiences in the past. These different understandings will guide me to have new ideas for teaching approaches. Among which I will be able to find the most suitable for my students.

Fei expects that she will be able to analyse and evaluate her own teaching performance in a more rational way:

> According to my feeling, and the feedback from other people, I know one class has been taught well by me. However, why is it better than other classes? And to what extent? Will it always be good long term? How can I develop it further? I always have these questions in my mind. I believe they cannot be answered unless I review my class theoretically.

Informant Nan, a college vice professor, hoped that the learning experience in this programme itself could be a source and background of reflection, which might lead him to refine his education philosophy. He stated:

> After working for more than ten years, I am increasingly confused about what is teaching and what is learning. Is there a connection between what I want to teach and what students want to learn if we are not on the same page? For example, in my teaching, I want students to use dictionaries, but students don't do this. I want to cultivate students' English thinking ways, but students don't want this. They just want to pass the exam and get the scores. By becoming a student here, I want to pay attention to how I learn? What do I expect of my teacher? At the same time, how do my teachers teach and evaluate me? I then reflect on how I teach my students. I can transfer good education methods from my teachers here to my students there. I guess the games played in class here, the lecturers' speech, solutions to problems, and attitudes towards students all will inspire me.

Although less than theories and reflection, academic training is stated by three participants (Lee, Nan and Fei). If these learners want to advance in their careers, such as becoming a senior teacher, they must complete a research project or publish their findings. As a result, they want to learn about the

academic standard approaches and routines of how to conduct a piece of research, or write papers step-by-step. They think they are novice as they have not been trained sufficiently, and their daily work has little relevance with academic research. In addition, Lee and Nan who both work in universities, are interested in the western academic tradition which is thought to be more advanced and widely acknowledged as main stream in the international academic community. Academic training enables them to understand and practice western academic signatures. They build academic ability for conducting research which would be shared with international academic peers. Lee stated her opinions about the academic training on this programme:

> I want to improve my research and academic ability. I want to learn how to conduct research according to western academic traditions, which is different and more advanced than those in China. Under the guidance of professors from Leeds, I want to write papers where my teaching experience would contribute to theories. I would like my research is to be published in English journals.

Nan valued the academic training as a routine to deepen their professional career:

> I hope this programme will improve my academic ability. Regardless of conducting a piece of research or upgrading to a PhD, academic ability is crucial'

For Nan, Gui and Lee, joining in this programme means joining an academic community which consists of academic resources from two partner universities, language education experts, peers from other institutions, and different education styles. This community is supposed to connect learners on an academic platform where they can learn from each other and immerse themselves in a strong academic atmosphere. Nan states:

> I want to communicate with peers or experts from different institutions via this programme. I expect that we will learn from each other in terms of how to study the programme and how to do research. I hope there will be various academic events, for instance forums, seminars or conferences. In my working place, we don't have these events, and the academic atmosphere is weak. I really view this programme as an academic platform.

Lee looks forward to the discussions with the Leeds teaching staff, which she sees as opportunity to be evaluated and receive advice from international authorities. She stated:

> I want to share my ideas of teaching with the professors from Leeds. I hope they can evaluate whether these opinions are meaningful or not. Such sharing is very precious for me because in my institution I cannot get such comments from outside experts.

In a short summary, the expectations stated by the learners imply both intrinsic and extrinsic motives. On one hand, these learners anticipate to be benefited directly via the learning itself, for instance, building theoretical knowledge, enhancing teaching, and resolving challenges in teaching practices. These expectations deliver the passion for learning and teaching, and the learners are self-motivated, even though they must overcome time and financial constraints that may impede their learning. They like the feeling of 'developing self' through learning.

On the other hand, the outcome of learning is a powerful factor for initiating their decision to enter onto this programme. The course diploma as a tangible result is stressed frequently by the informants who are involved into fierce competition in career development. Furthermore, the career development resulting from the developed profession competences are anticipated by the participants. Although it is indirect and takes a long time to achieve, it is an extrinsic factor that strongly motivates the informants to proceed with their learning on this course.

4.5 Learning experiences on UK-China MA TESOL

This chapter aims to present the readers with concrete evidence of how the group of learners study on this programme. The data comes from class observations and the second round of interviews with learner participants. Attending the classes and completing assignments are the first two categories that arise from the data. They are the main activities consisting of students' learning experiences, whilst they outline the pedagogical contexts where the learners are challenged or benefited. These collected data are mainly based around the two areas where the learners expressed their feelings, activities, and thoughts. Peer community and challenges of learning are another two

themes from the data. They are the shared features of module learning and essay writing in the learners' learning experiences.

4.5.1. Attending class

In all of the classes, no matter whether taught by British or Chinese staff, slides are one of the main teaching materials. Students prefer taking photos for the slides as much information can be contained, and sometimes can be played and viewed quickly. Learning materials (for example, slides, journal articles, books, and references in reading lists) have been printed by almost all of the learners. They bring these printed materials to their classes and make notes on them. 'I prefer paper materials as I can open and read them easily when I am in transportation to the programme ', one learner told me. She spent around eight (8) hours on high speed trains each weekend in order to attend the programme. Similar situations are shared by four (4) of eleven (11) participants who live and work in different cities, and have to spend hours travelling between their learning and working sites. Most learners come to the class immediately after they finish their workday in their own schools, and usually bring refreshments to the classroom in order to keep themselves refreshed and energized. In the following sections, I describe what a class looks like and how it is conducted by the UK or Chinese staff members, and then discuss how the learners believe a particular teaching style or strategy has aided their learning.

4.5.1.1 Classes taught by UK staff members

Photo 1: Class taught by UK Lecturer

The classroom layout is group designed, and teaching is lecture-discussion, and both the students and lecturers speak English in the class. There are no textbooks, but instead handouts are used for the class illustrating the main topic and sub-topics, class procedures, tasks, and references. In most of the classes that I observed, there were less slides used than in the Chinese classes, with some topics for class discussion. The UK staff member usually initially gives a short lecture to introduce a topic. Teaching then continues in light of the learners' reading, thinking, and discussion, whilst the teacher continues to ask questions in order to inspire students to think. Learners are divided into six groups to carry out group work. They are allocated reading tasks before the class which they discuss within their groups. These discussions are relevant with the taught topic in this class. The lecturer walks around the groups, listening to the discussions, and answering questions asked by each group. After around 15 to 20 minutes, there is a cross-group sharing activity, where students talk about the opinions of their groups. Zhou, a student participant, said that the UK lecturers prefer listening to the ideas from different group members, even though they are in the same group. The

lecturer usually ends the class with a summary of the discussions. The atmosphere in class is active, students are engaged, asking questions, discussing, and sharing their opinions with others. Some group discussions carried on until the lecturer had to ask them to stop. Zhou mentioned that around 70 per cent of class time was for students' learning, where they are talking, thinking, answering questions, and in discussion, while the other 30 per cent of the time is the staff member teaching the class. The class appears to be a communication between lecturers and students, as well as a communication between different learners, rather than a lecture in which a teacher dominates in leading the class, conducting teaching strategies, and imparting knowledge. One participant Fei, stated that what impressed her most in her classes were her discussions with classmates. Cheng, another participant, uses 'meaningful communication' to describe the moment when she felt beneficial in classes. The pre-requisite of meaningful communication is thought to be 'reading and thinking before going to a class'. She said: 'If I am just an audience with a blank brain, the class is meaningless.' It implies the student role of preparing communicable resources for attending class. A student has to engage in the class with initiative, instead of waiting to be involved.

The students outlined that they felt attending the classes to be 'enjoyable', but some were felt a little 'pressure', and some were 'nervous' about attending the classes. They were generally happy to go to the class, and enjoyed the 'feeling of studying'. Pressure and nervousness are the feelings of a student preparing for a class. Most students struggled with the pre-reading tasks. Time is one cause for this feeling. 'I have to squeeze in the time to read from my busy work every day. Almost it is a short while before bed time.' Nui told me. The other reason for feeling nervous is that a few of the papers are difficult to understand. Gui recalled that she could not understand one of the journal paper's arguments, although she had read it three times. She had no idea what to share with group members.

Zhou described the philosophy of UK teaching as 'drawing a mind map', meaning that having a class feels like drawing a mind map. He felt that the lecture starts from one point, and then moves to another point and to another point…and then gradually develops a picture of the topic. The British lecturers ask students questions when moving from one point to another, and the learners have to follow the lecturers, and think about the questions in detail. They are, therefore, guided to think, and seem to be 'drawing the mind map together with the lecturer'. This philosophy has contributed to a teaching style known as inspiring teaching in this research, as discussed further in a later section. This philosophy has echoed the thoughts of another informant called Nan, who thinks that the UK lectures function to provide open doors. This metaphor refers to the doors as different thresholds to new knowledge. The students are unable to gain the knowledge unless they go inside each door and explore in person. These narratives imply that some students are aware that the UK classes are student-centered and exploring is inclined. The lecturers are the guide in classes, and the learners take responsibility for their learning.

As for the learning results, the data are contradictory. Some learners feel very effective. The mentioned outcomes are 'open mind', 'think deeply', 'refreshing experience', and 'obtain impressive knowledge'. Two learners, in contrast, feel the obtained knowledge is 'less sufficient and less comprehensive.' The knowledge delivered by the classes is very limited, with the critical points of a topic not being identified and emphasized by the lecturers. Nan said:

> […] the class is active, and each of the tasks has been completed. But what have I really learnt from this class? What is the important knowledge/hot topics in the field? I still feel confused.

The background against Nan's narrative is that in most Chinese classes, a teacher tends to outline the whole structure of a piece of knowledge, highlighting the important parts for the learners.

4.5.1.2 Classes taught by Chinese staff

Photo 2: Class taught by a Chinese lecturer

The classroom layout is lecture-designed, with one lecturer standing on a platform and students sitting row-by-row. There is a thick book as a textbook (as observed in the module 2). The classes are taught in two languages, English and Chinese. The teaching is lecture style, where the teacher delivers the knowledge, and the students listen and take notes. Students are not required to carry out any pre-class work. Few questions are asked and discussed in the classes. The philosophy of teaching for Chinese lecturers is, as mentioned by Zhou, that Chinese lecturers want to tell their students everything that they know within the limited teaching time. 'The Chinese lecturers not only prepare doors but also pull us to go inside.' Nan uses the door metaphor to describe the perceived philosophy of teaching between China and the UK. The UK teaching aims to point out the doors for learners, but they have to go through by themselves, while Chinese teaching prefers leading learners to the doors to enter. In the observed classes, more than 90 per cent of the class was controlled by the lecturer, who continued to imparting knowledge throughout the time allocated for the class. There was rare communication (for example, games, discussions, questions) between the teacher and students. The delivered knowledge was condensed. One class usually covered three topics or more.

However, although the class is intensive, the terms 'easy and relaxed' were used by most of the participants when describing their feelings of going to classes taught by Chinese staff. 'We do not have to prepare, just go to the classroom and sit down.' I observed that the students were often quiet, engaged initially, and distracted later. Some classes were not fully attended, and three or four students were often engaging in activities that are not relevant to the class, although most students were busy with taking notes and reading the textbook. I felt that they tried to follow the lecturers and understand the delivered knowledge.

As for the learning outcomes, as with the UK teaching situation, the learners' opinions are contradictory. Three of them think it is 'efficient', as the lecturers keep imparting knowledge so that they can 'obtain much useful knowledge'. Cheng thinks that the Chinese classes are a good complementation for their insufficient reading and knowledge background. 'I don't have much time to read, so I feel very happy that the lecturer is delivering very sufficient knowledge.' Nan thinks the imparted knowledge is systematic, as the key points of a topic are highlighted repeatedly.

Six participants said they did not like this imparting teaching style. Nui thinks it is less effective because 'It [the teaching] is too fast and sometimes I cannot follow.' Fei associates imparting knowledge with the teacher-centered teaching style, which is considered outdated for higher education, as student-centered teaching has been prevailed even in many local secondary schools. Mao and Zhou believe that too much teaching has wasted their 'rooms for thinking and practicing oral English ability.' As there are both positive and negative opinions about the UK and Chinese teaching, it is less meaningful to compare between them than consider them together. This is discussed in the next section.

4.5.1.3 Desirable teaching style benefiting learning

Learning on this joint programme enables the learners experience the two different education styles, which implies a different educational culture. The

bi-cultural education experience is unique and typical in the learners' learning experience. In the student participant interviews, students tend to compare their learning feelings and results between the different lectures taught by the teaching staff from both of the universities. I do not intend to understand these comparisons from the evaluation perspective, like which one is better than the other. Instead, I see these teaching staff, regardless of their cultural background, as a group to provide the programme together for the learners. The research finding here is that from the student perspective, to spot the facts which have an impact on learning positively or negatively in different circumstances, based on answering how the programme teaching has supported the learners' learning.

Inspiring oriented teaching

This teaching style has been developed from the data which describes the participants' positive learning experiences in class. 'Refreshed', 'activate my brain', 'keep thinking', and 'thinking with initiative' are phrases used by the participants to describe their feelings of attending a 'very good class'. This consists of many ingredients which have illustrated different aspects of the class teaching, as discussed individually in the following section.

Drawing mind maps as a teaching philosophy plays the first role in inspiring oriented teaching. As previously introduced, this philosophy contributes to guiding the learners to think while delivering knowledge. With the progress of illustrating knowledge, the lecturers ask the learners questions, which seem to purposefully create a context for these learners' reflections. By thinking about these questions, they have to digest the new input of knowledge, think of the relationship between different pieces of knowledge, and reflect their working experiences, moving from point to point. They then gradually develop a picture of the theoretical knowledge regarding with a specific topic. Zhou said:

> When I connected the new knowledge with my teaching, I had some confusions and some interest. They lead me to a new round of learning and thinking. Thus my learning goes deeper.

It suggests the mind map teaching enlightens the learners to learn based on their reflections. It is an independent learning technique for each student as it is driven by individual situations where students have different levels of confusion and interest. It can be inferred that a student will be able to build a picture of knowledge with traces of their own interest, experience, reflection, opinions, and thinking. The mind map perceived in a class is neither the end nor the standard of knowledge regarding a topic. The learners develop various branches with different qualities and quantities. This process is equals to the process of building their own knowledge. Moreover, class engagement has increased by the learners' continuously thinking. Lee said: 'I have to follow the lecturer with 100% concentration. My brain keeps active. I can feel I am devoting myself to the class and generating a lot of ideas.'

Appropriate class management is the second ingredient of inspiring oriented teaching, meaning the process of a class organized by a lecturer. It is firstly featured as 'integrated teaching procedures' by the informants. Nui's description of a 'good class' is seen as an explanation of the integrated teaching procedures from the perspective of learners:

> The class starts with a lead-in, it both responds to my pre-reading and adds new knowledge, so my mind about the topic has been opened, new thoughts have come out, and also some questions or confusions. Then a group discussion is followed, in which we would like to exchange our fresh opinions and talk about any confusion. Our opinions overlap in some items and also are diverse in others, some questions can be answered by discussion and some are not. Then the lecturer starts to summarize this topic by gathering opinions from all groups and answering our questions. I feel the summary is an upgraded understanding of this topic. I can feel my thinking improving from the pre-reading to the end of the class. I want to know more about it and put it in my assignment.

This description suggests that the teaching tasks are undertaken logically with a clear purpose for each task. The lecturer is a 'good manager', who leads the learning process while speaking less than the learners. He is able to create the right occasion where the learners are activated and motivated to explore the knowledge. The teaching tasks service the learners in terms of reminding them about their experiences and knowledge about a topic, promoting thinking and learning, bringing about new ideas and confusions, a summary of what

has been understood in the topic, and possibilities for further learning. The entire teaching process does not function to provide a correct answer to the topic; rather, it functions to open all possibilities about this topic and encourage further learning. As a result, the class teaching could open up a new circle of learning. 'Perfect time management' has been thought of as the other feature of class management. Interviewee Fei gave her comments on the classes taught by a British lecturer:

> His ability of time management in a class is impressive. The time for each session (lead in，discussion, and summary) is controlled very well, leaving enough room for us to think and understand, whilst the delivered contents are sufficient. Usually with the group discussion this easily falls into the situation where much time is consumed and the target is lost. However this never happens in his class. We are timely called back to the class and there is always a strong and condensed summary following our discussion.

The pre-task approach and comments has been viewed to facilitate the inspiring- oriented teaching. The pre-task in this programme usually is pre-reading. The learners are required to read relevant journal papers to a topic in advance. The teaching content would then be around this topic. By pre-reading, the learners gain ideas about the topic. They are 'able to follow and understand what the lecturer is talking about in the class.' They are able to 'devote into class activities' and get positive results. Participant Zhou said:

> Pre-reading is very important for attending the UK lectures. Because [there will be] no participating and no learning [in the class] if no reading.

Some of the learners talked about the pre-task from a motivational perspective, for example, Lee said:

> Some lectures are irrelevant to pre-reading, they are different things. We feel very confused and frustrated. We wish the lecturer could have said something relevant to our reading because we read it and think about it, we want some feedback. It [irrelevance and no feedback] seems the pre-reading is not useful for the class. So I stopped it [pre-reading]'

This statement has implied that the learners have the potential expectation for comments on their work. Unless this is satisfied, their learning motivation and engagement in the class will decrease. Thus the pre-task relates to how it is responded to by the lecturer, which impacts the learning results together.

Another interviewee, Nui, said:

> I feel benefited when the lecture covers my pre-reading. I feel my work has been responded to. It has been corrected, complimented, or it has justified my understanding about the topic.

This suggests that pre-work provides the learner with some background knowledge of a topic, based on which the teaching is a communication/interaction within which the background knowledge interacts with the delivered knowledge. So the learner has been a positive and active learner, opposed to a passive learner who listens and receives the delivered knowledge. This interaction has been described as 'corrected, complimented and justified my understanding'. As a result, the learning has been developed and extended, and the teaching is beyond input.

Group discussion as the fourth critical element of inspiring teaching has been highly valued by the participants for magnifying learning effects. Staff participant Kate introduced and valued the group discussion as an approach which has been purposefully designed in her classes with the purpose of reinforcing learning outcomes for the learners.The students are first divided into several reading groups, and asked to read specific papers outside of the classroom, for example, .Group A read and discuss article A, Group B read and discuss Article B. Later in the class, these students are differently divided into study groups to discuss what they have read in the reading group. Thus, these learners get two opportunities to learn and share opinions. The first chance is discussing the same paper with others, which inspires different opinions and perspectives of understanding the same thing within a reading group. The second chance is discussing with others who have read different papers, where the learner is exposed in a wide reading community with different topics. Kate believes the group work technique reinforces the functions of developing critical thinking and reading efficiently. They are able to learn from each other, for example, how others read papers, and what they are sharing. They are pushed to develop their own opinions based on reading and discussions. Kate mentioned:

In the discussion they can ask each other questions like, 'What did you find out from it? What have you understood from this article? Tell me what the meaning of this article is for you?' It is a lucky moment of teaching and a very good beginning of critical thinking, as people are trying to explain what each other has understood? Try to question the self. I think this discussion as an activity is a good try of developing students' critical thinking.

The learner participants' comments about group discussions can be seen as complementary to Kate's opinions. Initiating independent learning is perceived as the first function of group learning. The learners have to read the papers and connect them with the questions that will then be discussed in class. They have to think about how their opinions draw on other's research. The opinions should be 'clear enough so they can be shared and understood by other members.' Thus, the discussion has initiated independent learning and activated learning engagement for the learners. This process is occurs when 'knowledge has come to my mind from the books' by the learners. The knowledge here is participating and co-building their thinking, so that it is understood deeper than just reading it. Peer pressure has also been mentioned by some of the interviewees. Fei said:

> I must complete the group discussions very well, because everyone in our team is able to complete reading and generate their own ideas, although we are all full-time teachers. How poor am I if I just sit and listen to others?'

This suggests that peer pressure as an external factor has increased the learning motivation. In addition to independent learning, most interviewees think they have been inspired by their peers in the discussions, which has benefited them more than the lectures delivered by the teaching staff. The discussion is an interaction between the opinions of pedagogical experiences which are both different and overlapped between group members. On one hand, to some extent, these learners have shared some background knowledge as they are Chinese teachers teaching English language in Chinese institutions. For example, the education goals, policies, teaching approaches, and Chinese students although in different institutions, are not

totally new for the learners. This enables them to enjoy 'deep communication and discussion' in the limited discussion time. 'The background information rarely took much time in our discussion. We mostly focused on the critical points about a [discussed] topic, talking about them in depth '. Mao told me.

One the other hand, these learners has various career experiences which inspire different perspectives of discussion. The discussion is like a window from which a learner is able to see how an English teaching issue is considered differently by other learners with different experiences. The different perspectives open the learners' minds and facilitate them to look deeply into the topic. Thus, the group discussion develops the learners' critical thinking.

Some interviewees attribute 'inspired deep thinking' partly to the group's peers who are experiential teachers or teacher educators. These peers are able to think well from multiple perspectives. For example, Fei told me:

> Our group mates are excellent teachers with plenty of experience. It makes our discussion very open minded. For example, when talking about learning motivation, we are able to relate it with learning environment, family support, policies, school management, and study activities outside of the classroom, apart from focusing on teaching itself. I don't think fresh teachers can cover so many aspects. So the positive effects of group discussion rely heavily on the experiential teacher peers.

Moreover, the group discussion has bridged the theories with pedagogical practice for the learners, which has improved their learning. Niu, who is the youngest among all of the participants, believes that the group discussion is where she is able to learn theories from peers' teaching experiences. She said:

> Sometimes I feel my learning is facilitated by my group mates with their practice experiences. Because some journal articles are too abstract for me, I cannot understand it. My group mates are able to explain it with very simple examples taking place in their working context.

Gui, who worked as a teacher in a NGO, thinks group discussion is a positive supplement for her lesser teaching experience in Chinese schools. Through peer sharing, she is able to link the theories with applications in the schools.

Thus, her understanding of teaching English to Chinese students has become comprehensive. She said:

> When I am reading literature, some theories remind me of the practice shared by a group mate in our discussion, thus, the theory goes close to me. My understanding goes deeper.

These learners, through group learning, go back forth between theories and teaching experiences, which is equal to the process of learning. In this process, the learners sometimes find connections between theories and practice, and sometimes they find tensions where their practice is not in line with a theory. They are sometimes either argumentative or defensive with group mates around the understanding of a journal paper. The discussion may cover further content which has not mentioned in the literature. The discussion is then a supplement and extension of the understanding of the literature. Therefore, these learning processes have been improved by the group learning activity, which furthers the learners' upcoming thinking and reading skills.

Lead-in is seen as a key technique for an effective discussion. It prepares the learners with the knowledge of a topic. Zhou said, 'it is like energy for my mind, making our discussion more effective.' Fei and Gui agreed, 'If there is no lead-in, or sometimes the lead-in is insufficient, I feel we don't have much to say [in a discussion]. Our opinions are limited. The discussion becomes superficial.' They implied activating students' minds by lead-in could improve the effect of the discussion. Additionally, the lecturer summarizing the discussion at the end has been highly valued by the participants as the summary really magnifies the effects of discussion. The summary responds to the learners' thinking and opinions comprehensively, during which time the learners' knowledge is integrated and systemized. The understanding of the topic has been developed, and sometimes leads to further interest of thinking and exploring.

'Good questions asked by teaching staff' is the fifth ingredient that plays a critical role in inspiring teaching. The lecturers ask the students questions in classes. The data is summarized to show how the questions designed by

lecturers to inspire learners and promote their learning are derived. The first key phrase is 'open question.' These questions cannot be answered simply with yes, no, or any other fixed answer. An open question seeks to elicit various perspectives and knowledge. It leaves room for thought, which motivates learners to learn new information and connect it to their experience. Nui said:

> Mike's [one of the teaching staff] questions are close to my experience. I ask myself, 'How did I deal with the situation (relevant to the topic)? Is there any other way to do it?' I am trying to think of the question from different perspectives. Sometimes I can find a theoretical rationale for my solution in light of new readings.

Self-doubt, as a result of open questions, has prompted the students to reflect on their experiences. Fei's narrative is very typical:

> I am impressed by some questions, although they are asking different things, but they all give me a sense of self-doubt in my teaching experience. I teach my students in light of my own experience accumulation and traditions shared by most colleagues. I have been an experiential teacher for many years. I can deal with many educational issues just by the way of automatic reaction based on my experience. But the questions enable me to think of those experiences from the third position. Do they really work well? If yes, to what extent and for whom are they good? What is the rationale? What are the negative aspects of my teaching strategies? Any improvement? I feel that my experiences are activated. They have become the targets of reviewing and learning.

'Active questions' is the second key phrase. An active question could be explained by the following narrative from Nui:

> He (a British lecturer) is really a good questioner. His questions are always answerable, which means every learner is able to answer the questions more or less. His questions increase my motivation to share my opinions and listen to others. I have a lot to share. Meanwhile I am curious of how my classmates think of it (the question)'

Another participant, Mao, used 'dead-alive' to describe the questions asked by the teaching staff. He feels that if the topic is over once the questions are answered, those are dead questions. If the questions raise tensions between the learners' practice and theoretical knowledge, or between different learners' opinions, they are alive questions because they create a new point of further reading and thinking. 'It's not over yet.' The live question functions for inspiring learning, rather than to elicit an answer.

Other elements mentioned by the participants involve the lecturer's attitude and career background. Nui thinks that the lecturer's inclusive attitude could encourage learners to express their own opinions. She told me about an episode which occurred during a class in Module One:

> The topic was about grammar translation (an English teaching approach), Mike asked us to think about its advantages and disadvantages, and he wrote down our answers immediately. It was finally found that the advantages outweighed the disadvantages. Mike laughed, and I could tell that he did not agree with our opinion, but he respected it. I think it is very good that he did not impact our thinking by his authority. We (the learners) could have our own voice.

It suggests that the lecturer is open minded, rather than judgmental, which is important in the process of inspiring. They decreased the power distance between an expert and learners, and open mind to all the answers although he has preference. It allows the learner to think independently and get confidence to express her opinions.

Career background is also valued by some of the middle or high school teacher participants. They find the module to be delivered very effectively when the lecturer has front line English language teaching experience. 'They are good at explaining theories by examples which are close to teaching reality.' Those examples are 'very front line of teaching, and not just cases in journal papers or in general life'. So, the explanation of a theory is thought to 'Catch the key points of the theory and exemplify how to apply it in real class context.' The whole lecture is seen to be 'very down to earth and very convincing.' The learners feel excited and inspired by the 'insightful understanding of a theory'.

Above all, it can be inferred that the inspiring oriented teaching has increased the engagement of learning. In the learning process, the learners have used their initiative to think rather than just listen and accept what is being delivered. Their thinking styles are intentionally being developed, and they are breaking 'the things taken for granted' in their teaching experience. They've learned to reflect on their experiences from various angles. Moreover, they are trained to understand or explain pedagogical practice by theoretical knowledge, which

enables their thinking to be more systematic. They are able to see beyond the specific teaching approaches, attempting to grasp the principle and essence of them.   On the other hand, motivational teaching does not imply universal treatment. In some cases, the input-oriented teaching style functions very well for the students.

Conditional input as a teaching style benefiting learning

A pure input (a phrase used by four participants to describe module classes) as a teaching style in which a lecturer talks and delivers theories has been associated with being 'boring', 'tiring' and 'less effective'. However, it does not mean that the input teaching style is ineffective. According to some data, participants need appropriate input under certain conditions:

1) Some learners prefer the lecturers to illustrate the whole picture of knowledge rather than find it themselves. The integrated knowledge framework provided directly by the lecturers is thought to be very important for their learning. Based on the systematic structure, the learners are able to know the structure of a discipline and the correlations between the theories within it. Nan said:

> I prefer to be told directly what main domains exist in this discipline, the interests or trends in each domain, what theories are applied and referred to. How have these domains developed and connected? But I feel these things have to be figured out by myself which frustrates and worries me because it is time consuming and I am not confident about doing it right. Our learning will be fast and efficient if we are told these things. My learning will proceed further based on the discipline structure as I know my position (what I am learning and its function in the whole discipline) and what theories I can use.

This section of the transcript indicates that the learner places a high value on the part and whole relationship in his learning process. He believes that his understanding and study of the part will be complete in light of the whole, and vice versa. This idea is influenced by a Chinese education tradition that draws on the phrase 'mang ren mo xiang,' which means that an elephant may become a pillar or a wall if partially/partly touched by blind people. This term is used to describe a negative educational situation where an individual insists

that what they have understood is the reality of the discussion, because they fail to see the whole picture of the topic. As a result, Chinese education strives to avoid 'mang ren mo xiang' by highlighting the whole picture of knowledge in the learning process. A whole picture provided by lecturers saves the learners' the time in exploring it. It is an efficient way for learners to have a general outline of one discipline, and it also increases their confidence of learning, similar to swimming in a pool rather than the sea.

2) Input is preferred in situations where they taught knowledge is new or unfamiliar to the learners. For example, learning tools and approaches that aligns with UK academic standards. All of the participants express a strong desire to be instructed in detail on how to read academic papers and write academic papers, such as writing a summary. This desire arose as a result of their lack of prior experience with academic work. Zhou stated:

> Our daily work is irrelevant with academic works, we are busy with teaching, talking with students and parents, managing class, preparing exams, and other admin work in schools. I rarely read academic papers. But I am required to write essays in English in this programme. I have no idea where I should start from or what I should do?

They said they lack the 'basic knowledge' and 'necessary skills' for academic writing. More lectures are needed. 'From the beginning', 'systematic', and 'steps and strategies' are the phrases used frequently by the learners, which indicates how much detail is expected from the input.

Nui stated:

> I asked a UK lecture how I can improve my academic ability of writing and reading, and he said more reading was a good way. I am still confused. So, what should I read and how should I read it? I actually need a solution with strategies and steps.

Input style is praised by the informants who learn the knowledge of statistics in the Testing module. The statistics cover some knowledge of maths, logic, and computer studies, which are abstract and difficult for most learners. They prefer a systematic input in the Chinese language so that they are able to

understand the principles underpinning different statistical approaches, working contexts, and strategies.

3) 'A good input is being able to be taken.' This is repeated by Nui who explains why she dislikes a few of the classes where the lecturer talks and imparts knowledge. Some other participants also said that they felt lost or distracted when required to sit and listen in a class. 'Being able to be taken' could be explained by three phrases mentioned the most in the interviews: 'Gradually move on', 'room and time for thinking and discussing', and 'examples coming from pedagogical reality'. The first phrase means the knowledge is delivered gradually, from one point to another, instead of presenting it all at one time. The second means the learners need time to understand the imparted knowledge which cannot be processed and learnt by just hearing it. The last one suggests how a theory is expected to be explained in class teaching. The participants prefer the cases close to English class teaching. 'We are English teachers, so I am interested in how a theory is applied by others, in other schools and institutions, in other countries especially in English speaking countries.' Those practices are thought to be helpful and meaningful to understanding the theory, like one interviewee, Cheng, said: 'The purpose of learning theories for me is to use them. So I want to know how they are used in teaching.'

In summary, the different teaching styles developed by the two university partners, Leeds and GW, have provided the learners the opportunity to consider what and how the programme teaching has facilitated their learning. In this case, each teaching style is praised and critiqued, despite the fact that learners preferring the UK style outnumber those preferring the Chinese style. The cultural background of the teaching staff, I believe, has an impact on teaching style.   They are more likely to use the one that is common in their educational cultures and with which they are familiar. However, it is worth mentioning an opinion held by three of the participants here. They believe that the teaching style relates to the understanding of what is really beneficial for

learning more than culture. In other words, if how and to what extent the teaching approaches in this programme are able to improve the learning outcome have been understood, the teaching staff are supposed to be able to upgrade the quality of class teaching regardless of cultural background.

4.5.2. Writing assignments

Writing assignments is discussed here as a theme illustrating the experience of learning in this programme. There are many reasons for this: first, for the programme itself, based on the programme document, writing an assignment is the only style of assessment. This is seen as a key element of the course. The second reason is that writing the assignment is a key experience for the learners themselves. This is the first time that they are directly and individually evaluated by the UK academic requirements. They have to complete a task independently which is supposed to present their learning results. The learners considerably emphasized the importance of writing assignments, and talked about this most frequently in our interviews, which brings us to the third reason. The data around writing assignments involves the learners' feelings, thoughts, attitudes, and behaviours, which consist of a picture in which Chinese students strive to achieve the UK academic requirements. The process of writing assignments can be seen as a sort of learning process, filled with challenges and improvements.

In this section, I first introduce the assignment of one of the modules, and the learners' contexts of writing it. I then illustrate how the learners complete the assignment by discussing their thoughts, the encountered challenges, and the main activities.

This assignment is for the first module taught by the UK staff. It is divided into two parts. Part one requires a learner to write five summaries for five journal papers chosen by the learner. In part two, the learner should discuss an issue with their teaching practice, describing it and suggesting a reform or change that is required.

The assignment represents many 'firsts' for the learners: the first time they have written 'a very long essay in English', the first time they have read 'so many academic papers in English', the first time they have conducted 'academic work', and the first time they have been required by UK academic standards. The time allowed for completing the assignment is short. They have about a month before they have to submit a draft, during which they are studying Module 2 and working full-time in their own workplaces on weekdays.

4.5.2.1 Shocked by the gap between attending classes and writing an assignment

The term "shock" refers to the learners' reaction when they realise the assignment's requirements are beyond their current level of competence. feeling shock is frequently linked with doing assignment by the learner participants, which is contrast to the confident feeling in classes of module. Fei described:

> I really enjoy the experience of going to classes. I feel confident and motivated. However I am very stressful and confused now [doing the assignment]. I feel they are different things.

Some learners focus on the knowledge requirements, finding that what they have learnt in the classes is not sufficient to complete the assignment. The learners were shocked and stressed. Mao said:

> I think I have understood the knowledge delivered in the classes. But, when I am starting thinking of my assignment, I am feeling there is a long distance between that knowledge and what I am required to do for the assignment. I have little to say in my assignment'

According to the data, the learners believed that being able to study in class equalled being able to complete the assignment. The assignment has 'woken them up', pushing them to bridge the gap between 'those I think I have known' and 'those I am supposed to know '. Nan, from the learner's point of view, uses a metaphor to explain the challenge he met:

> In the class, I feel I am looking at a draft of a palace with the guidance of the lecturer. The rooms, gardens, fountain, and sculptures have been shown to me in the draft. However, doing assignment means I have to go into the real palace

and explore it by myself. I am confused where I should go? How can I walk in it?

In this statement, the palace in a draft means the knowledge delivered in the classes where the learner is the audience, looking at knowledge. When writing an assignment, the learner is not an audience member anymore. Instead, he has to be a participant involved with the knowledge. His role has changed from one of listening and observing to another of acting and doing. It is like shifting from being an audience to a tourist walking through a palace. Furthermore, it implies that the learner does not feel confident because he has to complete the tour independently, as opposed to classes guided by lecturers. This new role has tested him, implying that he requires new disposition, skills, and support.

In light of the above, the findings show, by completing assignments, these students feel they are getting closer to meeting the academic requirements in terms of discipline knowledge, academic skills, and learning ability. 'Uncertain' might be an appropriate word to describe the situation where the learners do not feel that they are well-prepared, but have to start writing the essay anyway. The uncertainty here means that the learners find it difficult to understand the assignment requirements, even though this has been stated in a formal document, and sent to each of the learners. I noticed many times that before or after classes, the learners were asking their classmates questions such as, 'I think Part A is to …, do you think I am right?', 'I cannot understand, what does it mean [they highlighted some sentences in the assignment requirements], how about you?' They spent much time trying to understand what the assignment was asking them to do.

Some of them do not know what they are expected to do:

> I don't know what Part One and Part Two mean in our assignment. Are they separate things? Or should they be linked?

> I am not sure about the five summaries - do they have to be relevant to each other? What is the relationship between them?'

Some of them do not know how to achieve the requirements. For example:

> I don't know how to write a summary according to UK academic standards.
>
> I saw there was a phrase 'critical summary' in the requirement, what does that mean? Is it different from the summary itself?

Some learners do not understand the functions of these requirements:

> Does it mean we must follow these requirements one by one, or are they just options, and we can do the assignment based on our own ways?

The second uncertainty for the learners was to decide the first journal paper, which 'I want to summarize'. If related to the palace metaphor, used by Nan, the first paper means deciding 'where I should go'. In this study, uncertainty is interpreted as learners who have neither developed a clear interest in a specific field/topic, nor have enough confidence to handle it. However, two participants (Lee and Cheng) are not in this category. When they were in class, they focused on the topics for the assignment. That is partly due to their many years of work experience (more than ten years), and they have had a specific interest in problems existing in the teaching context, and they have a sense of how the programme can benefit the problems.

In addition to discussing with peers, the interviewees do not present any strategy for the first confusion of understanding assignment requirements. The effect is insufficient because "actually nobody can clarify it, people just say, 'I think', 'might be.'"

To resolve the second uncertainty, the students spent a significant amount of time 'reading widely and deeply.' They begin with the reading list provided by the module, select one article to read, and then move on to the next. The goal is to broaden academic horizons or resolve reading-related confusions, and finally to provide a general idea of a proposed topic. This is a process of narrowing down and improving one's mind. While reading, the students' minds improve as they progress from a broad and general selection to a specific topic. 'Understand new knowledge,' 'get fresh ideas,' 'change interest,' 'deny

or correct my previous thoughts,' and 'reduce confusion' are all examples of ways to improve.

When discussing how to decide what to write, three participants (Gui, Mei, and Mao) indicated a willingness to avoid risks. The learners are concerned that the topics that interest them will be too difficult to handle (for example, too much reference, difficult theories, and contrasting/contradictory arguments in the field), and therefore as a result, the assignment will receive a low grade. The deadline, as repeated by all participants, serves as an external motivator for the learners to begin writing. Despite being confused, 'the deadline is coming' , the learners must write something anyway.

4.5.2.2 Making progress

Writing facilitates the learners' thinking and also extends their reading because they have discovered that 'I have to say something else in order to say this thing clearly.' As a result, other papers were found and read on purpose by the learners, as opposed to their first paper which was said 'blindly selected', 'as a trial'. The knowledge network has gradually grown around a research topic, which is also 'becoming more specific as I write and read'. The students were then able to comprehend the assignment. Fei, after reading some papers and writing three summaries, stated:

> I have made sense, the summaries should be relevant with each other, and all of them contribute to illustrating the knowledge about a theme. That is what Part One of the assignment asks me to do. It should connect with Part Two because the theme in Part One serves Part Two

This step is referred to as 'clarifying'. Finally the learners have understood how to develop a literature review, the purpose of which is to service a problem in educational reality.

However, some students expressed confusion, despite the fact that they understood the summaries should serve the problem discussed in Part Two. 1) 'In order to solve the problem, do I need to use any other references besides the ones in part one?' 2) 'Can I get the solution by connecting literature with

my thinking, or does the solution have to be entirely based on literature?' It has revealed a potential challenge for learners: determining how and to what extent the literature can serve the education problem. My data has not shown any solution employed for overcoming this challenge.

The learners' writing progresses from retelling to critical summary in the second step. Fei described the shift as follows:

> My first three summaries were detail retelling. I covered all the things of a paper, its literature, data, comparison, and conclusion, almost everything has been included in my summary. However, I feel like I'm really struggling because [as required] the word limitation for each summary is 400 words. It is super hard to cover a whole paper in only 400 words. I start doubting myself: whether I am doing the right thing? Can I just summarize the parts which I am interested in and that are relevant to my topic? Can I just focus on the essence of the paper instead of everything? I suddenly realized it is a critical summary! I should say my opinions in the summary instead of repeating the author'

However, not everyone is certain about this enlightenment. Gui and Nui mention the lecturer's thought, Gui said:

> I am often in a dilemma, on one hand, for one paper, I want to focus on those relevant to my topic. On the other hand, if I do that, I am afraid the lecturer would think I did not 100% read that paper because my summary did not cover the overall thing.

This narrative has indicated again that the learners are not very clear about what they are expected to achieve in the assignment.

With more reading and writing, the learners' expectation for the work has increased from 'wanted to finish a summary' to 'wanting to have something valuable in my summaries.' They have walked into a circle of self-improving. They start asking themselves questions: 1) about the purpose of reading a piece of paper, for example, 'what is the function of this paper for my whole assignment/research? And its relationship to other papers in my work?'; 2) regarding the contents of the paper, for example, 'what contents in this paper have touched me?'. In addition, they tend to have a stop-and-reflection period before moving on to the following tasks of the assignment/research. These strategies imply that these learners are starting building their knowledge for the assignment. They are thinking comprehensively of what and how a topic

should be illustrated. As a result, these strategies have facilitated them to refine or self-correct the work. Some previously summarized papers have been replaced by a "better one" that is thought to be more relevant to the topic and has inspired the learner's deeper thinking and understanding. The argument of the writing has been discussed and integrated more thoroughly in light of a better understanding of a topic.

Polishing language in a piece of writing is mentioned by three participants. They improve some words and grammar which are not very suitable. The coherence between sentences and paragraphs has been enhanced.

In summary, consecutive reading while writing, self-questioning, and reflection, and self-correction compose a self-improving circle where the learner is able to develop their work before submission.

Some of the students refer to a stage in the writing process as *'ru men le'*. In Chinese, *'ru men le'* means to go through a door as opposed to being out of a door. It refers to a point at which students 'start understanding something' rather than 'have no idea'. The learners have made sense of academic writing under the UK education standards (for example, mandarin chapters consist of an essay, citing references, and holding an argument); the learners have also understood the approach and procedures for completing an essay (for example, searching literature and critically reviewing them, finding suitable methodology, the ethical issues).

4.5.2.3 Learning by doing

Learning by doing is viewed as an implied approach by which the learners have made improvements in the writing of their assignments. This approach has not been employed purposefully by the informants. In contrast, I summarized this approach in light of the data illustrating how the learners proceed with their assignment. Although the informants have various strategies to move forward, my biggest impression is that they are pushed into a situation where they learn how to write an essay by just writing it. There are

some activities that have been identified as evidence of learning by doing: deep reading, deep thinking, visiting the assignment requirement again, and making decision independently.

Reading as a main activity has functioned initially to fill the knowledge gap and specify the topic of the essay (as discussed in Section of 4.5.2.2). During this stage, input is overwhelming to thinking, which means the learners accumulate knowledge from literature, where they learn theories and conceptions. Then they think actively and comprehensively, more than initially. They are capable of interacting previous knowledge with new knowledge, attempting to connect theoretical knowledge with teaching reality. As a result, the learners have progressed from reading for learning to reading while thinking.

Language and content are two issues that challenge the learners in the process of reading. Although these learners are English teachers, they find reading academic articles difficult. 'A lot of new words' and 'very long sentences' have hindered their understanding. They 'read slowly'. In addition, the content delivered by the papers is very difficult to understand. One paper usually involves concepts, definitions, and theories which are not clearly explained but important for understanding that paper. In response, the learners have employed a strategy which I refer to as 'multiple reading', meaning one paper is read multiple times with different functions: the learners have to rely on a dictionary to understand the paper at their language level. They then jump between the relevant papers to understand any confusing knowledge mentioned in that paper. 'Go back to work experience' has been stressed by Lee and Cheng as a strategy of understanding abstract theories. The learners linked one theory with a specific teaching practice, thinking how the teaching was conducted, and what the teacher and learners thought and did in that situation. By doing so, they are able to understand that paper at its content/meaning level. Some learners also study the academic expressions based on the reading, for example, professional vocabularies, and sentences

and structure of a paragraph/passage. However, 'cannot remember' still frustrates many of the learners. Gui said:

> I don't know why. I am sure I understand the contents when I am reading. But nothing left in my mind once the paper is closed.

Writing notes as a key element of multiple reading has improved this situation. Fei said:

> It [making notes] facilitates my understanding of papers. Although I have read many papers, I feel it is the papers on which I took notes that I really read.

It suggests a sort of deep reading in which the learners have systemized the contents of the paper, adding their own thinking with the reading. The participants call it 'digesting the paper'. As a result, they are able to understand the paper comprehensively.

The second activity of learning by doing is deep thinking. The learners tend to think of the reading materials in terms of: 1) What does this paper really want to say? 2) How can it be understood if related with other similar papers? 3) What is my opinion if I put it in my context? Such deep thinking has facilitated the learners to build their own knowledge - knowledge rooted in the learner's perception rather than in papers.

Visiting the assignment requirement again is the third activity. With the process of reading and writing, the learners have built some knowledge related to the research topic and academic writing while some new areas of confusion have arisen. As a result, the learner participants revisited the requirements of the assignment with the purpose of clarifying what they are expected to do.

This is seen as a communication between learners and programme expectations by Cheng. Sometimes the communication is effective as their ideas have been proven by the requirements, (For example, understanding that critical summary is not a matter of retelling everything) while sometimes

it is not. For example, Cheng was confused by reading the requirements of Part Two of the assignment:

> [When I read the requirements again] I noticed the word 'reform', does it mean solution? Does solution include the steps of solving the problem? From the literature, I just get an idea that motivation will impact young learners' concentration in a class, so I argue the motivation should be valued in each class. However, should I develop a to-do list illustrating how to increase motivation step by step? I feel confused'

The final activity is making decisions on one's own. Learners are frequently required to make decisions on their own during the writing process. They must select the topic of interest as well as the papers for the literature review. They must consider several different writing structures before settling on one. They must compare and contrast their various writing works in order to decide which one is better.

Overall, by combining the four activities, learning by doing can be viewed as a routine in which students bridge the gap between attending class and writing assignments. They are accumulating integrated knowledge about a specific topic. Their learning autonomy has grown from a reliance on lecturers in class to working independently. They are honing their ability to think and learn independently. As a result, writing assignment is thought to improve learners' learning outcomes once they complete it and reflect on it. Writing essay is not only a product that is being assessed, but also a process of further learning. Fei said:

> Writing assignments enables me to read widely, think deeply, and reflect comprehensively. It extends my learning scoop. I am getting a lot of new knowledge. And I think that knowledge belongs to me personally because it is searched for, explored, and framed by myself according to my own context'

4.5.2.4 Scaffolding: Comments on learners' writing

It should initially be clarified that the programme has some supportive policies to facilitate the learners to complete their assignments: 1) Academic writing as an in-session task is provided by UK teaching fellows, which has provided a general outline of norms of writing, for example, how to cite references. 2) Reading resources and approaches shared by the teaching staff are seen as

important support for starting writing. 3) Class teaching has inspired the learners to open their minds and increase interest in some of the topics.

Writing comments on the learners' work was widely talked about in the interviews. Learner participants have a consensus that the lecturers' comments about assignment draft as a necessary strategy of supporting learning is applied better by the UK staff than by the Chinese ones.

The latter provide comments for the final work all at once, in a very brief and simple manner, which is thought very limited benefits to learning. Lee said:

> We are not required to write a draft before final submission in some modules. So I could not know whether my work is qualified until it is finally marked. This has made me so worried. I don't have any chance to improve my work if it is not desirable.

In contrast, the UK staff members applied a draft-comment and formal submission-comment policy. Comments are detailed, focusing on a learner's written work individually. The learners use 'purposefully', 'covering all', and 'guidelines' to describe the comments. The learners said they felt *'xin zhong you shu'* for their writing after reading these comments because the comments illustrated what had been well done and what else had not. *'Xin zhong you shu'* is a Chinese phrase describing a person feels confident because his business is within a track. When the informants start writing an assignment, most of them felt uncertain. There are a lot of 'presumably…', 'might be…'and 'assumptions' in their mind. These comments sometimes justify uncertain thoughts. Then the learners feel encouraged and confident. For example, Nui said:

> My opinion to a piece of research has been highlighted and said 'good' by a lecturer. I feel confident for myself.

Sometimes mistakes in a draft have been identified, which the learners can then correct in light of these comments. The learning is able to continue even the assignment is marked. The comments on a final submission are thought to be 'beneficial for further learning and improving.' The items that need improvement for most learners, are 1) language related, for example, oral

expression, academic phrases, expression style; 2) norms of academic writing in UK tradition, for example citing, format; 3) content related, for example, to improve logical flow, to strengthen insufficient arguments.

However, comments are not always thought to be very beneficial, given the various quality. Some interviewees said they were challenged by the comments. These challenges are grouped into three types:

1)   I cannot understand the comments. For example, Cheng said:

> Some sections of my writing have been highlighted with the comment 'unclear'. I don't know why it is unclear because I think it is clear.

Another example from Gui:

> The lecturer wrote 'what do you mean?' next to some paragraphs or sentences [in my draft]. I don't know what does he mean by asking 'what do you mean'. Does it mean I should correct my language or change my argument?

In these two examples, when the interviewees were questioned further: 'Did you ask, and say you don't understand the comments?' both of them said that they had not, because they were afraid that would not be able to describe their questions clearly in an email, and felt that it would be   better to ask in 'a face to face talk'. They were also afraid of appearing rude and foolish. 'How can I say 'Hey Mike, what do you mean by asking me what do I mean?'

Some learners did not seem to understand the purpose of comments. They feel their work is 'nonsense' as there are many comments with questions, so they give up working on the draft and initiate a new one instead of correcting the draft according to the comments one by one.

2) I can understand the comments but I don't know how to make the corrections. For example, Nui asked:

> The comment says: 'the argument is unclear.' I actually had the same feeling that my argument is weak but how can I have a clear and strong argument?

3)   I don't know whether my correction is right.

The students who fall into this situation are able to carry out the corrections according to the comments. However, they frequently encountered further confusion where one comment could have more than one option for corrections. These learners could not make a decision about which option would be better. Some participants wondered whether their corrections would be adequate in the view of the lecturers.

Responding to such challenged situations, some learners (Jia, Cheng, and Nan) think Chinese lecturers are good at explaining knowledge from the perspective of the Chinese education context. They are able to understand Chinese learners very well in terms of their learning habit and behaviour. Jia said:

> When I am confused by a problem in my writing, Nan Sheng is able to know why I, as a Chinese student, have this problem and give me a very useful advice to correct it.

With an overall view of the learners' experience of receiving support, I find the leanrers tend to wait to be offered help rather than asking for it. When they are challenged by reading papers, writing assignments, or understanding feedback on a draft, they rarely seek assistance from teaching staff. Kate, a UK teaching fellow, mentioned one reason for this - 'They [the learners] don't seem to know the exact supporting policy on the programme for academic study.' Another reason, inferred from the learners' preference for face-to-face communication, is that they need the ability to communicate with experts in a formal written way (discussed in section 4.5.4.3)

4.5.3 Peer community as a positive experience

Peer community has been valued by the learner participants in promoting their learning effects. This is in contrast with the Leeds case, where this is not mentioned by many of the informants.

There are two community styles, online and offline, on this course. The online community uses group chatting in WeChat, where each learner is a member involved in the group. It functions as a communication board where learners

share course information, ask questions, and provide support to each other. Although the programme staff members are included in the group chats, the main players of this community are definitely the learners themselves. References and programme documents are shared frequently here. If a paper is mentioned by a lecturer in the class, it will most likely be uploaded later to the chat group by students who have found it. To some extent, this saves time for the learners who then don't have to search for it individually. Similarly, in the process of writing essays, some references have been shared in the online community when they are thought to be useful or inspiring for other learners. In addition to the learning materials, issues relevant to the study, for example, IT techniques, using the library, module schedules, and even assignment requirements, are discussed via the online group chat. The learners prefer to ask questions starting with 'please, if anyone knows what/how…', then later, responses appear in the form of experience shared by someone who has resolved the problem previously. The UK lecturer, Mike, who is in the same WeChat group, thinks that the online community is so powerful that problems encountered by students starting the programme could be resolved from the information posted here (for examples, registration, and activating university accounts). However, some of the informants (Gui, Fei, and Jia) feel that the support in the online community is very limited in relieving psychological stress, and in dealing with difficulties that need discussion.

The offline peer community is valued for building a strong learning atmosphere. Mao said:

> I really like meeting up other learners in the classroom. I see everyone is reading, writing and thinking there, which is a positive and active environment. It feels like I am going back to the time when I was a college student.

Fei mentioned that she was encouraged by seeing classmates working hard and learning. The feelings of 'cannot stop' and 'keep going' have been reinforced. Jia appreciates her learning group mates in terms of supporting academic learning. Their writing ideas are shared within the group, and comments from group mates are discussed (for example, the topic is very

broad, the argument is unclear, etc.). Challenges are discussed together and solutions are often suggested, for example, how to understand the requirements of the assignment, how to improve reading speed. Lee and Gui felt a sense of relief after chatting with their classmates because they felt that they were not alone in feeling nervous, or having any self-doubt about writing essays.

Benefiting personal education career as an advantage of the offline community was mentioned by some of the participants (Mao and Nui). The students regard each other as excellent teachers. Their diverse teaching experiences are shared with other classmates, inspiring their work in their own schools. Nui stated:

> My group mates are senior teachers in middle school. I often ask them how to deal with some pedagogical challenges which I have no idea about in my teaching practice. They always give me very good answers which could be applied directly into my classroom. For example, I was anxious about the word test in which my own young learners will participate. I had no idea how to enhance their performance in this test. Two of my group mates gave me advice based on their experiences (for example, the priorities of teaching, the weakness of some approaches, useful videos and websites, and materials for students practice). The result [word test] was very good.

This narrative demonstrates that the peers in this programme, through their experiences, form a pool of pedagogical resources in the area of teaching English in Chinese schools. It is open for peer learning. Furthermore, Nui stated that she was able to learn about the work in various schools (private school, public school, high school, university, top one school, language training centre) through the peer community. This is thought to be beneficial for the learners who want to change jobs. Gui agreed with this opinion. She has been recommended for a new job by her group mate.

Despite the positive functions of the peer community, the programme does not provide its learners with enough opportunities to communicate with one another. Learners rarely have group meetings outside of the classroom, despite the fact that deep discussions are thought to benefit them. One of reasons might be the busy schedules of teachers who work and study -

'Everyone seems very busy and it is impolite to interrupt others' (Gui, Mao). Another reason might be a lack of guidance, which is implied by Fei:

> I need to refine the ideas of an assignment through discussing with others, but it seems impossible because we have different topics to focus on. I think it [group learning] would be better if someone was able to guide us to discuss.

4.5.4. Challenges of studying on the programme

The learners faced a number of academic skill challenges, such as how to read a journal paper quickly, how to cite a reference indirectly, and how to write a conclusion. There are a variety of specific problems that are dependent on different individuals who are engaged in specific activities. The difficulties discussed in this section have primarily focused on the most common difficulties that are thought to permeate the entire study process and have a significant impact on both academic study and social life. Based on my data, the strategies for overcoming these difficulties are limited.

4.5.4.1 How can I have my opinions?

This question has been asked by almost every participant when talking about academic learning. They feel like they are 'struggling', and attribute personal ideas to luck. They don't think they are able to handle this appropriately although they have employed some strategies.

'Meaningful communication' has been identified as a routine to develop personal opinions. The meaningful communication has two ends: one is a person with teaching experience and knowledge (previous knowledge), and the other is learning materials, which are frequently journal papers or research. If a learner believes they are capable of communicating with the learning materials, they are free to express personal opinions about the learning materials.

'Reading a lot' has been viewed as a necessary warm-up for meaningful communication. Gui stated: 'I can understand the literature only by reading more literature.' The learners feel their understanding of a piece of research is 'superficial and plain' unless the amount of reading is sufficient. Another

participant, Cheng, pointed out further that reading should purposefully 'focus on a direction'.

Prior to entering the programme, the students had pedagogical experience with problems or interests, which indicates the direction for reading and allows for meaningful communication. Nui and Cheng classify meaningful moments into three types: 1) The learner is in sync with the reading materials, for example, 'I think so, it has supported my assumption.'; 2) the learner is learning new knowledge benefiting the problem, for example, 'I didn't know there was such a good idea for the problem.'; and 3) the learner doesn't agree with the reading, for example, 'it seems different in my working place. Why?', then they personally have something to say regarding the problem/interest.

Nan employs a strategy called 'leave and think' to develop his opinion. He said:

> I usually read a paper many times then I leave it for a while, and later, I ask myself what has been talked about in this paper? I am usually impressed by something while forgetting something else. I think the former is the very beginning of my opinions.

Peer support has been mentioned by some informants. They tend to talk about their understandings and ideas of a topic or paper with their classmates, and ask their suggestions on whether these opinions are reasonable.

However, some difficulties remain unresolved even after the learners have completed the programme, such as how to develop research questions in light of a literature review, and how to shape their own argument between contradictory opinions of different research.

I think the challenge of developing personal opinion tells a situation where the learners are struggling with argumentation, independent learning, and critical thinking. They need independent learning abilities for writing essays more than learning in class. The students have to think of what to read, understand the reading materials, and find links between the reading and their own teaching practice. During this process, critical thinking abilities seem to be

insufficiently developed for these learners. Some of them are worried about their qualification for being critical. They think a person who is able to critique other's work must be a person who is very capable in that particular topic or field. Fei said: 'I am a student who read little and write little, how I am qualified to say my opinion on this topic?' Some students think being critical equates to criticizing others, because 'pipan' is the Chinese word for both critique and criticize, and the latter means irrespective and superior to others. So the learners cannot balance the positive and negative aspects of critical thinking. Some students seem to fall in a situation where they are trying to find a sole right answer when faced with different opinions. For example, one learner said: 'I am struggling because the two researches hold opposite arguments to the same thing. Then which one is it? Which one should I choose?'

4.5.4.2 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a big issue for these interviewees. They know it is a red line which must not be crossed over. But the point is they have little idea regarding plagiarism in the UK educational context. These students have attempted to apply what plagiarism is in China to this Leeds-UK programme, but they are unsure whether the two are the same or not. They want to know how plagiarism is detected in the UK. Lee, for example, told me:

> It is according to the number of overlapping words between a piece of academic work and an existing piece of work that plagiarism is identified in China. But Chinese language is different from English language. So this principle is possibly not suitable for this MA programme.

Although they studied information about plagiarism online, they need specific examples:

> The websites explained a lot but I am not sure still, whether my writing is plagiarism or not. I wonder what it looks like and how it is identified (Gui).

Some learners are afraid of overlapping ideas, Fei asked:

> I have an idea which is actually figured out by myself, but if it was discussed by others and I don't know, does it mean a disaster?

These confusions appear to extend beyond the university's official documents available online. It suggests that there is a need to inform these students about plagiarism within the context of the course, and that the opportunity to ask and clarify questions about this issue would be beneficial.

4.5.4.3 Communicating with staff

The learners have illustrated a contradictory phenomenon of communication with teaching staff. On the one hand, they are eager to communicate with the staff. On the other hand, communication with teaching fellows is thought to be extremely limited. Such inconsistency is reinforced when a student requires assistance in academic learning outside of the classroom. The students are unsure that they will receive adequate assistance if they ask questions of the teaching staff.

From the perspective of a student, the reasons for communication challenges vary. First, the primary mode of communication is via email, which is deemed inefficient. Writing, sending, and waiting for emails would take up several days. The learners feel 'I would like to figure it out by myself with such several days.' Some questions are thought 'not suitable for asking by emails', because the learners are afraid that the question cannot be agreed on by both teacher and student without a 'live talk'. Cheng believes that emails are not suitable for the situation where more than one round of communication is needed:

> 'I think we [the learners] need multiple rounds of conversation in order to understand one question. When the lecturer responds to my question, new questions have arisen from their response, so I continued to email them…but I was not answered sometimes.

Such 'failed experience' was echoed by another learner whose question was not adequately answered by emails. This had a negative impact on her motivation to ask the question again. As a result, she believes the staff's assistance is limited. The second reason is distance. The term "distance" refers to geographical location, which has hampered communication between UK staff and students. To my surprise, the opportunity for student communication with Chinese staff is also very limited, even though they are in

a same country. Different time schedules might be the reason for this. The learners come to the course at weekends while most teaching staff work on weekdays in the university, and therefore they have little chance to meet outside of the teaching sessions. The relationship distance has been proposed because some students never sought help from academic tutors, despite the fact that each student was assigned a tutor. Because they do not teach any modules, the students believe they are unfamiliar with the tutors. The third reason could be that the students are unsure how to ask because there are so many questions, or the question is too broad. 'Can I ask what the potential risks are for this writing [assignment] if I use the two theories? How can I avoid the risks?' The fourth reason is that the learners are worried about the reaction of teaching staff who receive their questions. These reactions are imagined by the learners before they decide to ask questions 1）Extending the confusion. Mao said, 'If the lecturer asks me other questions based on my question, what can I do?', 2) Denying the work. Zhou said:

> I have worked a lot to have some ideas, although I have some problems in developing them [the ideas] better. I am afraid that these ideas might not make sense anymore if I discuss with the lecturer. In that case, my work will be wasted and how can I have new ideas?

3) Being rejected. The students feel shy or embarrassed because they believe the teachers are too busy to answer their questions, and asking questions bothers them. . 4) The question is thought foolish and offensive, for example, 'How can I ask Mike what his comments mean?'

4.5.4.4 Identity issues

My data has revealed some issues that are directly related to identity. Although they are fully involved in the programme and fairly members of it, student participants are confused about their course identity, which is a sense of belonging to it. Because MA TESOL is a co-created programme, students want to be certain of which university they belong to, the University of Leeds, or the GW University?

In my interviews, the programme providers (both Chinese and UK staff) insist that these trainees are students of Leeds as they are educated in a 100% Leeds education style, and their diplomas are certificated by Leeds. In some classes taught by Chinese lecturers, I observed the lecturer stressing 'you are students of Leeds'. More than half the students responded with surprise. When I discussed this with some of those students, they told me it was like, 'I read something reported on the newspaper' to 'that thing is happening on me'. Some others told me it was a bit hard to imagine in what ways they are able to be students of Leeds, because of the far geographical distance. Two students expressed their confusion as, 'Does it mean we don't belong here [University of GW]?' ' They are potentially afraid that they 'cannot get support from GW'.

Additionally, in my field work, I was asked several times by these learners whether Leeds University considers them as their own students. This confusion gives rise to an unconfident attitude by which the learners wonder whether they are treated equally as those who study at Leeds, in the UK. The learners care about whether the modules of the two courses are the same or not. If not, does this mean that this course might be less difficult than the one at Leeds, and even, the programme might be less strict than it is in Leeds.

Due to this course identity confusion, most participants expressed a strong willingness to visit the UK campus in person (they are welcomed to visit the Leeds campus when the module teaching has finished). Some of them want to write dissertation in the library at Leeds, and some want to visit the UK lecturers. Others expressed a desire to join a campus tour and join the learning activities in person. These expectations suggest the participants want to build concrete connections with the British university. This connection is believed to reinforce their course identity.

Apart from course identity, the students are challenged by role identity. It means they are teachers while they are students in this programme, which necessarily imposes two different roles on these participants: the role of being

a teacher, and the role of being a student. Many participants (Zhou, Mao, Cheng, Jia, Tao, Mei and Feng) said they had to undertake various types of daily work as a teacher (for example, imparting knowledge, improving students' exam scores, evaluating students' performance, and communicating with parents). Participants become accustomed to and proficient at these tasks. However, as students in this programme, they are expected to do other things such as read papers, write assignments, and understand theoretical knowledge. Although these tasks are not new to these participants, they are not in the domain that the informants are comfortable with. Reading academic papers in English is described as 'an activity that has not been conducted since graduating from universities long time ago' (Zhou, Jia, Gui and Fei). Academic writing is described as 'a disaster' by most learners because they have no idea where to start. Conceptualizing academic research has little relevance to a Chinese middle school teacher (Mao, Zhou, and Fei). The abilities of keeping concentration and memory have decreased so that learning as an activity itself is thought a challenge for these participants.

In order to achieve the programme requirements, participants have to shift their roles of teacher to the role of student. It is believed there is a 'far distance' between the two roles. When the participants were asked directly, 'what do you think you are, a teacher, a student, or something else?', the answers are very uncertain and varied. Some said teacher, and others said student. Some said teacher learner, and some had no idea. However, my data collected from other interview questions have implied that these learners have strongly inclined to the teacher identity.

At first, when they talked about their motivation for joining the course, they all mentioned improving teaching performance and professional competence. Moreover，even in writing assignments, some students view it as a strategy to resolve the pedagogical problems in their teacher reality. For example, Cheng said:

> My purpose of doing assignments is to resolve a problem which has troubled my teaching for a long time. So I have no problem to decide the topic of the

> assignment. If it [the assignment] cannot resolve the education issues, what is the point of doing it?

Furthermore, when discussing their experience of learning this course, they spontaneously said things about how they plan to or have applied the learned knowledge in their teaching practice. They are eager to identify every ingredient that appears in their learning experiences and apply it in their own workplaces. A game played in class by Mike, an example illustrated in a module by Nan Sheng, a learning strategy developed by the learner, a case read from a paper... and so on, are viewed as ingredients that would benefit the learner's daily work of teaching.

The contradictory identity between learner and teacher reflects on various narratives which describe the learners' confusions. For example, Mao, in our interviews, impressed me very much by his comprehensive perceptions of English education for Chinese learners. He told me:

> I know I have understood something very valuable [from the modules]. I am able to apply these things in my class. I have clear ideas about it…my students also feel very useful and beneficial. But I don't know why, when it comes to writing essay, I feel lost, confused, I don't know where to start and how to move on. It [good at teaching whilst have no idea how to write] is very wield. What is the reason?

Zhou had the same feeling, and mentioned:

> If I am required to conduct a teaching session with a specific theory of TESOL, I am confident that I will do a good job. But I feel headache [extremely difficult] if asked to write an essay about this theory.

4.5.4.5 Difficulties of balancing life

An intense learning schedule makes it difficult for students to balance their social lives, academic learning, and daily tasks. Participants stated that they did not have any spare time. As previously stated, this course is delivered in-service to the majority of learners who are front-line teachers in their workplaces. During the day, they are preoccupied with a great deal of work. Cheng stated:

> I am in charge of the English education office in my school, meanwhile I am a head teacher of 60 students. Every day in my school, there is always endless work which is waiting for me, sometimes I feel I have to rush to eat a meal, rush

> to the toilet. The effective time for me to do the assignment is always after 9.00 pm.

Because she has been an English teacher for fewer years than most of her peers, Nui stated that she does not have time to sleep when she is busy. As a result, she must devote more time to preparing for each class. She states:

> I have to squeeze the hours out of my school to prepare the teaching for the next day, a lot of work to do, writing slides, materials, framing the process of the class, design games for it…etc. after that, I am able to study, reading papers, taking notes. Sometimes I feel I *am almost breaking down.*

Fei, as a candidate for a teaching champion event in her city, must put in extra effort to win first place. She stated:

> My school selects me to do this job [teaching champion event] because of my competence and experience in teaching English. I do not want to disappoint anyone. I have to spend hours each day in addition to daily work to prepare the competition, arriving home around 10 pm. I feel really exhausted, cannot merge into learning [this course].

Fei's case is not an individual one. Some of the other participants (Cheng, Nan and Mao) shared similar experiences in which they have to work extra hours to tackle new tasks out of their daily routines. Borrowing time from other activities has been employed as a strategy to support learning. The participants read papers during their travel on transportation (high speed train, underground), leaving housework for other family members, sacrificing the opportunities of staying with their children, and cancelling social lives and other entertainment activities.

Despite their busy and stressful schedules, it is worth noting that none of them say yes when asked if they would like to register for this course if it had a two-year academic schedule.

4.6 Outcomes of Learning on the UK-China MA TESOL Course

The data in this section is primarily drawn from the third round interview, in which participants are asked to reflect on their learning experience. On the one hand, the reflection includes personal transformation as a result of

learning MA TESOL. The reflection, on the other hand, equates with an evaluation of programme provision, in what aspects these informants feel/do not feel supported by this course. The personal gains are associated with the benefits of programme provision by these students, while its shortcomings lead to some disappointments. Parts of the data come from the second round interview, in which learners comment on specific learning experiences. These comments are thought to be closely related to their transformation, so they are analysed alongside the data from the third round interview.

4.6.1 Personal transformation

Personal transformation has been identified in various forms by different participants. The most commonly shared one exists in the development of knowledge and skills for pedagogical practice. It is initially driven by the modules which are valued by the participants. They think the sequence of the module from the first to the fourth is very helpful for enhancing their learning quality. The first module emphasized the role of context in English education, which was kept in the minds of the learners throughout the programme's learning process. As a result of being aware of their own context, they are able to critically understand theoretical knowledge. Mao stated:

> By the first module, I feel knowledge is very objective, it is always over there. It is the person who is using the knowledge should fit into their context and think about what is adaptive and what is not.

The four modules are taught alternately by the England and China faculties, which the students find very beneficial, because some of the contents mentioned in the previous module taught by UK lecturers are relevant and repeated in the subsequent module taught by Chinese lecturers. It is viewed as a method of stressing knowledge, in which students who did not understand the knowledge completely in UK lectures have the opportunity to study it again. Furthermore, module contents are seen as 'relevant to the Chinese context' and 'centered on English education.' The learners have no difficulty connecting the modules to their teaching practice. The modules guide learners as they begin theoretical learning and provide them with systematic

theoretical knowledge in the TESOL field. The obvious outcome is referred to as 'improvement of teaching practice.' These theories bridge the gap in their teaching. Feng, for example, stated:

> According to our [Chinese college schools] new version of the English education guide book, we are required to apply lexical chunks in our English teaching. However few teachers are able to explain what it exactly means. Neither relevant theories nor the approach has been demonstrated for us who are the front line teachers. The TESOL course enables me to study it specifically, what it involves, be related with, and how it is conducted in class teaching.

Theoretical knowledge enables the learners to review their perceptions of how to teach. These perceptions are shaped by their teaching experience and learning experience as an English learner. Some experiences are justified by the theories, and develop into a systematic understanding of a teaching approach. For example, Jia stated:

> I have an approach to develop listening ability: writing down what you are listening to. This is my personal experience of learning English when I was a college student. And I, as a teacher, ask my students to practice it and it really works well. In TESOL, I have read some papers which confirm my experience-based approach and explain it theoretically. I am now more confident in applying this approach because I have known the theories relevant to it, I know why it develops listening ability.

In other cases, the learners said some of the teaching approaches that had been taken for granted in their context for many years had been enhanced by the learnt knowledge in this course. Taking the example of lexical chunks again, Feng said:

> In the past, we teach English phrases from left to right, usually starting from a verb and ending with a noun. For example, boil an egg, thus my students can remember only this phrase. However, if we put the noun in the center, and ask students to think of all the possibilities of using it [this is inspired by lexical chunks, then those young learners are able to say fry an egg, steam an egg, sit on an egg, and hatch an egg. They have learnt more.

The things taken for granted are sometimes challenged. Cheng implemented task-based learning in her working school, where many teachers believe it is task-based learning because students are guided to complete multiple class activities in one class. However, on this course, she was inspired to investigate the conception of a task: 'Does it mean different steps of a class,

for example, first ask the learners to … second to present the materials of … the third… ', or, 'it is a purpose of a class as a whole, and should be supported by different class activities'. She has realized the popular understanding of task based learning might be challenged if task means purpose instead of process. 'The evaluation for our class teaching should be reconsidered.' Cheng has valued a deep analysis of teaching by connecting theories with teaching practice, which is in contrast to her prior teaching analysis. She said:

> We tended to analyse a teaching activity by highlighting its advantages, in what aspects it is good. I am now able to analyse it by considering the reasons behind its advantages and weaknesses. Theoretically explain why it is or not good.

She introduced 'a habit of connecting my teaching issues with theories '. If an issue interests or challenges her, she starts a purposeful learning in which she reads literatures relevant to the issue. She is then able to reflect on her teaching. A fruitful moment is described as 'I am inspired by reading. The issue could be improved by more than one strategy, really open mind'. Cheng's opinion is agreed by Feng in terms of purposeful learning. The theoretical knowledge and its application are focused, which enables Feng to build a comprehensive and systematic understanding about a theory.

In addition, however, not all the delivered theories are thought to fit into the learners' contexts. It is believed some approaches need conditions in order to make sense. It might need a group of teachers to cooperate and conduct together. It might be infeasible in public schools which aim to develop students' exam scores. It might take more time for the teacher to internalize the theory before it can be applied. These conditions are understandable from the perspective of learners. The data has shown that most learners, in their daily work, are under pressure to increase their own students' exam scores. They have been surrounded by various strategies of improving teaching centering on the scores, for example, performing teaching tasks in light of senior teachers' experiences, which have enhanced exam scores, conducting thousands of exam papers, and summarizing shortcuts or instant strategies to improve exam ability. The theories learnt in this course open another

window for these learners, through which they are able to know there is another routine to understand English teaching and learning. This routine is underpinned by theories, adapted into a specific context, and can be explained rationally.

Apart from improving his teaching practice, Zhou shared his experience of being authorized as an examiner in an oral English test by the Cambridge English education centre. This certification increases his professional competitiveness and serves as justification for his pedagogical skills. He stated:

> The most difficult part of applying this certification is to design an oral test. I followed the theories learnt in our testing module, based on their principles and designed the questions for testing. That theoretical knowledge enables me to justify the role of each question played in evaluating young peoples' oral performance. Although I have had experience in teaching oral English, it is the theories that make my proposal of test comprehensive and rational.

Qualified teaching staff members are thought to boost educational skills for these learners. Lecturers in this programme are said to be 'very capable in profession knowledge and very good at teaching'. A class itself is a good example of learning how to teach from the programme lecturers. The teaching staff, who have a strong passion for teaching and an interest in education, had the greatest influence on the students. It acts as 'psychological fuel' for students who are tired of working. Furthermore, how to be taught as a student in the modules inspires how to teach the learners' own students on weekdays. The games, class activities, and examples employed in the TESOL class have been transferred directly by the learners into their own work. The learners are very pleased to see their own young learners enjoy these activities and engage in learning. Feng talked about a class in her school:

> Usually, I am the leader and speaker of a class [in my school]. However, I find in TESOL class, we [as students] play the main role, which inspires me to try this style in one of my class where the learning material was an article about Mark Twain. I asked my students to read the article to each other and understand its contents. Those young learners were excited and engaged. They read the article and corrected pronunciation for each other. They were the speakers and the audience, practicing oral and listening English. I was an observer, supervising the learning, answering questions and correcting their

mistakes. This is a successful innovation for me, and also for my young learners
I think.

Zhou tends to view the British lecturers as a window to read English teaching in the UK. He likes to ask them 'what methods do you apply [in the UK] into how to [an English teaching issue]?'. He has appreciated a reading approach suggested by Mike for young learners. 'Mike told me a lot of reading was the approach employed by British young people who want to enhance reading ability, and there was no shortcut.' Therefore, Zhou was inspired to build a reading corner in his classroom for his own young students. The collections are English materials, including story books, magazines, and popular novels. His young learners are encouraged to read these resources. He told me it was a pleasure to see those young people getting into the habit of widely reading instead of doing exam papers. He stressed a positive sense of believing there will be an improvement in his young students' reading abilities.

In addition to knowledge and skills, personal transformation is featured with competence improvement. The competences discussed here result from engaging in learning activities on this course. Although not every informant is able to fully develop these competencies, it is indicated that the participants underwent a process from zero to one in terms of developing their competences. The table below (table 12) illustrates the improved competences of these learners in the process of engaging in learning tasks. This table is developed by the data analysis in the previous sections (attending modules and writing assignments). These outcomes appeared in the narratives of various learning experiences. Table12 is a summary and contracture of learning experience related with learning outcomes.

Table 12: Improved Learner Competences

Core competence involved in learning process	Main pedagogical activities	
	Class teaching and learning	**Writing assignment**
	Evidence	**Evidence**
Academic reading and writing	Reading list, preparing for group discussion	Reading references, writing summaries/essays in English
Critical thinking	Group discussion, teachers' comments	Argumentation, analyzing and organizing academic opinions and perspectives, relating theories with teaching reality
Reflection	Group discussion, teacher's lead in and summary, reading tasks	Relating theories with teaching reality, understanding different education contexts
Problem resolving	Reading and group discussion	Deciding a topic, literature searching and reading; analyzing data, argumentation, Suggesting solutions for any challenges in the topic
Learning agency (i.e., independent learning, sustainable learning)	Reading and group discussion	Deciding a topic, literature searching and reading, planning working schedule, reflecting on learning strategies and making adjustments to improve learning outcomes

When compared to how the participants read papers at the start of the programme, their academic reading ability has clearly improved. Whether attending classes or working on an assignment, students are required to read a large number of journal papers, which is seen as an opportunity to practice academic reading. The following enhancements have been mentioned:

1. Reading speed from very slow (three or four days for one paper) to a bit fast (one or two days for one paper)

2. Reading strategy from detailed reading (read every word using a dictionary) to selective reading (focus on the main content of a paper and skip the others)

3. From understanding the language (the words, sentences) to understanding the meaning of the contents or the argument of a paper.

4. From reading to critical reading in which the learners are able to think of the reading material instead of remembering it. Jia said:

> I pay attention to my own voice when I am reading. I had my voice before but overlooked it. I am now focusing on thinking of the things being read, which gives rise to my voice. This is a big change for me. I was trying to remember the

> contents covered by a paper. But now, I think understanding it [reading material] from my perspective is more important.

The ability to read has given rise to a sense of reader-center. Reading teaches students how to rigorously and clearly demonstrate ideas. They discovered that some papers are quite reader-friendly, illustrating arguments precisely with simple evidence and concise explanations, as opposed to some obscure papers that are good at explaining a simple thing complicatedly. So the learners try to alternate their position in the process of writing, from 'I want to say…' to 'how my readers would understand what I am saying'. This reader-center philosophy has been transferred to daily teaching by Nui who was confused why her own students could not understand grammar knowledge, even though she explained many times.

She reflects that the point does not exist in how many times she explained it, but instead, it is how her students understand it from their own perspective. She finds a way of enhancing teaching from the student perspective.

Academic writing is needed beyond writing assignments in this course. Making notes on a paper, listing outlines for group discussion, and even reading papers are seen as opportunities to learn how to undertake academic writing. The improvement of academic writing ability could be described as 'from zero to one' which is picked up from the interview narratives. Zero means these learners knew nothing about academic writing according to UK standards. One means they have understood the standards of a qualified academic paper, the basic structure and components (introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, discussion, and conclusion), the requirements of referencing, starting point and steps of writing. Although their knowledge about academic writing is thought to be 'very basic', it is a jump from the unknown to known. Fei, a middle school teacher, prized for his teaching performance by the local government, stated:

> I tried to publish one paper but failed because the editor told me it was not an academic paper although the topic was very good. So I stopped academic writing because I did not know, even my colleagues do not know how to write

paper about teaching English in an academic way. This programme really teaches me, which is fantastic and beyond my expectations.

Lee believes her academic writing ability will develop over time, although she is just starting:

Publishing papers is a big advantage for promotion in my working place, but I did know how to complete a qualified paper, what is the standard. I feel confident now that I am able to do it better with more practice.

Feng introduced her improvement in writing her literature review:

At the beginning, I was putting all papers relevant to a topic together, introduced what was found by who, what else was found at what time, the knowledge was listed one by one... I believed it was a literature review. I won't do it again, I need to group these papers with different themes and have my comments on them. The literature review is not about retelling papers, it needs my argument for those references. Understanding this is a big improvement for my academic writing.

Apart from academic reading and writing, Reflection as both an action and a sort of ability is triggered by various pedagogical elements in this course: reading a piece of research, hearing inspiring opinions from peers in group discussions, initiating a writing task, and opening minds by the lecturers in the classes. In addition, it is facilitated with the increase of theoretical knowledge. The informants gradually built a habit of 'review my teaching by the learnt knowledge' or 'link the knowledge with teaching activities', which is meaningful communication between teaching practice and knowledge. The learners try to figure out the rationale behind a teaching activity with the results of justifying their pedagogical behaviours or correcting some misunderstandings. Some learners aim to resolve a problem existing in their teaching context by reflecting 'what we have done for this problem and what the results are', and following with 'a comparison with what the research has suggested'. Then they seem to be able to find gaps for improving. The point here is highlighted by Mao, a senior teacher in high school, saying reflection is not simply looking back, but instead, he is able to jump out from himself and review his teaching from a theoretical perspective. Thus the reflection becomes 'meaningful and systematic'. Cheng said that reflection enabled her to enhance her teaching with an open mind:

> In the past, if a solution [to a problem in teaching] worked well, it was kept and copied by teachers who experienced the same problem. Now, I prefer thinking what other ways might be available by analyzing the problem and our action again.

Nui responded to this statement by describing that her teaching has transformed from following the experiences of other senior teachers to reflecting how it could become better by using different approaches.

These reflections imply a sense of critical thinking, that is, thinking from different perspectives. Despite the fact that critical thinking ability challenges these informants significantly, as evidenced by their inability to argue or deal with contradictory theoretical stances, the students are learning to have personal ideas through reading, writing, and group discussion. Although the definition of critical thinking has not been stated explicitly by participants' data, some participants introduced situations in which they feel they are carrying out critical thinking. Jia and Nan believe their attitudes of 'agree or disagree with a piece of research' is a sort of critical thinking. Feng thinks critical thinking enables her to compare different readings, evaluate arguments, and connect knowledge between different researches.' Zhou and Fei believe relating theories with teaching practices in a specific context is a type of critical thinking. They tended to accept theories without any hesitation, and fitted teaching into theories. Their own teaching contexts have been privileged when learning theoretical knowledge. They prefer to ask 'what is the context in this research?' and 'what is my context?'. They are then able to think how an approach in this research could be applied for their problem instead of replicating it. Nui, when considering a problem of teaching, is able to ask herself 'any other answers for this question?' or 'can it be understood from other perspectives?', and these narratives imply a shift of attitude in which the extent of relying on authority (that is, theories, books) and searching for a right answer seems to have been reduced for these informants.

The ability of problem resolving has been mentioned by participants (Jia, Feng, Lee and Fei). They believe the process of conducting a piece of research is equal with 'searching for answers to my question/interest'. The starting point

is analyzing the problem, 'what it is'. Then the literature reading is equal to 'see how other people deal with it'. Different approaches and contexts of research are analysed and linked within their own contexts, and then the potential approach to resolving this problem can be shaped. Limitations and advantages of the approach are considered according to the teaching context of implication. In this light, some other strategies have been developed as a complementation to the main approach. This is called 'a systematic routine' which is in contrast with 'an experience based routine'.   This ability has been developed and involved with the process of writing an assignment. 'Doing an assignment provides an opportunity of deep learning and thinking around a topic which interests me' explained Jia. She was encouraged to explore her interest following references which contribute to a comprehensive knowledge background. 'Interacting with the references' is a sort of deep thinking from Feng's perspective. A feeling is stated as 'fresh knowledge keeps going into my brain so that I have to mix them with those old ones.' Lee refers to the result as an 'upgraded knowledge system', and she believes this is a necessary tool to resolve a problem. Jia feels that the deep thinking and learning results in a comprehensive understanding of a topic. A problem could not be resolved unless she builds her own knowledge in terms of what it is and why it is in such way. The context gives rise to a problem which is stressed again by the informants. It functions in shaping 'own knowledge' instead of 'general knowledge'.

The competences discussed above (academic reading and writing, reflection, critical thinking, and problem solving) suggest, to some extent, that the participants are able to develop their own learning agency. Learning agency here involves two different aspects. On the one hand, it implies the ability to learn independently. The learners are self-motivated by their research interests and capable of continuing their research work. For example, Jia stated that she was proposing a research topic of developing writing ability for Chinese young learners in her dissertation after completing two modules in the middle of the programme schedule. . 'I am mapping the literature now.'

Lee thinks that she is now able to take advantage of her teaching experience and transfer it into academic research by academic tools. She said:

> I think putting my hands to research will not a problem for me, I have a lot of experience to be reflected and reviewed, through which the research topics come out. And I have known the procedures and approaches of conducting a study. So I think I am able to do the research interesting me.'

Other informants (Fe, Mao, Zhou, and Nui) hold a similar opinion that, although their middle school work does not require them to undertake research at present, what has been learnt on this course [knowledge of conducting study] can be 'saved for rainy days'. Once needed (for example, a challenge of teaching to overcome, an interesting pedagogical phenomenon becomes obvious), the academic tools could be utilized to deal with those situations. These statements indicate a sort of sustainable learning ability by which the learners are able to carry out self-education, even though the course has ended. However, not every informant think they have enhanced competence in this aspect. Four participants (Cheng, Gui, Nan, and Mei) did not mention it.

In addition to independent and sustainable learning, on the other hand, learning agency involves the ability of learning this course. It is observed in informants who try to follow the requirements of this programme, and go through each challenge in their learning experiences. The requirements are often readable, for example, group discussion in modules, while they are hidden in other occasions, for example, attending class is not sufficient to complete an essay. Therefore, the students have to learn how to build their learning strategy and adapt themselves into the course. For example, learn how to be critical in their literature review. Although these strategies are different depending on individual learners, they present a general learning ability by which the learners are able to achieve their learning goals. This general learning ability, for student participants, involves identifying issues and responding to them appropriately. For example, Feng said:

> I found the lecturers are good at inspiring ideas through class teaching but they don't deliver too much knowledge. So I take advantage of class teaching for

opening my mind while I rely on literatures with the purpose of getting knowledge about a topic.

Jia has changed her strategy of draft writing since she realized that UK staff members are skilled at writing feedback. She starts presenting the contents for which she is not quite confident instead of writing a whole draft, so that the feedback can relate to the 'most needed' parts of an essay. Since the study time is very limited, Chen shifts her reading habit from broad reading to focus reading, and Fei takes notes for reading and see these notes as direct resources to develop an essay.

Such a learning agency plays an important role in assisting learners in completing the course and progressing toward the MA TESOL learners expected by the programme.

Transformation of attitude and identity has been identified. The mostly shared attitude is confidence arising from the process of adapting into the programme. The learners feel they are 'gradually making sense of TESOL', which means they feel 'less anxious about the challenges they may encounter in the upcoming learning journey.' Fei said, 'It is like I am getting along with a person, from saying hello to becoming friends as I think I understand her more and more.' The TESOL course is that person in this narrative. The learners have recognized that their learning ability is being enhanced, which enables them to 'find ways to overcome the potential issues'.

This confidence also reflects on the learners' profession. Mao feels confident for teaching because it has shifted from 'experience-oriented' to 'theoretical-underpinned'. The latter enables the learners to analyse or design a teaching activity rationally. They feel they are 'becoming mature in teaching English'. Nui said she was able to start being critical with other senior teachers in her school, stating:

> Before joining this programme, I tended to believe the senior teachers are conducting perfect teaching so I must follow them. But I don't think so now. I feel confident to analyse their teaching approaches comprehensively, dropping off those senior experiences which are not suitable for my students' context. I mean I am confident to make decisions.

Mao confidently emphasises his profession identity shift from teaching–oriented teacher to research–oriented teacher. He describes how, when confronted with a problem in his own classroom, he now searches the literature first. 'The literature guides me to conceptualize the problem and link it to theories, which is able to inspire the solutions to that problem.' Mao builds new understanding of solving problems. It is not 'using one experience to deal with a specific problem', instead, it is 'exploring the essence of the problem and relevant conceptions'. Thus the solution can be developed effectively and transferred to other similar problems.

4.6.2 Disappointments

The participants also talked about the issues of the programme provision with which they feel unsatisfied. The first is the intense programme schedule. There is a lack of time for learning in and out of the classroom which has undermined the learning effect. Students said that because the teaching time is limited, some critical sections of knowledge delivered in teaching sessions were not explored comprehensively. For example, Jia said:

> The lecture of how to write in English in the third module has focused on general writing skills instead of including thinking ways of writing which are very critical to inspire and present main ideas of a piece of writing. The challenge in my teaching practice is to teach young learners how to think logically and critically. Training of how to think for writing is necessary, and I think it should have been covered in the lecturers.

Another negative impact of the intense programme schedule is that in order to meet the deadline of assignments and dissertation, five participants did not think they have fully developed in theoretical knowledge. For example, Feng said:

> I actually know I need to read more so that I can have a deep understanding of the topic of my assignment, I want to refine my ideas, but the time is very rushed. So I have to stop at 'just so so, and send my work before the deadline.

Cheng thinks the intense learning narrows the room for thinking:

> I need more room to think. The topic and the reading around it have interested me. They are quite relevant and useful for my own teaching. But I don't have

enough time to reflect and connect them. I have to rush into next topic and assignment.

Two participants think the rushed dissertation schedule limit the function of the dissertation in terms of developing research ability and benefiting their own practice. They don't have enough time to carry out action research to test whether an interval of teaching can work for their context. That, however, is what they want to do through the dissertation. They want to have some solutions or ideas to improve their teaching by learning this programme. The dissertation is thought to be an opportunity for them to conduct their ideas in education reality and see the results. However, under the rushed schedule of the dissertation, these learners have to employ an 'instant way' by which they are able to collect data by 'simple' interviews or questionnaires without designing experiments and comparing the results. One participant, Mei, feels that it is difficult to find qualified informants for her dissertation because the data collection starts early, in June, which is the examination season for most Chinese young learners. If she could postpone the data collection until after June, it is then the school summer holidays when most young students cannot be easily accessed.

Drawing on these narratives, and echoing the participants' expectations for the programme, it is suggested that these participants have a fundamental willingness to 'applying what has been learnt into educational practices', overwhelming writing a dissertation. The theoretical knowledge and research skills are thought to service learners' teaching more than for writing an essay/dissertation. Feng, who conducted an experiment with her own students, said:

> It is a pity. There were a few limitations in my experimental design [for the dissertation] due to the rushed schedule. I think it should have been more rigorous. I didn't have enough time to reflect on my research either. Conducting experiments and presenting findings has taken much time. The reflection should have been comprehensive, so the research should be able to benefit my teaching more, and the dissertation would be better with deeper reflection.

It seems that the rushed academic schedule has caused a lose-lose situation for the learners and the programme. The former lost the opportunity of fully

practicing their research abilities. The latter lost the opportunity of getting the very frontline and integrated pedagogical experience in China, and also an opportunity to understand the pragmatic effects of this programme.

This has also raised the issue of essay writing as the only mode of assessment in this programme. Mei believes it is less fair from the perspective of the learning process:

> Submitting an essay seems to be the only thing that highlighted by the programme regardless of the attendance for module teaching is not valued here. Some classmates travel a long way to the class and study in GW every weekend. We are making an effort in the process of learning. However some learners come to the class less often, even very few. We are finally assessed by the same ruler [writing essay]. It is unfair.

However, some students believe attending classes is a personal learning behaviour which is irrelevant with fairness. But they also think the learning outcome should be evaluated comprehensively. Apart from writing essay, some other styles have been suggested:

1. Class presentation by which a learner could illustrate what and how a theory is planned to apply into their own class teaching.

2. Video of a segment of teaching which is recorded in a real teaching environment, showing how a learner conducts teaching in their own working place using the knowledge learnt in this course.

3. A document, but not an essay, which could be an analysis report of an examination paper employed in the learner's context. It also could be a design for teaching materials or a section of textbook.

These suggested alternatives of assessment would enable the learners to combine their learnt knowledge with their working context, so that they are able to practice how the theoretical knowledge functions to benefit their teaching ability. The learners' expectations of developing teaching abilities underpinned by theories have been reinforced and responded to by these suggestions. The focus for the learners is to employ the knowledge for

pedagogical practice. They care about how it works. They have shown strong motivation of practice and trying out what they have learnt.

The assessment is suggested by Mei to consist of an essay and some in-class works, for example, a small piece of writing regarding a group discussion, or a piece of reading material. This suggestion is thought to increase the weight of the learning process in the assessment.

The second disappointment is around student support. Some of the informants do not think they are given enough support in their programme experience. These complaints include: 1. Both Chinese and UK staff members seem very busy, and it is difficult to approach them if the learners need help; 2. Emails are not always responded to by teaching staff, and the feedback is sometimes received very late; 3. Learners have not been given guidance on how to use the GW library resources, although the library is located on campus; 4. They do not understand the programme policy, for example, how to apply for an extension or defer the assignment, how the dissertation is marked and by whom, how to complain if one module has been delivered unqualified; 5. They don't understand why they are told to 'ask the UK university by email' for some shared admin issues (for example, paying tuition fees), instead of getting an answer from the Chinese partner directly. Mei said:

> We are told to email Lily (a UK admin staff member for student affairs) whenever we have a question or difficulty. However, some issues are shared by many learners, why can't the Chinese staff ask the UK university on the behalf of us and give us an answer agreed by the two universities. We don't think it is good to ask Lily individually, because our questions are the same, she does not have time to reply us one by one with the same answer.

One learner thinks 'limited support' by the UK staff cannot support him to get through the challenges of the dissertation:

> 'They (UK staff) have fixed times for feedback/comments to each student [in the process of writing dissertation]. This is not enough for me, and I prefer to discuss my work face to face with my supervisor.

The learners would like to view the Chinese staff as a bridge or inter-mediator between themselves and Leeds University. They prefer to ask the Chinese

staff for support in the aspect of non-academic issues more than communicating with UK staff directly. This might be because of the close geographical distance of Chinese campus for these learners. They think Chinese staff are easier to approach and it is more convenient to communicate in Chinese language. So the Chinese side is the first option for most learners when student services are needed. The student service here involves two layers. The first layer is responding to specific problems or challenges encountered by the learners, providing answers and solutions. The second layer is a feeling of being cared about, which is rather abstract and intangible compared with the first layer. The learners want to be cared about by the Chinese staff. One participant complained:

> Out of the classroom, we rarely meet the [GW] staff, even when we live on campus. It is understandable that they are busy. But I think, they, as our tutors or headmaster, should come to our classroom more often than not, communicating with us, having some idea of how our studies are going, providing even informal advice or encouragements to us.

From this narrative, there are a few specific problems which really need to be resolved or answered by the programme provider. Instead, there is a strong willingness or expectation of being cared about by the staff. If this expectation could be met, it would create an atmosphere for the learners to feel that they are an important part of the programme community, and they are in a safe environment which is ready to provide support if needed. Learners would then feel a sense of belonging and support, which will benefit their learning experiences.

The learners are also concerned about whether they would be supported appropriately in the dissertation process. Some evidence has shown that the learners care about the number of students supervised by one supervisor. They worry about whether the supervisor has enough energy and time to supervise so many students (seven students are supervised in this case). They are also concerned when their supervisors have not taught any of the modules in this programme because they feel that that communication will be difficult due to the unfamiliar feeling. These sources of anxiety have failed to

be resolved. In other words, these learners do not know to whom and in what ways they can express their confusions and worries. These feelings have not been responded to appropriately, and have developed into complaints and dissatisfaction.

The third, some complaints are grouped into 'I don't think the two partners are on the same page.' The learners think the two universities of the programme might not communicate sufficiently in terms of how to support and service the students. Mei said:

> Modules taught by UK staff have the routine of outline-draft-formal submission in order to support us to do the assignment, whereas other modules taught by Chinese staff do not have this [routine], we are asked to do only one formal assignment. We think the draft routine is supportive. Why not all modules have this routine?

Another helpful approach, but not shared by all modules, is 'informing us about the assignment at the beginning of a module' because learners can prepare for it by purposefully taking advantage of teaching sessions (for example, decide on topic, purposefully read literature). The Chinese teaching staff appear to be unfamiliar with the academic schedule. According to one participant - We are in our last module, but the lecturer himself doesn't know when we should submit the assignment. He told us he was waiting to be informed about the schedule.

The staff members in each of the two universities might work in different styles, which confused the learners. One informant said:

> For the dissertation, some students are supervised by UK staff while others are supervised by Chinese staff. Those students supervised by UK staff have received emails from their supervisors informing them of the main tasks and meeting schedules. However, the students, including me, that are supervised by Chinese staff have received nothing. We don't know how to start our work. Should we wait for the supervisors?

Another learner was confused by the 'conflicts of academic opinions between the two universities'. Her ideas and topic, which were approved by one member of staff at one university, were rejected by another member of staff at another university.

4.7 Comparison within the UK-China case

In light of the data, some interesting issues have been spotted. They suggest comparisons and contrasts between different stakeholders in UK-China case. This section conducts a comparative analysis by three dimensions: programme perspective VS student perspective, programme itself, and within student perspectives. The former aims to understand how the programme learning objectives and its provision are responded by the students' motivations, experiences and outcomes in the learning process. This comparison implies a self-comparison in the course itself. By the learners' learning outcomes, the course is evidenced whether its education objectives are reached or not.

The last dimension is to compare different student opinions of their learning expectation, experience and outcomes. The aims is to understand the student satisfaction of learning results, which implies an evaluation of the course quality.

4.7.1 The programme perspective VS student perspective

The location and timetable of the programme perfectly resolve the Chinese learners' career dilemma in which they want to study an academic course whilst keep their jobs. The reputation of course providers attracts the learners and implies education quality guarantee for them. Therefore, the motivation and approach of establishing UK-China MA TESOL course are positively responded by the Chinese learners. The education objectives of the course are consistent with the learners' expectations in terms of TESOL discipline knowledge. The programme and its learners both believe the linkage between theories and teaching reality could develop teaching abilities. However, it should notice the research-oriented abilities (e.g., academic reading and writing) and developmental skills (e.g., critical thinking and independent learning) which are valued by the programme have mentioned little by learner participants. The learners' weak motivations of the two objectives implies their

lack of preparation for the upcoming learning process and the encountered challenges.

The course provision dominated by the UK university indicates obvious contrasts to its Chinese learners' learning style. In other words, the Chinese learners are shocked by how they are supposed to do. They feel overwhelmed by massive academic reading and writing. They are confused between critical summary and knowledge retelling, which implies a contradiction between conception-oriented course and content-based learning style. Although linking theories with teaching practice are valued by both the course providers and the leaners, it is understood differently in the learning process. The course stresses thinking which means reflection between theories and teaching experiences while the learners value doing which means they want to apply the theories into class teaching. So they complain writing essay as sole assessment style regardless of practicing teaching skills. Another example is the gap between going to classes and doing assignment. The data indicates the course purposefully designs this gap as a room where the leaners are supposed to learn independently and build their own knowledge. However, the learners think differently. For them, doing good jobs in classes must result in good performance in writing essay because they have completed all the tasks in classes which means they are qualified to handle assignment. Writing essay is not a learning process, as designed by the course, but an evaluation to show how much they have learnt in the classes from the student perspective. Therefore majority of the learners feel 'break down' when they are challenged by the assignments. It shows a contradiction between process-oriented course provision and product-oriented learning style. The comparison between the course provision and student learning experience suggest an unaware learning routine-the learners are adapting themselves into the designed course provision, learning its values and behave on them. The 'unaware' here involves two aspects. One refers to the programme providers who have insufficient understanding about the culture shocks of learning encountered by the Chinese learners. Little data, except the Chinese staff

interviews (The Chinese staff mentioned their supports for the learners to understand UK course requirements.), shows the programme aims to adapt its learners into British education culture, neither in its objectives nor in its provision approaches. The second aspect refers to the learners who have little idea about UK education culture but jump into it. They have to follow the course routine whilst learning about it. The unaware learning routine are overlapping with and hiding behind the course routine which is officially designed by the programme providers. So the difficulties encountered by the learners are mixtures of academic and cultural issues. This results in a situation where the students need more help than the one provided by the course. For example, academic writing is described as 'disaster' by the learners because they have neither knowledge of the big picture of academic writing according to course standards nor skills of how to improve academic writing. So they ask for a focused module to study it, which implies the scaffolds of the programme are not sufficient.

Although difficulties, the learners' learning outcomes are positively responded to the programme objectives. The learners have made progress on theoretical knowledge, research ability (e.g., academic reading and writing), and developmental skills (e.g., critical thinking, reflection, problem resolving, and learning agency). So it is seen as the evidence by which the programme is thought effective to promote personal development as supposed by itself. In specific, the course routine is thought successfully guiding the learners to go along its track and achieve educational goals. The course routine here could be conceptualized as a system in which the course values, educational goals, modules, assessment, academic requirements and standards, and provision strategies are working together with the aim of pushing the learners to go through the course and achieve their learning goals.

Whereas, it should notice that a majority of learners suggest the course to include some practice sessions in that the class teaching performance is needed more than academic research ability for their careers. The learners'

disappointments imply a gap between the course design and its learners who have big size of Chinese middle school teachers. Their professional characteristics should be considered by the course providers.

The last but not least point about the comparison between learners and programme is regarding with the peer community of which has not taken full advantages although mentioned by both sides. I feel surprised that the course has recruit so many excellent school teachers but use them as an educational resource very limited. These school teachers with years of teaching experience in top schools in China could be proper resources by which they are able to develop and discuss teaching skills by learning from each other. The course has provided limited opportunities by which the learners can present their teaching together as a fresh contribution for community learning.

4.7.2 Comparison within student group

Linking the learners' expectations to their learning outcomes, the data indicates they have overlaps of professional competence development. They have gotten theories and approach to improve their teaching. An extra part is their transformations of teaching attitude, e.g., research-oriented teacher, teacher with his/her own opinions instead of authority follower. Such attitude is underpinned by the adopted abilities of critical thinking, reflection, and problem solving. They were not mentioned in the learners' expectations but bring a feeling of satisfaction for the learners as learning outcomes.

It should be acknowledged that students have different personal situations. Their working experience, personalities, and career expectations vary, which impacts their learning experience and outcomes. In specific, although all the leaners feel difficult to handle with academic writing, some of them are good at making a trial and learn from it while some others like being told solutions directly. Some learners are able to understand and accept the course's value of developing teaching professions via critical reflection between theories and

practice, while some others complain they fail to get useful teaching skills from the lecturers of this programme.

It should also notice the students are sometimes self-contradiction. For example, most of them complain the intense programme schedule and hardship of balancing life and study, however, few of them are willing to accept a longer calendar when asked 'how do you think about if the programme becomes a eighteen month study?'. A majority learners stress the course quality as a main consideration of registering it while they don't think it would be such difficult because it is a 'weekend course'. They are moving between 'a qualified degree issued by the prestige British university will not be gotten easily' and 'a weekend course far from abroad campus might be easy'. Such self-contradictions suggest the student learning expectations, experiences and outcomes are complicated with multiple facets which should be considered systematically.

Chapter 5 The UK MA TESOL case

The aim of this chapter is to present the integrated story of the UK MA TESOL programme which is located in and provided by a British university in the UK. The storyline overlaps with the structure of this chapter, which comprises four main themes. These themes are developed by linking the RQs with the data in order to answer each RQ relevant to the UK case. In order to prevent repetition, data overlaps with the findings of the UK-China case will be very briefly mentioned in this chapter. Data indicating differences between the cases will be discussed and compared. Section 5.1 answers RQ1 and RQ4, introducing the course contents and provision. Section 5.2 answers RQ 2 by analysing the motives and expectations influencing students entering the programme. Sections 5.3 and 5.4 answer RQ3 and RQ4, presenting the learners' experiences and learning outcomes. Section 5.5 is a summary of a brief outline of the Chinese learners in the UK MA TESOL programme, answering all the RQs together. The chapter concludes with a brief comparison between the two cases in the aspects of course provision, student learning experience and learning outcomes. This comparison then leads to the discussion chapter.

5.1 Introduction to the programme

The UK MA TESOL programme is a classic course with a history of over thirty years. It is developed and provided by a research-intensive UK university in England. This section will focus on its provision rather than its establishment, as data cannot be found owing to this being quite a long time ago. I will first briefly introduce the programme, describing what it is, then I will move on to how it is provided. The data in this section come from programme official websites, the student handbook (published in 2018, 34 pages, with links to other official documents) and interviews with staff. Only one member of staff, Ely, was interviewed in this case because he has double identities: a lecturer with responsibility for teaching and a programme leader in charge of programme provision and management.

5.1.1 Background to UK MA TESOL programme

The UK MA TESOL programme is located in the northeast of the UK. It is fully provided by the British university and open to candidates all over the world. The qualified candidates are required to achieve an IELTS test score of 7.0 across the four sectors (listening, reading, speaking and writing) for English language ability. Three years of teaching experience are required before application. The UK course is a full-time course, in which the learners are based full time in the UK campus. This is quite different from those in the UK-China programme, who work on weekdays and study at weekends. Students in UK case are fully involved in the university campus in England, going to classes, doing group learning tasks outside the classroom, going to libraries and joining university social events. The module provision is a little different from the other case in China. In UK course, there are two core modules in the first semester and a range of optional modules in the rest of the academic year (detailed in 5.1.3). According to the academic credit and schedule of each optional module, students are usually able to take two or three optional modules in this case. Compared with the learners in the other case, students in UK case have more learning resources: the modules (66 modules in total are available for the learners); the libraries, which provide not only online but also hard-copy learning materials; workshops or seminars provided by the university; and other academic events, like forum of TESOL in each semester. The teaching staff are employees of the UK university with international diversity: some are British/EU, and some come from Middle East, Asia and Africa. The students are exposed to an English context in terms of language, social life and learning tradition. The UK programme shares academic credits for graduation, and the schedule of the academic year same with the UK-China programme. The assessment is also writing essays and a dissertation with the same marking criteria as the UK-China case. The learners registering on the UK course are younger and with less teaching experience than the ones in the other programme. Most of my participants (except two) have just three years' experience of teaching English, which is a significant contrast to

those on the UK-China course. They resigned from their jobs and study full time in the UK for this course.

5.1.2 Characteristics of the programme from the provider's perspective

The university differentiates the MA TESOL learners by teaching experience. Learners who have more than three years' English teaching experience in education institutions are accepted by this MA TESOL course (the case of this research), otherwise they go to another programme called MA TESOL Studies, which requires little teaching experience. This differentiation is in order to 'benefit leaners equally'. It is believed that learners with different backgrounds, those who have been teaching for years and those without teaching experience, cannot benefit equally from the same course because the in-service teachers already have some pedagogical knowledge. What they need is to develop in their profession instead of learning very basic English-language teaching knowledge, which are over simple for in-service teachers. Thus the modules in this programme are tailored for teachers with teaching experience and aim to help them to link their theoretical knowledge with their teaching practice.

Another characteristic can be summarized as a diverse learning context, to which international students contribute. This course recruits 35 or 40 students each year. The majority of students are Chinese, and other students come from EU, America, Middle East, Japan, Korea or other countries in south-east Asia. These students with different cultural backgrounds constitute an international community, in which each student is able to share and learn about pedagogical ideas and teaching practices in other regions. They are supposed to develop awareness of other practices and understandings of English teaching across the world. This diversity is much valued by programme leader Ely, who thinks homogeneity is boring as learners have little new to share and learn. He considers the international context as a key element of the programme, based on which learners are able to experience a dynamic learning process:

> 'we [programme providers] always try to capitalize on this [international] context and benefit from it. It is a great community where our students are able to learn from diverse practices, ideas, perceptions, tools and attitudes towards English teaching indifferent contexts.'(Ely, the programme leader and lecturer)

'Being in and using an international context' has become the core philosophy of teaching for modules, according to Ely. Group study and discussion are purposefully designed to enhance learning effects. This dynamic learning enables the learners to develop a clear understanding of the shared theories behind different pedagogical options, and how teaching decisions are made differently because of cultural differences. In addition, meeting diversity is seen as an approach to 'being self-critical'.

> 'As human beings, it is easy for us to believe everyone else is like us in terms of thinking and attitudes towards phenomena. Once we meet diversity, we can evaluate ourselves more critically, break with the taken for granted and make adjustments to our actions. Otherwise, we tend to be blind to ourselves and lose room for improvement.' (Ely, the programme leader and lecturer)

Being a research-oriented course is identified as the third characteristic. The opportunity and ability to do research are stressed, especially via dissertation. Based on extensive reading and writing, learners are supposed to focus on a specific area and be able to reflect on their teaching. The purpose is to present their understanding of education in that specific area. This suggests that the focus of the course is more related to understanding/explanation of English education than doing and acting it in the process of the course process.

Being a research-oriented course implies the value of linking theory with teaching experiences. Theoretical learning is emphasised by both the Student Handbook and the staff. In the module objectives (the module catalogues of two core modules in this case were searched via the links cited in the student handbook), 'comprehensive understanding of theoretical knowledge' is repeated. The theory refers to broad knowledge of teaching and learning, motivation, culture, and theories specific to the TESOL discipline, e.g. language theories, English language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Ely, the programme leader, further explains that although the learners have many years of teaching English, they lack of understanding of theory in

the TESOL field. The course aims to help them learn the concepts and theories underpinning pedagogical practices. Through this, the students are expected to link theory with their teaching, and understand the rationale behind teaching activities. Ely thinks theory helps the learners reflect on different teaching activities, so that with the international learning community, the learners are able to be self- critical and find the space to adjust their teaching.

Being a research-oriented course also suggests that students are expected to obtain research competence. From interviews and documents, a range of phrases can be identified as relating to research competence: reflective ability, enquiry skills, applying theory to support critical analysis, observing and interpreting practices of language education, discussing and assessing theories, identifying and discussing research literature in TESOL. Specifically, critical thinking and critical reading have been highlighted in both documents and interviews. These together are seen as another value underpinning the programme. In the context of this programme, critical reading and thinking are explained as:

> 'You [learners] are able to read a wide range of papers and have an in-depth understanding. Then you interpret these papers and incorporate your own ideas into them. Finally you are able to develop an argument.' (Ely, the programme leader and lecturer)

Critical reading and thinking are in line with the learning objectives of each module and the programme as a whole, as stated on the official website and documents. The phrase 'being critical' is repeated in different sections of the student handbook and module catalogue. Furthermore, this is what is evaluated in assessments of this course. Ely, as a module lecturer who reads students' assignments, says he purposefully looks for and evaluates the student's own argument in light of reading widely, and its supporting evidence. Critical reading and thinking are valued so much because

> 'They are at the heart of the teaching ability'. If a teacher wants to keep getting better at what he/she is doing, it calls for 'a constant process of reflection, evaluation and improvement of practice'. (Ely, the programme leader and lecturer)

This means that one has to be a good critical thinker, with self-awareness and self-reflection. He/she has to draw on the knowledge and skills to reflect on his/her own practices. Thus, Ely believes the learners' teaching profession could be extended.

5.1.3 Course provision

The characteristics and values mentioned previously are thought to influence the approaches to module delivery and assessment.

There are compulsory and optional modules provided by this course. The rationale behind the two types of modules is that they have different functions in the programme working process. Compulsory modules, apart from the dissertation, are delivered in the first semester. The principle behind these modules (Teaching and Learning in TESOL; Investigating Language for TESOL) is to prepare the students with the structure of the language, giving them the underlying rules (e.g. grammar, construction, semantic), and theories of how languages are learnt in terms of cognitive and social processes. The English language skills of listening, speaking, writing and reading are included in the compulsory modules by discussing the underlying theories and concepts. The knowledge covered by core modules is believed to 'essential for becoming a good and confident teacher'.

On the other hand, the optional modules are delivered in the second semester. There is a wide range of options through which students are expected to develop their interest in relevant topics. The most popular options for TESOL students are regarding with vocabulary, grammar or teaching materials design.

Teaching plays an important role in module delivery. How the teaching is considered to help learners to achieve module objectives is explicated by Ely. One consideration and strategy is for lecturers to maximize the benefit of the

internationally diverse context of the programme. As mentioned in 5.1.2, study groups are the main strategy. Learners of different nationalities are divided into study groups of around six students. The study groups have to do learning activities both outside the classroom (such as reading journal papers and completing relevant tasks) and inside the classroom. Via increasing academic communication between students with different backgrounds, students are expected to be open-minded and inspired by diverse ideas and practices in the TESOL discipline.

In addition to taking advantage of the diverse backgrounds of the learners, Ely states two considerations as the rationale underpinning module teaching. The first is the consideration of possibility, which means what is thought to be possible to deliver in a teaching session and what is impossible. The staff share a clear understanding that the time of each class is limited, and so it is impossible to cover all the knowledge of teaching. This implies that the weight of self-learning beyond the classroom is obvious. The class aims to outline the subject instead of giving details, which should be learning tasks for the learners themselves. The other consideration is related to legitimacy, and 'what is right and what is wrong in terms of helping students to improve'. Ely said:

> 'I don't think it is educationally right to assume that teachers at any level should teach everything to the students, and fill them with knowledge by considering the students are empty vessels.' (Ely, the programme leader and lecturer)

The learners in this programme have years of teaching experience, and it is obvious that they come with knowledge already in their minds. Therefore, in contrast to imparting knowledge, independent learning is insisted upon:

> 'We believe students need to do their work independently. After all, we provide resources to support them, we scaffold their development, but gradually we remove that scaffold to make sure the students can do their work independently.' (Ely, the programme leader and lecturer)

Based on this narrative, the two following questions were asked: 1) independent learning for what?; and 2) what does scaffolding mean? (scaffold will be discussed in a later paragraph). Independent learning in this course

goes beyond learning specific subject knowledge. Ely defines it as the critical ability to think between theories and practices. This ability is believed to 'predominate in the process of professional development for in-service teachers', and it can mainly be obtained by the learners' independent learning and thinking.

Written essay is the only assessment style in this course, which is the same as the UK-China case. The rationale behind this was discussed in the interview with Ely. It is interesting that at first he said 'I don't know why.' Then he tried to explain the functions of the essay from his perspective. Writing an essay is thought to be a 'traditional standard way to demonstrate the performance of learning'. Influenced by the programme value of linking theory with teaching experience, via essay, a student is able to present how well he/she understands theory and to what extent connections between theory and different teaching experience can be developed critically. In addition, the essay is thought to be 'the most convenient way of keeping fairness of assessment'. This is in contrast to group presentation, in which it is 'hard to determine how much contribution has been made by who'. The practical considerations of essay as assessment overlap with the UK-China case.

Scaffolding independent learning has been repeated by Ely. In detail, the scaffolding includes tutorials in each module. These usually take place face-to-face between module lecturers/personal tutors and learners, with one-to-one meetings or a group of two or three students. Ely said:

> 'They (the learners) come to me (in a tutorial), ask questions about essays/assignments, I am trying to help them shape their ideas. Sometimes, if I feel a student is completely out of track, a one-to-one meeting is needed because this student needs more structured support, and we can discuss issues in the meeting.' (Ely, the programme leader and lecturer)

Meanwhile, Ely states that other styles of scaffolding are preferred by colleagues on this course. Some people use online tutorials, and others are good at providing learning resources, for instance slides or formal videos. Draft-feedback is highlighted as a powerful scaffold for enhancing learning

outcomes. The lecturers provide 'a lot of comments to the drafts of assignments' sent by the learners. It is believed that these comments tell the learners whether and in what aspects they are going in the right/wrong direction. The students are supposed to learn from these comments and then be able to develop their work.

What impressed me when talking about scaffolding in the interview with Ely was that he strongly encourages the students to 'ask questions about anything they have doubts about'. He believes that in an educational context, it is 'the responsibility of a teacher to respond to students' questions'. A feeling of sympathy is expressed as:

> 'Studying anything is pretty much like doing a job, you don't know what you don't know. You don't know what questions you have to ask. Although it is difficult, you [the learners] need to find the way to ask, just ask.' (Ely, the programme leader and lecturer)

This statement shows that he knows the students' difficult feelings of confusion, and the struggling feeling of whether to ask a question. He also used the word 'never' to answer my question of whether he ever felt offended by any questions asked by the learners. In addition, he explained that his colleagues were supportive of questions from students:

> 'We [staff in TESOL] all know that these learners come from different parts of the world, they study here, in a new country and must have a lot of things to deal with. So we place answering students' questions, especially at the beginning of the semester, in the priority of our work.' (Ely, the programme leader and lecturer)

These narratives are in contrast to the attitudes of students who find it difficult to ask questions. The gap between these will be discussed more in the student experiences.

In summary, the course evidently shares its orientations with the UK-China course. Student-centred learning (i.e. independent learning, scaffolding), conceptually-oriented learning (i.e. critically linking theory with teaching experience, critical thinking and reading, building their own knowledge in an area, research-inclined learning objectives), and process-oriented learning

(i.e., gradually removing scaffolds, assignments and dissertation), are reflected in the data. The educational objectives impacted by these values present expectations of self-critical teachers, making sustainable improvements in professional knowledge and competence. These echo the UK-China case, whose objectives include academic and career orientations. In addition, the course routine is similar in the two cases: module teaching, self-study, writing an essay as assessment, with similar standards. However, course provision differs from the UK-China case: more learning resources, more scaffolding, English-language context, and an international learning community contributing to learning from diversity and effective group learning.

5.2. Motivation to enrol on the programme

This section will analyse how the Chinese learners come to this course through the frameworks of push-pull factors and intrinsic-extrinsic motivation. It aims to answer RQ2.

5.2.1 Contexts: macro and personal

The Chinese labour market in English education is degree-oriented. It is said that a master's degree is a prerequisite for applying for a job in public primary/middle schools in developed cities in China. One's degree is tightly connected to one's professional ability by employers. Six of eight informants told me that in their workplaces, a person with higher degree from a famous overseas university is believed to have better performance and teaching outcomes. Therefore, those employees who have Masters degrees tend to have higher salary even for the same job, and more opportunities for promotion. All the participants said they were pushed to improve their academic degree from Bachelor to Masters level if they want to maintain competitiveness in career development.

Based on the participants' self-introductions, their career routines so far have been formed. All eight have taken a Bachelor degree in China: four with English-relevant degrees, one with a Chemistry degree and one with a

Finance degree. Three of them tried office jobs before they became English teachers. They are currently English teachers with an average of four years' teaching experience, and one of them is a senior administrator in an English training institution. They worked in either primary school (mainly the private sector) or English training centers before they started this programme. They are younger than the teachers in the UK-China programme, also with fewer years of teaching (five average years of working). A potential expectation shared by these learners is to find a job better than the one from which they resigned. Going to public schools or working in top cities in China are preferred. They have resigned from their jobs and come to England for the one-year course, so they have to live on their deposit for tuition fees and living expenses. So they share a strong desire to look for a job after graduation as soon as possible.

These learners share a highly achievement-motivated personality which impacts their values related to how they think about their careers. They are inspired by setting goals for themselves. They enjoy a sense of satisfaction from learning new things, facing challenges, and developing competitiveness in a vocational career. In our interviews, they often said 'the comfort zone is boring,' 'I want to keep learning,' 'Challenges make me improve.' Two interviewees quit their jobs because of being bored with over-stable work/working context, preferring something 'challenging and interesting'.

In addition, the participants show great passion for English education. They like students and enjoy teaching activities. They believe English education is and will be promising in China. Y promotes and respects education itself in that 'its benefit lasts long-term and exclusively belongs to me.' All the participants think of a career in English teaching from a long-term perspective, so they want to prepare themselves with advanced knowledge to achieve career success in English education.

5.2.2 The push-pull factors influencing decision to study

The evidence in the push-pull framework explains why and how these Chinese students choose the UK course specifically.

Push factors in this case are interpreted as the reasons for excluding motherland and other overseas Masters courses from the learners' option list; in short, why the learner did not choose other programmes. In fact, only two (V and L) of eight participants had thought of doing a Masters in a Chinese university, but they soon gave up this idea because of the hardship of entering a Chinese master programme. Similarly to the data in the UK-China programme, the National Exams for Entering Masters Education in China, especially in two of the tested subjects, second foreign language and politics, are said to be much harder for these learners. It is easier for them to prepare applications for UK universities, in which there are no standard exams assessing knowledge irrelevant to English. What surprised me is that few informants know a UK-China collaburative MA TESOL course is accessible in GW, China, without travelling abroad. It is also interesting that, even when the learners are told about that programme, they don't show any interest in studying there. They seem to believe studying abroad is definitely the thing to do. Studying in China is thought by the informants to be an inferior option with limitations in cultural context, language background, and social diversity. This is in contrast with the informants in the other case (UK-China), who express obvious curiosity and willingness to undergo the UK case.

MA TESOL programmes in the US and UK were compared by the learners. The financial and time cost in studying a Masters course are the two main factors considered by the students. Shorter programmes are preferred by these learners because they have to cover expenditure in both tuition fees and living on their savings. Shorter time means less stress in financial issues, and learners can start to hunt for a new job as soon as possible. Therefore, the UK programme, with one year of study, is preferable to other options.

Life wellbeing in the country where the learners will start their Masters study was a concern for some participants (X, Ji, M) when they compared UK and USA, or different universities in the UK. They want to study in a stable and peaceful country. The USA is said to be undesirable due to violent gun-related events. They also avoid universities where international students, especially Chinese students, are discriminated against.

Above all, the costs of money and time, the hardship of entering the examination, and wellbeing are three practical considerations which influenced the informants to delete other options, pushing them to move forward with the UK MA TESOL.

The pull factors here are found to explain why the UK programme. They are mostly related to the advantages of the UK MA TESOL programme from the learners' perspective. The prestige of the British university is valued by all the participants. They prefer its advanced position in different league tables, which are considered overwhelming references regarding the performance of a university. The participants believe a university at a higher rank is higher quality, and provides better educational resources, for example qualified course design and teaching staff. In addition, positive learning experiences shared by the university's alumni are considered a non-official reference to the university's prestige, which is mentioned by three participants (X,V, Ji) to evaluate the educational quality of the university.

The UK MA TESOL programme is seen as a better-designed course compared with other courses in other universities. Four interviewees (T, Lin, X, M) did some research on different TESOL programmes in England. The purpose was to find out which programme is more professional and developed. Having sub-branches in TESOL and being integrated into the education discipline, as two signatures of the programme, have convinced these learners that it is a very qualified programme. Xiao's narrative is cited here to illustrate exactly how she thinks about this programme:

'When I was applying for a programme in the UK, I read each course's website carefully. I found its [the LS programme] course system was the most systematic. It is provided by the School of Education, and is specified into TESOL STUDIES and TESOL. Students are divided into those with teaching experience, and those without. There are also majors in education, childhood studies, science education. This subdivision appears to be very professional. However, in other institutions, their TESOL education is mixed with other schools mainly relevant to humanities, social science, language literacy etc. This gives me the feeling that it is not valued or has developed poorly in those institutions.'

Programme modules thought to be relevant to their professional career development are valued by most participants. Some learners prefer the contents which involve both language knowledge and education, especially teaching-learning theories. In addition to English as a language, the course focuses on theories of and approaches to language teaching.

Programme teaching staff have been highlighted by Lin and T. By reviewing staff information (their publications, research interests, current focuses), Lin and T suppose the staff in the programme are 'highly qualified and will benefit students'.

All the advantages mentioned above are highly relevant to educational quality. The interviewees share a strong desire to get a proper education of high quality. As Lin said:

'I really care about the quality of a programme. Is it good? Does the university put effort into developing it well? If it's purely for a diploma, I don't think it's worth spending so much money on studying abroad, so I must study on a good course so that I can really learn something useful.'

Educational quality has become the foremost criteria for these learners to select which programme is desirable for them. The highly-valued quality implies the learners' expectations of learning useful knowledge and skills which will benefit their profession, which will be discussed in the following sections.

5.2.3 Learners' expectations

Although the push-pull factors have explained why the learners prefer the UK programme to the others, it is still necessary to clarify what they would like to

achieve via studying it through the framework of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

5.2.3.1 Intrinsic motives: academic learning and exotic cultures

Partly similar to the case of UK-China, the learners want to benefit directly in terms of theoretical knowledge and teaching skills in English education. 'Language knowledge and theories', 'teaching material and textbook design' and 'language teaching skills' are repeated by informants. Where there is a little difference here is pedagogical knowledge, e.g. 'education theories', 'class teaching approaches', and 'teaching ability' have been specifically highlighted by the majority of interviewees (more than in the case of UK-China), because they think English language and English language education are two different things, and the latter is also needed by them. Two informants (M and T) mentioned the ability to reflect on teaching practices, but only one of them privileged it. This is quite different from another case where the learners highlight the focus on reflection. Most informants place much more importance on obtaining theoretical knowledge and skills in order to improve their teaching - for example, 'how to adapt different teaching approaches according to various students' contexts in a big class' - rather than understanding and reviewing their teaching practices. This might because they are new-born in-service teachers (with three or more years of teaching) who are keen on developing teaching quality through external resources. The learners with less motivation to reflect on teaching might encounter conflicts with a course which values linking theory with teaching practice in light of reflection. I am afraid that if they do not know what they did, how can they know in what aspect it could be improved?

A significant difference in intrinsic motivation between the two cases is that the participants in this case significantly value the expectation of exotic cultural experiences. The exotic culture here means, first, cultures of British education, which is related to the expectation of academic learning; second, it means

cultures of living in England, which includes multiple cultures (more than UK) and is more related to expectations of social life.

Studying in the campus of England has the geographical advantage of understanding and engaging with cultures of the UK. The learners expect that they will have plenty of chances to access, and benefit from, the educational culture in the UK. They are eager to know 'what British education style is', 'how class teaching and learning take place here', 'how British young learners study English, and 'what philosophy, values and ideologies underpin the British education system'. These understandings are thought to broaden their horizons of education, and enrich the learning experience: 'if I know how education is conducted in the UK, I must be able to borrow some advanced approaches for my own school' (X). In addition, English-language ability is expected to improve owing to learners being immersed in such a native-speaker context. This is much valued by the learners, who view English ability as one of the main professional competences for an English teacher.

'Being able to know in person what Britain looks like, and how people there live everyday lives.' is much appreciated by most learners because their knowledge about England comes from internet media, films, TV programmes (e.g. Harry Potter, Sherlock Holmes). Studying abroad in the UK gives them first- hand knowledge. Moreover, the cultural experience in person is thought to benefit the learners' English teaching because they will be able to teach Chinese young learners beyond the English language itself, for example the lifestyle and the social values behind the language (M, X).

Being part of an international community has been identified as another culture-related expectation held by the learners. This international community is supposed to have two functions: a community for informal learning and a community for cross-cultural experience. The former is mentioned by only one participant, T. He values the international learning context created by the UK programme. He thinks the learners' various cultural backgrounds will

contribute to a dynamic learning context where he will be able to directly know how English teaching is conducted differently in other countries.

A community for cross-cultural experience is expected by most learners. They believe that getting along with friends from different countries, travelling to other countries and doing voluntary works with different people are the most direct way to understand other cultures and how people live their lives in different ways. Encountering different cultures for some learners (Lin, X, M) is not only a window through which they see others' lives but also breaks the default life routine influenced by Chinese social tradition. Take X's words, for example:

> 'In our traditions, people should complete a range of specific things in each stage of their lives. Those specific things are shared by most Chinese people. For example, individuals should study hard when they are in their 20s, and they should get married and have children when they are in their 30s. In our traditional belief, there are specific tasks and targets for each age. I think, after coming to the UK, I probably will meet many people who can break through these stereotypes about life traditions. The defined life standards will be broken.'

The culture-related motives imply that learners want to understand and interact with different cultures. They are open-minded about new things, with an expectation that new cultural experience will inspire and enrich their lives. In this aspect, it can be inferred that developing cross-cultural ability is a potential expectation of studying in England.

5.2.3.2 Extrinsic motives: more than career development

Extrinsic motives in this case have been identified as those expectations to obtain tangible results from studying the UK MA TESOL course, and the indirect and long-term impacts on the learners. The same extrinsic motives as those identified in the UK-China case - the master's degree and promising career development (e.g. working in a better school, being an English course designer) - are strongly stressed by the participants on the UK course.

However, a more holistic personal development is distinguished in this case. In my interviews I can clearly feel that these learners have a strong desire for

a sort of personal improvement. It is strong but implicit, cannot be seen immediately but lasts a lifetime, and is comprehensive beyond professional development. I link this holistic personal development with the expectation of cross-cultural experience and ability. Studying in the UK is a totally new experience for the learners; they expect the possibility of 'an extended life' by 'jumping out of the conformity zoo' and 'jumping out of Chinese traditions'. In the participants' perceptions, immersion in different cultures can remind a person of what is unknown to them, which is a good starting point for learning and improvement. M's words offer an example:

> 'I believe, in addition to learning some professional knowledge, studying abroad is also an opportunity for whole-person growth. I think there are some things I don't know, but the sad point is I don't know what I don't know. By making contact with different people and cultures in a new environment, I can realize those things I didn't know. Then I get new things to learn, which develops me. I think being exposed to different cultures is a mirror reflecting on myself. The differences will inspire me.'

These Chinese adult students quit their jobs, spent a lot of money and one year on this course, under the pressure of running out of savings and being without income, leaving families and friends, and taking the risks of job-hunting again. From their perspective, they really want a big reward which justifies all of these costs. The reward appears to be a transformation positively impacting their whole life. I use one piece of narrative from Lin to end this section:

> 'One academic year will pass quickly, and I hope my studies and daily life will have as many positive transformations as possible. I hope to make progress in oral English and academic writing. I want to get an ideal score. I hope one day my life will become wider because of what I learnt and underwent here. I want to prove that my money is not wasted, nor is my time.'

Here comes a short summary of section 5.2. Chinese learners are motivated to learn MA TESOL in England because they are empowered by both external and internal factors. The external factors have been identified by push-pull factors. The push factors have excluded other educational options for the learners, focusing on study in the UK. The pull factors have highlighted the advantages of the UK programme. Learners' personal contexts play a central role in evaluating push and pull factors. The biggest difference between these

learners and those in the UK-China case is that the former are much younger than the latter, so they are better able to afford the risk of study abroad (e.g. resigning from their job, leaving families, lost income).

Moreover, internal factors have been discussed in relation to intrinsic and extrinsic motives. They are identified as the learners' expectations for learning on the UK course. These expectations enrich the learners' decision to register on this programme. Specifically, intrinsic expectations are knowledge and skills in the TESOL field, cross-cultural experience and abilities, which are related to expected career development with a master degree in TESOL, and broad and life-long personal development. Behind these motives, two items have an implicit impact: the learners' context and the cross-cultural element. The personal context is fully involved in what and why it is these factors instead of other factors that influence the informants' decision. For example, the students in UK case rarely thought about study at home owing to the acceptable cost of resigning from current jobs. Most of them do not have families so they can use personal deposit to pay for an education programme. They are willing to change jobs, and have strong desire for cross-cultural experience. The passion for exotic culture is linked with the whole personal development as an expectation.

5.3 Student learning experiences on the UK MA TESOL programme

In this section, data from class observations and second and third interviews with students are analysed. The themes are generated from the data in light of RQ3: students' learning experiences in the course context, and how they are different from the other case in this research. In order to describe how learners perceive the course routine, and compare with the other case, similar themes (attending classes, doing assignment) have been identified with those in the previous case. However, the sub-themes are different because of the different context, in which the Chinese learners' learning experiences are

influenced by a purely British education culture, which means they have their own way of perceiving the course and dealing with the challenges of learning.

5.3.1 Attending classes in the UK

As with the data of the GW programme, all the participants consider going to classes as one of the main learning activities. The classes they talked about include compulsory and optional modules. These modules are taught by UK teaching fellows, and featured 'Britain marks' from the perspective of the Chinese student interviewees. Based on my class observations and interviews with learners, this section aims to present the themes generated from the data, illustrating the experience and perceptions of how these Chinese learners perceive the modules on the MA TESOL course. These themes are: 1) British-marked teaching; 2) a dilemma of failure; and 3) teaching quality.

5.3.1.1 British-marked teaching

A UK class on this course usually involves three main parts: pre-reading (before and in class), group discussion, and lectures. The classroom is usually in a group style and very occasionally in lecture style, with seating row by row in a classroom. Most classes have fewer than thirty students (and around 15 in some optional modules), which is seen as 'small size teaching' for the learners.

The data around the learners' feelings about teaching sessions on this course show little difference between student informants. Class teaching is thought to be quite different from China, or from the expectations of the Chinese learners. The informants say 'it takes for some time' to realize 'it is how UK teaching works.' They told me their contrasting experience. In China, pre-reading aims to give a brief understanding of the topic in an upcoming class. In the class, a Chinese teacher will explicate the relevant knowledge, highlight the critical points of understanding the topic and complete a detailed knowledge picture of that topic. In contrast, however, the UK lecturers do not do these things. Instead, these things seem to be the tasks of learners before a class. The UK lecturers, in classes, tend to pick up some parts of the

knowledge and upgrade understanding of this knowledge. M uses a Chinese phrase, *'hua long dian Jing'*, to describe her feelings about teaching on this programme. In this phrase, *'hua long'* means drawing a dragon which has no eyes; *'dian Jing'* means drawing eyes for that dragon, so it is integrated. M said:

> 'I should draw the dragon by myself before going to class [hua long], then in the class, the lecturer's work is to add eyes for my dragon [dian Jing]. Then the dragon is alive. If I come to the class without a dragon, the class is meaningless even though the lecturer gives me dragon eyes. […] The Chinese class is not like this, we don't have to have a dragon before a class. […] The teacher will teach and help us to draw a dragon in the class, and guide us to add eyes.'

This narrative implies that the function of teaching on the UK TESOL programme is to upgrade and extend the learner's understanding of the knowledge instead of building basic knowledge. It also suggests that the learning autonomy expected by this course, together with the responsive teacher's role, is quite different from class teaching in China. It is worth adding M's extra comments to such teaching style. She thinks it does drive her to learn some basic knowledge before each class. If she is able to understand them, the effect of class learning is 'a cheerful feeling that I know what I have understood'. However, she stressed the risk that, if lecturers just rely on the learners to build basic knowledge by themselves without explanation for it, the learners might understand that knowledge inappropriately:

> Sometimes the theories are too abstract to understand, I am afraid what I draw is not a dragon […] then, I go to class where the lecturer gives me dragon eyes […]it is pointless.

In addition, six of eight participants find the teaching is 'too theoretical or research-oriented instead of practice-oriented'. This is far from their expectation that a TESOL course should deliver a range of teaching methods, and provide opportunities to practice using these tools. However, despite this, understanding theory becomes the priority of the course. Some learners positively accept it and think theory enables them to understand the knowledge behind teaching activities. Such understanding is 'deeper and more insightful than learning specific teaching methods.' The theory of Second

Language Acquisition is thought to be 'systematic knowledge by which various teaching tricks could be applied depending on individual educational context.' However, not all participants feel the benefit. Some are confused and dissatisfied with the theoretical teaching. The question 'why don't the modules give us practical tools which can be applied to teaching directly?' is shared by these learners. They believe that, compared with abstract theories, practical skills are more needed. Lin thinks the purpose of theory is to be applied to real teaching. Thus learning the theories is just 'half of the TESOL'; the other half should 'train us to use those theories'. Ji agrees with this idea and values the connection between theory and teaching by calling for 'opportunities to show such connection in classes.' X has the same feeling, and explained her confusion to a module lecturer. She got the answer: 'that is TESOL rather than certification training programmes. The academic education is for understanding the rationale behind teaching activities. It focuses on why.' X does not seem convinced because she told me the two things (learning theories and putting them into practice) were not incompatible with each other.

Language issues were mentioned by three participants (X, V, Lin). They feel the English listening and speaking ability implicitly required by the module teaching is a 'big challenge'. The class is taught in English with 'a lot of academic phrases and jargon'. It requires 'a long time of concentration and language proceeding.' The learners lacked such 'language immersion' before they came to the UK course, and so 'I feel lost and then back, sooner, lost again.' V attributes her language issues to being 'unfamiliar with theoretical knowledge'. She thinks the academic knowledge is so new for her that it takes some time to understand it, but the lecturer has moved to another theory. In addition, the lecturer's accent and unclear voice have been mentioned as factors hindering the understanding of modules. Apart from finding it hard to follow the lecturers, group discussion is not smooth for these learners, who worry that 'the thing in my mind is changed once it is spoken out' or 'my brain thinks a good idea but my mouth is able to say half of it.'

As above, the new teaching style, theory priority and language issues impose much pressure on these Chinese learners, leaving them feeling 'anxious' and 'frustrated'. Responsively, they have figured out some strategies to handle these challenges. Listening to TED talks (short videos of academic speech in different subjects) is employed by X and V. They found the academic style of TED is accessible for them, and from these talks they are able to enhance the expressions used in academic context.

Moreover, pre-reading is highlighted, with the function of 'preparing for a class effectively'. The informants do a lot of reading based on the reading list, with the purpose of 'drawing a dragon before going into a class.' They try to outline the knowledge of the intentional topic, and to become familiar with relevant jargon, so that even if they get lost in a class, it is possible to quickly re-locate themselves again. M describes the experience of benefiting from 'sufficient preparation':

> 'If I read a range of papers around the topic before the class, I feel the teaching becomes a communication with the lecturer rather than following her. The points stressed and extended by her echo my inner voices, then I get a very clear understanding of that knowledge. Otherwise [if I have not read sufficiently], I feel concerned - 'what does it mean? Where it come from? Should I know it in advance?'

5.3.1.2 Dilemma from an experience of failure

Despite taking strategies to address the challenges in adapting to UK teaching, V, who thinks herself a slow learner, feels overwhelmed by the intense tasks expanded from classes of modules. Each class has a new reading list for a new topic, and V said she was busy dealing with the task at hand while the new task was coming:

> 'I feel I am just starting to make sense of the topic of today's lecture by reading some papers, the new class is coming and I have to stop reading the current materials, shifting to other readings which aim to prepare for the coming class. [...] but the time is actually not enough for me [...] then the result is I failed to fully understand the topics.'

The knowledge delivered in the classes is not easy for V to understand; she has to do a lot of 'after-work' [learning activities after a class] to understand

the theoretical concepts, and indeed the whole class. The anxiety resulting from keeping step with teaching has troubled her, and her strategy is to replay each class both by online sound recording and in her mind after it is over. She recalls how the class proceeded, marks the knowledge stressed by the lecturer, and lists the ideas mentioned in group discussions, finally shaping a note covering the above points for each class. She spends the majority of her time doing such work but she failed one module.

In our interview, V was still very depressed owing to the failure. On one hand, she was so confused about 'why I spent almost all the time to study, working hard to follow the lectures, but the result is failure?' On the other hand, she tries to reflect on this experience:

> 'I feel even though I carefully followed each class, I have had no clear understanding of any topic, […] just have some ideas here and there[…] it seems working hard on each class doesn't ensure me to write an assignment. Does it?'

At that moment I said 'yes, your feeling is right.' Then I saw a surprised expression on her face, implying the message 'why? Really? How can it be?' Then she stated:

> 'I actually had such a feeling, when I was in the classes, that the class is just to inspire me by some ideas. […] I wanted to focus on the topic which interests me. But I denied this feeling and put each class equally in priority. [I thought] If I study hard for the classes, I can pass the assessment.'

V's narratives suggest a teacher-centred learning style. She persuaded herself to follow the teacher, and believes it is the right thing. Even though learning autonomy appeared when she felt it might be not wise to work on all the classes regardless of her interest, following teacher's direction in each class is her priority.

Her narratives also raise a dilemma for the Chinese learners: should they utilize module classes to widen knowledge in different fields, and to have some ideas on different topics owing to paying high tuition fees and having the precious opportunity to study abroad as they said, or should they focus on

one accessible topic and develop an essay on that, owing to the limited duration of the MA programme?

This dilemma has also been implied by the other three interviewees, who described similar situations. They find that the gap between module teaching and its assignment is 'too far.' It takes quite a lot of time to complete an essay, so that they don't feel they 'have extra energy to really taking advantage of teaching sessions'. Meanwhile, they find the module actually requires an essay, which is called 'the rule of the game'. They make their decision to prioritise, although knowing its limitations:

> 'I feel it's a great shame to only engage into the modules very superficially, because I have to focus on my own essay which exhaust my energy.' M

> 'I have to decide the topic of the assignment as early as possible then devote my time to writing regardless of other things [classes or learning activities]. I know I am wasting learning opportunities, but what else can I do? Seeing failure of essay?' LIN

> 'I know if I read materials of each session it will broaden my horizon of the subject, I know if I join the group work with sufficient preparation, there will be deep academic communication. But I can't do these, my brain is obsessed with writing […] otherwise I will fail.' X

According to these statements, the learners seem very product-oriented, demonstrating an instrumental approach to learning by exclusively focusing on the assessment. This is in contrast with the value of process-oriented learning advocated by this course. They isolate themselves into one topic for assessment, according to the rules of this course (i.e., one essay for one module). This is also contrary to the expectations of the programme that learners are inspired by international diversity, and develop their professional knowledge as English teachers or educators.

   After my data collection was over and at the end of the delivery of modules, V came to me with delight, and told me she had passed her other modules since 'exclusively focusing on writing one topic'. At the same time, she said 'it is very disappointing, I sacrifice them [modules]'.

5.3.1.3 Teaching quality

Teaching quality is mentioned frequently in student interviews. Satisfactory teaching quality, in this case, is explained by the interviewees as 'a sense of being inspired', 'a sense of understanding something' and 'a sense that I am learning'. From the student perspective, the teaching quality of the UK TESOL course is not consistently good, depending on two factors.

One is about the lecturer him/herself. Some lecturers are thought not to be good at teaching although they are good researchers. The class structure is not coherent. Knowledge is delivered in an inexplicit way. In contrast, some others are thought to be 'humorous', or 'very familiar with the field', or to 'have concrete pedagogical examples/experiences'.

The other factor is class design, which is mentioned by seven of the eight informants. In each effective class, a clear storyline could be easily identified by the learners. The class is well structured with different tasks. The questions asked by the lecturers are thought to be inspiring. Ji introduced good teaching related to reading skills in the first module. It started from the knowledge the learners already had, then moved to new conceptions. She and her study group liked the episodes presented in the class, demonstrating how a theory of vocabulary is linked to a teaching reality. The informants prefer theories to be explicated 'down to earth instead of laying in books', which means explained through concrete examples of teaching and learning instead of through other concepts in books.

X described one perfectly designed class related to research methods. The elements which facilitated her learning were: 1) purposefully designed games promoted engagement; 2) lecturer was guiding and inspiring instead of inputting; 3) the learning process overlapped with the process of doing tasks.

'I am absorbing knowledge rather than meeting up them,' said Ji, as a result of effective classes, indicating a connection between her and the knowledge. 'Get impressive knowledge', 'want to use that theory in my assignment' and

'feel interested to explore more concepts based on the class', were mentioned by other informants regarding positive learning outcomes.

In contrast, in ineffective classes, the lecturers are thought to be just 'reading slides', or 'somehow jumping from one theory to another'. The students cannot make sense of the knowledge, and have to 'almost learn from zero by myself'.

Group discussion is a major teaching approach utilized by each module on the TESOL course. The data shows that how the group learning is conducted influences the learning outcomes. In the modules, each learner usually goes into two types of learning groups: one outside the classroom with fixed group mates for doing allocated learning tasks, and the other in the classroom with random members depending on seats for discussing a topic in a class. Most learners tend to overlap the two types of group several weeks after starting the module, so they do learning tasks outside class and sit together in class.

Group learning benefits the Chinese learners in different ways. Some learners (Y M V) view it as good opportunity to practise English, specifically their speaking and listening skills. Thus they do not care too much about whether the group discussion enhances understanding of the module. One learner (Y) views it as a method of participating in the process of class, otherwise 'I feel sleepy and bored'. Some learners (V, Ji, T) think they are inspired by different opinions, and so their horizons of English teaching are 'extending to other countries'.

Although the perceived benefits vary, the interviewees share the experience that an effective discussion (which can enhance module learning) is influenced by a range of factors. The most mentioned factor is the quality of members in a group. M values a hardworking attitude as very important. She said:

> 'If each person is sufficiently preparing the task, reading and thinking, then the discussion is fruitful. Otherwise, the discussion is pointless, just talking one by one.'

The experience of working with a quality group mates is valued by X and V, who believe themselves to have 'very limited experiences'. They describe the inspiring and refreshing feeling in the group when working with learners who are experienced teachers of more than five years:

> 'They are good at connecting reading material with teaching practices, and I feel their opinions are really creative and insightful. They are able to broaden their insights beyond classroom activities, even beyond teaching. I seem never to have thought about these ideas.'

Diversity is highlighted by T and Ji. An 'open mind' and 'opinion exchange' resulting from talking with group mates who have different nationalities are seen as positively impacting learning. T takes teacher education as an example, saying:

> 'the group discussion enables me to understand how one general theoretical knowledge [e.g. principles in evaluation of teacher education modes] performs differently in different countries, and those applications are all reasonable. I feel the theoretical knowledge becomes real, so this is impressive for me.'

Therefore, how to utilize diversity to enhance the effect of discussion becomes critical. T and X believe the 'topic for discussion matters much.' The topic should promote ideas exchange between persons from diverse backgrounds. Topics such as 'what /how/why/applied/understood in your own context/school' is believed to be much better than 'what is vocabulary'/'what is teaching material'. The former is seen as 'connecting with different practices and bringing new things for us [the group] '. The latter is seen as 'answers can be found in books', and it is pointless for learners to swap similar things. A good topic is believed to promote different opinions around one point, then the discussion is developed.

> 'a good topic can not only induce different voices to focus on a very specific point, based on which our discussion goes further to structure these ideas, then we can get a deep understanding of the topic.' T

However, X thinks topics inspiring different ideas might run the risk that group work becomes 'an opinion introduction' rather than 'an effective discussion':

> 'Sometimes, we are required to share our experiences in teaching [e.g. writing skills]. In our group, each person introduced 'oh, in my context, I did…' one by

> one, and that is all. So what the point of the sharing? Where is the discussion? I feel it is like an introduction.'

Therefore, it calls for an expected outcome of discussion where the learners interact and negotiate with each other to achieve a specific goal. X shares another example:

> 'We are required to complete a teaching plan through discussion. We share different opinions and positively engage in grouping those opinions, adjusting the structure of our [teaching] plan, reviewing the contents of each subtitle. Finally we made our plan together. It is a good learning process.'

The teacher's role in group discussion is mentioned by X and Ji. Specifically, teachers should instantly respond to discussion in order to enhance its quality. Giving comments and summaries to the opinions discussed by the learners is seen as very helpful:

> 'I want to compare two types of discussion I joined here [in this course]. In type A, the lecturer, after each person/group sharing, always says 'good'. Our discussions are good, good and that is all. […] In type B, the lecturer links the opinions of different groups with her own understandings together, developing a summary of that topic. The topic becomes very impressive and clear for me.'

Although group discussion is seen as one of the main approaches of teaching in the UK, it is interesting that a majority of participants think it is sometimes unnecessary. In other words, the learners feel in some classes 'the group discussion is just for discussion itself', rather than benefiting the learning process. It seems that the lecturer thinks there should be a group discussion in a class so it happens, rather than a discussion being needed to better understand specific knowledge. In such cases, the learners cannot fully engage owing to confusion over 'why are we discussing?'/'discuss for what?' in addition, such unnecessary discussion sends a signal that 'the lecturer is just killing time because she/he does not know what to say.' In two interviews the learners link unnecessary discussion with 'the lecturer seems not prepared well for the class, so our discussions usually last for quite a long time(sometimes 20 minutes) and we are talking about other things.'

Two participants (Ji and X) describe a module which they think 'full of benefits of learning TESOL in the UK'. They are the only two participants who

joined an optional module called 'Global Learning'. They purposefully decided to take it based on information from the course's alumni, saying this module is 'one you must do'. Ji and X considerably value the module, which gave them 'extraordinary satisfaction'. In addition to its teaching design, the learners visit a primary school in middle of England, observing the classes of different subjects there, talking with teachers and students.

When I tried to determine the details of the observation, their answers covered little information about English language education; rather, they were more attracted by things which seem related to a broad education field. By comparing their own teaching experiences in China with the field visit in the primary school, the learners broadened their horizons of learning through direct field observation: for example, 'why is the teacher so passionate about teaching?' (motivation); 'how can the kids (eight years old) behave and concentrate so well in the class' (teaching design, class management, class culture); 'they are very polite both in and out of the class, I don't think it attributes to the school training, their parents must have done something' (family education).

Owing to COVID-19, the visiting activity on the module was stopped. However, Ji and X's excitement and passion for this module indicate that local fieldwork in enables Chinese learners to get close to the educational reality in England. It is non-theoretical, non-book learning. They benefit by doing observations, communicating with staff and children, and participating in class activities onsite. These concrete experiences corresponded to their expectations of study abroad in terms of opening their minds, gaining international horizons and experiencing English culture, as Ji said:

> 'This is the first time in my life, as an English teacher, to go inside a local classroom [in England], watching how the native speakers teach and learn their own language, or other subjects [...]. I am surprised by what I have seen here [...]. It is very different from what I did in China, and also very different from my imagination of British schools based on media reports. When I see the children are able to individually express their ideas so clearly, I seem to understand why I feel a gap between my course and my competence.'

In summary, the perceptions held by these learners regarding their module classes appear different from those held in the UK-China case. The latter commented positively on the classes taught by UK staff, much more than those taught by the Chinese staff. In contrast, the former, who were immersed in British educational culture, held various opinions depending on the individual class. Some were preferred and some others were criticized. However, the positive comments shared between the two cases were attributed to the classes in which the learners felt fruitful via effective teaching. This implies that the cultural element should be considered carefully and conservatively in the students' learning process. Do cultural factors really hinder Chinese learning?

5.3.2 Doing assignments

The assignments mentioned in the interviews with the learners include two tasks of two core modules. Two assignments are required for these learners: Task One is to describe a problem in their teaching, critically analyse it and find solutions; Task Two is to transcribe an interview between two participants, and to analyse the transcript according theories of second language acquisition. The informants' personal contexts for doing the assignment are similar: it is their first time writing academic paper with a long word count (three thousand words for each), and it is their first time writing an essay according to British requirements for MA students.

The two tasks share similar challenges for the informants. 'Go crazy', 'kill me', 'struggling with desperation' are repeated in their narratives of their writing experience.

5.3.2.1 Deciding on a manageable topic

In contrast to the China-UK case, in which the participants find it hard come up with topic ideas, the majority of learners in the UK case do not find deciding on a topic difficult, but rather 'find it difficult to decide a topic which should be in the control of my ability.' Although they are able to identify some promising topics in the class, they do not feel these topics are 'feasible.' Tutorials are

arranged to discuss potential topics for the learners. X is the only participant who thinks this tutorial is helpful. She wrote an email with proposed topics to the lecturer, and got feedback on each of them. Based on this email, she was able to decide on 'a suitable topic'. Others did not mention whether they took this action, and two informants felt that the tutorial did not work effectively on this issue. (This is discussed in 5.3.3).

Two routes have been found to enable the learners to decide on a topic for an assignment. One is called 'following my interest', which means that by going to the classes, the learners find a topic which is creative and interesting. They then follow this idea with the aim of developing the assignment. They think the UK lecturers really encourage personal interest in a range of topics. The other route is accessibility-oriented. The learners tend to decide on a manageable topic instead of an interesting one by reading widely. If the relevant knowledge of that topic is understandable for the learners, they start writing on it. It is said that usually the first route is employed at the beginning of the semester, and it becomes a 'naive idea' for most learners at the end of the semester because 'interest will easily become a disaster out of control.' T gave up his idea of evaluating the impact of one teaching approach on a group of young learners' writing ability because 'the variables are too many', even though he had thought of it as his potential dissertation topic. These narratives indicate that the learners might move from one end of being conscious of interest, to the other end of focusing on stable success. Their minds are obsessed with completing an assignment as safely as possible. There is no evidence in this research that any informant is trying to balance curiosity and passing the assessment.

5.3.2.2 Building knowledge gaps between class and assignment

As in the case of the UK-China programme, the learners found gaps between attending classes and doing the assignment. Fewer learners felt shocked and confused by this gap in the UK programme than in the UK-China programme. The majority of the informants seem to accept that 'teaching can do very little

for the assignment' and believe 'I have to rely on myself' very early in advance of starting writing.

Compared with doing the assignment, the knowledge learnt in classes is thought to be 'superficial', 'limited understanding', 'segmental' and 'almost focusing on what'. This knowledge, with sufficient pre-reading and effective teaching, are said to be able to meet the job requirement of teaching as an English teacher because 'plenty of theories and modes of language have been learnt.' This knowledge has provided a general outline of theory and developed interest in the assignment for the learners. However, it is still 'little to do with the assignment'. In order to describe the gap clearly for me, Y says:

> 'The knowledge learnt in each class is individual, just like a brick. I feel I know this in this class, know that in another class. But I do not know what the connections or the co-relations between them are. However, the assignment is like asking us to build a house with those bricks.'

Thus the assignment needs more systematic knowledge, linking different knowledge to develop a sense of a topic. M talked about the depth of knowledge required by an assignment:

> 'Doing the assignment requires me to understand the essence of the theory. [Although] in the class, I thought I had understood it, but I couldn't paraphrase it when doing the assignment, because I found there might be other understandings of this theory due to different paraphrases. So what does the theory really mean? I need to dig its essence, which rarely happened in the classes.'

T' s narrative echoes M and Y, highlighting independent learning:

> 'Classes are just for providing tools and a map for us; [when doing the assignment] I have to learn how to use those tools, to decide what area to explore, and to complete my expedition.'

Reading is identified as the main approach to supporting the learners for the assignment. They made progress by reading while many challenges were encountered.

In order to have a clear understanding regarding one topic, the participants said they had to read a lot of literature, around twenty to thirty pieces for each

task, much more than the fifteen required. Using Task Two as an example, Y said:

> 'I cannot find a suitable theory to analyse the transcript unless I know all theories [in second language acquisition]. I struggle to understand each of them, the contents, the context of application and what the differences and relations are between theories. It is crazy, I learn all of these things by myself.'

This suggests that the learner is reading for learning, which has been corroborated by other participants. Two (Ji and V) think the literature is difficult in that they lack relevant or basic underpinning knowledge. In addition, lack of teaching experience is thought by M and X to undermine their understanding of the knowledge. The theoretical knowledge seems still too abstract to be understood owing to their limited experience. Under such challenges, the learners talked about a strategy called 'cross literature'. Before the knowledge relevant to the assignment is outlined, a reading list provided by the module is considered the start point of reading, providing clues to other literature, by which reading is extended. The readers are moving between textbooks, other papers and different writers, searching for even a 'specific segment of theory'. They found that some confusing concepts in literature could be explained by other literature. Therefore the reading becomes 'reading across different literature at one time' instead of reading one by one. Thus the knowledge become understandable.

Four of the eight participants talked about literature searching, in which they feel they are wasting time. They do not like the 'painful process of searching' because 'it always takes the majority of time to distinguish what is rubbish literature and what is not.' Even though they are advised by the lecturers to do brief readings of introductions and conclusions, they still feel 'brief reading is the first bar, which prevents the obvious irrelevant papers but can do nothing with the implicit rubbish.' How to find the useful literature seems a necessary support for them. The library provides workshops for this need, although it is considered less useful because it helps to find literature rather than identify useful literature quickly.

5.3.2.3 Expectations of the assignment

In addition to the overwhelming workload of reading, what these participants have 'broken down'/ 'killed' is to understand the expectations of the assessment. Understanding expectations here includes what they expectations are, and how they can be achieved.

How wide and how deep?

T carefully read the marking criteria with the purpose of ensuring his writing was on the right track. He saw a statement saying the writing should be able to show 'a wide range of reading'. He wondered how wide. He went to his tutor and got the answer 'you should use different perspectives and link other theories instead of focusing on a single perspective'. However, T still felt confused because he wanted to know 'at least how many perspectives should be included.'

M has her strategy on this issue. She finds reading three different authors' works for one idea is suitable, based on which a theoretical concept can be paraphrased, and 'at least it is not a narrow range of reading.' In another example, X knows an essay should present deep understanding of a piece of knowledge, but she does not know what is deep and what is not. Similar questions have been held by other participants L, Y and T, who noticed that there are two statements regarding the criteria of understanding knowledge at different levels: 'deep understanding' and 'some understanding'. Thus they wonder how to distinguish between the two in their writing. Such confusion implies that the informants cannot understand the criteria unless an explicit example/explanation is given. It is very hard for them to perceive what the lecturers prefer and do not prefer, and to what extent.

In other situations, the students are able to understand what the criteria means but they do not know how to achieve it. Taking 'a deep understanding' as an example, Lin equals deep understanding with building connection with the knowledge. She searched for answers from the literature to the problem she

discussed, but failed to do it. 'I know I have to link the theory with my problem, and solve it. But my difficulty is how to link.' X describes her feeling of the same confusion:

> 'The linkage in my writing seems unnatural and unconvincing, I feel it is like I want them [the theory and the problem] to link regardless whether the linkage makes sense or not. So the discussion is still superficial.'

What are critical thinking and argument?

Apart from the marking criteria, the most-mentioned items are critical thinking and argumentation. Although these are highlighted throughout the overall learning activities in this programme, from going to teaching sessions to doing the assignment, the informants feel confused whether they are reading papers or developing a literature review. Few participants said they knew what critical thinking was or that they knew how to develop an argument; rather, the majority of them understand neither what the two things are nor how to achieve them. For example, M was shocked in a tutorial to be asked what her argument was because she did not know what an argument was. Y, X and L were struggling with 'what does critical thinking look like?' These two issues are discussed together in this section because they are interwoven with each other most often in my data: critical thinking influences argumentation, and argumentation relies on critical thinking.

It is very interesting that although these informants either claimed they did not know critical thinking or they were uncertain whether their understandings of critical thinking were appropriate, only one person asked the lecturer what critical thinking is. Others just figured it out by themselves and applied their understandings in the process of literature reading and writing. They explained to me: 'we feel the lecturers seem to take for granted that we know critical thinking, so we have to fill in the blanks by ourselves.' Therefore some evidence has been probed to show how these learners develop their critical thinking in their assignments.

Y told me he tried to understand critical thinking through YouTube, Google, asking classmates or reading books (e.g. on academic writing), but he cannot get a standard answer because 'everyone says different things.' Then he went back to the journal papers, carefully reading the literature reviews with the purpose of learning from the authors how to develop critical reviews. This strategy was also reported by other participants (L, T, Ji). They are then able to develop assumptions about critical thinking. These assumptions are tentatively applied to their writing, a draft or a formal assignment. The learners wait for the feedback from lecturers to see whether their assumptions have been approved or not. They are now confident of their understandings of critical thinking: a topic should be discussed from different perspectives, including the voices of more than one scholar. However, despite this, not all learners are able to fully understand what should be achieved by being critical; in other words, whether being critical is a tool to achieve something or the purpose in itself is unclear for the learners. This will be detailed in the paragraphs below.

Self-correction has been identified as another strategy employed by the participants to develop critical thinking. During the process of doing assignments, the learners felt uncertain about what they were doing, so they stopped and thought again, with the result that they 'find better ways to do the task.' M introduced one of her episodes in writing a literature review:

> 'I was writing the literature review for my first assignment, following the rules in my perception. The rules are to introduce each concept [relevant to vocabulary and reading]. I tried my best to praise each theory, like it is so good… in terms of… It is very useful because… then I felt it was less possible that an assignment would ask me to praise those theories. I might need to say something else.'

This narrative indicates M starts being critical about the knowledge by considering the purpose of doing the assignment. She intends to intentionally break the authority of theory, which tends to be thought of as always right. However, even M herself thinks it is not easy to challenge a theory:

> '[For one theory of reading skills] I feel this author says well, that paper is also good, and another perspective is reasonable. I agree with them all. I like [use]

this theory. Can I say these in my literature review? No, I have to find disagreement with it even though I see no limitations in it.'

This narrative indicates a competence gap in which she is unable to find a way to challenge a theory. In this aspect, Ji and V have made progress. They think that although they are not able to analyse the weakness of a theory from a comprehensive perspective, it is a little easier to find something unsuitable if a theory is placed in their own teaching context.

Related to M's statements about breaking the authority of a theory, X expressed her difficulty from the perspective of power distance:

> 'It is very difficult to critique an authority because I am a beginner - how can I challenge an expert who has worked on this theory for decades?'

In addition, the narrative from M above also implies an uncertain attitude towards the rationale for being critical, which is reflected in X's words that being critical is viewed purely as a requirement of the assignment. It seems that although some learners are able to recognize that multiple perspectives should be included in their writing, they have little knowledge about what this is for. Regarding this, Y shared an example in which he became critical of the mindset of insisting on a right answer. Y stated:

> 'I think a lot of Chinese students are like me. I did suppose everything should have a fixed answer […]. I found the definition of error [a concept in TESOL] has seven different versions, and I was struggling very much to find which one was correct by grouping and comparing different ideas in the literature. […] I felt exhausted and gradually doubted 'why do I need only one right answer? Does it matter so much?' […] I feel now that the different ideas serve for understanding errors comprehensively rather than competing to win.'

This statement points to Y's understanding of the purpose of critical thinking: gaining comprehensive understanding of a concept. There is no fixed answer forever. Different stances are options for thinking. The point is 'what I believe and why', which is applied as the argument in Y's writing. The comprehensive understanding provides a concrete background for him to develop such an argument between different stances.

However, some students do not jump out of the one-right-answer mindset as smoothly as Y does. 'Drowned in literature' was a phrase used to describe the struggles in which the learners sometimes find that the views on a topic, even though opposed to each other, are all reasonable. They lack ideas to deal with such contradiction, and they find it difficult to develop argument in light of different stances. Even Y himself, despite the example above, feels that it is very challenging to synthesize different ideas. This is because, to take reading skills as an example, understanding each of the abstract concepts in reading is 'brain burning', not to mention finding a way to organize them. X seems to have compromise for this challenge. She does not search for all voices on a topic, and gives up those ideas too abstract to understand, focusing only on those which are accessible and available. This compromise is because the reading range is too wide for her in the limited time. She said she gives up the prospect of a distinction [the first level of mark for an assignment] for feasibility.

In addition to breaking authority and jumping out of the one-right-answer mindset, another example of developing critical thinking, from T, is self-correction. He is becoming critical in his work by shift from 'presenting knowledge as much as possible' to 'keep what is necessary'. The necessary here means the most relevant knowledge connected with his writing purpose. In the first assignment, he used to cover all the theories about reading fluency [a topic in TESOL], but the word limitation did not allow so much content, which forced him to critically think about the purpose of presenting theories. An email communication with his tutor supported him in this situation. T told me:

> '[via the reply of tutor] I finally realized there was no point covering so many concepts; instead, I just had to focus on those useful for resolving my problem.'

This evidence shows a transformation of the learner, from a knowledge re-teller to a knowledge user. He is learning to make decisions between optional theories. Critical thinking is involved in this process, with the purpose of building connections between the identified problem and relevant theoretical tools. However, this transformation does not mean this participant is confident

of his critical decision. He keeps hesitating about whether it will fulfil the expectation of the examiners in this course, because

> '[…] there are four walls [meaning the theories involved in reading fluency] which constitute a room [meaning reading fluency], but now I am just focusing on two of them [meaning the adopted theories]. Is it acceptable? Will they [examiners] say my writing is not integrated?'

M, Y and T's examples partly chimed with other participants who had similar experiences in writing literature reviews. These informants, on the whole, are good at presenting 'what others said about this knowledge' but less so at 'what I think of it'. This might be because, as they said, literature reviews in the UK are quite different from those they did in China. In the interviewees' previous experience, the literature review was to introduce, one by one, the relevant concepts and theories of a topic. For each concept, the learners were expected to introduce what it is. Comparing and contrasting academic understandings was unnecessary, and nor were the learners' own opinions in light of the introduced knowledge needed. Furthermore, learners were not required to explicate why they chose this theory rather than another one. Therefore, they were shocked that an argument is required in a literature review. They feel stressed about how to demonstrate critical thinking. In the process of learning this course, sooner or later, despite the learners finding that placing literature into an individual's teaching reality is a useful routine of critical thinking, like T in this example, and despite knowing that this routine supports the critical evaluation or application of theoretical knowledge which results in argumentation, it does challenge these students. Because these understandings about learning TESOL in the UK are so new for them, it takes some time for them to build up. It takes some time for them to transform their identity from knowledge re-teller to knowledge user. It also takes some time for them to practice the skills implicitly needed during this process, such as building new understandings of learning, and meeting the programme's expectation by tentatively using those understandings.

5.3.2.4 Language issues and plagiarism in the assignment

The shared background of these learners is: 1) they are in-service English teachers, and 2) they have all passed the IELTS test with a score over 6.5. Therefore, it seems there would be few language challenges for them in academic writing. However, language issues were mentioned by six of the eight informants. The most frequently mentioned one is that writing an essay in the English language troubles their thinking process. Although the literature is written in English, the informants understand the academic ideas in Chinese in their minds; then they paraphrase academic stances into English. During this process they have to, on the one hand, keep their thoughts correct in the shift into words on paper. On the other hand, they have to keep the words in correct English expressions. Therefore, very often, the idea disappears whilst the learners are either thinking of the English language (i.e. grammar or vocabulary) or looking for a character on the keyboard.

Another frequently-mentioned issue is the English expression expected on this course. The informants thought the IELTS test would be the standard academic English, and so they tended to transfer experience of doing the IELTS writing test in China into writing their module assignments. Those experiences include using long compound sentences, and using complex words instead of simple ones (e.g. 'encompass' instead of 'include'). In contrast to the informants' beliefs, they are told by tutors or in assignment comments to use simple sentences and words so that the meaning of their writing is clear. IELTS and academic English in a real educational context are different things. They gradually came to know the norms of English language accepted by the programme, and feel happy to follow the new rules.

Plagiarism was mentioned as another issue in the student interviews. In contrast to the case of UK-China, in which the learners are confused by the definition and regulation of plagiarism, the majority of students said they feel confused about to cite references appropriately; for example, how to do indirect citing, which means a reference to be cite comes from a piece of

literature which has already cited it. Another example is 'I want to avoid plagiarism, but how can I know whether my idea has been stated by others?' It is worth pointing out that V made a mistake in which she was accused of plagiarism. She felt surprised to be told she had plagiarised because she copied one paragraph from her first assignment to her second assignment. She told me in our interview:

> 'It was the first time I had heard of self-plagiarism. And I know some other students made this mistake […] if it is a mistake repeated between different learners, why does the programme not tell us directly about those common mistakes? then we can avoid them. They [the programme] just give us a website with loads of information to learn [about plagiarism].'

5.3.3 Scaffolding

In this case, different types of scaffolding are used by these learners who are filling the gap between module teaching and the requirements of the assignment. Unlike the China-based case, students in this case get more face-to-face tutorials and written comments (not every module in China-based course has a draft-feedback routine). They have personal tutors, lecture tutorials for academic issues whilst they have one draft-feedback and one submission-comments for each module task. In other words, students in the UK case are officially provided with more opportunities to communicate with and get support from lecturers than in China.

The tutorials discussed here are those offered by module lecturers in advance of each assignment. These are widely shared by the interviewees as the most effective scaffold for the face-to–face style. In a tutorial, a lecturer and learner/s discuss the questions around the assignment for that module, usually including potential topics for writing, difficulties in learning (e.g. reading the literature), organizing ideas, refining the outline of their writing, and the issues in the draft. The face-to-face communication (usually 15 minutes for each student) offers opportunities to clarify questions confusing the learners, and to get advice from the tutors.

Comments on writing (on both draft and formal assignment) given by lecturers are also thought to be very helpful to 'learn from it and develop the next time'. In addition to an overall comment on a whole work, the comments on lines of writing are particularly highlighted by the learners because these comments tell them specifically in which part they have done a good job and which part is weak. Reading the comments, especially for a formal assignment, enables the learners to know how and why their work is evaluated in such a way. The comments show in what aspects and in what ways the work could become better. They are then able to clarify 'the tastes of the examiners' and 'what I need to improve in the next stage.'

However, the support obtained in these ways is thought to be 'still limited' or 'just better than nothing' by all participants. They described the challenges where a question is asked and answered but the problem still exists.

5.3.3.1 Failure of scaffolding

In some occasions, the failure dysfunction of asking and answering questions is because the lecturers failed to understand why the question was being asked. So their answers could not resolve the question fundamentally. To take this example of deciding on a topic: the learners have some options for assignment topics and they ask for advice. When they ask a tutor 'which one is better?' or 'can I write…?', the meaning is that they are asking for a risk evaluation of a topic. They are afraid of falling into a trap where the topic is too difficult to control owing to their lack of experience/knowledge. Therefore, what they want is an answer about to what extent a topic is difficult or what potential risks it might entail. However, in such situations, the UK lecturers usually encourage the leaners' ideas. 'Every one [topics] is good in their [the UK lecturers] eyes', the students told me. It shows a contradiction in beliefs between the UK staff and the Chinese learners. The former tend to believe that learning is an exploratory process of development based on interest. The latter want to pass the assessment as successfully as possible. The former think that deciding on the topic of their assignment presents learner autonomy,

while the latter think the lecturers are able to give an answer depending on their knowledge and experiences.

A further statement should be added here, that the data above (on deciding assignment topics) might lead readers to the assumption that the UK lecturers let the learners make a completely free topic decision. This is not true. The staff give their negative opinions to inappropriate topic options. I have not mentioned these cases here because they do not serve the purpose of this section, which is to illustrate the contradictions between staff and learners in the context of asking questions.

Another typical example refers to a group of situations where the learners fail to be guided when challenged by different ideas. They are confused by various definitions of one thing (e.g. errors), different understandings of one theory, or different theories explaining one problem. Then they ask the tutors 'how can I do… because there are many…?' The learners gave me a summary of the answers, as given by different lecturers: 'whether long or short, their answers to such questions always mean everything is acceptable.' The students feel disappointed, for they can rarely get a clear answer about what is right, nor a definite attitude of yes/no. This example suggests that the UK lecturers do not understand the reasons behind the students' questions, and so they tend to explain the specific knowledge, indicating a different understanding of it. However, the students who have such questions believe there is a fixed/right answer for the knowledge, and they are struggling to find it. They come to the tutors to finding a right answer, but they fail. What they actually need first of all is to break this stereotype by being told that not everything has a fixed answer, then the forthcoming explanations referring to specific concepts/theories are able to make sense.

Sometimes the students feel their tutorials enable them to 'just understand a thing in the aspect of language but with no idea of how to do it'. To cite again the previous example of different stances: In the tutorials, some learners are able to know each of the theoretical stances is reasonable if reviewed from

different perspectives. However, the shared challenge is how to deal with such contrasting or even contradictory opinions. They wonder 'Can I just focus on one of the voices?' 'How can I group the ideas which are so different?', but they cannot get answers to these confusions because the tutorial has passed. X gave another typical example of 'linking theory to your practice.' In a tutorial, her tutor said: 'what you should improve is to link the theory to your problem discussed in the writing.' X remembered and understood this comment 'just at the language level [what I should do] but not at the approach level [how to achieve it]'. Therefore she was challenged by 'how to link?' She tried different styles of linking them but had no idea 'which one is really a link or a desirable link'.

In such cases, the challenge has little to do with educational culture but has much relevance to the limited opportunities for asking questions face to face. It takes some time for the learners to clarify their questions and the comments, moving from 'I have heard that [language level]' to 'I have questions after trying [strategy level].' Opportunities for further communication, or more scaffolds, are needed on such occasions. Four participants (X, Y, T and L) gave examples where they were positively supported by the scaffolding followed by comments. In these situations, the learners not only received comments on what weaknesses existed in the writing, but also on how to deal with it. 'Please elabourate on this' is a comment widely used by UK lecturers. Some learners were unable to understand it until they saw 'please elabourate on this, give an example here, because…'; then they felt they were able to understand that in addition to citing words from big names, examples are needed in academic writing to support the reader's understanding of the meaning of the writing. Similarly, 'unclear' is another comment which frequently appeared, although the preferred format is 'unclear…, do you mean…? Please give reasons/other evidence of… please read… [some suggested literature]'.

5.3.3.2. Pretending to understand

Pretending to have understood the answer is a strategy shared by the interviewees in situations where they are afraid of being offensive to tutors, or where they do not think they will get useful answers. For example, learner X asked a tutor what critical analysis was? The tutor answered it in very long words, but the learner still felt confused, plus she felt embarrassed to continue to ask in this situation because 'it was desperate that I cannot understand it despite the long explanation.' So she pretended to understand it at that moment and went back to her own thinking. She told me 'I actually don't need the explanation, just give me an example. Look! That is critical analysis. Then I am able to get some feeling for it.' X also told me why she did not explain her needs to the tutor: 'I am afraid the tutor would be annoyed because I wasted his explanation and asked for another support which he might not be good at.'

In addition to avoid being offensive, pretending to understand has been employed by the learners in other situations where they felt 'we should have known something'. Taking critical analysis as an example, Y did not know it and he did not ask the tutor either because 'I feel our lecturer believes it [critical analysis] is a shared knowledge for everyone. We should have known it before coming here. So I think it is my job to understand the very basic knowledge.' The result was that Y pretended he had understood critical analysis, which was first read in the assignment requirement whilst he spent a lot of time searching for the answer by himself.

Another typical example is offered by T, who read a comment on his work saying 'too descriptive'. He told me: 'I feel the tutor thinks I should have known what it was [descriptive] and how to improve it [from descriptive to non-descriptive], but I actually have no idea.' When, in our interviews, he was asked why he had not asked the tutor for the meaning of the comments, T showed great surprise: 'how can I say [to a tutor] I don't understand the comments? Will the tutor think I am so poor to understand English words that are clearly written?'

Compared with the narratives given by the programme staff saying they welcome and are ready for any questions from learners, these narratives indicate that these learners are over-careful about asking questions. They are afraid of being thought foolish if they do not know the things they are expected to know. Few learners' first reaction is to ask. Instead, most of them judge what should be asked and what else should not be, before they ask a question. If they perceive that some knowledge seems 'obvious to everyone except me', they feel nervous and tend to struggle with themselves. It is also very interesting that the way in which they evaluate what things they 'should have known' depends on whether it has been explained especially by lecturers or whether it has been asked about by other learners. For example, the majority of interviewees have little idea about critical thinking but few of them asked because first, the phrase is used by lecturers as an everyday term, and second, nobody had a question about it. Therefore, the learners felt they were responsible for understanding it by themselves so that they are able to keep step with others.

The learners' experiences of dysfunctional scaffolding and pretending to understand imply that they do not fully know what asking a question is in the discourse of this programme, even though they are encouraged to do it. X's example justifies this inference. X followed the lecturer's statement 'just email me if you have any questions about deciding assignment topics.' She wrote an email of around 1000 words, expressing her ideas on a range of potential topics. She was replied to with an email commenting on those topics, plus the sentence 'please do not write such a long email anymore.' X laughed and told me: 'I initially felt it [long email] was not a good idea but the lecturer asked us to email him if we had any questions, so I did that.' Her words implied a tone of lack of knowledge about how to ask questions appropriately in such circumstances, although she wanted a face-to-face conversation.

5.3.3.3 Stepping out

To continue with the example of X's email about asking a question: although it shows that some Chinese learners appear to lack knowledge about how to ask questions, from another perspective, X's experience has been a positive trial which has broken her over-careful attitude towards asking for help. She did not feel she was labeled as offensive by the tutor, and she got advice on the topic of her writing.

Another example, from T's experience, indicates how a student was pushed to ask for help and got a positive result. T is a student who comports himself very strictly, being smart, getting distinctions and studying hard. He said he would not go to lecturers unless he was very stuck. He was afraid that asking questions frequently would make him look foolish. However, he encountered a great challenge when he decided on a topic about reading fluency. He found the literature supporting this topic was very limited so he went to a tutor, asking to change to another topic. The tutor gave him a book to read and encouraged him to continue with this topic. He read the book and found he was unable to understand it at all. He doubted that he was too foolish to complete this course but he was very reluctant to ask for help because 'how can I say to my tutor that I cannot understand the book he gave me? How foolish I might be in his eyes.' However, he has no choice but to meet the tutor again, to change to another topic. The tutor was very surprised by T's experience, saying 'how can you believe that a book should be understood just by reading it once?' T felt surprised too, saying 'it is my first time to know that even an expert has to read a book several times to understand it, there is nothing foolish about it.' The result is that T kept reading the book and understood the relevant knowledge for the same topic. He got distinction in that assignment.

This is a typical example indicating how the two persons (learner and tutor) make efforts to build a functioning scaffold. The learner, T, pushed himself to ask for help at every opportunity once he found he could not keep going, taking the risk of being thought foolish. However, the tutor acted in contrast to T's

assumption. He provided support, encouragement and a new attitude to learning. Through this experience, the two people understood what the other was thinking, and then they were able to respond to it. The co-response between them enabled the scaffold to function well.

In brief summary, the learners failed to get appropriate support via asking questions owing to the educational cultural differences between the UK and China, the policy of course provision, and learners' over-carefully attitude towards asking questions. Thus the scaffold tended to be limited in how it was used. It is somewhat contradictory that on the one hand, the learners claimed they needed support, and on the other hand, they did not take steps to get appropriate support owing to challenges they were unable to overcome. Like the example of T and X, although it was very hard for them to ask for support, they made further attempts and the result was by no means negative. Communicating with university UK staff is a direct opportunity for the learners to practice how to do cross-cultural communication, which is unique and valuable for study abroad. It should be acknowledged and kept in mind by the learners that cross-cultural ability is not always learnt spontaneously or by nature. It sometimes needs courage to break self-stereotypes and limitations, honestly and directly expressing 'what I really think is…'. After all, how can the UK staff develop their scaffold if nobody tells them what is preferred? Chinese students themselves might be the right person to do this job in the first instance.

5.4 Reflections on the programme

5.4.1. Perceived personal development

In the final interviews with the participants, they were invited to reflect on their whole experience of learning MA TESOL in the UK case. It was found they have come a long way compared to the start of the course. It is very interesting that the informants in the current case have gained professional development very similar to the learners' transformations in the UK-China case. The data has been grouped into the following themes: 1) deep understanding of

theoretical knowledge; 2) reflective abilities; 3) other competences; 4) teacher beliefs.

5.4.1.1 Deep understanding of theoretical knowledge

Most students think they have made obvious improvement in understanding theories of teaching and learning English. In particular, writing essays, which play a critical role, are valued for pushing the learners to think about theories deeply. To take the theory of motivation in M's narrative as an example, by doing the assignment, she was pushed to review her own young learners' motivation to learn English. She had to carefully analyse in what aspect and why those young learners' motivations are weak. Then she needed to propose a solution to improve their motivation. During this process, her reading and thinking went deeper than understanding a general theoretical frame, e.g. what motivation is and the factors of school teaching impacting on students' learning motivation. She needed to learn how these factors behave differently in various microteaching environments, and whether any interactions exist between these factors. She also needed to think more deeply, linking her teaching reality with those researched in the literature. The purpose was to understand how motivation theory is presented explicitly and implicitly in her context. Thus she was able to build up her own knowledge of motivation in her specific context. This understanding was deep and concrete, based on which her suggestions for promoting young learner's motivation to practise oral English could be constructive and reliable. M stated that she was unable to do such analysis without theoretical knowledge and the assignment.

M's case above indicates that writing essays provide the learner with a compulsory opportunity to be able to focus on one issue in a specific teaching context, comprehensively analyse it, and resolve it through theoretical knowledge. Her understandings have been deepened in two aspects: 1) building knowledge of a specific educational episode with the guidance of academic ideas, so that her understanding is systematic; 2) building

knowledge of the application of theory and adapting this to a real English teaching environment.

Y's case of doing an assignment for Second Language Acquisition echoes M's opinions. Y said he was unable to know that he knew nothing until doing the assignment for that module, although he felt good in each class and he was confident that he had understood the academic stances in the module. Y said:

> When I started writing the essay, I suddenly found that what I understood were knowledge blocks here and there […] whereas the assignment requires me to connect them systematically […] what the correlations are among these knowledge blocks, what function can organize them together in different way […] I felt I did not get the essence of this module at all.

Y's thinking was deepened by the challenges of doing the assignment. He was searching, via plenty of reading, for the implicit essence behind various theoretical conceptions in the discipline. He described a threshold where he suddenly understood the essence of Second Language Acquisition:

> 'That knowledge becomes active and systematic, shaping a map in my mind, so I know I can go anywhere [applying the knowledge to resolving problems] in light of this map. It is a memorable feeling of achievement and satisfaction.'

However, not all the informants speak positively about theoretical knowledge. X and Lin have negative comments. They think personal teaching experience influences the deep understanding of theory. In some modules, they failed to build a deep understanding because they were unsure of what the theory was and which teaching practice could be linked with it. In such circumstances, their essays were superficial and the arguments were difficult to squeeze out.

5.4.1.2 Ability to reflect on own teaching practice

Similarly to the case of UK-China, students mentioned development of reflective ability. Reflection here has two understandings: reflection on teaching practice, and understanding MA TESOL via reflection. These two forms of reflection overlap with each other in the students' narratives. Students were driven to reflect on their teaching practice, by which they changed their

perception of MA TESOL from content-oriented learning to concept-dominated learning.

T told me that through writing essays, he felt the TESOL course functions as a pool of instruments which are a range of theoretical concepts, constructs and systems. He has to use different instruments to dig himself. The purpose is to find the essence behind the events/issues/activities in his previous teaching, and his thoughts/feelings/behaviours about/towards English education. During this process, T kept asking himself 'what did I do? How did I do it? Why did I do this instead of that? Can it be improved?' T says his thinking is driven by different theoretical stances, that these are fighting in his brain, and he is able to hear different voices, all of which guide him to build new understandings of old experiences of teaching. T's description implies that theories are not at the centre of his learning; instead, teaching practice in his context is the focus of learning. His learning seems not to be searching for or receiving knowledge, but instead, reflection is seen more important. Critical thinking and deep learning has taken place in the process of reflection. This chimes with what L described as her feeling when writing essay: 'I feel I am looking at myself from a mirror, it is me while also not me.' I interpret it as the learners reviewing a fact with different lens, then they gain a new understanding of that fact, which might contribute to an enhanced perception of teaching and learning English.

Y says his transformation is to be able to consider teaching from the learner's perspective. Y says that in the past, he was confused in some teaching situations where he had to repeat a piece of knowledge [e.g. a grammar tense] again and again but the learners could not understand. He carefully refined his teaching, but this did not work either. This TESOL course provides learners' insights into learning English, Y tells me:

> 'It is like a brain refreshment […] I never thought about my learners having their own ideas. I cannot assume they are blank paper and that they are able to receive anything I impart to them […] their ideas about learning English is quite important to improve my teaching.'

This statement implies that the teacher-centered perception of education held by Y has been undermined, which will enable him to teach effectively in the future.

Lin's case is somewhat special among the informants. She initially criticized the programme heavily, feeling great disappointment because the programme differed significantly from her expectations. On average, teaching quality was not good between different lecturers. She failed to gain any practical techniques or methods to teaching. The theories seemed to be unsuitable for class teaching in China. She worried too much that studying on this course must be a waste of time and money. However, her opinions were changed when she read a paper discussing what TESOL education should be. She suddenly realized at that moment that her imagination about TESOL was wrong. TESOL is not professional certification training. It should value academic skills, and be research-oriented, so that the learners are able to do self-development in their future career. She then shifted her learning attitude and approaches, linking theories to her own class teaching. She told me 'I will not wait for any instant teaching solution on this course. I am working on developing my teaching by myself.' This has suggested a shift from passive learning to positive learning since she knows what TESOL really is. She felt disappointed that nobody had told her what TESOL is:

> '[…] if I was told this is TESOL, its difference from teacher training, I would not have wasted those learning opportunities in the first semester by just ignorantly complaining and worrying. I am sure at least half of the learners [in my class] did not know what TESOL is […] that is really bad […] we are studying in our misunderstanding.'

This narrative has reinforced my feeling in the interviews with students of both cases: they seem to have little idea about what MA TESOL is, its values, purposes and approaches of provision; they seem to have some imagined assumptions for learning on the courses, and they are not told whether these assumptions are appropriate. In a word, in both cases, I feel the learners are starting, or continuing, a Harry Potter adventure without any preparation.

It is worth pointing out that, though reflective ability is shown in two cases, fewer learners perceived such ability in the current case than in the other case. This might because learners' average years of teaching are higher in the UK-China case than in the UK case. The accumulation of experience equals a knowledge background which enables the thinking to deepen.

5.4.1.3 Other competences

Other competences mentioned are critical thinking, research ability (i.e. academic roles, norms, and the procedure of conducting research), problem solving and academic reading/writing. These competences are evidenced from the learning experience of module teaching and doing assignments, and they are much more similar to the competences obtained by the learners in the UK-China case.

Moreover, a competence called learning ability has been highlighted much more by the participants in this case than in the UK-China case. The majority of informants told me they felt they were learning theoretical knowledge of English education whilst learning how to learn under English educational culture. The latter is far more difficult than the former. The latter is also unlike the former, in which the learners are at least able to identify what theories they should know and how to learn them, whereas in the latter they are confused. X said:

> 'I initially actually did not know I was not qualified [learner]. I just felt it seemed we [me and the programme provision] were not on the same page. I was confused about how I could keep step with the programme.'

Y, in the middle of writing his dissertation, asked me to add his reflection to the data (data collection for learners was completed three months ago). Y believes his learning experience in this programme was a process of moving from a new-born learner to a baby learner. Being a new-born learner means that TESOL was unknown for him, especially the programme expectations and the way it is provided. Baby learner means he already knows the preference of the UK course regarding academic learning. M and L share

similar feelings as Y. They underwent the hardship of 'getting along with the programme', from being 'unknown to each other' to 'I see it is like that'. They added: 'we finally found we were able to learn even though the course would be over one day. The process of writing essays equals learning something and resolving challenges.' I think these statements suggest learning ability for sustainable development of their careers. The participants believe they will benefit in their careers as they know what to do with an unknown thing and how to do it. For example, M knows there are teaching challenges in her future career but she feels she is able to handle them:

> 'I know how to synthesize different perspectives to investigate a problem, and I also know any theory should serve for my context. I need to adapt knowledge in my career but without believing in authority [that knowledge equals a fixed authority].'

This statement together with the reflective ability (in 5.4.1.2) seems to imply a transformation of epistemology in which the authority (teacher, expert, or knowledge) in the learning process is removed and the student is at the centre of learning, deciding what and how to learn. A conceptual mind set of learning has developed, which might benefit these participants in wider ways. This interpretation is reinforced by T's summary of his learning experience:

> 'The shift in way of thinking, from memory [learning by remembering] to figuring out my own ideas, is a milestone for me [...] I am freed from remembering knowledge [...] I am now focusing on deep thinking, analyzing and applying. It will definitely enhance the way in which I teach my students. I think it is a good way to learn effectively.'

Above all, based on these stated personal developments in terms of theoretical knowledge, reflection, and competences, especially learning ability, it is safe to say these informants have become confident students who are able to adapt to UK higher education culture whilst they are moving toward becoming English teachers with sustainable development ability, echoing the course expectation of confident teachers and career development.

5.4.2 Disappointment

The learners express substantial disappointments with their learning experience. The fundamental reason is that the learners in this case have not

felt they have obtained the expected development in terms of breadth and depth by taking full advantage of learning TESOL in UK. Evidence are:

1) Limited cross-cultural social experience

To my knowledge in light of the interviews, for these learners, their routines for social contact with people from other countries are of two types: 1) off campus, which includes living with foreign students, volunteer works in local organizations and short homestay programmes; 2) on-campus opportunities which are provided by the university both formally and informally, for example module learning, social events around festivals, and activities in the student union. Only two of the eight participants talked about their social lives involving getting along with people from other countries. One is L, whose flatmate is a student from Egypt. The other is Y, who often goes to the gym with his British classmate. Language ability and cultural knowledge, as the two most important aspects valued by L and Y, have improved via getting along with these 'foreign friends'.

For the majority of interviewees, however, the social living experiences involving another culture are described as 'very few'. On the one hand, most of the informants live with Chinese flatmates for 'similar living habits'. In addition, the majority of students in TESOL are Chinese, with a limited number of English native speakers or people from other countries on this course. Therefore, the Chinese learners do not have many chances to know 'other people [people from other countries]'.

On the other hand, the majority of students said they were obsessed by intensive learning, which leads to lack of social life. For example, T said he was interested in the tennis club at the student union, but he gave up soon after two tries because 'I found it is impossible to complete my study without 100% devotion.' Similar issues are mentioned by X, M and L: their daily schedule is going to classes, going to libraries, going to supermarkets and going to kitchens. I was surprised by some daily routines in which I saw some

Chinese learners would travel around very often. My participants told me they also felt very surprised about those students who are able to travel around and go to different parties - 'how can they have so much time?' I think what Lin said could respond to this confusion:

> 'I used my deposit, quit my job to study here. Time is flying […] and I don't want to waste any chance of learning. I really hope I improve via this learning, in the aspects of English language ability, teaching ability, knowledge. I want to obtain a good score for graduation. This [study in the UK] is very precious. I need great focus.'

It is worth mentioning that the university makes efforts to build an international community where students from different countries can be involved in events. For example, the Chinese learners feel happy that they are invited to visit local families by their British classmate. Taking part in day trips/festival parties/clubs in the student union organized by the university are seen as opportunities to get to know 'other people'. However, compared with their expectations of fully immersing into a new culture, understanding it, and meeting people from different cultures, the cultural involvement is actually said to be 'too little' by the learners. M gives a reason for this feeling:

> 'I feel I cannot really encounter or [be] impressed by another culture just by people playing together. Doing a thing is better than just playing […] different opinions, solutions to dealing with a task, if people are doing a thing together, there are good chances to perceive cultural differences and to build strong social connections with others.'

Such dissatisfaction reflects the limited intercultural involvement in the learners' social lives. It suggests a dilemma facing British higher education. On the one hand, its development needs the financial benefits contributed by overseas students, especially Asian and Chinese students. On the other hand, the tendency to rely on tuition fees from Chinese students might undermine the experience of immersing into an exotic culture expected by the learners. For example, Chinese learners are the majority of students on the TESOL course, which limits their opportunity to learn from a culturally diverse environment. The learners say classmates from other countries are 'very precious for us' because those students can activate group learning through

different opinions and improve the Chinese learners' oral English ability (this will be discussed later in the issue of language development).

It is also a dilemma for the learners themselves, who, on the one hand, want to build connection with people from other countries, but on the other hand, often prefer to stay with Chinese learners because of shared living habits and a sense of security studying abroad, as X said:

> 'We live together, and if any there is emergency, they [Chinese flatmates] are sort of a life saver. I cannot imagine being able to ask for help from non-Chinese persons.'

In addition to the disappointment in social life experiences in the UK, the learners also want more experience of understanding UK education, especially how English is taught to young learners in the UK. The optional module which includes a tour to a primary school in England (as discussed in 5.3.1.3) is highly valued but the capacity of this module is limited (up to 20 people), which means only a small number of learners are able to have this experience. School visiting is so much desired and welcomed because this is seen the unique advantage of study abroad over home universities. The learners are English teachers, and it should be a part of the course for them to be able to know how English is taught between native speakers or other second-language users in England. In other words, England is the birthplace of English language, and studying TESOL here without knowing how the British teach English language is like passing by dreamland. Learners are curious as to how English schools teach vocabulary/grammar, how they improve students' reading ability, what their exams look like, how they support slow learners, even whether/why they like their jobs. Such curiosity is part of the learners' expectations for understanding UK educational culture.

2) Disappointing teaching sessions. One aspect is that the teaching quality is thought to be inconsistent. They feel the teaching in UK classes is not what they would suppose to be 'advanced education approach and idea.' (Abundant knowledge, advanced teaching approaches, creative class activities.) As discussed before, some modules are thought to be delivered

ineffectively. Another concern is that the amount of teaching sessions are 'pretty much insufficient'. The learners feel they are 'paying much money for self-learning in the UK'. They get limited knowledge from module lectures from which they had positive expectations. A potential thought is that the learners expect that the classes are able to deliver more knowledge, preparing them better with basic knowledge of fields (structures of theories, mainstream and sub-stream, concepts and definitions) which echoes M's notion of 'drawing a dragon'. The third issue relates to teaching staff, and 'why they never point out directly what my weakness is?' (X and M). They appreciate being corrected by the UK staff, and they believe such correction is an important part of education which empowers them to improve, if not at the moment in the course, then in the future. It is seen as a direction for self-improvement.

These narratives imply a different understanding of education or teacher roles between UK staff and Chinese learners. Imparting knowledge from experts to students seems to be expected by the Chinese learners on this course. They tend to equal the amount of knowledge delivered by classes with what they will obtain from their learning. UK lecturers are thought of as experts who are not only knowledgeable in the field but also models of excellent teaching, from which the learners expect to gain fresh and practical teaching experiences which can be applied in their own teaching.

These unsatisfied expectations partly suggest a conflict between concept-oriented course provision and content-based learning. One might wonder here why the learners tend to have transformation of epistemology in their learning outcomes (in section 5.4.1.3) but they seem to still rely on teachers. I think, firstly, that the transformation mentioned in the learning outcomes is something taking place from one end to another end (i.e. from believing in authority to learning autonomy). It does not mean something has been completed (and they have become a completely independent learner). Secondly, learning autonomy does not mean the learners do not need a teacher in their learning. The disappointing teacher role in this course, as

stated by the learners, reflects what and how the learners expect to be supported in their learning. It is interesting that I had an informal chat with a UK member of staff, in which we talked about teacher roles:

> Me: 'do you point out directly the weaknesses of a student, like you are poor in … or you have big issues in…? '
>
> The staff member was surprised: 'no, it is not a good way unless the student is standing at the cliff… they [students] have the ability for self-education, we are here to provide support instead of judging or scaring them.'

This is in contrast with the teacher's role in the Chinese tradition, which believes a teacher's job includes evaluating student performance with strict standards with the purpose of driving them to improve. It is seen as an educational approach and a booster for learning activity.

Returning to the comments about 'self-learning' stated by the learners above: these also imply complaints of being supported insufficiently in the process of learning. The data on dealing with the difficulties of writing assignments, and the data on scaffolding, have shown that the learners lack the expertise to employ external support as a tool to get through these challenges. They seem to unconsciously be placed in a blank area where their tough situation is not perceived by the programme staff.

3) Language development in speaking is unsatisfactory. Most participants except two (L and Y) complained that their oral English competence 'has ridiculously decreased in an English context'. Owing to the factors mentioned above (fewer teaching sessions and more Chinese students in their study context), the learners feel they speak English less than in China [English was spoken every day when teaching English]. The course is thought to place much value on academic writing and reading, and very little on speaking. The learners say they are English teachers whose oral English ability weighs considerably in their career development. M's words are very typical of this disappointment:

> 'I never thought the reality of studying here would be that we do not need advanced oral expression […] the majority of academic tasks could be achieved by academic reading and writing. Either learning on campus or living in a flat,

> basic English is enough, which is too simple for us [as English teachers]. It seems impossible for us to know how the things in daily life are expressed by the native speakers [in an authentic way]. It is my first time to study abroad but the opportunity to communicate with locals is rare, very surprising and disappointing.'

X links the insufficient opportunity to practise oral English with the assessment style of writing essays. She said their [her and other classmates] study was oriented to essays which rarely need oral English. If the assessment is a presentation, then they [the learners] have to practise English speaking purposefully because a presentation is a formal situation where a thing should be explained in a standard academic way. Then the oral English is able to improve from daily-life level to advanced academic context level.

4) Little development in teaching skills and teaching practice because the course is too research-oriented.

The majority of students complain that the course fails to provide opportunities for the learners to practise teaching. Learners think they have understood some theories via reading and writing, and so they need at least one opportunity by which they demonstrate to others how the relevant knowledge can be applied in live teaching.

> Lin said: 'we are English teachers, teaching is the core value for us. We cannot develop our careers by writing essays.'
>
> Ji said: 'writing an essay is something taking place on paper; we need something taking place in a real classroom. I think they are different, and how to deal with such differences must be very interesting for us [the programme and its learners].'

M and L link teaching practice with the learning context consisting of qualified peers and lecturers as top world experts. They believe microteaching is a very precious chance to improve teaching ability owing to the audience and evaluators.

These narratives suggest a potential advantage of the programme, if it is applied, which is that learners are willing and able to learn from each other by illustrating a real teaching segment of how a piece of English knowledge is

taught in/from different backgrounds. A shared teaching case might empower different ideas to emerge and interact. Thus the learning might be deeper than when students focus on essay topics individually.

It is also necessary to mention here that despite the disappointment due to lack of teaching practice on this course, the function of writing essays is not denied by the learners. They think writing essays enable them to become deep thinkers in teaching English, which will permanently benefit their careers. The principles and rationales behind English teaching and learning can be understood systematically and contextualized specifically via writing essays. It is acknowledged by some learners that doing presentations or microteaching hardly need such deep thinking. Therefore, linked with the students' expectations for developing teaching skills, the programme needs to find a balance between valuing theory and promoting practice.

In summary, the students' dissatisfactions discussed in this case could be explained by the unmet expectations for overall personal development (in 5.2.3). The Chinese participants indicate obvious learning orientations in terms of personal and vocational development, i.e. teaching ability, language development, and overall personal growth via being immersed in a new culture. In contrast, the research-oriented course seems to overwhelm the academic learning (i.e. academic reading/writing/researching), which is distant from the learners' expectations. Their limited socio-cultural involvement undermines their cross-cultural experience in a non-academic UK living environment.

5.5 Comparison within the UK case

This section is to compare the forgoing findings within the UK MA TESOL course. The comparison is to understand how the key stakeholders of the course are involved into it with shared similarities and differences. In order to develop a cross-cases comparison in the next chapter, this within-case

comparison involves perspectives between programme and learners, in the programme itself and between the learners themselves.

5.5.1 The programme perspective VS the learner perspective

The findings regarding with the student motivations of registering the UK programme match the advantages of the programme in terms of education quality (university rank , teaching staff, specifically focusing on learners with teaching experience, and course modules), and international context which contributes to diversity learning community and exotic socio-cultural life. The data also indicates learning goals are shared between the learners and the programme. Both of them want to develop teaching professions for the learners in English language teaching field.

Despite the shared goal, the data of learning experiences have implied tensions between the course provision and the Chinese learners. The tensions could be understood as different understandings regarding with how the TESOL course benefiting teaching profession for its learners. In specific, the first gap exists in learning theoretical knowledge. The UK course believe theories could be understood by a wide range of reading and critical reflections on the learners' previous teaching practices. The learners are thought as reflectors who are moving between their working reality and theories. Interactions between teaching experiences and theories are expected by the course, by which the learners are thought to be able to build their own knowledge about the theories. In contrast, most students prefer learning theoretical knowledge in order to develop teaching skills which could be applied in their future work. Reflection has been mentioned little by them. In other words, the learners tend to think themselves as practitioners who are going to apply theoretical knowledge into teaching practice. Such identity assumption implies the learners might be aware insufficiently that their teaching experience is a sort of learning resource in this course. It also implies the learners might put the theories at an authority position for their teaching,

at a risk of ignoring the weight put by teaching practice on the theories, so that critical reading/reflection might challenge them.

The tension between practitioner(student identity assumed by the learners themselves) and reflector (student identity assumed by the course) contributes to the second gap in which the learners think TESOL is to learn some teaching skills and tools which can be directly used in their future classes, while the course emphasize research abilities and opportunities. Then the learners feel anxious and confused when they are required to think critically and develop their own opinions about a theory. Such requirements of the course fall out of the learners' assumptions. The Chinese learners know neither why these research abilities can boost teaching profession nor how to achieve them. Therefore, some learners complain the course provides them with little teaching tools, some are unsatisfied with the predominate position of writing essay, and some feel shameful that they are unable to understand the way of TESOL provision as soon as possible. In this vein, the student learning experience could be viewed as a process in which the learners are adjusting their learning assumptions and following the course provision. They start, from zero, building knowledge of the programme itself whilst involving into it. It takes some time for the learners to differentiate TESOL as an academic education rather than a career certification training. Learners tries to follow with the routine of an academic education in the UK university, perceiving and reaching its expectations. The findings indicate tensions between the education cultures underpinning the programme (i.e., student-centred, conceptual, and process-oriented learning) and the learners' learning style (i.e., teacher-centred, content-based, and product-oriented learning).

Here rises a new gap in which the scaffold needed by the learners are more than the ones provided by the course. The findings tell positive functions of scaffolds in supporting student learning experience while reveal the learners need more supports quantitatively and qualitatively. The data regarding with tutorials and comments on assignment suggests more face-to-face

communications between students and staff are needed, in which programme expectations could be explicated to the learners and the cognitive knowledge about how to achieve these expectations could be discussed, for example, what is an argument and how to develop one in literature review. What significant is the data also implies the learners are incapable to use some current scaffold, e.g., how to ask questions appropriately in the discourse of the programme. It seems the learners need sub-scaffolds in order to take advantage of the course.

The third gap is found that the Chinese learners want to get a wide range of cross-cultural experiences and development of English language competence, while such opportunities provided by the course are thought insufficient. The learners have a strong desire to take full advantage of study in UK owing to geographical and cultural context of the course. An example is that the learners appreciate considerably the first-hand knowledge of education in British schools and how English is taught to youngsters here. However, the programme provides these items limitedly. Studying in a prestigious MA course in the UK university has reinforced the Chinese learners' high expectation of teaching staff who are thought to have excellent teaching performance with advanced pedagogical methods. The learners' feeling of disappointment is increased once a class is thought to be conducted ineffectively, while they feel worth of studying abroad owing to a lecturer who is good at teaching. The socio-cultural lives are thought not to meet the learners' expectations. Although the intensive learning schedule and COVID-19 have reduced the opportunities of socializing with other people, the learners think the programme recruits too many Chinese students, which has limited their cross-cultural communication experiences, and undermined the function of group learning valued by the programme as an international diversity background.

5.5.2 Comparisons in the programme itself and within student group

Linking the learning outcomes with programme objectives, the findings show positive responses that the learners are guided along the track of the course and obtain its expected results. The learners discipline knowledge and research ability have been enhanced, which adds evidence to the effectiveness of the course design. In other words, the course seems to be a system, in which modules, teaching sessions, tutorials, and assignments together with massive academic reading, writing and reflection are working together with the purpose of pushing the learners to move towards the designed education goals. It successes. However, the data of student's dilemma learning experience suggests writing essay as a sole style of assessment might be at a risk of leading some learners to be product-oriented learners because 'the programme needs just a piece of paper'. In addition, although the programme has justified its effectiveness in terms of supporting the learners to achieve course objectives, the learners' expectation of practicing teaching skills might rise a possibility of considering the course system from another perspective.

Within the group of students, it should acknowledge that different personal backgrounds influence learning experiences and outcomes. In specific, compared to peers who have less working experiences, the learners with more working years are found more capable to understand abstract theoretical knowledge and reflect between theories and teaching experiences. They are also the ones who tend to think about the essence of TESOL course in the process of learning it, e.g., what TESOL is really for? Why TESOL is delivered in such way? Then they are able to adjust learning strategies for the perceived programme rules.

Linking the learners' learning outcomes with their expectations, learning ability has been found as an unexpected outcome but brings fundamental transformation for the learners. It could be attributed to the process of adapting student themselves into the course routine, in which they have to comply with

new educational cultures. Learning ability implies a responsive learning experience which is parallel but hidden behind the course system. It equals with a cross-cultural ability by which the learners feel capable to proceed their study in a foreign educational context.

One interesting contradiction has been identified in the learners' learning experience. Although British education culture challenges the learners, they do not always feel difficult in the programme. In specific, they enjoy the teaching in some cases because the classes are well-organized, and they find written comments are very helpful if explicated. Such contradictions rise a question-does learning in a cross-cultural context doom to be difficult?

Chapter 6 Discussion

When reviewing the stories of the two programmes, I returned to my initial motivation for conducting this research, answering the fundamental question: what is the difference between study abroad and learning on a cooperated TNHE course in China? Guided by it, this chapter is a comparison cross the two cases. I will start from an evidence-based comparison, summarizing the similarities and contrasts between the two cases, covering the answers to RQ3 and 4. Then it moves to constructing an understanding of Chinese students learning on MA TESOL programmes of CBHE under the lens of cross-cultural adaption mode (CA), cultural intelligence mode (CQ) and the experiential learning theory (ELT). The interactions between course provisions, student learning experience and outcomes in the two cases will be investigated. From the theoretical lens, findings of this research suggest the learners, although on different programmes, share similar learning experiences and outcomes (although the details and extent of personal growth are different). The shared gap between course systems and students serves as an external/contextual factor which has initiated the learners' transformation. Learners' active involvement into the course routines as an internal factor drives them to fill the gap. The learners are found to build their cultural ability by learning from their fresh experiences of doing academic tasks of the programmes. As a result, they are able to adapt into the course systems and achieve personal growth.

6.1 Cross cases comparison: based on the evidence

In light of findings in each of the case, this section aims to develop a comparison between the two programmes. It firstly compare the two courses in terms of education objectives and provision. Then comparisons of student motivation, expectation, learning experiences and outcomes between the two programmes will be discussed. The purpose is to provide evidence for how/why the two cases are different/same in developing the students' personal growth.

6.1.1 The contrasts between the two cases

The most significant difference between the two programmes exists in their provision characteristics. UK-China course is featured with contextualization provision which means the course are designed to fit in Chinese environment. It is located in China. Chinese side contributes two modules which are their discipline advantages, and Chinese staff take responsibilities of teaching, tutoring and supervising. The programme schedule is shifted to weekend teaching so that it is accessible for most Chinese in-service teachers who are potential candidates for the programme. The Chinese education values (e.g., content-based and product-oriented teaching, parent-like teachers) are involved into course provision. These course elements above present in contrast to the UK programme which emphasizes international diversity. It is located in a UK campus and recruits international students. The teaching staff have different cultural backgrounds. All the modules are taught in accordance with British education norms (e.g., conceptual and process –oriented teaching, learning by doing).

The different course characteristics are considered by Chinese candidates. Personal context plays a main role for the Chinese participants in deciding their target programme. The ones who wants to keep jobs and save money go to the UK-China course while the ones looking forward to exotic cultural experience prefer the UK course. Although the learners in the two cases are in-service school teachers who want to develop profession careers via learning a MA TESOL programme, there are obvious differences between the two groups of participants. The learners in the UK-China course want to get promotion in their current jobs while the ones study abroad want to firstly develop their careers in terms finding new jobs in a more prestigious school or a developed city, secondly they expect a whole-person development which is contributed by cross-cultural experiences and beyond profession (e.g., other perspectives of life styles).

Average working years, as another significant difference of personal context between the two groups of learners, has influenced their learning experiences and outcomes. The learners in UK-China course have worked in English education field for years more than another group of learners. Reflection is a key word appeared in their expectations and experiences of learning. They have plenty of pedagogical practices, as extra learning resource, which is able to support them to understand abstract theoretical knowledge. Their learning experiences show they tend to think between theories and teaching more proficiently than the learners in the UK programme. The statement like 'how to link theories to practice', or 'the theories are too abstract to understand 'are spotted in the UK case more frequently than in the UK-China case. Plenty of teaching experiences are shown to be beneficial for promoting group learning. The students in UK-China case present positive comments to group discussion and peer community of learning more than the learners in the UK programme. In the UK-China programme, via group learning, a majority of learners feel open mind, share teaching ideas, and build deep understanding of a theory. In contrast, the effectiveness of group learning in the UK case is said to depend on the quality of group members. It is very interesting here. The students are benefited from homogeneous working backgrounds more than the ones with international diversity.

Moreover, the learners themselves in both cases have a consensus that teaching experience considerably contributes to the learning results. Experiential teacher learners tend to do well in reflecting and linking different knowledge together. Therefore, rich working experience could be a critical factor explaining that the learners in UK-China case could achieve learning outcomes similar with the ones in the UK case although the latter have more study time. It is worth noting that, the findings suggest the categories of learning outcomes in the two cases rather than the extents. In other words, the learners in the two programmes get personal growth in similar aspects, which does not mean those items are achieved at same levels. This research

has no intention to evaluate the levels of personal growth between the programmes.

Although the differences exist in the courses' characteristics, and in the learners' personal contexts which put influences on learning expectations and experiences, it is impressed that the learners in the two programmes obtain personal growth in similar items. One of the factors is, as discussed above, that more years of working experiences promote understandings of theories and reflections so that the home-based and weekend-learning Chinese learners(the UK-China case) are able to reach similar learning outcomes as their peers based in the UK campus. However, apart from this factor, the findings suggest the similarities shared by the two courses have lead the learners to undergo similar learning experiences, and thus resulted in similar learning outcomes.

6.1.2 The similarities between the two cases

6.1.2.1 The shared essence of course provisions

The findings of course provision in the two cases, although in different locations, reflect significant similarities. First of all, the UK university tends to predominate in both programmes, which means its educational goals, values, approaches and standards permeate the courses' provisions. The two programmes share educational objectives which involve developments in terms of student academic knowledge, research ability and career (findings in 4.3.1 and 5.1.2). The learners are expected to go through the courses via a shared course routine which is designed to constrain the leaners' learning actions. The shared course routine is like a system consisting of a range of elements: modules teaching, style of assessment, assignment requirements, plagiarism regulations, and deadline policy. The most important one among which is evidenced as a gap between module teaching and doing the assignment, which is intentionally designed by the programme providers. Module teaching, tutorials, draft feedback and comments on each assignment,

as identified from the data, are scaffolds which are supposed to help the students bridge the gap and achieve the learning objects. The findings (in 4.3.2 and 5.1.2) have revealed both of the programmes are impacted/underpinned by British educational culture. Specifically, the two courses are process-oriented, conceptual-based, and student-centred. Once the learners go into the shared course routine, their learning is directed by its values and rules. Instead of following the lecturers/authorities, both courses would prefer the learners to study independently, critically, and be able to build their own knowledge of a theory against a specific educational context (the data of doing an assignment in the two cases). The two programmes believe the course routine is an effective system to support the learners to reach the learning goals. Linking the course provisions with the student learning experiences, this research argues the shared course essence(education objectives, course routine, and British education values), as a primary external factor, has contributed to the similarities of student learning experiences and outcomes between the two programmes. The next paragraphs will explicate the similarities of student learning experience and outcomes between the two programmes.

6.1.2.2 The shared learning experience behind the learning outcomes

Against the background of the shared course provision, the learners have officially involved into the two programmes. However, does this mean they follow the track as it is designed? My findings say yes and no. 'Yes', because the learners in both cases have to go through the course routine. The purposefully designed course routine shared by the two cases is like a rigorous computer game. No matter who and where players are, once they initiate the game, they have to follow its rules, and complete its tasks. Then they are able to get rewards by the same principles, in the form of knowledge and competence in both cases. The learners in the two cases have massive academic reading/writing tasks in order to build the knowledge gap between attending module and doing assignment. They try to study how to think
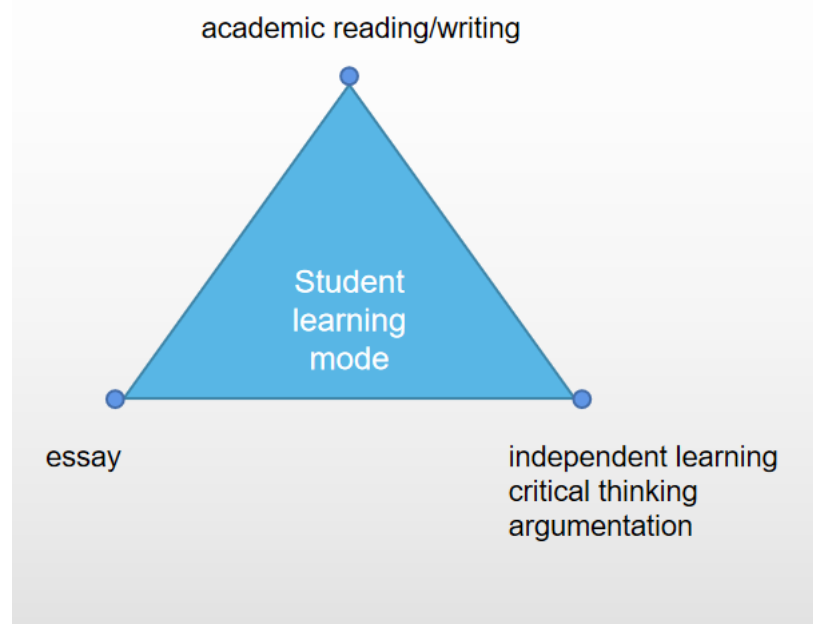
critically and develop their own opinions on a piece of research. They learn British academic standards (e.g., reference norms) and avoid plagiarism. They, pushed by the assignments, are learning TESOL theoretical knowledge whilst learning how to reflect on those things. Their learning are directed and supported by staff of the programmes. Finally, they have made progress in terms of theories, research abilities, and profession competence. They have found they are able to spot and analyse problems existing in their teaching, in which they are aware of their centre position instead of a knowledge re-teller. However, on the other side is 'No', because the ways in which the learners implement the designed course routine are quite different from what it is intended to be by its designers. Thus, an interesting thing arising from the stories of the Chinese learners is that these learners, in the two cases, shared a similar metaphor of their progress on the course: they start a Harry Potter adventure without any preparation and complete it by their own ways.

In light of the comparisons between student expectations and course objectives in the two programmes, an overlapped gap is identified as research oriented course VS student limited expectation of research ability. It means the students in both cases value research ability less than the courses do. A majority of students want to enhance teaching skills via learning the courses. They suppose conducting teaching should be included into course content. Therefore, they feel obsessed by massive academic reading and writing in the learning process. Moreover, the learners in both cases suppose following with lecturers/books, and putting knowledge into minds are safe ways to complete an assignment. However, the data (i.e. assignment requirement in the UK-China case, course expectations in the UK case, and plagiarism in both cases) indicates the learners know little about the academic norms, values and policies implied by the programmes. The learners feel stressful owing to the gap between attending classes and doing assignment. They are worried about independent learning (the findings of deciding topics of assignments in both cases). They have difficulties to understand assignment requirements and marking criteria (e.g., argumentation, critical review, deep understanding).

They feel challenged to communicate with teaching staff and use scaffolds provided by the programmes. In a word, the difficulties encountered by the learners in both cases imply the Chinese learners are challenged to follow the course routine because they are either lack of knowledge of the course provisions or incapable to follow them.

The data shows, thus, the learners in the two courses have developed a similar mode to adapt themselves into the course provision. The mode starts from dealing with academic tasks. The learners found they were less competent to read and write according to English academic norms, and they also recognized that academic reading and writing were the very skills needed in the course routine. The data reflected by attending modules and doing assignments indicates the positive correlation between ability in academic reading/writing and learning effect. The learners tried to learn how to read fast, understand the points of an article, and write something in an academic way (language, references). Meanwhile, they found critical thinking, independent learning, and argumentation were important conceptions hidden behind academic reading/writing and essays (findings in module learning and doing assignments in both cases). Thus the learning mode has been shaped. This mode (diagram 4) consists of three sets of elements: skills of academic reading and writing; essay as learning purpose; and conceptions of critical thinking, independent learning and argumentation. These three sets of elements are co-related and co-impacted. In addition, the mode also presents a trend of self-circulation because the way in which the learners learn these elements is learning by doing. This means they are learning academic reading and writing in the process of writing essays, whilst they are understanding critical thinking, independent learning and argumentation. Thus, the three sets of elements frame a triangle, with each set connecting with each other.

Diagram 4: The shared student learning mode

Therefore, as above, a learning experience with double functions has been traced for the MA TESOL participants in the two programmes. On one hand, they are learning TESOL knowledge, reflecting on theories and pedagogical activities, and presenting opinions about solving problems of teaching. They are developing discipline knowledge and moving towards the objectives of the courses. On the other hand, they are learning how to adapt into the course routine by jumping into it. For the first function, the learners in both cases are allocated officially designed tasks, staff's scaffolds, and knowledge from books/researchers. They are hiking within the field in which they have working experiences. Findings in both cases rarely show the learners are much challenged and struggling. In contrast, for the second function, the learners are challenged to resolve the tensions of learning cultures between UKHE and the Chinese students themselves. The learners have to perceive the new learning context, and understand the implicit but important tasks behind the official course routine. Findings of difficulties of learning in the two programmes suggest quality and quantity of support are required to enhance by the learners.

Due to the shared course routine and approach of adapting into it, the learners in the two courses present similar learning outcomes which are TESOL discipline professions and cross-cultural abilities of studying in the British-dominated education discourse.

6.2. The Chinese learners' learning: understandings under the theoretical framework

In light of above evidence of cross-case comparison, especially the shared gap between course provisions and students' learning experiences, there is clear evidence of the learning culture differences between the UK and Chinese students. These differences, on the one hand, have hindered the learning process. On the other hand, the learners are pushed to enhance cross-cultural competence in learning to deal with such differences. As a result, they have undergone an epistemological transformation, having developed cross-cultural learning ability on the MA TESOL programmes. This section links the evidence discussed above with the lens of cross-cultural adaptation mode (CA), cultural intelligence mode (CQ) and experiential learning theories (EL). The aim is to build theoretical understandings of why and how the learners undergo the courses in such a shared way, and discrepancies with previous research will also be discussed. This section starts with the evidenced cultural characteristics between the course routine and the Chinese learners. Then it moves to a discussion underpinned by modes of CA, CQ, and EL, indicating, in both cases, how the learners' cross-cultural abilities are involved into and improved with the process of adapting into the shared course system.

6.2.1 The Socratic dominant culture delivered by the programmes and the learners' Confucian cultural background

The comparison between the two MA TESOL programmes has provided evidence of a shared gap between course provisions and student learning experiences. The gap is thought to be attributed to two different learning cultures between UK higher education and Chinese learners. Learning culture, or culture of learning, have been used by researchers to explain the behaviours of teaching and learning in an education context with a certain cultural background. It refers to a set of beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, expectations, values, preferences and behaviours which featured in those cultural elements (Riley, 2014; Cortazzi and Jin, 1996).

The Socratic learning culture and Confucian learning culture are thought to contrast, and belong to western and eastern culture respectively. Under Socratic learning culture, learning is to question and generate knowledge through the self (Tweed and Lehman, 2002). It values internal authority, seeking cognition about the learner's independent self via learning. Independent thinking, active learning, questioning the known and exploring the unknown, and developing personal insights are emphasized in Socratic learning culture (Li, 2001, 2002, 2003; Tweed and Lehman, 2002). In contrast, the learners impacted by Confucian learning culture are good at respectful learning and absorptive learning (Tweed and Lehman, 2002). The Chinese learners believe knowledge is transmitted from an external authority to the students. Thus they get used to accepting knowledge, and respect authority (Hodkinson and Poropat, 2014; Cortazzi and Jin, 1996; Hammond and Gao, 2002).

These opinions have been partly evidenced in this research, in rising tensions between the programme provision and students' learning experiences. These tensions are perceived as contrasting combinations of a range of learning conceptions and corresponding learning approaches which are all influenced by different learning cultures. 'Learning conception' is how learning is perceived by individuals involved in learning activities (Säljö, 1979). It refers

to a range of perceptions of and preferences for teaching, learning, knowledge, instruction, and teaching-learning environment. (Entwistle, 1998; Brownlee et al., 2002). Learning approach is a specific form of study activity provoked by a learning task in a learning environment (Entwistle, 1991). Learning approaches are context-influenced and in line with learners' learning conceptions (Vermunt, 2007). In the two MA TESOL programmes in this research, the learners who are familiar with Confucian education culture move into an uncomfortable zone dominated by Socratic culture. The data has shown what the learning conceptions and approaches implied in the two learning cultures, and how these confused the learners.

The first tension is student-centered education vs teacher-centered learning. The values of programme provision and the intentionally-designed ZPD (discussed in 6.1) indicate that the programmes think students are self-driven learners, taking responsibility for their learning. The teachers play the role of supporting the learners to achieve their learning goals (i.e. various forms of scaffolding in the two courses). The programmes leave room for the learners to think and proceed with their study independently (i.e. amount of out-of-class learning time in each module, the freedom of deciding their topic for each assignment, encouraging personal ideas and interests in the assignment). However, the Chinese learners show teacher-centered tendencies in both cases. The student informants view the programme staff as authorities, believing that following instructions is a guarantee of the learning outcomes. The data on the students' shock at the gap between module teaching and the assignment in the UK-China case, the data of V's failure experience in the UK case, and the difficulties of initiating a topic for the assignment shared by the two cases, all reflect this contradiction. The student informants expect to be told and evaluated by the lecturers so that they can prioritise different knowledge. The complaints of less systematic module teaching, the worries about rare negative comments on their ideas for assignments, and even X's complaint of never being told their personal weaknesses all suggest the students expect the lecturers to be authorities who are able to directly impart

knowledge and evaluate the students. They are what is called interdependent learners (Markus and Kitayama, 1991) who shape their own self-development in the learning process by interacting with others (Holmes and Tan, 2003; Holmes, 2004). The interdependent learner contrasts with the independent learner who is able to develop self-inner authority valued by the Socratic learning culture on the two courses. That both courses expect the learners to become confident in their field and careers reflects this point.

Although the teacher-centered learning style might indicate that these informants lack learner autonomy (i.e. independent learning), it should be recognized by the data that such insufficient learning autonomy is reasonable. Littlewood (Littlewood, 1996) has conceptualized autonomy in relation to two factors: the willingness to take charge of a task, and the ability to take charge of it. My findings indicate the learners lack ability rather than being unwilling to have autonomy. In the struggle to decide the topic of their assignment, the learners in both cases are afraid that they are incapable of completing an interest-motivated topic. They have little knowledge of different potential topics so they are unable to have their own ideas. In addition, the data in which the Chinese informants tend to resolve challenges by themselves instead of asking for help suggests a self-contradictory learning autonomy, where on the one hand students demonstrate autonomy in learning how to deal with those challenges (e.g. critical thinking), while on the other hand they show low autonomy in using the scaffolding provided by the courses. I view the former as evidence of willingness to be autonomous, and attribute the latter to incompetence in communicating with UK staff.

The second tension deriving from the two learning cultures presents as concept-oriented course vs content-based learning. The assignments on each course emphasise the point of building learners' own knowledge of a topic in a given context. This implies that firstly, the learners are expected to be creative learners instead of knowledge re-tellers. Secondly, it suggests a learning approach of understanding knowledge instead of remembering

knowledge, which means the theories need to be contextualized. Thirdly, it calls for an approach to learning through different views, applying critical thinking and argumentation. However, the learners initially appear not to know the implicit requirements behind the explicit assignment requirements. They insisted on their known learning approaches, and then found those approaches did not function. The data on learning challenges (e.g. what a critical summary is; how to have my idea; what an argument is; what non-descriptive writing is; how to deal with contradictory theoretical stances) in both cases indicates the learners understand neither the exact meaning of building one's own knowledge in the programmes' discourse nor the corresponding learning approaches. The learners in both cases initially behaved in the style of knowledge re-tellers, covering knowledge as much as possible in an assignment, searching for and believing in one right answer only, being afraid of having their own voices and critiquing the research.

The third cultural tension is between the process-oriented course and product-oriented learning. The programme believes learning is gradually making progress by doing and practising while the learners think learning is to equip themselves with knowledge needed for assessment. This tension is typically reflected in the shared findings of the experience of doing assessment on the two courses. The assignment takes the form of writing an essay, which is considered a major method of assessment in western higher education (Dahlin et al., 2001). The designed tasks in the two cases reflect an internal perspective of understanding the function of assessment. It views assessment as a part of a learning process via which the learners are expected to achieve development (Dahlin et al., 2001). Thus the courses, taking the essay as their form of assessment, leave room for the learners to extend their learning scope, deepen their knowledge about their interests, and enhance their abilities.

However, in contrast, the learners' experiences around assessment reflect strong product-oriented learning perceptions. These perceptions respond to the external perspective which views assessment as an external device to

measure and check the learning performance (Dahlin et al., 2001). In this research, it seems hard for the Chinese students to accept that they are encouraged to gradually improve themselves by learning how to do an assignment. In fact, assessment is thought of as an evaluation of their study and they have to prepare well before starting to do it, which is reflected by T's experience of reading a book several times. In T's opinion, when he found that the book was too difficult to understand, he worried he was unable to prepare for the essay and so his first strategy was to change to another accessible topic, while his tutor believed it was a good chance to learn the relevant knowledge and suggested T keep to the original topic with more support. Moreover, the external perspective of understanding the function of assessment partly explains why the Chinese students feel substantially shocked by the gap between attending modules and writing essays. Apart from the perceived weaknesses in their ability and knowledge, the shock also implies a conflict in leaners' learning conceptions: how can the assessment start without the candidates being ready for it?

These findings correspond to previous studies, saying the learning perceptions and approaches perceived by the Chinese learners mismatch those expected by the British staff (Wang, 2010, p. 83; Cortazzi and Jin, 2002), or that some Chinese learners cannot adapt to the Socratic learning culture (Dai and Garcia, 2019). These studies either failed to give further explanation because of the research focus, or appeared to attribute the mismatches/challenges/failures to the differences between the two learning cultures. However, are the mismatches doomed to be challenges because of differences? Biggs(1999) argues that the principles of good teaching and learning might exist across cultures, and any cultural differences can be accommodated by good teaching and learning practices. In this research, the shared data on attending modules and doing assignments on the two courses provide evidence to support this opinion.

Firstly, in the case of UK-China, the data present a stronger feeling of acceptance in British classes than in classes taught by Chinese lecturers. The majority of the learners have enjoyed playing the main role in the British classes, through which they have improved in class engagement, independent thinking and a sense of thinking from different perspectives. They are, despite feeling pressure, able to handle those classes and make progress. They have slowly and definitely shown a sense of confidence. The learners prefer participating in learning with more initiative and independence to being taught by authority figures (the lecturers). They feel positive and inspired by the British staff, and bored by the knowledge input approach in the classes taught by Chinese staff. In addition, for the modules in the UK case which are all taught in the British style, the Chinese learners have both positive and negative feelings. They really enjoyed the rigorous class design, the attractive teaching style, and got a sense of improving themselves, but they also complained that some classes were poorly conducted and a waste of time. These data in the two cases have challenged the taken-for-granted notion that links student learning with an absolute differentiation between the two learning cultures. In other words, the learners do not always insist on one learning culture, preferring one and getting development via one. They are sometimes able to enjoy the British teaching style while critiquing the Chinese teaching tradition. They sometimes enjoy some aspects of British teaching while critiquing others. Therefore, in the learners' perceptions, it is safe to say that they do not think cultural differences matter much; instead, what they value is whether a class is delivered effectively whichever the culture.

Secondly, reviewing the data about the perceived gap between attending classes and doing assignments in the two cases, it is clear that in contrast to the enjoyable and confident feeling in modules, the learners all have shown a strong desire to be told something when they are doing their assignments. The feelings of uncertainty and confusion are overwhelming. I think the two contrasting feelings can be attributed to the scaffolding provided. To be specific, the learners have enough scaffolds in the module classes, e.g. the

reading list for class, the questions to be discussed, and the questions asked to inspire reflection. In addition, they have already had plenty of experience of teaching English, which is a sort of knowledge background against which theories are able to be related and understood. In contrast, academic writing is very new and challenging for these learners. The requirements of quotations, references and formatting are new things to learn. The essay requires stronger ability in independent learning (e.g. searching for literature, deciding on a topic, understanding theories in depth and breadth), critical thinking and argumentation than learning in class does. The scaffolding provided in the form of tutorials or asking the lecturer questions are hindered by the students' incompetence in communicating with UK staff. Therefore, it is over simply to say the Chinese students feel challenged in a cross-cultural learning context because of the differences between Socratic and Confucian cultures. Rather, it should be thought of in this way: whether the Chinese learners are supported appropriately and sufficiently in order to achieve the learning object. The data of this research has suggested the Chinese learners are able to use the scaffolds, if appropriate, to improve their learning. The challenges of academic writing imply that more sub-scaffolds (for example, explanation of academic standards in a course context, and communication skills with teaching staff) might be needed before the learners are able to use the scaffolds officially provided on the course.

6.2.2 Cultural adaptation: the Chinese leaners in academic learning

The findings of student learning experiences and outcomes of the two cases are found respond to Kim's cross-cultural adaptation mode which refers cultural adaptation to a cyclic movement towards a functional relationship between individuals and new environment (Kim, 2001, 2012). The three-pronged mode (i.e., stress-adaptation-personal growth) has been echoed by the data of the two cases, indicating a track in which the Chinese participants are adapting themselves into a Socratic dominant learning culture. Cultural intelligence mode (CQ) as a facilitation tool has employed to understand each

of the stages in Kim's adaptation mode, companying with the development of cross-cultural ability of four dimensions (cultural motivation, cognition, metacognition and behaviour). This section, combining the two theories, discusses the learning experiences and outcomes shared by the two cases.

6.2.2.1 under stress of new learning culture

The Chinese learners in both cases initially are overwhelmed by the foregoing tensions of learning cultures (the stage of 'stress' in Kim's mode). CQ tries to explain this in specific. The learners' cultural motivation are complicated in this stage. They sometimes have strong motivation to survive in the new learning culture. Their autonomy in dealing with the challenges of learning reflects such motivation. In some occasions, whereas, the learners are less motivated. An example is they prefer practice-oriented to research-oriented course provision. The essay-centred assessment is complained by majority of learners. The learners' cultural cognition and metacognition is little. The difficulties of understanding the assignment requirements in the case of UK-China, their confusion about the expectations of the UK course, and their uncertainty about the norms of academic wiring (i.e. references, plagiarism) in both cases have indicated the learners have less knowledge of the norms preferred by the programme learning cultures. In addition, what these preferred norms really mean also have challenged the learners. Some data suggest such cognition/metacognition is not built sufficiently, and varies depending on individuals. The typical evidence is that critical thinking has not been understood well by all learners. Some learners equate critical thinking with considering a thing both positively and negatively; some others think that challenging authorities is critical thinking; more still believe that understanding a thing from different viewpoints is critical thinking. Although these cognitions built by themselves are not wrong, a comprehensive understanding of critical thinking, i.e. what it is, why it is valued, and what its functions are, is lacking. Such insufficient understanding might risk learners superficially equating critical thinking with assignment requirements, instead of a cognitive tool driving their self-education in the future. If so, this inference might be one

possible explanation for Turner's research (Turner, 2006) which claims a group of Chinese learners have not presented fundamental changes in the epistemological composition of learning despite having studied on masters courses in England.

6.2.2.2 Moving towards adaptation

Pushed by the stress of learning under a new context, the findings of learning experiences in both cases indicate the learners are moving into the stage of cultural adaptation in CA mode. They are trying to perceive the new learning norms and figure out approaches to reach these norms. They feel critical thinking, argumentation, and independent learning are essential for success in the courses because these norms are valued in module teaching and assignment requirements. They also come to know later, especially through the tutorials and comments on assignments, that linking theory with their own teaching practices and considering theories against their own teaching context are more desirable than retelling knowledge. They are aware of there are no fixed right answers and that one thing could be understood from different perspectives.

Meanwhile, apart from enhancement of cultural cognition, the significant development of cultural metacognition has been identified in the learners' process of adaptation. According to the CQ model, metacognition is the third element and step for developing one's cultural competence. It refers to a range of knowledge, techniques and skills for how to achieve the cultural norms implied by the new environment. In the two courses, the shared experience of achieving those cultural norms of learning is that the learners adjust their learning conceptions and approaches. It has been found that the learners are moving from rote learning towards deep learning. The data about being a knowledge re-teller, the worries that they 'cannot remember anything even though they read a lot' in academic reading, and V giving the majority of her attention to class learning all reflect that the learners initially tended to believe that learning is remembering knowledge as much as possible. This is

called surface learning/rote learning, which means learning by memory (Marton and Säljö, 1976). Influenced by this, knowledge as equated with authority was placed at the center of learning by these learners. They found it hard to have their own voices (i.e. argumentation and critical thinking) because they had become used to accepting and believing knowledge – such a conception reinforces the teacher-centered learning style. When they realized the norms preferred by the programmes (i.e., cultural cognition), the learners tried to shift their learning conception and approach. They tended to pay attention to their ideas when reading literature (e.g. the data about making progress in the case of UK-China, Y developing his rationale for believing which theoretical stance and why). Reflection took place between theoretical knowledge and their own teaching practice, and answers to a question were not absolute anymore. They tried to interpret and use knowledge instead of retelling it. They tended to build their opinions based on a range of different literature instead of a lecturer/authority. These findings reflect what is called a deep approach to learning (Biggs, 1988) in which the learners present knowledge agency and a self-driven style.

It is worth pointing out that effective module teaching and group discussion in the two programmes (4.5.1.3 and 5.3.1) contribute to the shift in learning conception and approach. These two things, although they do not directly tell the learners how to behave in the programmes, function in a way which opens the learners' minds and demonstrates how a thing can be thought about in different ways. Such demonstrations stimulated the learners to organize different views and think independently. In addition, evaluation standards play an important role in shaping the learners within an expected course routine. The requirements, deadline policy and word limit for each assignment pushed the learners to reflect on their work, conduct self-correction and make decisions by themselves. The corresponding tutorials and comments supported the learners not to walk out a track. The data showing the learners' assumptions about how to write an essay under British education discourse have been confirmed or corrected by these scaffolds. In addition, the formative

comments on the assignments delighted the students so that they were supported to improve more even though the essay was marked.

Despite the learners showing characteristics of a deep learning approach, they are far from proficient users. The evidence of hardship (e.g. having their own ideas in light of the literature, how to deal with contradictory stances, communicating academic issues with programme staff in a formal way, thinking about a thing from a perspective different from authority, and linking knowledge with teaching practice) suggest these are novice learners in the UK learning context. Linking the development of cultural competence in cultural cognition with metacognition, it appears to be insufficient guidance for these learners. Although scaffolds are provided, as stated before, this support is not enough and not purposeful enough, due to which the learners perceive the new learning cultural norms implicitly and indirectly. What would be preferred and their exact meanings on the course have not been explicated. However, it seems the courses think the learners must experience difficulty due to the discrepancies between two learning cultures, and that then they are able to somehow understand the learning culture by themselves because they are immersed into it. Cotterall attributes the ability to manage the challenges resulting from the educational culture to the learners' learning autonomy (Cotterall, 1995). Benson equates deciding what to learn and controlling the learning situation with learning ability (Benson, 2013). This, however, does not mean students should achieve it automatically. Autonomy has interdependent features which means some support from teachers can facilitate the learners to become autonomous learners (Chanock, 2003; Benson et al., 2003). My data shows that the majority of the Chinese learners spent quite a long time (some spent one module, some spent one semester, some need even more time) making sense of the new learning context. This is inefficient. The course runs for only one year, and the tuition fee is expensive for self-funded learners who use their deposit to study. It is reasonable to support these learners to run fast. My data from these learners has not shown any evidence of resistance to British educational culture, which

implies a positive premise for scaffolding. If the learners are well informed of the value of the course, and are offered methods to enact these values - for example, what critical thinking is and how to practise it - they might be able to get involved in the course sooner. Secondly, they may take advantage of every learning opportunity to purposefully improve themselves (e.g. increase engagement in group learning for the UK case, fully use the learning community in the UK-China programme), rather than purely struggling with completing the assignment. In other words, the Chinese learners are walking into constructive friction (Vermunt and Verloop, 1999) where their learning habits, perceptions and approaches potentially have to be transformed. According to Vermunt and Verloop, going through such transformation calls for expert guidance. Here, in this research, the Chinese learners need appropriate and purposeful support in terms of learning conceptions and approaches, as well as cognitive and metacognitive knowledge about UK learning culture.

In addition to a deep learning approach, an achieving approach (Biggs, 1988) or instrumental approach has been identified among the Chinese learners. Some previous research has found that the Chinese learners tend to behave according to an achieving approach in the learning process. They are alert to assessment requirements and monitoring their learning effectiveness for passing exams (Biggs, 1996; Li, 2001; Turner, 2006). The findings about using the rules of the game (findings of the UK case), and the complaint about focusing on writing essays (in the UK-China case) have implied the learners might keen on working for assessment regardless of other learning opportunities or a fundamental change via learning. However, this research suggests that the course design itself promotes such a learning approach. The courses take writing essays as the only assessment style. As Engeström says, learning activity is object-oriented (Engeström, 2016). It is reasonable for the learners who are not familiar with the programme, and its implied academic and cultural orientations, to choose the obviously-evaluated item as their learning object. Any failure will lead to extra time and money spent on the

course, or even loss of the degree, which is a huge risk for these learners (according to the shared data in the push-pull factors relating to registering on the courses). Therefore, passing through assessment is considered a priority by the learners. In addition, the learners feel overwhelmed by understanding and achieving the new learning norms implied in the assessment (i.e. the data about understanding the requirements of the assignment in the UK-China case, and the data about understanding the expectations of the course in the UK case) together with the disciplinary knowledge needed for the essay. Learners actually, if they are without any guidance, have limited ability to figure out a comprehensive horizon of the programme, (i.e. what the programmes are, what the fundamental purposes are, and why, explicitly and implicitly). The data, in the UK case, that the learners felt sorry to give up other learning opportunities but exclusively focused on essays, indicates the learners' reluctant attitude towards an instrumental learning strategy. Finally and most importantly, the majority of the learners have strongly suggested other styles of assessment with the purpose of magnifying personal development. For example, presentations are suggested with the expectation of practising oral English, applying theory to class teaching, and enhancing teaching ability. This evidence shows that the Chinese learners are not instrumental learners unconditionally; rather, their learning approach results from negotiating between personal situations and the officially required learning object.

6.2.2.3 Getting personal growth: a qualified learner under UK learning culture

As argued by Kim (2001), adapting into a new culture means individuals get cross-cultural abilities which enables them to meet the demands of new environment. They are able to understand things by a new cultural perspective, and deal with problems by the norms accepted by the host culture. Such cross-cultural ability suggests comprehensive personal growth for a person in terms of refreshed attitudes and behaviours. This stance responds to the behaviour dimension of CQ mode which means an individual is able to behave

appropriately in a new culture, applying its norms to making decisions, taking actions and understanding things like an insider of that culture (Van Dyne et al., 2012). Behaviours are externally observable evidence of an individual's cultural competence and can be seen as the result of the foregoing three dimensions: motivation, cognition and metacognition. Findings of learning outcomes in the current research have suggested the learners in both cases are able to follow the norms accepted by UK learning culture. In other words, these learners have become qualified learners who are in line with the course routine. They are able to do academic reading/writing, follow the procedures and approaches of conducting research, and develop a sense of critical thinking. Moreover, the development of knowledge agency as a shared learning outcome suggests an epistemological transformation in which the learners' perception of theoretical knowledge has shifted. In the two cases, knowledge was initially equated with authority or right answers, which was seen as the purpose of learning. Students, as followers, believed in knowledge (and were unable to be critical). They equated the learning process with receiving knowledge (rote learning, teacher-center learning). By adjusting their learning conceptions and approaches, however, knowledge becomes viewed as options and tools to achieve learning goals. The data about abilities in reflection and problem solving demonstrates such transformation. Learners, or what the learners want to achieve through knowledge, have become the center of learning. The interaction between knowledge and its applied context is valued. Knowledge is reflected and applied via learners' own thinking in their own context and with their own purpose. As a result, they are able to build their own knowledge, which is valued by the course object. Thus their learner identity has been transformed from receiver of knowledge and implementer of directions/followers of instructions, to knowledge agency and independent learners. The observed epistemological transformation is different from the conclusion drawn in Turner's research, which states that despite learning in a UK institution, the Chinese learners have developed in the aspect of technique rather than epistemological composition (Turner, 2006). The reason might be that the sample students in that research are

studying a range of different majors, including business, engineering and social science, which could apply exam papers as assessment more than writing essays. Thus the learners' learning conceptions and approaches might not be transformed in similar ways to this research.

Therefore, in a summary, from the cultural perspective, Chinese participants' learning experiences in the two cases suggest a cross-cultural learning trip, in which they are transforming from Chinese learners featuring Confucian learning culture to learners qualified to survive in a British learning culture featuring Socratic educational characteristics. The table 13 presents the shared learning experiences under the lens of CA and CQ. Students in both cases share a course journey responding to Kim's cross-cultural adaptation mode which implies the sojourners undergo three stages of adapting themselves into the course routine. The CQ mode facilitates to understand how each of the stage is formed and transformed to the next one, companying with the development of four dimensions of cross-cultural ability. They, the learners in the two cases, are initially challenged by unfamiliar British learning culture due to lack of knowledge of what it is (cultural cognition) and how to achieve it(metacognition). Then, however, the UK learning traditions have pushed the learners to adjust their learning conceptions and approaches. The shared adapting routine involves understanding the new learning norms, figuring out approaches to reach these norms, and behaving appropriately with the learnt norms. The learners' little cultural cognition and metacognition are evidenced to increase. Learning behaviours tend to comply with the courses' contexts. Scaffolds provided by the courses facilitate this process, but their enhancement of quality and quantity are needed. The third stage of adaptation mode is personal growth. In this research, it firstly evidenced as an identity of qualified learners who are able to follow the course routines. Secondly it is a transformed epistemological composition featuring with learner-centredness and knowledge agency.

Table 13: Student shared learning experience under cultural perspective

Stances of CA	Stress	Adaptation	Personal growth
Stances of CQ Motivation Cognition Metacognition Behaviour	●Complicated motivation of learning; ●No evidence in other dimensions; ●Tensions between Confucian learning culture and Socratic learning culture	●Developing CQ; ●Build knowledge of course routine and try to follow it; ●Adjust learning conceptions and approaches; ●Scaffolds of programmes	●Obtain cross-cultural competence of learning; ●Identity of qualified learners; ●Transformation of epistemology composition

In light of linking the cultural theoretical knowledge with the findings in the two cases, as discussed above, this research echoes the findings in other research that the Chinese learners are able to adjust themselves into a new learning culture given appropriate conditions (Chan, 2001; Gieve and Clark, 2005; Gu and Maley, 2008). The 'appropriate conditions' equates with learning context which is stressed as a powerful role to understand Chinese learners flexibility in tackling with academic issues and their adaptation to new culture of learning (Biggs, 1996; Littlewood, 1999; Evans et al., 2003). In this research, the learners' adaptation routine shared by the two cases implies macro cultural environment where a course is geographically located have less impacts on shifting Chinese learners' learning behaviours. Rather, the micro cultural context which is the institutional practice of education (Richardson, 1994) plays a critical role in promoting the leaners' cultural adaptation. The shared course system between the two CBHE cases, its educational goals and course provision approaches (i.e., values, academic rules and standards, assessment, teaching, and scaffolds), is featured with cultural variations of learning to the Chinese learners. Keeping such course system no matter where the course is located, is a key function by which the Chinese learners are pushed to step out their comfort zoom and reflecting on their learning. Their learning behaviours in the form of cross-cultural ability are shaped by such institutional practice.

It is worth pointing out that, owing to individual differences, students do not transform equally across individuals and across the four dimensions. Some students have developed in all four dimensions while others are weak in some dimensions - for example, some learners cannot achieve critical thinking like their peers. The learners generally behave strongly in the dimension of motivation while numbers of students are struggling in the cognition and metacognition dimensions. For example, argumentation is still difficult for most students although they know it is needed for developing a literature review. Another example is that students know everything should be thought about critically from multiple perspectives, but most of them still feel difficult to deal
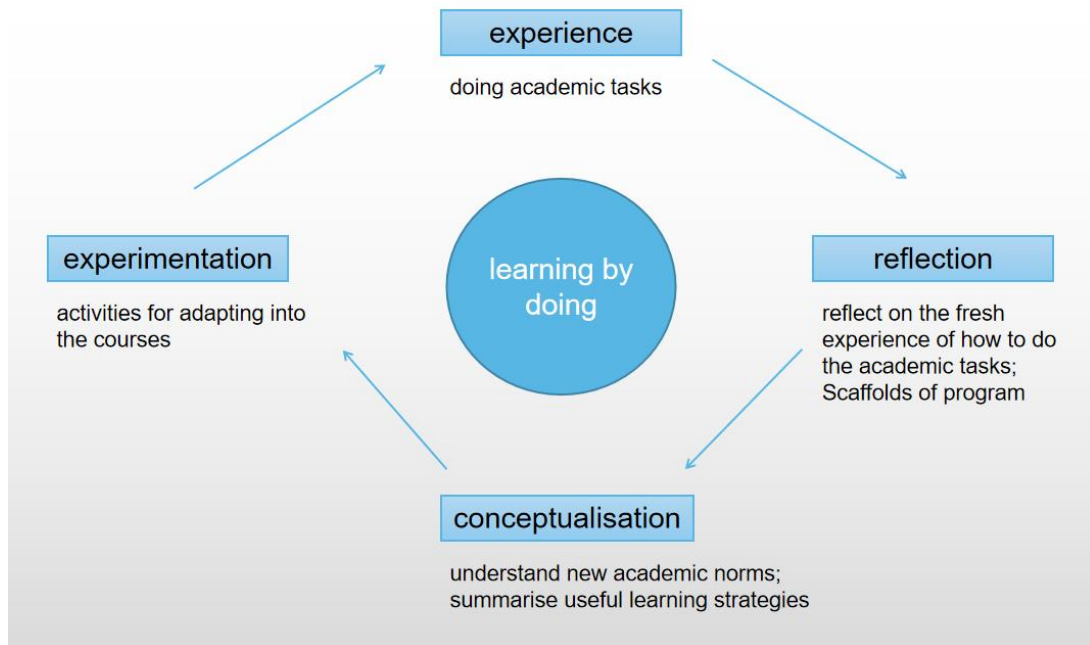
with different opinions.

It should also notice that, by facilitation of CQ mode, the essence of the Chinese students' adaptation trip could be seen as a process in which their cultural ability keeps enhancing. In other words, CQ enables us to review the cross-cultural adaptation from a perspective regarding with competence/intelligence. This provides an alternation to understand the learners' experience in CBHE: cross-cultural issues are inevitable but the adaptation could be supported by appropriate training which aims to develop cultural ability for the sojourners. This perspective might provide insights into explaining the findings which are inconsistent with Kim's mode. The learners in both cases are not always challenged by the UK learning culture if they are appropriately guided (e.g., they think the UK teaching style effectively boost their learning once it is well-designed and conducted (discussed in 6.2.1)).

6.2.3 Chinese Students learning: under experiential learning lens

ELT defines learning as the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience (Kolb, 1984). The four stages of experiential learning (experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting) argued in Kolb's mode have been identified in the learners' experiences of cross-cultural learning in the two cases. They contribute to a further understanding regarding with the learners' cultural adaptation in academic learning. In other words, from cultural perspective, the learners' cultural adaptation overlaps with the process in which they are developing cultural ability by dealing with the tensions between learning cultures of programmes and the learners. Meanwhile, ELT explains how cultural knowledge and skills are obtained from learning perspective. A typical example is taken from the shared triangle learning mode cross the learners (discussed in 6.1.2.2). 'Learning by doing it' plays a key role for the learners to adapt into British learning culture. They positively interact with the courses routine, building their concrete experiences of doing academic tasks (e.g., academic reading, group discussion and writing essays). Then they tend to reflect on these fresh experiences, reinforcing

some that are positively responded by the lecturers (e.g., reading at least three authors for one theory seems to be critical), or adjusting some others that are not desirable for the courses (e.g., equates attending classes with being able to do assignment, retelling a theory without linking it with teaching reality). Such reflections result in their cultural intelligence development in both cognition and metacognition. Their knowledge of the course system increases (e.g., perceive the independent learning, critical thinking and argumentation implied by the courses), based on which they are trying to adjust learning approach and conceptions (e.g., break the insistence on one right answer) in order to follow the new academic norms and requirements. The four learning stages indicate a developmental circulation (diagram 5), by which the Chinese learners are continuously developing their cultural cognition and metacognition, and applying the new culture knowledge into their learning activities.

Diagram 5：Student experiential learning mode

Apart from the cyclic learning process, ELT also explicate the four stages of learning as learning abilities which are preferred by different learners depends on specific learning situation (Kolb and Kolb, 2005). The two polar opposite dimensions of understanding experience: concrete experience, and abstract conceptualization are chosen by different learners who are dealing with writing essay. For example, Fei in the UK-China case is aware of how to write a critical summary by writing three drafts of summary while T in the UK case prefers understanding the marking criteria of assignment in advance of doing it(marking criteria is more abstract than specific introductions of assignment). Some learners, via joining group discussions in the programmes, are able to build consciousness of multiple perspectives to understand one thing. Some learners prefer thinking of conceptions rising from their learning process (e.g., Y in the UK case tries to understand critical thinking by Google/YouTube). According to Kolb, apart from understanding experience, experiential learning includes thinking of applying the experience into practice (i.e., transforming experience). There are also two opposite learning modes needed by the transforming: active experimentation, and reflective observation (Kolb and Kolb, 2005). The both learning modes are evidenced in the two programmes in order to deal with learning tasks. For example, for academic reading, most learners in the two cases learn how to read by just reading papers. Meanwhile, they have reflections on their own reading experiences and develop strategies of reading (e.g., reading whilst taking notes, and multiple functions of reading). In some other situations, they have assumptions in light of reflections on learning experiences in the courses. Then they tentatively applied such assumptions into upcoming learning. For example, in the UK case, V shifted her learning approach from teacher-centred to student-centred after reflection on her failure experience.

Based on the discussion above, the learners in the two programmes share a learning circulation argued by ELT. Their actively engagement into the course system is the ground of cross-cultural learning. The four learning abilities in ELT mode are involved into dealing with different academic tasks. In this

aspect, the evidence in this research have not shown any similarities between the two cases/ learners within one case. This echoes what Kolb argues that learning style is to find a balance between the polar dimensions of learning abilities in the ELT mode. It is individually and task-based-on (Kolb and Kolb, 2005). It is worth mentioning my research suggest extra evidence to ELT that scaffolds provided by the courses play an important role in promoting experience transformation. In specific, the comments-draft strategy, tutorials, and ask-answer student questions have helped the learners reflect on their own learning experiences, clarifying misunderstanding and highlighting desirable thoughts. The scaffolds are like guidance, directing the learning behaviours.

Some prior research applies experiential learning theory as a facilitation to understand sojourners' adaptation process (the second stage in Kim's cross-cultural framework). They argue sojourners tend to link their experience of home culture with new host culture so that they are able to understand the norms and traditions in host country (Gill, 2007). My research presents evidence which are not quite same as these studies. Evidence have been rarely found that the participants perceive the new learning culture based on their experiences of Chinese learning cultures. This means the Chinese participants are building new cultural cognition from zero. The learners are getting fresh experiences of the course system whilst learning from them. One possible reason for the different finding is those research focus mainly on sojourners' social experience whereas my research focus on academic learning.

Another learning experience suggested by this research also corresponds ELT. Such experience shared by the two programmes are related to TESOL disciplines rather than cross-cultural learning. Student narratives in the two cases have implied positive correlations between teaching experience and learning TESOL theories. In specific, once the learners are able to link abstract theoretical conceptions with their prior teaching practices, their

understandings of this knowledge tend to be deep and reflections become rich(e.g., in the two cases, the narratives of reflection ability, and the data of developing personal opinions for an assignment). The weak linkage between a theory and teaching reality increase the difficulties of learning (e.g., most of the learners who stated their difficulties of learning theoretical knowledge tend to be fresh in-service teachers in the two cases). In this vein, it is partly explained that the learners in UK-China case (weekend learners) can reach learning results similar with the ones in UK case (full-time learners) because the former has average working years double than the latter. Although this extra evidence, this research has not explored it too much because I am lack of knowledge in the field of language education.

6.2.4 Other theoretical stances linked with this research

Apart from the frameworks (CA, CQ and ELT) employed to discuss the findings of this research, the data has also appeared to be relevant with some other theoretical stances which were not expected at initial. They are briefly discussed in this section with the purpose of understanding the CBHE phenomenon comprehensively, and implying some directions of research in the future.

The findings of course provision in the two cases, although in different locations, reflect a primary mode of learning activity argued by Vygotsky (McLeod, 2018, Turuk, 2008). Vygotsky's activity theory believes learning is something taking place between individuals who are learners and an object which is to be learnt. The zone of proximal development (ZPD) has been conceptualized by Vygotsky as a key approach by which the learners are driven to develop so that they are able to reach the learning object. ZPD, from cognitive psychology, means the distance between the actual developmental level achieved by students on their own, and the potential development they can reach with support of someone more knowledgeable (Sanders and Welk, 2005; McLeod, 2018). A double stimulation of intervention (Vygotsky) has been applied to ZPD with the purpose of enhancing learning quality (Doolittle,

1997; Sanders and Welk, 2005). The first stimulation is to have the learners find it difficult to complete a task. The second stimulation is to provide scaffolding. My data in the two courses suggests the Chinese learners are walking along a shared course routine and expected to achieve the learning objectives. An intentionally designed gap between studying in classes of modules and doing assignment could be seen as the ZPD in their learning activities, by which the learners are expected to making progress towards courses' objectives. The first stimulation to the ZPD could be evidenced as the perceived difficulties of writing essays in the two courses. Module teaching, tutorials, draft-feedback and comments on each assignment, show as a stimulation of scaffolds helping the students complete the assignments. On one hand, the data of their learning outcomes shows the ZPD functions effective to promote the learners' personal growth in the two cases. On the other hand, the voices regarding with challenges/complains in the learning experiences suggest the scaffolds provided by the courses are not seen as specific and purposeful enough for promoting the learners' cultural cognition/metacognition implied by the courses' systems. So, the strategies employed by the learners to adapt into the courses appear to be spontaneous and individual actions instead of systematic activities, during which challenges come and go.

Engeström's expansive learning theory (Engeström, 2001; Engeström and Sannino, 2010) argues the tensions existing in a learning context/activity might drive learning expansion and transformation. This stance could be responded by this research in the form of expansive learning between different activity systems. In specific, in the UK-China case, the course provision is achieved by the collaboration between the two universities. The data has shown the inconsistencies between the two players existing in educational values and working approaches. Such inconsistencies have implied an expanded learning activity is needed cross the two individual ones hold by the partner universities respectively. As stated in the findings, the two partners have to sit down together and discuss a new activity model which aims to

enhance the quality of course provision by dealing with the gaps between their individual activity systems. In other words, the two universities have to go beyond their current activities of course provision, learning how to incorporate different perspectives/cultural traditions into a new system of course provision.

Another expansive learning activity might be researched between the learners' learning activity and the CBHE course provision activity. The findings show tensions existing between how the learners learn the courses (i.e., their expectations and learning experience) and how they are supposed to learn by the courses (e.g., educational values, teaching goals/approaches, scaffolds). An expansive learning activity might be built by negotiations of these tensions, which is expected to enhance the provision quality for supporting student to fully involve into the courses. In addition, there is a latent transformation for the learners in both cases. They are going to shift their identity from learner to teacher after graduation from the TESOL courses. These learners are going to apply the knowledge obtained from the courses to teach their own young learners. Thus they have to transform the learning activity of being a student in the MA TESOL courses to the one of being a practitioner of using TESOL knowledge in Chinese schools. Tensions cross the two activity systems (e.g., what is learnt in the courses and what is needed by new working context) imply further research focusing on the graduated students of the two courses.

6.3 Summary

From the theoretical lens, findings of this research suggest the learners, although on different programmes, have similar learning experiences and outcomes initiating by the shared course system. On one hand, the course system guides the learners to achieve TESOL discipline objects (i.e., findings of the shared learning outcomes of theoretical knowledge, academic ability and identity).

On the other hand, this research has identified cultural inconsistency existing between the programme provision dominated by the provider's learning

culture and its learners' home learning culture, which prevents the learners from being fully involved in the courses. Thus the Chinese learners in this research are driven to initiate a cross-cultural learning so as to implement the course routine.

The concrete learning experience of doing academic tasks (e.g., academic reading, writing essay, critical thinking and independent learning) initiate the learners' adaptation process. Although it cannot say that the learning tasks exclusively belong to UK education culture (as HE in China also stresses these things), it is safe to say that how these tasks are performed and evaluated in the course contexts are cross-cultural issues for the learners. Due to the tensions between Socratic and Confucian learning cultures, the learners initially have little knowledge and skills to conduct such learning activities. Despite, 'learning by doing it' as a main force enables the learners to reflect on their experiences of doing such academic tasks. Some self-made strategies (e.g., self-correction, self-doubt, or peer community of learning) and official scaffolds (draft-comments and tutorials) have been identified in this experiential learning process. Thus, the learners' cultural ability are increasing. They are able to perceive the norms accepted by the programmes, and try to shift their own learning perceptions and approaches. The developed cultural intelligence is applied to deal with the upcoming academic tasks (e.g., doing assignment of another module in the UK case, read some papers and writing critical summaries in the UK-China course). The learners keep learning from doing those new tasks. In this vein, the process of adapting into the new course system equates with a circulation of experiential learning in which the learners in both cases have to negotiate with and learn from the tensions between Socratic and Confucian learning cultures. As a result, the learners' cross-cultural ability (i.e., the four dimensions of CQ mode) is enhanced. They become qualified learners in the UK learning culture who are able to follow the official course routines.

Thus, the learners are able to develop a transformed epistemological

composition featuring with learner-centredness and knowledge agency for the learners. It is seen as a fundamental intellect which makes the outcomes mentioned above profound and transferable.

Some of the research on the learning processes and outcomes of graduate students has found that the sample of university students developed their intellectual rank from the most dualistic (there is knowledge which is absolutely right or wrong) to the least dualistic (knowledge is dependent and developing) along with the learning process (King, 1978; West, 2004; Magolda, 2006). This result is also reflected in the epistemological composition in the learning outcomes of my research. One might argue that previous research has not mentioned cross-cultural learning because the sample students were westerners in western universities. However, I would argue that this is meaningful to my research because it indicates that education in a Socratic culture appears to function well for developing the students in a certain way. It is like a computer game, in which the players will get similar results if they follow its rules. The students, whether they are westerners or Chinese, are shaped and developed once they engage with this system. My research mainly focused on the student learning with a lack of data to analyse the course routine, e.g. the module design, teaching organization and performance, the design of assessment and the rationale for evaluation criteria. Therefore I am only able to suggest that the course routine of TESOL plays a critical role in generating similar learning outcomes between students in the two cases. However, I could not analyse what/how its elements co-relate and work systematically to promote learning. This points to potential research for the future: how the TESOL course routine is designed systematically so that it can benefit the learners effectively.

Despite this, it is also worth pointing out that the course routine is functional but not sufficiently supportive for the Chinese learners in the two cases. As previously discussed in the process of adapting the learners into the British culture of learning, purposeful support is lacking. The learners have difficulties

in using the scaffolds provided by the programmes because of their incompetence to communicate with UK staff (although Chinese staff in the UK-China case, the learners tend to use them insufficiently). This partly led to their dissatisfaction with the programmes. The students complained that they were almost doing self-learning, which suggested a weakness in the programmes. In addition, another weakness is that the programmes provide limited opportunities for the learners to practise teaching and to develop themselves comprehensively (i.e. in the UK case, the learners wanted to practise English language and make sense of English education at all institutional levels). These weaknesses call for a refined course routine where a new balance between valuing learning autonomy and providing support can be found.

Chapter 7 Conclusions

This is a short chapter starts with answering the RQS based on the findings of two cases, followed by research implications and limitations. The last section is a reflection on my PhD experiences.

7.1 Answers to research questions

RQ1: What strategic objectives and approaches underpin the establishment and provision of the two programmes?

The data in 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 5.1 show shared educational objectives of the two cases: TESOL discipline knowledge, research ability (e.g., academic reading and writing) and developmental skills (e.g., critical thinking, independent learning). The learners are expect to become confident and professional teachers who have prospect career development in English education. The two cases both provide core and optional modules with the aim of shaping the structure of TESOL discipline for the learners. The style of assessment is writing essay in both course but the tasks of assignment are different. Students in the two programmes are evaluated by the British university standards because their degree is authorized by the British university. Learners are taught in person on weekdays in UK course and weekends in UK-China course. Course structure and teachings of UK case are conducted by solely UK staff while they are conducted by UK and Chinese staff together in UK-China case. The learning resource in UK campus is more than in Chinese campus in terms of libraries, tutorials with UK staff, module options and British education context. The programme establishment solely refers to UK-China course, which is answered in 4.2 and 4.7.

RQ2: Why were students motivated to enrol on these particular programmes?

The data in 4.4 and 5.2 show the student personal context plays a center role in deciding to enrol a particular course. Different personal contexts result in considerations of pull-push factors and intrinsic-extrinsic motives of learning.

The learners in UK-China programme rarely think about study abroad because of practical factors. In contrast, the learners of UK case insist on overseas learning because they expect socio-cultural experiences which is able to be achieved exclusively by studying in the UK. The overlapping aspects are 1) the learners face with challenges in profession development, and they believe learning a MA TESOL course is a best solution ; 2) they are pushed by disadvantages of other options of master education in China/abroad whilst pulled by the advantages of one particular course of the two cases; 3) they want to upgrade their theoretical knowledge and teaching performance so that they are able to achieve better careers; 4) teaching fellow in the courses are seen as experts in teaching from whom the learners expect to learn how to conduct teaching in an advanced way.

RQ3: How do the programmes compare and contrast in course provisions and the learning experiences of students?

The data in 4.3 show UK-China course involves educational cultures from the two countries which influence module teaching and scaffolding students. The data in 5.1 indicate the UK case is uniquely featured with international diversity which is expected to benefit learning outcomes. The module options in UK programme are more than the ones in UK-China case, and the course is provided with weekdays schedule in the UK course while the UK-China programme is with weekend schedule. Despite these, a shared course system has been found cross the programmes, in which the British education values of process-oriented, conceptual-oriented and learner-centred are dominated. Data in 4.5 and 5.3 suggest the learners present similar learning routines: go to the modules, feel difficult to do assignment, develop strategies of coping with the challenges of learning, complete assignment, find a way to study in the programmes and get personal growth. Most of the challenges encountered by the learners are culture-related. These challenges have driven the learners' cross-cultural adaptation for academic learning in which developing cultural competence of learning and learning from doing academic tasks have deeply

engaged. Therefore, the shared essence of learning experiences in the two courses is the learners are learning MA TESOL as a discipline whilst learning how to learn in British learning culture. In addition, however, some occasions in which the British learning style does not challenge the learners suggest appropriate scaffolds of the courses are essential to get the Chinese students involved.

RQ4: According to the key stakeholders, how effective have the programmes been in satisfying student expectations in the quality of course delivery and providing personal growth opportunities?

The data in 4.6 and 5.4 implies the students of the two cases have gotten similar personal developments, although different in extent and evidence, in theoretical knowledge, reflection ability, academic reading/writing, critical thinking and ability of problem solving. They are contributed by the course routine and students' cross-cultural learning activities. The latter service for becoming qualified learners under the programme contexts, by which the learners are able to follow the former. A transformation of epistemology composition featured with learner-centered and knowledge agency has been identified in the learners' process of achieving course objects. Despite the personal growth, the students in UK case complain lack of social-cultural involvement. The learners express dissatisfactions for insufficient opportunity of teaching practice in both cases. Their incompetence of using the provided scaffolds undermines the potential benefits of learning the courses.

7.2 Research implications and limitations

This research provides concrete background against which policy makers in higher education, course providers and individuals taking part into CBHE might be able to develop approaches to CBHE with the purpose of promoting the quality of higher education.

For the policy makers and course providers of CBHE programmes of MA TESOL, the first implication is related to student recruit. The learners'

motivations and expectations of the MA TESOL courses suggest a signal that the market of student candidates are plenty for CBHE due to the degree-oriented competition in Chinese labour market. Especially, a TNHE programme with accessible time schedule, location, and bar of entrance are prior to other education options for the Chinese in-service teachers.

The most successful experience borrowed from this research is that a well-designed course system dominated by UK learning culture is a significant guarantee of education quality in CBHE, by which the supposed learning outcomes could be reached. Therefore, insisting on the course system is the priority for the stakeholders in importing or exporting CBHE programmes. It is the involvement of Chinese learners into the course routine that has contributed to personal growth in the form of cross-culture ability regardless their locations of study. However, the research implies the scaffold provided by the courses are insufficient both qualitatively and quantitatively to support the Chinese learners to proceed academic learning. My findings suggest culture-focused scaffolds are considerably needed by the Chinese learners in order to adapt into the courses. The discussion from cultural perspective shows the Chinese learners need support to build their culture abilities of motivation and cognition required by the programmes. The learners also needs more opportunities to practice/apply the new learnt cultural skills in their academic learning. In specific, for the UK–China programme, the providers of the two institutions might propose a constructive discussion regarding with how to incorporate the cultural advantages of Chinese/UK lecturers into building scaffolds. For the UK case, the learners' incapability of using its scaffolds implies the construction of sub-scaffolds. The learning culture taken for granted by the programmes (e.g., critical thinking) are required to be explicit for the learners.

Learning community as a strategy to promote the learners' learning effects are shared cross the two cases, whereas, there is a potential room of extension. Linking the double functions of course routine with the group

learning in the two cases, it is found the group learning aims to reach the function of TESOL discipline learning regardless the cross-culture learning for adapting into the courses. Therefore, there might be an expansive group learning designed by the course providers to scaffold the learners to think about how to become a qualified learner under the courses' discourse.

The shared learners' expectation of teaching practice in their learning process calls for a reform of assessment which is currently writing essay in the two cases. Although writing essay has justified its function of enhancing learning outcomes for the learners, teaching practice is valued by the learners in terms of increasing engagement in each module, and directly developing teaching skills. Given the educational goals of the courses emphasize the profession development for English teachers, it is worth for the course providers re-thinking the balance between theoretical learning and practicing. The data of course provision in the two cases indicate writing essay as an assessment style is also influenced by some practical factors (e.g., fairness, feasibility). So negotiations between a course context and its learners' expectations might be needed.

The last suggestion inspired by this research (section4.5.4.4) is for TNHE, the UK-China case. It is regarding with building programme identity for the learners in TNHE who do not study the course in its mother campus. A reinforcement is needed for the learners to justify their feelings of belonging, i.e., they are whose students.

For Chinese individuals who are considering to apply a course of CBHE. This research firstly shows the effectiveness of CBHE in developing personal profession competence. It further provides evidence of similarity and contrast of learning experiences between different course provisions. These evidence are supposed to be acknowledged by the Chinese learners so they are able to prepare for the upcoming adventure in CBHE.

The research although shapes an overall picture of the course provision,

learners' motivations, expectancies, learning experiences and outcomes in two MA TESOL courses, it has limitations as below: 1) the research scales are different between the two cases. The number of participants (student and staff), the class observations (i.e., different modules and observing time) and tasks of assignment are not quite same between the two cases. This might undermine the comparison in terms of analysing to what extent and why the student learning activity in one course is different from the other. 2) The small size of participants (staff and students) in this research might overlook voices of different perspectives. Especially, in the UK case, only three student informants registered in 2018 and one teaching staff are interviewed. The evidence of reflection on learning experience by a majority learners, and the education perceptions of module designing and teaching valued by other staff are not rich. 3) The gap between module teaching and task of assignment is evidenced in this research. But it also should notice such analysis is based on the data of only three modules (two in the UK-China case, and one in the UK case) which are provided in the first semester of the two courses. Therefore, the evidenced gap in this research cannot be seen as a fixed one. Instead, Is it observed the same in other modules? Is it perceived little by the learners over time when they are proficient learners in the programmes? Such questions should be also considered. The limitations above call for further research of replication. Research which includes more/different informants and employs the same methods is expected to test the findings and conclusions in this study. In addition, alternative research employing different methods (e.g., quantitative or mixed-methods) is supposed to be a complementation to this study. The findings rising from these research could be triangulated with each other and reach a deep understandings of the phenomenon of CBHE.

7.3 Reflection on research journey

This research initially planned to apply human capital theory to analyse learners' learning experiences (i.e., motivations and outcomes) as a framework because education is seen as personal investment for profession

competence development. However, it fails to cover personal context, explaining why the learners prefer a specific course instead of other else. Although it conceptualize learning outcomes as knowledge and competence development, it has limitation in understanding why these result happen. Then push-pull factors, extrinsic-intrinsic motivation theory and cultural adaptation theory with experiential learning theory is found suitable for dealing with those issues.

An experience impressed me in developing theoretical framework is I really understand there is no framework that matches a study perfectly. As a researcher, making efforts to overcome the challenges of applying theories is more important than searching for a best option. Another impressive experience is, in social science, a theory is to inspire and guide research to understand reality. Rather, theory is not fixed standards implying things should happen in a certain way. Researcher is the person who uses and develops theory rather than follows with it all the same. For example, experiential learning theory is applied in this research by picking up some of its stances (e.g., dimensions of obtaining experience and transforming the experience) to understand how the cross-culture learning takes place, and what learning abilities are involved into the learning process. It is unnecessary to assess/differentiate learners' learning styles (i.e., the learning style inventory （LSI）is a tool of ELT to evaluate different learning styles of an individual, but it is not applied in this research).

The process of data collection is a precious experience for me to learn how to do filed work by doing it. Although a plan is shaped before filed work, there is much room for me to learn how to adjust plan according to the field context. Interview timetable was decided by the schedule of learners. Inquiry questions was changed once they cannot reveal clues for my research questions. An example is the question of 'do you feel satisfaction to your learning outcomes?' each participants said yes but I can tell untold information from their face expression. I realized this question was ineffective as the power distance

disable the participants to express negative comments directly. So I changed the question into: do you feel you are fully developed via the course? In what aspect do you think the programme should be developed in order to support your learning? Then the answers became diverse and dynamic. I tried to be a real person who is curious about the learners' stories in the interviews. I preferred communicating with participants and building understanding of the whole thing about which they are talking. I find it is a good strategy which relaxes the interviewees and closes the distance between them and me. We keeps in touch like friends even though the research is completed. I think good data comes from building real connection with participants.

My personal background that I am not a language teacher challenges me to understand the language-discipline-related knowledge talked about in interviews with the participants (this was mentioned in section3.3.1). This weakness limits the research to investigate the participants' perceptions about discipline knowledge in deep. In specific, either how the participants as language teachers think of the theoretical conceptions learnt in the courses or to what extent they think the knowledge could be applied into their own teaching is just briefly mentioned in this research, although these two questions are important for justifying the effectiveness of the TESOL courses in terms of supporting teachers to improve their profession performance.

However, meanwhile, a most significant lesson I learnt via field work is, if a researcher wants to know something, the best way of understanding it is to go inside the field and ask people there, instead of staying with literatures. I felt nervous to conduct the field work because I am an outsider of TESOL. So, I read a lot of papers to understand what TESOL is. However, it is the field work that builds my knowledge of TESOL. I just ask people in the courses 'why you/it…', 'what is …', 'how do you understand…' then I feel the people became experts informing new knowledge to me.

Another big lesson is about data analysis. I really understand what is 'close to the data' which is emphasized repeatedly by my supervisors. I think data has

its own voice and potential. My job is to reveal them and avoid the interruption by my mind. Let the data tells the story regardless whether the story responds to my imagination. An example is I prepared to analyse how the different experience impact the learning outcomes between the two courses. However the finding shows the overlap between the two cases overwhelms the differences, which is out of my prediction. This surprise gives rise to explanation of why and reaches a new understanding of CBHE. Data analysis is also a practice of critical thinking and argumentation. I initially was a data re-teller, covering all the data but my own opinions were little. As a solution, I tried to add some comments within the lines of data, like why? Any contrast ideas? Relevant to what? But there is still a large room for improvement of being critical to the data in my journey of becoming a researcher.

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Appendix A
Interview guide to the students' expectations

NO.	Main question	Follow up question	prompts
1	Could you please introduce yourself? (related to RQ2)	●Please introduce your academic backgrounds; ●Pleas describe your job (responsibilities and how it goes in a day) and how you think about it; ●Did you resign your job in order to study here? How do you think about it?	Please explain?
2	Why did you decide to begin a master degree/MA TESOL programme? (related to RQ2)	●What influenced your decision (insider/outsider factors)? ●Could you tell me your considerations in deciding to study a master? ●What do you pay attention to when you think about studying abroad? ●Why the current programme attract you? ●How did you focus on the current programme?	Why? Could you tell me more about that?
3	What are your expectations for your master study life? (related to RQ2)	●Could you like to talk about some goals/developments you expect to achieve through the study? ●Is there anything specific you want to do in this academic year? ●what was your feeling when you know you are going to study in this programme?	

Appendix B
Interview guide for the students' experiences and outcomes

NO.	Main question	Follow up question/probes	prompts
1.	Let's talk about your academic experience in the programme. (related to RQ3)	● How do you feel about the experience in the master study? ●What difficulties/challenges have you met in study? Any ideas to overcome them? ●How about the support from university/faculty or others? (Programme staff, friends, classmates, parents, etc.) ●Could you talk about the modules you think much helpful for you? ● 'Writing essays' as an examination style in this programme, what is your opinions about this requirement? ●How do you feel about the teaching styles in the modules? ●Would you describe an incident in you academic learning by which you are impressed?	Why? What does it mean to you? Could you explain it ? Could you give an example? Would you talk more details about it?
2	Let's talk about your social experience in the programme. (related to RQ3)	●What did you usually do in your daily life apart from academic study? ● Anything impressive you want to share with me?	Why? Would you talk more details about it?
3	If you reflect on your learning experience on this course, what would you say?	●Do you think you have made some progress on this course? ●What is your biggest improvement since you study here?	What are they?

(related to RQ4)	● Do you have any disappointment if the academic year is over soon? ●In what aspect, do you think, the programme could do better to rich your learning experience/ enhance your learning outcomes?	

Appendix C
Interview guide for the teaching staff

Main questions/topics	following questions	prompts
Teaching TESOL in China/ UK staff (related to RQ1)	●Why did you join in this programme and start to teach? ●How do you feel of teaching TESOL in this programme?	Would you Please explain more?
Changed academic schedule(for UK-China) (related to RQ1)	●Has it influenced your teaching? ●What influences? ●How did you adjust the teaching for these influences?	Anything else? Would you Please explain more?
Module design (related to RQ1,4)	●Why this module was built? (motivation and purpose) ●What do you want to deliver to the learners	Why? Would you Please explain more?
Writing essay? (related to RQ1,4)	●Why does this module/programme value writing essay? ●Did you consider other styles? Presentation? Micro teaching? Attendance?	Why (not) them?
Group discussions in your classes (related to RQ1,4)	●What purposes/functions/roles of them in your teaching?	
Supports---- more supports----fly by yourself(for Kate) (related to RQ4)	●Could you explain what do you mean by saying this in you class?	
Students in UK; the UK academic rules and regulations(for	●Could you explain what do you mean by saying this in you class?	

Nan Sheng) (related to RQ4)		