'Bridging the Gaps':

A Case Study of Faculty and Student Expectations, Perceptions, Challenges, and Responses in

The Chinese 'Teach-Abroad' Learning Environment

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

R. Michael Paige, Adviser

July 2013

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I need to thank my partner, Jeffrey, for all of his love and encouragement. I could not have reached this point in the journey without him. I would also like to acknowledge my parents, Jim and Virginia, and my brother, Zach, for their support over the years.

I have greatly appreciated the wisdom provided by my adviser, Professor R. Michael Paige, as well as the guidance offered by the other members of my dissertation committee—Professor Gerald Fry, Assistant Dean Barbara Kappler, and Associate Professor Michael Goh. I also would like to acknowledge the support of Professor Connie Walker.

Having the opportunity to pursue research connected to my staff role at the Carlson School of Management has enormously enriched both my dissertation study and my professional pursuits. I owe a debt of thanks to Assistant Dean Anne D'Angelo for her continued encouragement, to Associate Dean Michael Houston, and to my colleague, Theresa Heath.

I would also like to thank my colleagues at Lingnan (University) College, Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou for their support, as well as all of the CHEMBA faculty, students, and graduates who participated in this study.

Lastly, I am grateful for the insights provided by Yang Li regarding the Chinese cultural context and to Kong Kaishan for her assistance with translation of key metaphors in my findings chapter from English to Chinese.

Abstract

Thousands of U.S. faculty travel abroad each year to teach host-country students (George, 1995). This study explores the 'teach-abroad classroom', defined as "the teaching and learning processes and interactions between faculty and students" in this learning environment (George, 1987, 1995; Slethaug, 2007). Faculty and student expectations and perceptions of this learning environment are investigated, 'gaps' between the faculty and students are identified, and faculty and student responses to cultural differences are assessed.

This qualitative study focuses on the case of the China Executive MBA (CHEMBA) Program, a joint offering of the Carlson School of Management, University of Minnesota in the United States and Lingnan (University) College, Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, China. Individual interviews were conducted with Carlson School faculty who teach in the program and with students and graduates of the program. The researcher also formally observed CHEMBA class sessions.

Utilizing intercultural competence theory (M. J. Bennett, 1986, 1993; Deardorff, 2008), this study reports findings related to faculty and learner expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses in the teach-abroad learning environment. Three metaphors are used to represent the key gaps between faculty and students in regard to classroom discussion, the completion of readings for class, and language issues. Recommendations are offered for faculty, learners, and program administrators.

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Chapter One: Introduction

"I would say 'What about this?' And then I'd wait. I'd sit there and sip my tea…Nothing. Then I'd call on somebody, 'Chung, what do you think?' He would look down at his book…[silence]…[silence]. I have no experience with this—the experience of calling on a student and the ability of that student to outwait me!"

—U.S. instructor teaching in China (George, 1995, p. 14)

"In China, classroom participation is not common…Students have questions, but they usually ask them after class. Sometimes, the teacher will arrange time for questions at a special session."

—Chinese student in U.S. classroom (Liu, 2001, pp. 114-115)

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In 1995 scholar Pamela George estimated that as many as 50,000 U.S. university faculty would travel abroad in that year alone to participate in overseas academic exchanges, and many of these faculty would find themselves teaching non-U.S. students in some capacity. Since that time, one can assume that this number of faculty has only grown as opportunities for college and university instructors to teach beyond U.S.-American borders have multiplied. For example, 1,200 scholars from the United States currently participate every year in international academic exchanges coordinated by the U.S. government's Fulbright Program, and this is just one of the many entities in the United States sending scholars and instructors abroad (Fulbright Program Web site, 2010). With thousands of U.S. faculty teaching non-U.S. students abroad, researchers have concluded that faculty members who are teaching abroad often approach the

instruction of host country students with the assumption that they will learn in the same way that their home country students do, while the host country students assume that the instructors will teach in the same way as teachers in their own culture. As learning is culturally influenced (George, 1995; Louie, 2005; Rao & Chan, 2009), both teachers and students are put at a disadvantage if they do not understand that the other party naturally approaches the learning process differently due to divergent cultural influences. Researchers (George, 1995; Slethaug, 2007) have begun to pose this question about the "teach-abroad learning environment": Are these instructors and students proceeding in a 'business as usual' manner or are they adapting their teaching practices and learning approaches to meet the special needs of this particular learning environment?

Research Goals

The overarching goal of this study is to better understand the teach-abroad learning environment, taking into consideration both faculty and student perspectives, i.e., points of convergence and divergence about the teaching and learning process. In addition to exploring the faculty-student dynamics of the teach-abroad classroom in general, I want to understand faculty and students' differing expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses in the learning environment of the teach-abroad classroom. By identifying these gaps—points of divergence in faculty and student perspectives—I hope to be able to utilize the study's findings to make improvements to the 'China Executive MBA Program', which is the focus of this research endeavor.

Purpose and Research Questions

With these research goals in mind, the primary purpose of this study is to understand faculty and student expectations and perceptions of the learning environment

in the Chinese teach-abroad classroom, to identify the 'gaps' between faculty and students, and to understand how faculty and students respond to cultural differences related to teaching and learning when they occur. Based on this purpose statement, the key research questions guiding the study are as follows:

1) With respect to the teach-abroad learning environment in terms of the faculty role as instructor, student role as learner (e.g., participation), and language use in the classroom:

   a. What are faculty members' and students' expectations?

   b. What are faculty members' and students' perceptions of their actual experience?

   c. How are faculty and students challenged?

   d. How do faculty and students respond to the challenges they encounter?

2) Do faculty members perceive that their previous international and cross-cultural experiences and their previous teach-abroad experiences influence their expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses in the teach-abroad learning environment? If so, in what ways and to what degree?

3) Do students perceive that their previous international and cross-cultural experiences and their length of time in the teach-abroad learning environment influence their expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses? If so, in what ways and to what degree?

4) What preparatory experiences do faculty and students indicate they found, or would find, beneficial in regard to their expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses in the teach-abroad learning environment?

Assumptions

It is important to acknowledge the assumptions that inform this study, as they are fundamental to the research goals, purpose statement, and research questions. First, the researcher perceives that teaching and learning tend to differ across cultural contexts (George, 1995; Louie, 2005). For example, teaching and learning in the U.S. higher education classroom is often not the same as that in the Chinese higher education classroom (Rao & Chan, 2009; Slethaug, 2007)—although it is also important to note that teaching and learning are never static, no matter the geographic location. Another assumption is that students in one culture are likely to have different expectations of their professors than students from another culture (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Furey, 1986). As a result, instructors are likely to face a different set of expectations from U.S. university students than they are from Chinese university students (George, 1995; Liu, 2001). In turn, students experience instruction from international faculty in a different way than they do instruction from their own culture's teachers (Simpson, 2008; Wong, 2000). Lastly, as suggested by Myrdal (1969), my 'value premises' as a researcher are based on the notion that it is important to be sensitive to cultural differences when working internationally and that this sensitivity should be a core part of teaching and learning in the teach-abroad learning environment.

Key Definitions

The terms that require definition in order to understand the scope of this study are: (a) 'teaching abroad', (b) 'teach-abroad learning environment' or 'teach-abroad classroom' (used synonymously), (c) 'learning environment expectations', (d) 'learning environment perceptions', (e) 'learning environment challenges', and (f) 'learning

environment responses'. For the purposes of this study, I have defined 'teaching abroad' as instruction that occurs outside the instructor's home country, e.g., a professor from the United States teaching in China (George, 1995; Slethaug, 2007). The 'teach- abroad learning environment' or 'teach-abroad classroom' is defined in this paper as the teaching and learning processes and interactions between faculty and students (George, 1987, 1995; Slethaug, 2007). Based on the relevant research literature, three key components of the 'teach-abroad learning environment' are the faculty role as instructor, student role as learner (with a focus on participation), and the importance of language (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Slethaug, 2007). I have adopted the definition of 'learning environment expectations' as referring to instructors' and students' unique assumptions about the teaching and learning processes that happen in a classroom and 'learning environment perceptions' as a concept referring to how students and faculty actually experience the teaching and learning in this particular setting (George, 1995; Louie, 2005). Lastly, 'learning environment challenges' are defined as the aspects of the teach-abroad classroom with which instructors and students struggle and 'learning environment responses' refer to the students' and professors' reactions to these difficulties (George, 1987, 1995; Slethaug, 2007). I will examine instructor and student expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses in the three areas of faculty role, student role, and language.

<h2 style="text-align:center">Theoretical Framework</h2>

This study has been conceived in the context of 'intercultural competence theory', which helps explain how individuals interact across cultures. Deardorff (2008) defined intercultural competence (IC) as "the ability to communicate effectively and

appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 33). Her description of IC builds on previous scholarship from this body of literature, including Milton Bennett's work on what he termed 'intercultural sensitivity' (1986, 1993). Historically, IC's roots can be traced back to the 1600s, when Czech educator and writer John Amos Comenius stated the "…belief that a multiplicity of perspectives not only was foundational to knowledge acquisition but also encouraged mutual understanding between people of differing backgrounds…" (Cushner & Mahon, 2009, p. 305). More recently terms such as 'peace education', 'global or international education', 'intercultural education', and 'cultural IQ' have emerged to build on Comenius' and other scholars' notions about the nature of cultures and cultural difference (Cushner & Mahon, 2009, p. 305). IC theory has been applied in classroom settings, both K-12 and higher education, around the world—and is directly applicable to the teach-abroad learning environment in providing a theoretical lens on the culture-bound perspectives of instructors and students in this classroom context and how these two groups might relate across cultures.

China Executive MBA Program

To explore the problem of teaching and learning in the teach-abroad learning environment in a specific context, this study will focus on this issue from the faculty and student perspectives in the 'China Executive MBA Program', jointly administered by two business schools—one in the United States and one in China (the information provided in this section comes from the program web site, www.chemba.com, and from internal program documents).

Initiated in 2001, the China Executive MBA (CHEMBA) Program is administered by the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota (Twin Cities) and Lingnan (University) College at Sun Yat-sen University (Guangzhou). L(U)C is a business-focused college within Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou. In the CHEMBA Program, which is built around a standard MBA core curriculum (with courses on topics such as strategy, finance, marketing, and operations), the Carlson School provides roughly half of the instructors and the other half are employed by L(U)C. All courses in the CHEMBA Program are taught in English and English-language competence is a requirement for admission to the program. Each CHEMBA course has a teaching assistant assigned by Lingnan (University) College; the t.a.'s are often assistant professors at L(U)C who speak both Chinese and English.

The students in the program are almost exclusively from mainland China (with a very small number from Taiwan and other countries such as India and Malaysia). Most of the CHEMBA students are in their 30s or 40s and are working as mid-level managers and executives for Chinese and multinational companies at the time they enter the program (they continue to work full-time throughout the program). While the Carlson School and L(U)C aspire to recruit students from throughout China, most of the student participants in this study are from the southern part of the country, especially Guangdong Province.

All but one of the CHEMBA students' courses takes place on the L(U)C campus in Guangzhou, and so Carlson School instructors regularly travel to southern China to teach in the program. Most courses last for two consecutive weekends (both Saturday and Sunday) and the teaching is divided between the Carlson professor and the L(U)C

professor (each instructor covers one weekend). The program's duration is two full

academic years, beginning in the fall and ending in the spring, and the students typically

progress through their coursework in a cohort structure, graduating with the same group

of students with which they began the program. The students' final course, called the

'International Residency', serves as the capstone for the degree program. For the

'residency' course the student participants in this study travel(ed) to Minneapolis—where

they join(ed) students from the Carlson School's other global Executive MBA programs

in Vienna, Austria and Warsaw, Poland (the Warsaw program ended in Spring 2012)—

for academic class sessions and visits to Minnesota-based companies. At the conclusion

of the 'International Residency', the CHEMBA students participate in the Carlson School

Graduate Commencement Ceremony and are henceforward alumni of both the Carlson

School and L(U)C (although the MBA degree received by the students is granted only by

the Carlson School).

Rationale and Significance

While this study focuses on international instructors teaching in the Chinese

university classroom, better understanding the challenges that the CHEMBA faculty and

students face in the teach-abroad learning environment—from their own perspective—

could be helpful to other instructors and students in teach-abroad classrooms around the

world. I hope that the findings of the study might also be useful for instructors teaching

international students in the classrooms of U.S. higher education institutions.

This study's conclusions will potentially provide concrete guidance regarding

future CHEMBA program development, given my role as CHEMBA director at the

Carlson School. In addition, I hope that the study's findings will benefit administrators of other teach-abroad programs.

Study Design

This study employed a case study method within a constructivist research framework to better understand faculty, student, and alumni perspectives on teaching and learning in the teach-abroad learning environment. I interviewed Carlson School faculty who teach in the CHEMBA Program and also first- and second-year students and recent alumni. I also observed CHEMBA class sessions on the L(U)C campus in Guangzhou.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this study is that, while the findings will hopefully be of use in other teach-abroad contexts, the conclusions drawn can only be strictly applied to the CHEMBA Program. It is also true that there are a limited number of faculty (approximately 20 from the Carlson School), students (approximately 50), and recent graduates (approximately 50) associated with the program, and so the study is perhaps constrained by the data that can be collected from this finite number of participants. Furthermore, there was potential for hindsight bias, given that the study participants were asked to recall their expectations of the program when they first enrolled.

Organization of the Paper

In the following chapter I present a review of key ideas from the literature. In Chapter Three, I discuss the research methodology utilized for this study, including the design of the sampling, data collection, and data analysis. Next, in Chapter Four I present the study's findings as they respond to the research questions posed earlier in this chapter. Lastly, in Chapter Five I discuss the larger themes that emerged from the data,

and the implications for the CHEMBA Program and the teach-abroad learning

environment in general.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

"Those who have studied or taught in more than one culture are often struck by the strong differences in attitudes surrounding the teacher and are surprised at the extent to which culturally conditioned ideas about the teacher role are reflected in norms of classroom behavior."

—Furey (1986), pp. 19-20

"Norms for student participation in the classroom vary considerably across cultures and are probably the most discussed attribute of classroom culture…"

—George (1995), p. 15

"Optimal communication and understanding require language fluency whereas a partial language barrier creates impediments to teaching that are not easily circumvented. It can be difficult to share anecdotes, mistakes, or humor, which sometimes make for the most enduring lessons."

—Dhaliwal (2009), p. 772

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As stated in Chapter One, the purpose of this study is to understand faculty and student expectations and perceptions of the learning environment in the Chinese teach-abroad classroom, to identify the 'gaps' between faculty and students, and to understand how faculty and students respond to cultural differences related to teaching and learning when they occur. In order to fully understand the many dimensions of this research problem, I investigated multiple bodies of literature.

In this review of the literature I explore the research that specifically assesses the teach-abroad learning environment, including Pamela George's (1987, 1995) seminal work, as well as Slethaug's (2007) analysis of the 'cross-cultural classroom'. I also look at the highly relevant body of literature on the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom, both abroad (sometimes referred to as 'English as a Foreign Language') and domestically within the United States (Furey, 1986; Simpson, 2008; Wong, 2000). In addition, I present key literature regarding international students studying abroad, including in the United States (Carroll & Ryan, 2005; Liu, 2001). Furthermore, I explore the literature on the Chinese learner, which charts changing attitudes over time toward the nature of this dynamic student population (Kember, 2004; Lee, 1996; Peterson, Hayhoe, & Lu, 2001; Rao & Chan, 2009). Lastly, this review delves into the literature on intercultural competence and adaptation, so as to better understand the challenges for both faculty and students in the teach-abroad learning environment.

These different bodies of literature generated four primary themes that are particularly relevant to this thesis research: (a) the gap in learning environment expectations and perceptions between faculty and students; (b) the challenging aspects of this gap, for both instructors and students, including the faculty role, student role, and the importance of language; (c) the Chinese cultural context, including Confucian traditions and the group/collective orientation; and (d) intercultural adaptation on the part of both instructors and students.

Gap in Learning Environment Expectations and Perceptions

In reviewing the literature, a theory about differences in learning environment expectations and perceptions between faculty and students in the teach-abroad classroom

clearly surfaced. This theory attributed a gap between instructors and students to divergent cultural influences (see Figure 1) that have shaped both teachers' and students' understanding of, and assumptions about, the classroom environment (Furey, 1986; Garson, 2005; Li, 2002; Wong, 2000). Simpson (2008) described the differences between students and faculty as "…firmly rooted in culture…" (p. 391) and other scholars (George, 1995; Louie, 2005; Rao & Chan, 2009) have affirmed this perspective. Examples of these variances include instructors' expectations of learners, learners' expectations of instructors, and perceptions of instructor-learner interactions. In the literature regarding "expectancy violations," scholars have discussed the varying expectations that "…often translate into pitting one culture's norms against…another culture" (Burgoon & Hubbard, 2005, p. 154) when individuals interact across cultures. The research literature confirms the existence of this gap. In this section of the literature review, theory and research on teachers' and students' expectations and perceptions of the learning environment are explored in turn.
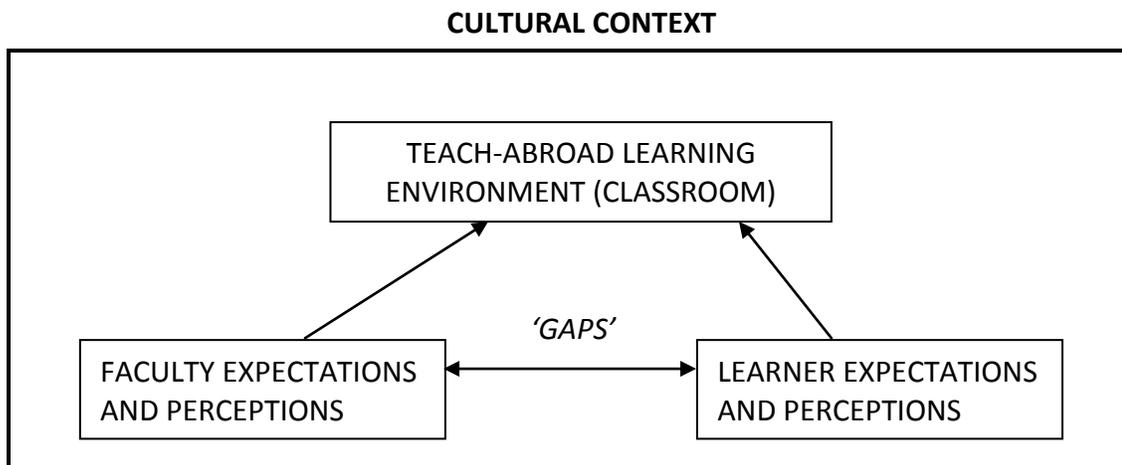
CULTURAL CONTEXT

Figure 1. Role of cultural context in faculty and learner expectations and perceptions.

Faculty Expectations and Perceptions

   All instructors, including those teaching abroad, were once students themselves and research has shown that teachers are strongly influenced by their own formative learning experiences (George, 1995; Simpson, 2008). In describing faculty expectations and perceptions in the teach-abroad learning environment, Wong's (2000) framework illustrated three phases in the adjustment of the teach-abroad instructor, the first of which she called "baggage brought" (p. 90). This approach to understanding faculty expectations and perceptions was formulated in the context of the EFL classroom abroad, but can be applied to any teach-abroad environment. In Wong's framework the "baggage brought" stage referred to the previous "experience and expectations" of the instructor, including their prior learning environment interactions as students. The literature has found that some faculty, though not all, are aware of the impact that their experiences as learners have had on their expectations and perceptions as instructors (Wong, 2000). Regardless, "…the methods they [U.S.-educated teach-abroad faculty] described that they used in their classrooms resembled those found in typical American classrooms…" (Wong, 2000, p. 98). Indeed, all teachers are guided by their previous lives in what they expect of the classroom environment and these expectations and perceptions "…reflect our cultural, geographical and experiential norms" (George, 1995, p. 18).

   When instructors teach abroad for the first time, they encounter an unfamiliar classroom environment and discover that their expectations might be out of alignment with the new context (George, 1987; Slethaug, 2007). Many faculty stumble before recognizing that their expectations do not fit the teach-abroad learning environment. "On the morning that I walked into class," wrote one teach-abroad instructor, "I assertively

started out with introductions and described my facilitative teaching style and my expectations. I forgot my organizational development (OD) training and did not ask what my students expected of me" (Garson, 2005, p. 323). Scholars of the teach-abroad and cross-cultural classrooms have determined that, while faculty need not necessarily change everything about their expectations, they must consider the cultural context in which they are teaching and in what ways it might be helpful to adjust their assumptions and understandings (George, 1995). It has been found that intentional thought and reflection on the instructor's part regarding the teach-abroad learning environment are extremely useful as a way for them to gauge the appropriateness of their expectations (George, 1987, 1995). Kelley (2007) advised soliciting "…the advice of other…educators who have taught in a specific country. Seeking information before leaving the United States will help…educators to set realistic expectations" (p. 208).

Student Expectations and Perceptions

Just as faculty rely on their prior learning experiences in formulating their expectations of the teach-abroad learning environment, their students often assume that the new classroom context will conform to their own previous educational experiences (Slethaug, 2007; Wong, 2000). Research has shown that students frequently have expectations and perceptions of their instructors based on the particular cultural context in which they have learned—for example, in their prior higher education studies and in secondary school (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Furey, 1986). Bodycott and Walker (2000) concluded that "the general expectation of students [in their teach-abroad classroom] was that we [the instructors] have the answers to *all* [original italics] questions" (p. 88). As a result, students find themselves surprised by the differences between international

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instructors' teaching approaches and the instruction from their own culture's teachers (Simpson, 2008; Thorstensson, 2001; Wong, 2000). "Internationalization of the classroom," wrote Slethaug (2007), "must therefore consider the cultural context of the students…[and] their expectations…" (p. 34).

In the teach-abroad learning environment students discover that the expectations on which they have relied might not serve them as well in the new classroom context. The norms to which students have grown accustomed may no longer apply, but their initial response to this dissimilar cultural context is often to maintain their previous modes of learning (George, 1987, 1995; Slethaug, 2007). These modes might include an assumption on the students' part that their instructors will primarily 'lecture' to them, as observed by George (1987). In one study, it was found that "…students [in the non-U.S. teach-abroad learning environment] have an expectation that university teaching is 'lecturing only'. Their accompanying response is to sit quietly and listen" (George, 1987, p. 55). It has been reported that students in the non-U.S. teach-abroad learning environment also sometimes enter the classroom with an expectation that they will be asked to memorize information as a key learning strategy (Garson, 2005). In addition, students often arrive with expectations about the amount and type of work they will need to do before, during, and after class that do not coincide with the instructor's perspective. "Differences in expectations about an appropriate workload ha[ve] decided implications for the classroom," wrote George (1995). "For example, it was reported by professors…[who had taught in] many countries and cultures that students they taught [outside the United States] 'did not have the practice of preparing for class, doing the assigned readings, or doing homework'" (p. 11).

Conclusion

It is clear from reviewing the literature that the differing learning environment expectations and perceptions of faculty and students in the teach-abroad classroom, which are based on each group's prior culturally-bound educational experiences, are critical in understanding this dynamic teaching and learning context. The gaps between instructors and students result in a divide that can be difficult for both parties to navigate and can sometimes even cause conflict in the classroom setting (Simpson, 2008; Slethaug, 2007). In her presentation of a cross-cultural framework for the ESL classroom, Furey (1986) emphasized the importance of both faculty and students exploring "categories…[that] should [be] investigate[d] in order to anticipate possible sources of misunderstanding, conflict, or difficulty in the multicultural classroom" (p. 16). In the next section of this literature review, the key challenging aspects of the teach-abroad learning environment that emerge from the gaps between instructors and students are described.

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Challenging Aspects of the Teach-Abroad Learning Environment

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Based on the understanding that faculty and students often experience a gap between their own expectations and perceptions and the other group's expectations and perceptions, an analysis of the literature reveals key aspects of the teach-abroad classroom that both teachers and students find challenging. First, it is apparent from research on instructor-student interactions that interpretations of the role a teacher plays in the classroom can vary widely across cultures (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; George, 1995). How these different approaches to the teacher's position in the learning environment affect the experience of both instructors and students is an important

component of the teach-abroad classroom context. Second, a common theme among studies of the cross-cultural classroom is that modes of classroom participation differ significantly from one cultural milieu to the next (Liu, 2001; Slethaug, 2007). The perspectives of faculty and students toward student engagement in the learning environment, defined differently in each cultural context, can engender a problematic experience of the teach-abroad setting for both teachers and students. Third, and finally, the place of language in the teach-abroad learning environment cannot be overstated (Furey, 1986; George, 1987). When the instructor and students come from divergent language backgrounds, can each group feel comfortable and competent in the learning environment, despite a language gap?

Faculty Role

In the literature exploring the teach-abroad learning environment, the role played by the teacher in this context is frequently cited as a point of concern for instructors and students (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; George, 1995). It is often surprising for both faculty and students that the position held by the teacher is up for debate, as each party enters the teach-abroad classroom with assumptions about the teacher's role (Furey, 1986; George, 1995). "Those who have studied or taught in more than one culture," wrote Furey (1986), "are often struck by the strong differences in attitudes surrounding the teacher and are surprised at the extent to which culturally conditioned ideas about the teacher role are reflected in norms of classroom behavior" (pp. 19-20). George (1995) found that even instructors who were made aware of this aspect of the teach-abroad learning environment ahead of time were startled by the differing approaches to the instructor's role across varying cultural contexts.

Many teach-abroad instructors from the United States and other 'Western' nations arrive in the host country with certain preconceived notions about the role they will play (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; George, 1995). As with their overall expectations of the learning environment, faculty bring prior understandings of the role they should perform in the context of the teach-abroad classroom. Bodycott and Walker (2000) reported that some 'Western' instructors "…see themselves as savior, that is, bringing the best of the West to a developing country. This attitude is manifest in overt and covert ways…" (p. 81). Some faculty carry with them a perception that their chief function is to serve as a "facilitator" in the classroom, which is an unfamiliar position for instructors to play in certain cultural contexts (Garson, 2005, p. 325). In the literature there is a call for teachers to acknowledge their "baggage brought" (Wong, 2000, p. 90) and to question their instinctive understanding of their purpose and role in the classroom, as what has worked for them in the past might no longer be relevant in the new learning environment (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Furey, 1986).

From the student perspective, the literature reveals a picture of an 'authoritative' role that students from some cultures expect faculty to play (Furey, 1986; Liu, 2001; Thorstensson, 2001). "In many cultures," found Furey (1986), "the teacher exercises greater authority and plays a highly directive role in determining and controlling what goes on in the classroom" (p. 20). East Asian cultures, in particular, are highlighted in the literature as valuing the authority of the instructor as the traditional role performed by teachers in this cultural context (Liu, 2001). Liu (2001) determined that students from throughout the East Asian region are typically culturally influenced to perceive their instructors as not only authorities but also "as having a parental role" (p. 24). He and

other scholars (Grimshaw, 2007) also point out that there is great cultural diversity among East Asian countries (e.g., China, Japan, and South Korea) and that it is important not to forget this fact. To help in bridging the gap between some students' expectation of an authoritative presence on the part of their teachers and the collaborative role that many teach-abroad faculty from the 'West' are accustomed to playing, Liu (2001) suggested using "…the role of authority by inviting students to participate" (p. 235). Bodycott and Walker (2000) supported this approach in advising teach-abroad instructors "…to reconstruct their view of the role of teacher and teaching in higher education" (p. 87).

Student Role

If assumptions about the faculty role in the teach-abroad learning environment often magnify the gap in expectations and perceptions between instructors and students, so too do differing understandings of student 'classroom participation' (Liu, 2001; Slethaug, 2007). George (1995) identified the "…*structur[ing of] thoughtful learning environments* [original italics] to maximize student comprehension and participation…" as one of the key responsibilities of successful teach-abroad instructors (p. xi). In reviewing the literature, the notion of participation by students in the teach-abroad learning environment is discussed in a variety of ways (including students' divergent approaches to preparing for class), but participation is typically referred to in the literature as students' verbal and non-verbal engagement during class sessions (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Liu, 2001). In his study of international students' participation in the cross-cultural classroom, Liu (2001) discovered four general types of student involvement: "total integration, conditional participation, marginal interaction, and silent observation" (p. 72). According to Liu, these participation modes represent differing

levels of student engagement, with "total integration" being the most participative and "silent observation" proving to be the least.

A review of the literature reveals an emphasis on student participation in understanding the dynamics of the teach-abroad learning environment—with George (1995) stating that, "Norms for student participation in the classroom vary considerably across cultures and are probably the most discussed attribute of classroom culture…" (p. 15). It is not clear from the research, however, which phenomena are most significant in determining students' participation patterns (Liu, 2001). In a study of 38 Hong Kong EFL teachers' perspectives on what influences shaped their students' in-class participation, or lack thereof, Tsui (1996, pp. 148-155) indicated five major factors: (a) "students' low English proficiency," (b) "students' fear of mistakes and derision," (c) "teachers' intolerance of silence," (d) "uneven allocation of turns" (not all students are 'called on' equally), and (e) "incomprehensible input" (teachers' questions are unclear to students). The phenomena related to student language competence and instructors' use of language are discussed in the next section of this literature review, but it is apparent that the full range of factors is important in understanding student participation modes in the teach-abroad learning environment.

A common finding related to student participation in the teach-abroad learning environment is instructors' difficulty in bringing about the level and type of engagement they expect from their students (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Simpson, 2008). Many faculty carry with them the expectation that students will participate in the same way that local students do in the teacher's own culture, which often proves to be a false assumption (Liu, 2001). In some cultural contexts, including many East Asian

classrooms, the literature reports that teach-abroad instructors often desire more verbal participation from their students than the students expect based on their prior educational experiences (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Simpson, 2008). Simpson (2008) found that, "Western EFL teachers complain that their students lack motivation…[and] do not participate…" (p. 385). On the other hand some research has found that students in the teach-abroad classroom, including students in East Asia, do participate at levels satisfactory to 'Western' instructors when the faculty are clear with students regarding what they expect (Slethaug, 2007). In the literature there is research that has found teachers must examine their assumptions related to student participation in the teach-abroad learning environment and try new strategies to engage their pupils. "Students rarely volunteered responses," wrote Bodycott and Walker (2000), "and we discovered that often, the only way to obtain a response was to target a specific student. Somewhat to our surprise, this appeared an acceptable way to elicit student responses" (p. 84).

While the teach-abroad instructor might find a lack of student participation frustrating, the students also must confront an unfamiliar context where their previous patterns of engagement no longer seem appropriate (Kingston & Forland, 2008; Liu, 2001; Thorstensson, 2001; Wong, 2000). "In the [cross-cultural] classroom," wrote Liu (2001), "Asian students often encounter…differences in core beliefs, values, and situational norms in terms of…expected oral classroom participation modes…" (p. 223). The presence and function of silence on the part of students in the teach-abroad learning environment feature prominently in the literature and can be a cause of concern for both teachers and students (George, 1995; Wong, 2000). East Asian students, in particular, are reported to be quieter than 'Western' instructors typically experience with their local

students and there are a range of perspectives regarding the reasons for this silence (Liu,

2001). Liu (2001) observed that, "Whether their [students'] lack of classroom

participation is due to unwillingness or inability to speak up in class, or a combination of

both, [students' silence] remains controversial" (p. 40). At the same time, research has

found that students' lack of verbal engagement during class does not necessarily imply a

lack of understanding or interest, as a student might be highly attuned to the topic of

discussion through the "silent observation" approach that Liu (2001) identified.

Language in the Teach-Abroad Learning Environment

As reported in the literature, most teach-abroad instruction is given in the primary

language of the teacher and students are expected to adjust accordingly (Bodycott &

Walker, 2000; Slethaug, 2007). It is clear from the research that this process of growing

accustomed to an unfamiliar linguistic environment can be stressful and even

overwhelming for students (Dhaliwal, 2009; Liu, 2001). Liu (2001) pointed to "…their

[students'] sense of social as well as linguistic incompetence in responding to the new

[classroom] setting appropriately and effectively" (p. 223). As a result of students' lack

of confidence in their linguistic abilities in the teach-abroad learning environment, they

often refrain from speaking up in class or do so with great hesitation (Dhaliwal, 2009;

Slethaug, 2007). In his study Slethaug (2007) found that "…many students participate

cautiously [in class], hoping not to have to answer questions directly…This is particularly

the case when it is a second-language class for the students" (p. 73). Studies have also

determined that it is often students' own perceptions of their second-language skills that

prevent them from engaging more actively during class sessions rather than their actual

ability to do so. As Liu (2001) discovered, "…academic adjustment for

international…students is closely related to their perceived language skills, especially in terms of note-taking, conversing with faculty, and participating in class discussions" (p. 5).

When students in the teach-abroad learning environment find themselves in a new linguistic setting, research has shown that they attempt to adjust in a variety of ways (George, 1987; Liu, 2001). One of the primary methods that students utilize is to seek out the support of their fellow classmates, with whom they are able to speak in their preferred language (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Liu, 2001). In the literature there is significant commentary on the role of small-group discussion, both formal and informal, in the teach-abroad classroom that allows students in this learning environment to communicate in a more comfortable context. Bodycott and Walker (2000) found that "…students expressed satisfaction in the companionship and security attained from working closely with a small number of peers. Socio-cultural environments and a common language appeared to enhance this sense of belonging, bonding and familiarity" (p. 89). Other approaches students use to adjust linguistically include reading the non-verbal body language of their teach-abroad instructors (Slethaug, 2007) and recording their own class notes in the language of the classroom (George, 1987). Despite the language-related challenges many students face in the teach-abroad learning environment, research has also provided evidence of students taking a risk by using their second-language skills, no matter their own perceptions of their linguistic abilities (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Liu, 2001). "For some students," wrote Liu (2001), "oral classroom participation is a way to demonstrate their communicative competence and to improve their spoken English through trial and error" (pp. 152-153).

Although most teach-abroad instruction occurs in the teacher's primary language, there are still many challenging aspects of this linguistic scenario for faculty (Dhaliwal, 2009; George, 1987). Liu (2001) stated that "…a lack of English language proficiency is viewed by faculty…as one of the great problems of international students…who often have had little practice in using English…" (pp. 3-4). In teach-abroad learning environments, a lack of proficiency by students in the language used by the instructor can limit what and how the instructor teaches (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Dhaliwal, 2009). Faculty report that they must consider students' language skills as they plan and prepare for their teach-abroad course so that what they set out to accomplish with the students is realistic (Bodycott & Walker, 2000). "Optimal communication and understanding," found Dhaliwal (2009), "require language fluency whereas a partial language barrier creates impediments to teaching that are not easily circumvented. It can be difficult to share anecdotes, mistakes, or humor, which sometimes make for the most enduring lessons" (p. 772). In the literature faculty comment on unrealistic expectations related to student linguistic competence, including some overseas educational institutions' assumption that instructors from 'Anglo' countries will include as part of their curricula a focus on EFL instruction with students (Bodycott & Walker, 2000). In addition, George (1995) highlighted the "…contradiction between the language proficiency reported or advertised [for students] and the [actual] skill level needed [by students] for sophisticated classroom work…" (p. 175).

In facing the difficulties inherent in a multilingual learning environment, teach-abroad instructors have found different ways to respond to this situation (Dhaliwal, 2009; Liu, 2001). Bodycott and Walker (2000) noted that, "The need to consider carefully the

language support offered to students by institutions of higher education is essential to the preparation and teaching of all students" (pp. 83-84). Much of the research has shown that students benefit from attention on the part of faculty to their own oral communication in the teach-abroad learning environment (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Liu, 2001). It is critical that instructors are mindful of the speed and precision of their own speech (Dhaliwal, 2009), as well as the way in which they verbally respond to students' comments and questions (Liu, 2001). "Teachers…can develop verbal empathy and patience for…students who experience linguistic difficulties in their classrooms," wrote Liu (2001). "Besides adjusting input to facilitate comprehension, teachers should pay attention to both the verbal and nonverbal messages of the speaker before responding or evaluating" (p. 235). Teach-abroad faculty should also ensure that the content of course materials is clear, given the students' linguistic abilities, and that it makes sense within the students' cultural and educational contexts (Bodycott & Walker, 2000).

Conclusion

In considering the key challenging aspects of the teach-abroad learning environment, including the faculty role, student role, and the importance of language, the literature reveals that both instructors and students struggle in their own way with these complex teacher-student dynamics (George, 1995; Slethaug, 2007). These difficulties stem, at their most fundamental level, from divergent expectations and perceptions of the teach-abroad learning environment between faculty and students (Furey, 1986; Wong, 2000). These expectations and perceptions emerge from both the instructors' and the students' prior educational experiences, which are grounded in the cultural context of their respective societies (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Simpson, 2008). When the reality

of the teach-abroad learning environment does not conform to faculty or student expectations, both parties can find themselves frustrated, but the literature also provides examples of teachers and students attempting to adjust to this new classroom setting (George, 1987; Liu, 2001). In this literature review's next section, relevant elements of the Chinese cultural context are explored as they relate to the teach-abroad learning environment.

Chinese Cultural Context

This literature review has described the gaps between faculty and students in the teach-abroad learning environment and the challenges faced by teachers and students in this classroom setting, without a particular focus on a specific cultural context. As the focus of this dissertation study is on the teach-abroad learning environment in China, the next section of the literature review summarizes the research on the Chinese cultural context as it relates to education. First, the prominent Confucian traditions in China are assessed, including a contemporary reading of Confucian influences in modern-day China and an exploration of what the literature has to say about student motivations (Kember, 2004; Lee, 1996; Peterson, Hayhoe, & Lu, 2001). Second, the importance of the group/collective orientation in China is discussed, as is the central concept of 'saving face' in Chinese culture and the Chinese classroom (Liu, 2001; Slethaug, 2007).

Confucian Traditions

Any history of China would be remiss if it did not describe the nature of Confucian traditions and how they have influenced the development of Chinese culture. The figure of Confucius, a revered scholar and philosopher who has for centuries commanded respect and devotion from the people of China, imparted a set of values that

served to guide daily life and specifically shaped a particular approach to the role and purpose of education in society (Lee, 1996; Rao & Chan, 2009). "That education enjoys special significance in the Confucian tradition," concluded Lee (1996), "rests upon the Confucian presumption that everyone is educable" (p. 28). One key theme of the Confucian perspective on education is that educating oneself requires great effort on the part of the student; if anything, exertion matters more in the Confucian approach than natural intelligence. Lee (1996) wrote that—"To the Confucianist, education and learning are always associated with effort…"—and quoted a popular saying that, "The ants are busy all the time" (p. 31). Another important Confucian tenet in relation to education regards the notion of 'sagehood', whereby a student fulfills their greatest promise. Confucius emphasized the "…infinite potential for growth and an inexhaustible supply of resources for development…" that each person holds (Lee, 1996, p. 30). Confucianism in China has also historically meant great respect for teachers as revered persons who have achieved 'sagehood' (Lee, 1996). In terms of interactions between instructors and students in the Chinese classroom, Rao and Chan (2009) found that "…research has shown that mainland Chinese teachers conceptualize teaching as preparation for examination and conduct guidance…" (p. 21) and that this focus shapes the relationship between teacher and student.

Recent examinations of the role Confucianism plays in the present-day Chinese classroom have validated prior understandings about the focus on hard work and 'sagehood' in Confucian philosophy, but the research has also questioned some of the previous assumptions about Chinese students (Kember, 2004; Kingston & Forland, 2008; Wong, 2000). As Rao and Chan (2009) proposed, "…given the extant research on the

Chinese learner, and wide-ranging social, economic, technological and educational policy

changes, there is an important need to *revisit* [original italics] the existing notions of the

Chinese learner…" (p. 17). Some of the earlier research regarding Chinese students

perceived a primary focus on 'rote learning', at the core of which was the technique of

repetitive memorization. Contemporary scholars have not disavowed the continued

importance of memorization within Chinese classrooms, but the literature reveals

inherent value in this approach (Lee, 1996). Wong (2000) wrote that memorization is

"…not an end in itself but a way of making the text an integral part of one's experience"

(p. 28). Along with a refined consideration of memorization, recent scholarship has also

found that the learning environment in China encourages alternate learning approaches

more so than previously thought (Kember, 2004; Wong, 2000). For example, Lee (1996)

observed that both "reflective thinking" (p. 35) and "creative response" (p. 34) are part of

the Confucian influence in Chinese classrooms.

Studies exploring the motivations of Chinese students in the classroom have

utilized these new perspectives on Confucianism to better understand the underlying

factors influencing learners (Kember, 2004; Lee, 1996). In general, wrote Furey (1986)

of the cross-cultural classroom, "Since the perceived purpose of education affects…the

degree and type of student motivation, it is crucial for us to know if there are strong

cultural differences between our students' and our own [instructors'] conceptions of the

purpose of education…" (p. 19). Much of the literature regarding the motivations of

Chinese students has centered on questions regarding whether learners are driven by

'extrinsic' or 'intrinsic' levers. 'Extrinsic' motivators typically refer to the use of

education to garner material success (such as better career prospects), while 'intrinsic'

motivators usually reference an individual's personal development (Kember, 2004; Lee, 1996). Whereas in the past a dichotomy was often drawn between these two sets of influences, recent research has shown that 'extrinsic' and 'intrinsic' motivations can exist simultaneously within students. Lee (1996) noted that there has "…always [been] a correlation between a person's internal establishment and external performance" in the Confucian approach to education (p. 37).

Group Orientation

One of the most commonly emphasized aspects of Chinese culture, especially as it relates to education, is the 'group' or 'collective' orientation (Liu, 2001; Slethaug, 2007). Geert Hofstede and other scholars have popularized the dimension of 'individualism versus collectivism', which contrasts national cultures in which individual identity is more highly valued with societies in which group identity is emphasized (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). "Cross-cultural variation in individualism vs. group orientation is one of the most frequently discussed value differences," observed Furey (1986). "The United States is regarded as a society in which the individual is paramount while the orientation in many cultures [including China] is toward the group" (p. 17). In cross-cultural classrooms, including the teach-abroad learning environment, understanding the individual and group orientations and how they interact is a critical function for both instructors and students (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Furey, 1986). Slethaug (2007) wrote that, "Knowing whether society gives primacy to the individual or the group in any relationship is an important starting point in constructing a positive international cross-cultural classroom and learning environment" (p. 62). While developing an understanding of individualism and collectivism in the context of the

teach-abroad learning environment is key, the research has also revealed the importance

of refraining from making assumptions about either students or teachers based on the

culture from which they come (Furey, 1986)—what Grimshaw (2007) called the

"essentialist perspective" (p. 301).

In Chinese learning environments the prominence of the group orientation shapes

the types of learning approaches with which many students, though not all, are most

comfortable (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Simpson, 2008). Both within and outside of the

classroom, studies have shown that many Chinese learners prefer small-group work, as it

allows them the comfort of relating to the course content through the culturally-based

collective orientation (Kember, 2004; Slethaug, 2007). As Bodycott and Walker (2000)

wrote, "…the Asian students in our classes appeared to learn best in small groups. In

fact, their willingness to contribute in class was directly related to whether they worked

in individual or group situations" (p. 89). Similarly, Kember (2004) reported many Asian

students, particularly those in Hong Kong, choosing to work together outside of class

time in small groups, which seemed to be effective in terms of students achieving strong

learning outcomes. Although most Chinese students appear to favor the collective

orientation, research has revealed differing rationales among these learners for group

work. "Some students and groups were placed in a category labeled 'avoiders' as the

underlying reason for the joint activity was minimising the amount of work each student

had to do…" observed Kember (2004). "Other students were classified as 'engagers'

since the joint activities aimed towards achieving a better understanding of the course

material" (p. 50). L. Yang (personal communication, January 8, 2013) noted that

"...Chinese students feel more comfortable if their roles in...group projects are designated

by the professor," considering that Chinese learners find it difficult "...to discipline their fellow classmates."

As a result of the group orientation in Chinese culture the value of 'saving face' is stressed, with significant implications for the educational context (George, 1995; Slethaug, 2007). Defined as "self-image or respect from others" (Simpson, 2008, p. 388), the notion of 'face' in Chinese culture plays a role in students' classroom experiences. One of the commonly cited consequences of 'saving face' in the literature is students' reluctance to speak up, especially on an individual basis, during class sessions (Simpson, 2008; Slethaug, 2007). Furthermore, L. Yang (personal communication, January 8, 2013) observed that Chinese learners are sometimes hesitant to verbalize in the classroom "...when they are not sure about the accuracy of their answer." Bodycott and Walker (2000) found that, "Students [in Hong Kong] appeared extremely reluctant to question others' opinions, perhaps because they worried about making the other person, or themselves, lose 'face'" (p. 84). The desire to 'save face' can also affect Chinese students' perspectives on the physical environment of the classroom, such as a decision by a teach-abroad instructor to configure the learners' desks in a circle. As Slethaug (2007) discovered, "While sitting in a circle might seem an innocent arrangement and unlikely to embarrass anyone, some students do find it discomfiting, potentially humiliating because of possible confrontations, and stressful because they are 'exposed'" (p. 70). In addition, faculty must think twice before offering critiques of Chinese students' comments during class, as this type of individual attention might be experienced by learners as a loss of 'face' (Furey, 1986).

Conclusion

Given the particular nuances of Chinese culture and the Chinese classroom, the literature makes clear that teach-abroad instructors from the United States and other 'Western' nations would benefit from greater understanding of both the Confucian traditions and the group/collective orientation in the context of Chinese learning environments (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Wong, 2000). Learning, for example, to work across differing norms regarding the purpose of and motivations behind education, as well as preferences related to the role of individuals and groups, would be useful for students and faculty in the teach-abroad learning environment (Kember, 2004; Slethaug, 2007). In the next section of this chapter, the process by which teachers and students can adapt across cultures in the classroom setting is more deeply explored, beginning with analysis of 'intercultural competence theory'.

Intercultural Adaptation in the Teach-Abroad Learning Environment

Much has been written about the difficulties people, including students and faculty, face in interacting across cultures, and one approach to this 'intercultural' context is to learn how to adapt (M. J. Bennett, 1986, 1993; Deardorff, 2008). In the teach-abroad learning environment instructors and students are challenged by the gaps between their respective expectations and perceptions of the classroom, with cross-cultural dilemmas such as the faculty role, student role, and language (George, 1995; Slethaug, 2007; Wong, 2000). If students and teachers are expected to adapt, scholars argue that it is important to describe how this process can or should occur (Liu, 2001; Wong, 2000). In this section of the literature review, intercultural adaptation in the teach-abroad learning environment will be assessed by: (a) analysis of 'intercultural competence

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theory' in terms of its stages/dimensions, as well as the important issue of guided

reflection (Cushner & Mahon, 2009; Paige, 1993), and (b) the application of this theory

to the context of the teach-abroad learning environment, with assessment of faculty and

student adaptation (George, 1995; Liu, 2001).

Intercultural Competence Theory: Stages and Dimensions

Over the years 'intercultural competence theory' (IC theory) has evolved through

the creation and refinement of models that illustrate the stages and dimensions of the

process through which learners grow their degree of cultural competence (M. J. Bennett,

1986, 1993; Deardorff, 2008). In this section on IC theory it is important to note that

'learners' refers to both students and faculty, as each group must adapt across cultures in

the teach-abroad learning environment. Arguably one of the most influential among

these IC models is the "Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity" (DMIS),

which was shaped by Milton Bennett. In the DMIS learners move from 'ethnocentrism'

in stages to 'ethnorelativism'—or, in other words, from "…assuming that the worldview

of one's own culture is central to all reality" (M. J. Bennett, 1993, p. 30) to "*the*

construction of reality as increasingly capable of accommodating cultural difference

[original italics]" (M. J. Bennett, 1993, p. 24). More recently, Darla Deardorff's "Process

model of intercultural competence" (2008) flows in a feedback loop between learners'

"Attitudes" (i.e., "Respect" and "Openness"), "Knowledge & Comprehension/Skills"

(i.e., "Cultural self-awareness," "deep cultural knowledge," and "sociolinguistic

awareness"), "Desired Internal Outcome[s]" (i.e., "adaptability, flexibility, ethnorelative

view, empathy"), and "Desired External Outcome[s]" (i.e., "Effective and appropriate

communication & behavior in an intercultural situation") (p. 36). In terms of

international student development in a study abroad context, Dunn (2006) introduced the "International Academic Adjustment Model," in which she suggested key factors that influenced international students' success in a new cultural environment. These predictors included "interactions with faculty," "English language proficiency," "peer relationships," and "academic achievement" (Dunn, 2006, p. iii).

Regardless of which IC model is being discussed, these systems are built in similar ways with the goal of IC development for learners foremost in mind (M. J. Bennett, 1986, 1993; Deardorff, 2008). As Bennett observed, "A developmental model is ideally based upon the key organizing concept which must be internalized for development to occur. In the case of intercultural sensitivity, this concept is *difference* [original italics]" (1986, p. 181). Both Bennett and Deardorff's models are constructed around this notion of 'difference' and both systems are dynamic, in that learners move between stages as their 'life world' states flex and change with their worldview. One contrast between the two models is that while Bennett's DMIS is not entirely a linear model, the expectation is that learners will with proper guidance move from one stage to the next; Deardorff's model, on the other hand, works in a continuous circle, where there is no clear beginning or end.

With the understanding that learners develop greater IC in stages and through dynamic processes (M. J. Bennett, 1986, 1993), Paige (1993) noted that, "[We]…must know which factors can or cannot be influenced…which types of learning activities can affect different types of learning outcomes, and how to prepare the learner to continue the learning process" (p. 171). Although the IC models were not designed with certain prescriptive strategies in mind (M. J. Bennett, 1986), the IC theory literature does provide

examples of approaches that can be taken in fostering the development of IC in learners.

For instance, learners who are struggling to recognize the cultural differences around them (the 'denial' stage of the DMIS) might benefit from "cultural awareness" events such as 'international food night', where they have an opportunity to see that people differ in their daily habits (M. J. Bennett, 1993, p. 34). Another activity, for learners who are dealing with a sense of 'us versus them' (the 'defense' or 'polarization' stage of the DMIS), could be a "ropes course" in which learners must depend on one another and come to understand that all humans have certain basic things in common (M. J. Bennett, 1993, p. 41). In addition, learners who recognize cultural differences and similarities (the 'acceptance' stage of the DMIS) would likely benefit from simulations in which they are asked to practice adapting their thinking and behavior to new cultural contexts (M. J. Bennett, 1993, p. 51).

Along with the stages in the IC models and the strategies for helping learners move through them, central in the IC theory literature is a focus on the different dimensions of intercultural competence. Janet Bennett identified three primary factors: "…the nature of the goals (cognitive, affective, behavioral), the nature of the content (culture general or culture specific), and the nature of the process (experiential or intellectual)" (1986, p. 117). IC scholars agree that intercultural learning should incorporate the cognitive, affective (emotional), and behavioral components; a culture-general and culture-specific approach; and both traditional (intellectual) and non-traditional (experiential) learning (J. M. Bennett, 1986; Cushner & Mahon, 2009). On the one hand, not all learning can contain all of these elements at once—as learners will respond differently, for example, to an affective or an intellectual learning experience,

depending on where their current 'life world' state places them in the IC models. On the other hand, Cushner and Mahon (2009) argued that, "Developing intercultural sensitivity and competence is not achieved in the cognitive-only approach to learning…It is through impactful experiences…where they [learners] ultimately gain more sophisticated knowledge about other people and a feeling of being at home in a new context" (p. 316).

Intercultural Competence Theory: Guided Reflection

Research in the IC theory literature has shown that learners benefit from structured guidance through intercultural experiences (Cushner & Mahon, 2009; Paige & Goode, 2009). Recent studies, including research connected to the Georgetown Consortium and the *Maximizing Study Abroad* guides from the University of Minnesota, have provided verification of the value of the mentoring and facilitation of intercultural learning (Paige & Goode, 2009; Paige & Vande Berg, 2012; Vande Berg, Paige, & Lou, 2012). Janet Bennett (1986) provided this rationale for guided intercultural learning: "Few trainees [learners] have had much opportunity to plan educational goals and thus they arrive in the intercultural setting [such as the teach-abroad learning environment] unprepared to operate in a learner-centered modality" (p. 119). Thus, according to IC scholars, learners find themselves in need of support and mentoring (Cushner & Mahon, 2009; Paige & Goode, 2009).

Successful facilitation of intercultural learning requires the appropriate knowledge and skills (Cushner & Mahon, 2009; Paige, 1993). "Developing the intercultural competence of…people," wrote Cushner and Mahon (2009), "…requires a core of…[individuals] who have not only attained this sensitivity and skill themselves but are also able to transmit this to the…people in their charge" (p. 304). Paige (1993) presented

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a comprehensive list of "cognitive," "behavioral," and "personal" competencies desirable in people who are responsible for nurturing the growth of IC in learners (p. 170). While IC scholars have stressed the importance of facilitative skills in working with learners, Milton Bennett (1993) argued that an individual need be only one DMIS stage ahead of the learner in terms of providing them with adequate support. Ultimately, though, facilitators should "have the ability to provide personal support to the learner by means of effective listening, advising, and counseling" (Paige, 1993, p. 174).

Intercultural Adaptation: Teach-Abroad Faculty

The proponents of IC theory provide a strong argument for the importance of intercultural competence development on the part of learners, both teachers and students, and some of the teach-abroad literature affirms the role of IC adaptation in this cross-cultural learning environment—with scholars focusing on the changes that faculty do or should make in their teaching approaches (George, 1995; Li, 2002; Slethaug, 2007). Research studies have found that this process of adjustment is complex and can be very challenging for teach-abroad instructors (George, 1987; Pembleton, 2011; Simpson, 2008). Wong's (2000) study identified one instructor who stated that the idea of adapting his teaching methods in the teach-abroad learning environment "…defeated his desires," and another teacher who referred to her teach-abroad students' own learning objectives as "manipulation" (p. 100). Some teach-abroad faculty reported pursuing the same teaching approaches that they commonly used in their home culture, despite a markedly different cultural context in the teach-abroad classroom, and one of the reasons mentioned for this inertia was a lack of time built in for instructors to adjust pedagogies (George, 1995; Wong, 2000). In her study of U.S. EFL instructors teaching in China, Wong (2000)

learned that faculty chose not to adjust their teaching approaches due to these factors (from their own perspective): "…Western methods were more effective, Western methods were preferred by the Chinese, and the Western teachers were not given the opportunity to collaborate with the Chinese teachers" (pp. 160-161).

While instructors' intercultural adaptation in the teach-abroad learning environment can be frustrating, the literature offers examples of strategies that teachers have utilized in their adjustment process (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Kelley, 2007). "As teaching professionals [in the teach-abroad learning environment]," wrote Bodycott and Walker (2000), "to ignore issues of language and communication was not in reality an option that could be considered. In fact, these issues forced us out of our offices and into discussions about alternative teaching methods that could be adapted for use in the classroom" (p. 84). Some research has highlighted the adjustment of instructors' overall approach to teaching (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Wong, 2000), while other scholars have focused on specific changes faculty make to the methods they use in the classroom (Kelley, 2007). Bodycott and Walker (2000) described faculty adaptation as "…a form of 'acculturation'…[whereby instructors] try to adapt their established teaching approaches and learning theories to their new culture" (p. 81). On the other hand Kelley (2007) called for changes to teach-abroad courses' "…content, methods for assessing student performance, and techniques…" (p. 202). Emert (2008) found, however, that regardless of the way in which an instructor adjusts to the teach-abroad learning environment the teach-abroad experience itself can help teachers develop their intercultural competence, thus providing a degree of motivation for faculty to get through the struggles associated with the intercultural adaptation process.

Intercultural Adaptation: Teach-Abroad Students

Although students in the teach-abroad learning environment study within their home culture, scholars have explored the adaptive challenges that these learners encounter (Kember, 2004; Pembleton, 2011; Slethaug, 2007). Indeed, while one might assume that it is the instructors who should adjust, as they are 'outsiders' in this learning context, Bodycott and Walker (2000) posed this provocative question: "Is it not the student's responsibility to adapt to the language and learning culture created in the classroom?" (p. 79). While there is a greater emphasis in the teach-abroad literature on faculty adjustment, the research on international students who are studying abroad tends to focus on student adaptation and some of these findings can usefully be applied to the teach-abroad context (Liu, 2001). In earlier decades, and as recently as the 1990s, some scholars perceived international students through the so-called 'deficit' lens, whereby "…dealing effectively with international students stressed the need for the student to adapt as quickly as possible to 'our' academic tradition…" (Ryan & Hellmundt, 2005, p. 14). There is now in the literature greater evidence of respect for international students' knowledge and skills (Kember, 2004), both in the student study-abroad and instructor teach-abroad contexts, but the debate continues among researchers regarding whether and to what extent students should be expected to adjust (Liu, 2001). The IC literature suggests that one of the key faculty skills related to student adjustment is the ability to help students make the transition to a new learning environment rather than assuming that a student will naturally adapt (Cushner & Mahon, 2009; Paige & Goode, 2009).

If students must adapt in the cross-cultural classroom, scholars have commented on the process by which student adjustment occurs and the difficulties students face (Liu,

2001; Slethaug, 2007). "Most people find change of any sort can be difficult to adapt to," observed Kember (2004), "so when new forms of teaching are introduced it is important to address the issue of implementing the change and allow the students time to make the transition" (p. 48). It is clear in the literature that students in the teach-abroad classroom benefit from reflecting on the differences between the learning environments with which they are most familiar (in their home culture) and the new context or 'sub-culture' of the teach-abroad learning environment (Kember, 2004; Slethaug, 2007). Liu (2001) noted that students should look for differing "…classroom communication patterns…" (p. 15) and "…beliefs, values, customs, and conventions" (p. 233) as part of their adjustment efforts. While the research suggests faculty also should observe these types of cultural contrasts, the literature emphasizes the affective component of adjustment for students (Liu, 2001; Slethaug, 2007). Liu (2001) stated that, "…Asian students [in particular] dance along the continuum with various degrees of certainty and effort on their journey of adaptive cultural transformation" (p. 73), and added that students' development of IC will support them in reducing their affective experience of conflict across cultures.

Intercultural Adaptation: An Integrative Approach

The literature portrays the unique challenges that teach-abroad faculty and students face in their adjustment process and the research also provides an integrative approach to the adaptation of both groups in the teach-abroad learning environment (Pembleton, 2011; Simpson, 2008; Yu, 1984). "Through an understanding of the cultural values, such as individualism versus collectivism," suggested Liu (2001), "both groups will make an effort to bridge the gap in classrooms" (p. 227). Some scholars argue that it is not the responsibility of teachers or students alone to adjust to the teach-abroad

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learning environment, but rather a duty of both parties (Liu, 2001; Wong, 2000). Yu (1984) offered three primary "options" in regard to the teach-abroad learning environment, with a particular focus on the Chinese context: "One is to make foreign…teachers change their way of teaching to suit their Chinese students. The second is to ask the Chinese…students to adopt new approaches. The third possibility is to try to bridge the gap between the Chinese and foreigners, finding some kind of compromise and adjustment" (pp. 37-38). Commenting on Yu's (1984) framework, Simpson (2008) argued that, "The advantages of compromise outweigh those of the other two options" (p. 389). Building on the precepts of IC theory, there is some consensus in the literature that an integrated approach entailing the adaptation of both faculty and students is the most effective (Simpson, 2008; Yu, 1984).

If teach-abroad instructors and students are to jointly pursue a process of adjustment in this learning environment, research has explored how this mutual evolution can occur and the barriers to its success (Liu, 2001; Wong, 2000). A key point in the literature is that adaptation on the part of students and faculty does not happen automatically and that both groups must undergo intentional preparation for the cross-cultural experience of the teach-abroad classroom. "Adaptive cultural transformation," wrote Liu (2001), "is a process in which one constantly adjusts one's cultural beliefs, values, and behaviors to those of the target culture [the teach-abroad learning environment] and gradually develops the multiple identities necessary to operate in different intercultural communication settings with appropriate, effective, and meaningful communicative performance" (p. 221). This approach to "[a]daptive cultural transformation…" (Liu, 2001, p. 221) can be difficult to achieve, however, and the

literature refers to issues such as conflict between faculty and students related to classroom participation and other dimensions of the teach-abroad learning context (Wong, 2000) and a lack of "[c]ulture-sensitive knowledge…" (Liu, 2001) on the part of both teachers and students. One key response in the literature to these challenges is the importance of instructors supporting students, as well as students supporting faculty, as both groups struggle with their own adjustment (Liu, 2001; Simpson, 2008). Liu (2001) presented this strategy in the following way: "Should…[teachers] be more sensitive to foreign students by trying to understand them and accept who they are and what they do in class? Should Asian students as a…cultural group adjust and adapt to the American classroom cultural norms…?" (p. 219). It appears that many scholars (M. J. Bennett, 1986, 1993; Simpson, 2008; Yu, 1984) would argue that both of these approaches are equally necessary.

Conclusion

The integrative approach toward teach-abroad faculty and students' mutual adaptation is founded on the principles of IC theory, with both students and instructors needing to contemplate the stages/dimensions of intercultural competence development (M. J. Bennett, 1986, 1993; Deardorff, 2008) as well as the concept of guided reflection (Cushner & Mahon, 2009; Paige & Goode, 2009). The conversation regarding whose role it is to adjust—teachers or students—in the context of the teach-abroad learning environment will likely continue in the literature, but it seems that knowledge and awareness on the part of both groups about the main tenets of IC theory and the utilization of these concepts in the classroom is critical to the evolution of the teach-abroad learning environment (Liu, 2001; Simpson, 2008).

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter the literature reviewed has been relevant to the study purpose: "to understand faculty and student expectations and perceptions of the learning environment in the Chinese teach-abroad classroom, to identify the 'gaps' between faculty and students, and to understand how faculty and students respond to cultural differences related to teaching and learning when they occur." Research studies have provided compelling evidence of the gaps between teachers and students in the teach-abroad learning environment and scholars have presented these differences as fundamental to the dynamic of the teach-abroad classroom (George, 1995; Wong, 2000). As students and faculty enter this learning environment with contrasting assumptions, the literature portrays each party's unique experience of the key challenging aspects of the teach-abroad classroom (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Slethaug, 2007): the faculty role, student role, and language. With these elements in mind, the research regarding the Chinese cultural context was presented, with emphasis on Confucian traditions and the prominent group/collective orientation as they relate to education (Lee, 1996; Liu, 2001). Lastly, the literature exploring the stages/dimensions of IC theory and the notion of guided reflection was assessed, followed by research analyzing the relevance of IC adaptation in the teach-abroad learning environment (M. J. Bennett, 1986, 1993; Simpson, 2008).

In the following chapter, I discuss the research methodology utilized for this study, including the design of the sampling, data collection, and data analysis. It was the intention of this study to empirically assess the cross-cultural dynamics of the teach-abroad learning environment within the case of the China Executive MBA Program in

order to determine how faculty and students respond to challenges resulting from

divergent learning environment expectations and perceptions.

Chapter Three: Methodology and Research Design

"...[W]e need to shift to a different view of the cognitive object as not already constituted but rather as constructed by the subject or subjects as a condition of knowledge. The result is [a] view of the object of knowledge as no longer independent of, but rather dependent on, the knower."

—Rockmore (2005), p. 4

"[One objective of the case study method is] to delve into things in more detail and discover things that might not have become apparent through more superficial research."

—Denscombe (2003), p. 31

~

To satisfy the purpose of this study, I crafted a research design within a constructivist framework and case study method that enabled a deep exploration of the subjective expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses of faculty, students, and alumni in the teach-abroad learning environment. I then selected research strategies—interviews and classroom observation—that responded to the research questions at the heart of the study:

1) With respect to the teach-abroad learning environment in terms of the faculty role as instructor, student role as learner (e.g., participation), and language use in the classroom:

   a. What are faculty members' and students' expectations?

b. What are faculty members' and students' perceptions of their actual experience?

c. How are faculty and students challenged?

d. How do faculty and students respond to the challenges they encounter?

2) Do faculty members perceive that their previous international and cross-cultural experiences and their previous teach-abroad experiences influence their expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses in the teach-abroad learning environment? If so, in what ways and to what degree?

3) Do students perceive that their previous international and cross-cultural experiences and their length of time in the teach-abroad learning environment influence their expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses? If so, in what ways and to what degree?

4) What preparatory experiences do faculty and students indicate they found, or would find, beneficial in regard to their expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses in the teach-abroad learning environment?

Research Relationships

As director of the CHEMBA Program within the Carlson School, I have professional relationships with the faculty who teach in the program, the students enrolled in the program and program graduates, and my staff colleagues at Lingnan (University) College. I therefore needed to be clear in my interviews with faculty, students, and alumni that I would be wearing my researcher's 'hat' throughout the research process, not my director's 'hat'. At the same time, I wanted to be completely transparent about my intention to utilize the findings of the study to improve aspects of

the CHEMBA Program. In interviewing students, alumni, and faculty, I communicated that the data I collected from them would remain confidential and that their responses would have no bearing on their standing with the program. For faculty, students, and graduates it will be important for me to report back an executive summary of the study's findings so that they feel the time they invested as study participants was worthwhile. It is also important for me to note that my professional relationships with my staff colleagues at L(U)C helped me gain access to CHEMBA class sessions for the purpose of classroom observation.

Constructivist Framework

This study was conceived in the context of a 'constructivist' framework, defined by Koro-Ljungberg, Yendol-Hoppey, Smith, and Hayes (2009) as "describ[ing] individuals' perspectives, experiences, and meaning-making processes" (p. 689). As the guiding force of the study, the constructivist approach led to selection of the case study method and the research strategies utilized.

The essence of constructivism does not mandate any particular research design, but in this instance the emphasis in the literature regarding the importance of depth within the constructivist framework aligned seamlessly with the case study method. "If knowledge depends on the knower," wrote Rockmore (2005), "and if the knower is one or more real human beings, then what I will be calling a thick account of subjectivity is indispensable in working out a postfoundational view of knowledge" (p. 5). Rockmore's "thick account of subjectivity," whereby the researcher endeavors to deeply understand the study participants' own views of the world, links with the often-cited 'in-depth inquiry' (Denscombe, 2003) of the case study approach. In both the constructivist

framework and the case study method, depth is valued; in this study depth was achieved in terms of the subjective perspectives of the study participants (faculty, students, and alumni) and the rigor with which each participant's views were explored.

Based on the notion that constructivism advocates for a subjective approach to the world, I selected research strategies that would result in data illustrative of the CHEMBA Program's student, alumni, and instructor perspectives. "As different as most philosophical, scientific, social, ideological, or individual world images may be from one another," observed Watzlawick (1984), "they still have one thing in common: the basic assumption that a real reality exists and that certain theories, ideologies, or personal convictions reflect it (match it) more correctly than others" (p. 15). In other words, one can assume that the faculty, students, and alumni of the CHEMBA Program have divergent expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses in regard to the teach-abroad learning environment due to the varying subjective worldviews they each have. These subjective perspectives exist concurrently with the cultural norms (e.g., U.S. norms and Chinese norms) that play a significant role in shaping individual perspectives. To access these individual variances, I opted to conduct in-depth, one-to-one interviews with the students, alumni, and instructors in CHEMBA so I could learn more about the program from their vantage point(s). Lastly, while the classroom observation provided data from the researcher's perspective, I also approached my time in the classroom as an effort to better understand the subjective viewpoints of the faculty, students, and graduates.

Case Study Method

In the literature one discovers that the case study method—which informs the participant selection, data collection, and data analysis methods for this study—includes the key aspects of having a bounded unit (i.e., the CHEMBA Program) and conducting in-depth inquiry (i.e., multiple research strategies getting at faculty, student, and alumni perspectives) (Denscombe, 2003; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). By selecting the CHEMBA Program as the focus of this study I was able to work toward the study's overarching research goals, including the goal to make improvements to CHEMBA, and to answer the study's specific research questions. In my director role, my hope was to be able to facilitate potential changes to the program as a result of the study's findings. It is important to note, however, that while it was an objective of mine to improve the CHEMBA Program, this study was not essentially evaluative in nature. The thrust of the study was to better understand faculty, student, and alumni expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses in relation to the teach-abroad learning environment, not to evaluate the CHEMBA Program. Utilizing Stake's (1995) categorization, this study was defined by both "intrinsic" and "instrumental" objectives, with a primary interest in the CHEMBA case itself and in generating knowledge that might apply broadly to the larger context of the teach-abroad learning environment (p. 3).

In reviewing the literature, one discerns the 'bounded unit' feature of the case study method as perhaps its most critical (Merriam, 1998, 2009; Stake, 1995). "…[T]he single most defining characteristic of case study research," argued Merriam (2009), "lies in delimiting the object of study, the case" (p. 40). Merriam stated that one must consider "whether there is a limit to the number of people involved who could be interviewed or a

finite amount of time for observations" (1998, p. 27). In this case study, the bounded unit

was restricted by the following confines: (a) place—the CHEMBA Program, physically

situated at the Lingnan (University) College campus in Guangzhou and the Carlson

School of Management campus in Minneapolis; (b) participants—students, alumni, and

faculty of the CHEMBA Program; and (c) temporal—current students, recent alumni who

had graduated in 2010 or 2011, and faculty who had taught in the program at least once

within the 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11, and/or 2011-12 academic years.

The case study method has also been distinguished by a focus on 'in-depth

inquiry' (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009): "to delve into things in more detail and discover

things that might not have become apparent through more superficial research"

(Denscombe, 2003, p. 31). The interview strategy in this case study was intended to

explore the perspectives of students, alumni, and faculty regarding the CHEMBA

Program by posing interview questions to the participants that encouraged them to share

deeply. In addition, the classroom observation strategy was utilized to offer a deep view

of the teach-abroad learning environment from the researcher's perspective.

Interviews

For this study, semi-structured, one-to-one interviews were selected due to their

fit with the case study method: both provide depth (Merriam, 2009; Rubin & Rubin,

1995). In terms of the study's research questions, the interview research strategy

provided targeted data in response to all of the research questions at a deep level of

inquiry. Denscombe (2003) described three approaches to the interview strategy:

structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. The structured interview "is like a

questionnaire which is administered face to face with a respondent" (Denscombe, 2003,

p. 166), while in an unstructured interview one must "start the ball rolling by introducing a theme or topic and then letting the interviewee develop his or her ideas and pursue his or her train of thought" (Denscombe, 2003, p. 167). Chosen for this study, the semi-structured interview allows the interviewer to have "a clear list of issues to be addressed..." without being limited by the questions on the page (Denscombe, 2003, p. 167). Lastly, one-to-one interviews—defined by Denscombe (2003) as "involve[ing] a meeting between one researcher and one informant" (pp. 167-168)—were adopted for this study so that each interviewee's unique stance on the teach-abroad learning environment could be heard.

Classroom Observation

The classroom observation research strategy complemented the interview strategy by generating data from the researcher's perspective regarding the CHEMBA Program. This strategy specifically answered Research Question #1d and allowed me, as the researcher, to observe faculty and students' in-class behavioral responses to the challenges they faced in the teach-abroad learning environment. This research strategy was not able to assess the study participants' cognitive reactions to the learning environment, as they were essentially invisible to the observer's eye, or their affective responses, except in cases where an instructor or student clearly displayed emotions in the classroom. This strategy—described as "…research in the native environment to see people and their behavior given all the real-world incentives and constraints" (Fetterman, 2010, p. 33)—enabled comparison of the researcher's classroom observations with what the students and instructors reported about their reactions to the teach-abroad learning environment in the interviews. The classroom observation strategy contributed to the

constructivist framework's "thick account of subjectivity" (Rockmore, 2005, p. 5)

through data that could be compared and contrasted with the study participants' self-

reported expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses from the interview research

strategy.

　　While the classroom observation strategy represented the viewpoint of the

researcher, it is critical to acknowledge that this perspective was just as subjective as

those of the CHEMBA instructors and students. In observing the class sessions I, as the

researcher, instinctively viewed the interactions between the students and faculty through

my own lens, which was shaped by my reading of the relevant literature and my prior

understandings regarding the CHEMBA Program. To counteract my own subjectivity I

acknowledged my own biases before observing the class sessions and sought to keep an

open mind (Wolcott, 2008). A key part of the classroom observation strategy was

simultaneously filtering what I witnessed through "…preestablished categories deemed

relevant to the research focus" (e.g., the faculty role, student role, and language) while

also remaining alert to observations that did not fit into these preexisting groupings

(Wolcott, 2008, p. 186).

Participant Selection

　　In regard to the selection process for the study, for the faculty participants I

selected the population of all Carlson School instructors (18 faculty, including one of

whose class sessions I observed) who had taught in the CHEMBA Program in the 2008-

09, 2009-10, 2010-11, and/or 2011-12 academic years (to match the academic years

during which the recent graduates and current students were enrolled) for individual

interviews. While the Carlson School is a U.S. business school, in addition to U.S.-

American instructors teaching in the CHEMBA Program there are also three instructors who are originally from China, as well as others from India, the United Kingdom, and Venezuela. An invitation letter (Appendix A) from the Carlson School's Associate Dean of Global Initiatives was sent by e-mail to the 18 instructors. Prior to contacting any of the potential participants in this study, I obtained the appropriate permissions for this research from the University of Minnesota's Institutional Review Board (IRB Approval #1110E05942).

In terms of the student and alumni participants for the study, I selected all of the current students (a population of 46 individuals) enrolled in the CHEMBA Program for the 2011-12 academic year and all of the CHEMBA graduates from 2010 and 2011 (a population totaling 49 individuals) to be invited to participate in individual interviews. An invitation letter (Appendix B) from the Carlson School's Associate Dean of Global Initiatives and the Deputy Dean from Lingnan (University) College was sent by e-mail to the current students, while an invitation letter (Appendix C) from the vice president of the CHEMBA alumni group was sent by e-mail to the graduates.

Lastly, I drew a convenience sample of one CHEMBA course held over two consecutive weekends for classroom observation: I observed approximately 12 hours of instruction from the Carlson School professor, and another 12 hours from the L(U)C professor. While the two instructors planned the course together, they each taught their own content separately, which is the typical approach in the program. Notification letters from the Carlson School's Associate Dean of Global Initiatives and the Deputy Dean from Lingnan (University) College, respectively, were sent by e-mail to the Carlson School and L(U)C instructors.

Data Collection

Of the 18 instructors invited to participate in the study, 10 volunteered, and in Spring 2012 I interviewed the Carlson School faculty face-to-face on campus in Minneapolis (Appendix G); with the interviewees' permission, all of the interviews with faculty, students, and graduates were audio-recorded. Before beginning the instructor interviews, I piloted the faculty interview questions with two instructors who had taught in the CHEMBA Program, following guidance given in Maxwell (2005); these faculty were not included in the population of instructors invited to participate in the full study.

Also in Spring 2012, I traveled to L(U)C in Guangzhou to conduct individual interviews with the 10 students and 4 alumni who volunteered to participate (two of the interviews occurred via Skype, due to the interviewees' busy schedules) and to observe CHEMBA class sessions on the L(U)C campus. Some of the students and alumni indicated their desire to be interviewed before I departed for Guangzhou, but several others did not express interest until I was on the ground in China. For both students and alumni, I asked interview questions (Appendices H and I) that did not force the participants to mention specific instructors in their responses so as to avoid potential concerns on their part about loss of 'face'. Before conducting the interviews I piloted the questions with two graduates of the CHEMBA Program who were not included in the main study (Maxwell, 2005).

For the classroom observation strategy (Appendix J) I observed the Carlson instructor's academic sessions and the academic sessions taught by their Chinese co-instructor from L(U)C. This allowed me to compare the in-class behavior of the non-Chinese (Carlson School) instructor and the Chinese (Lingnan) instructor, as well as the

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behavioral responses of the students. In advance of the CHEMBA classroom observation in Guangzhou, I piloted the observation protocol with a group of international students in a classroom setting at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis (Maxwell, 2005). In conducting the classroom observation for the study, I followed the 'Describe-Interpret-Evaluate' approach by intentionally "observ[ing] with maximum fidelity and without attributing meaning" (Wendt, 1984, p. 397). In so doing I was careful to record only what I saw and heard, and endeavored to refrain from 'interpreting' or 'evaluating' at this stage.

Data Analysis

Once I collected the data for the study, I had the faculty, student, and graduate interviews transcribed by a freelance professional (recommended by a fellow Ph.D. student) and typed up my field notes from the classroom observation strategy, guided by Fetterman (2010). I used the software tool NVivo to identify and code themes in the interview and classroom observation data in alignment with the study's research questions and then triangulated (Maxwell, 2005) the data analysis by comparing the student and alumni perspectives (individual interviews), the faculty perspective (individual interviews), and the researcher's perspective (classroom observation).

Validity and Reliability

Regarding the validity of the research instruments utilized in this study, the categories (faculty role, student role, and language) integrated in the interview questions, as well as the classroom observation protocol, emerged from the review of the relevant literature. These focal areas were also confirmed by anecdotal evidence from the researcher's prior informal conversations with CHEMBA faculty, students, and

graduates. In addition, an effort to ensure the reliability of the research instruments was

attempted through standardization of the data collection processes.

I practiced 'member checking' by soliciting feedback from the interviewees

regarding their individual interview transcripts. I also shared my interpretation of the

research findings with three U.S.-American and two Chinese colleagues (none of whom

had participated in the study) to assess whether their reading of the findings matched my

own. My colleagues' feedback resulted in analysis similar to my own and they offered

helpful insights such as a nuanced understanding of 'saving face' in a Chinese cultural

context.

More broadly related to validity and reliability, in my role as CHEMBA director

within the Carlson School I had a prior viewpoint on the faculty, student, and alumni

perspectives related to the teach-abroad learning environment—and, thus, potential 'bias'

as a researcher. It was important for me to acknowledge my existing vantage point and to

be willing to alter my stance based on the data I collected for the study (Maxwell, 2005).

Also, I needed to be aware that the students, graduates, and faculty might 'react'

to my dual roles of 'researcher' and 'administrator' by in some way restricting the

comments they shared with me (Maxwell, 2005). By being clear about my commitment

that there would be absolutely no negative repercussions for faculty, students, or alumni

who participated in the study, I hoped to mitigate this issue of 'reactivity'. I decided to

include alumni in the study so I could compare the expectations, perceptions, challenges,

and responses they expressed with those of the current students, considering the

possibility that current students might be more reluctant in some cases to be candid in

their interview responses while alumni who had already graduated from the program might not feel this same pressure.

Chapter Conclusion

In summary I designed a study that aligned the research strategies and the participant selection, data collection, and data analysis approaches with a case study method and constructivist research framework. Just as critical, I endeavored to craft a study that would allow me to meet the overall research goals and purpose I identified and to answer the research questions at the center of the study. In-depth inquiry was critical to the research design, as was a subjective approach to the perspectives of the study participants—students, graduates, and faculty in the CHEMBA Program—in regard to the teach-abroad learning environment. The research strategies—interviews and classroom observation—provided data from the student/alumni, faculty, and researcher perspectives, thus enabling triangulation of the data analysis and, as described in the next chapter, the study's findings.

"I think, for those Western professors, getting in the students' face and asking questions, they [the students] would listen, make sure they pay attention."

—CHEMBA Student

"I've got to get some cues or clues or feedback that says, 'slow down', or 'repeat', or 'could you give another example'."

—CHEMBA Instructor

~

In this chapter I report the findings associated with the study's four key research questions, which stem from the study purpose: "to understand faculty and student expectations and perceptions of the learning environment in the Chinese teach-abroad classroom, to identify the 'gaps' between faculty and students, and to understand how faculty and students respond to cultural differences related to teaching and learning when they occur." The research questions guiding the study were as follows:

1) With respect to the teach-abroad learning environment in terms of the faculty role as instructor, student role as learner (e.g., participation), and language use in the classroom:

   a. What are faculty members' and students' expectations?

   b. What are faculty members' and students' perceptions of their actual experience?

   c. How are faculty and students challenged?

   d. How do faculty and students respond to the challenges they encounter?

2) Do faculty members perceive that their previous international and cross-cultural experiences and their previous teach-abroad experiences influence their expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses in the teach-abroad learning environment? If so, in what ways and to what degree?

3) Do students perceive that their previous international and cross-cultural experiences and their length of time in the teach-abroad learning environment influence their expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses? If so, in what ways and to what degree?

4) What preparatory experiences do faculty and students indicate they found, or would find, beneficial in regard to their expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses in the teach-abroad learning environment?

In the chapter's first section, I describe the faculty and student/alumni expectations of the teach-abroad learning environment in the CHEMBA Program and their corresponding perceptions of their own experiences. Subsequently, I depict the challenges that the CHEMBA faculty and students/alumni have faced in the teach-abroad classroom and the ways in which they have responded. Next I portray the impact of previous international and cross-cultural experiences (faculty and students/alumni), previous teach-abroad experiences (faculty), and length of time in the teach-abroad learning environment (students/alumni) from the study participants' own perspectives. Lastly, I illustrate what preparation, if any, the CHEMBA faculty and students/alumni received in relation to the teach-abroad learning environment and what types of support they desired.

Expectations and Perceptions

In the one-to-one interviews, CHEMBA faculty, students, and alumni described their expectations of the teach-abroad learning environment and how they perceived their actual experience of the CHEMBA classroom. The instructors reported expectations and perceptions regarding the cultural context, classroom teaching and learning modes, student preparation, and language; while the students and graduates identified expectations and perceptions related to classroom learning and teaching modes, classroom content, class preparation, language, and classroom outcomes. Although the faculty and students/alumni shared expectations/perceptions that could be grouped into similar categories, the content of these expectations/perceptions often differed significantly between the two participant groups.

Faculty Expectations and Perceptions (Research Questions #1a and #1b)

The CHEMBA faculty interviewed for the study expressed a range of expectations and perceptions that followed several key themes. Here I illustrate each of these categories by depicting the perspectives of the teach-abroad instructors in their own words (in Figure 2, I have provided a summary of the instructors' expectations and perceptions).

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                  Faculty Expectations and Perceptions                     │
│                                                                           │
│ Cultural Context (Theme)                                                  │
│     1.  Expectations and perceptions related to the Chinese cultural      │
│         context                                                           │
│ Classroom Teaching/Learning Modes (Theme)                                 │
│     2.  Expectations and perceptions regarding teaching modes (Sub-theme) │
│     3.  Expectations and perceptions related to learning modes (Sub-theme)│
│ Student Preparation (Theme)                                               │
│     4.  Expectations and perceptions regarding student preparation for    │
│         class                                                             │
│ Language (Theme)                                                          │
│     5.  Expectations and perceptions related to use of Chinese in         │
│         classroom (Sub-                                                   │
│         theme)                                                            │
│     6.  Expectations and perceptions regarding use of English in          │
│         classroom (Sub-                                                   │
│         theme)                                                            │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 2. Themes from faculty expectations and perceptions of the CHEMBA teach-abroad learning environment.

Cultural context expectations. The faculty generally did not arrive in

Guangzhou with significant expectations related to the broader Chinese cultural context.

"I'd never been to China, and I didn't know what to expect," shared one instructor.

However, one CHEMBA faculty member expressed some anxiety before travelling

behind the "bamboo curtain" regarding potentially taboo political topics such as Tibet or

Taiwan and another noted that he had expected marked cultural differences between his

home culture and the Chinese host culture.

Cultural context perceptions. While the majority of the instructors did not find

the Chinese cultural context overwhelming, two of the faculty perceived a bewildering

cultural context in which "none of it makes sense, and you're going to get completely

upended." For example, one professor opined that "things work in a rational way in the

U.S." when compared with the environment he discovered in China. Among the more

frustrating aspects of this new setting, one CHEMBA instructor reported a general lack of

'discipline' in which everything seemed up for negotiation—including the timing and

location of this professor's final exam. Other faculty warmly described the politeness of people in China and a "gracious tenacity" inherent in its citizens. One professor even described a notable openness in China that differed from what they expected, even given an apparent focus on law and order and a context in which "the individual may be somewhat subordinated to the group." Interestingly, those faculty who perceived a great degree of cultural difference between the United States and China reported an increasing degree of comfort the more time they spent in the country.

Classroom teaching and learning modes. The faculty participants expressed that they began with limited expectations regarding how teaching and learning in the CHEMBA classroom might differ from their previous experiences, but they conveyed a range of perceptions about their actual experience as instructors in this teach-abroad program.

Teaching mode expectations. At least initially, many of the faculty did not anticipate needing to customize their instructional approach to the Chinese teach-abroad learning environment—with one professor, for example, hoping that the students would be as willing to challenge their professors as their pupils in the United States. On the other hand, another faculty member did expect that he would need to adapt his jokes and sense of humor for the context of the CHEMBA classroom.

Teaching mode perceptions. Most of the instructors recognized the need to adjust their teaching methods in the CHEMBA teach-abroad learning environment, but two of the instructors perceived that major changes to their teaching modes were not necessary due to the 'universality' of their content. One professor expressed that, in order for him to see the need to alter his approach, "I've got to get some cues or clues or

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feedback that says, 'slow down', or 'repeat', or 'could you give another example'." In the absence of this type of student response, his assumption was that these kinds of adjustments were not needed. Three faculty focused on what they viewed as core aspects of 'traditional' teaching such as PowerPoint slides and other written materials and the importance of lecturing, especially in more quantitative disciplines within the business field. At the same time, most of the instructors emphasized the essential role of strong class discussion, both in their home classrooms and abroad.

Learning mode expectations. A few faculty expected their CHEMBA students to exhibit the 'reserve' stereotypically associated with Asian learners and at least one instructor noted that he had partly based this assumption on his experiences teaching Asian students in the United States. "[H]aving had Asian students here," he said, "maybe it's a generalization I made that they tend to be a bit more reticent. And so I kind of expected that."

Learning mode perceptions. When the faculty participants reflected on their experience teaching the CHEMBA students, half of them did identify a 'rote' approach from these learners. "...[T]hat's how they've been brought up," shared one instructor, "that's how they've been taught to think and learn." A few faculty encountered a sense of hierarchy in the classroom whereby the students deferred to their instructors out of respect. A number of faculty had observed the students primarily in a listening mode, absorbing information from the instructor, which one CHEMBA professor evaluated as "absolutely useless" in terms of student learning. Another instructor noted the students' desire to retain discrete information from their courses so that they could "walk away with a specific body of rules and knowledge." Among the faculty members' interview

comments, a couple mentioned the CHEMBA students' interpretation of some individual

assignments as group projects, which the instructors understood as a product of the

"group identity" rooted in the Chinese context.

While some faculty concluded that the CHEMBA students' approach to learning

was "formulistic," other instructors observed the students' eagerness to learn and their

interest in discussion. One instructor even shared that he had witnessed "more discussion

[in the CHEMBA classroom] than we typically have in the United States." While this

perspective was not widely shared among the faculty participants, many did observe that

the students attempted to engage in their coursework in their own way—approaches that

often differed from the professors' teaching experiences in the United States. For

example, the instructors reported that students in the CHEMBA teach-abroad learning

environment did not as frequently raise their hands to ask questions or make comments as

their learners in the United States. Instead, their CHEMBA pupils often approached the

professor to share thoughts and questions on the course content during class breaks. In

addition, some faculty noted that the students appeared most committed to class

discussion when the learners connected the course concepts to their own professional

contexts outside the classroom.

Student preparation expectations. One expectation held by the CHEMBA

faculty regarded the extent to which their teach-abroad students would arrive 'ready' for

class. While a few had heard that student preparation had been problematic for other

instructors in the program, at least one professor "never realized how hard it would be for

me to get them to do their reading." On the other hand, another instructor indicated that

he "...had expected that there would not be the level of participation that you see in the United States."

Student preparation perceptions. Half of the CHEMBA faculty interviewed perceived that their students had not completed an adequate amount of the assigned readings in preparation for class and several instructors observed a connection between lack of preparation and limited engagement in class discussion. Other professors wondered, however, whether the extent to which their students spoke in class also stemmed from language-based comprehension issues. A few CHEMBA faculty argued for the imposition of clear consequences for poor class preparation—in so many words, "If you don't do this, here's what's going to happen." On the other hand, two instructors had observed improvement in learners' preparation over the years. One professor observed that he had students in the United States who also had not regularly completed their readings, though the faculty emphasized the importance of CHEMBA students aligning with what they called Carlson School 'standards' for student preparation.

Language. The CHEMBA instructors shared expectations regarding the use of Chinese in the classroom, as well as the use of English. They also offered perceptions of the role language played in this teach-abroad learning environment.

Chinese usage expectations. The faculty expressed a range of views related to the use of Chinese in the classroom, with a few communicating their expectation that Chinese should be spoken in the CHEMBA classroom only as a secondary option. One professor expressed that speaking Chinese in this learning environment "should be our last thing, if there's no other choice." Another instructor opined, "...[W]hen the students came to our program, they accepted the fact that they were expected to learn things in

English. People are always much more comfortable with their mother language; that's going to happen everywhere."

Chinese usage perceptions. Once in the classroom, two of the instructors acknowledged that Chinese was the students' mother tongue. "I think they're better able to debate the nuances or the options…in their own language," observed one faculty member, "so when the [student] teams are talking among themselves, they generally talk in Chinese…" Another Carlson School professor, who was originally from China, argued that integrating some Chinese terms into the class discussion would be beneficial for student learning.

English usage expectations. A few of the professors indicated their expectation that the CHEMBA students' English-language skills would suffer in comparison with their U.S. students. "In particular," noted one instructor, "I thought the [English] language skills would be of a much lower order." The instructors also noted their expectation that English should predominate in the classroom given that English was the CHEMBA program's official language of instruction.

English usage perceptions. In this teach-abroad learning environment the faculty observed considerable variation in the students' English skills, with a small number of learners demonstrating insufficient English to participate effectively in class. One professor shared that "comprehension time is much, much longer" for some CHEMBA students, "and so you can only get through a certain set of concepts." The instructors discerned a difference between the learners' ability to read English and their facility in spoken English, with those students competent in both skill areas best positioned for success in the classroom. Three faculty had witnessed improvement in CHEMBA

students' English-language competence over the years, and one professor expressed

surprise at "how fluent most of the students were in English."

Conclusion. In their interviews the CHEMBA instructors communicated a

variety of expectations and perceptions related to the Chinese cultural context, teaching

and learning modes, student preparation, and the use of Chinese and English in the

classroom. Next I report what the CHEMBA students and graduates had to say.

Student/Alumni Expectations and Perceptions (Research Questions #1a and #1b)

Students and alumni of the CHEMBA program shared their own expectations and

perceptions of the teach-abroad learning environment. In Figure 3, I have offered an

overview of the themes that emerged from their interview comments.

Student/Alumni Expectations and Perceptions

Classroom Learning/Teaching Modes (Theme)
  1. Expectations and perceptions related to faculty lecturing *(Sub-theme)*
  2. Expectations and perceptions regarding class discussion and interaction *(Sub-theme)*
  3. Expectations and perceptions related to an 'American' education *(Sub-theme)*
  4. Expectations and perceptions regarding customization to local context *(Sub-theme)*
Classroom Content (Theme)
  5. Expectations and perceptions related to readings and textbooks *(Sub-theme)*
  6. Expectations and perceptions regarding new knowledge *(Sub-theme)*
Class Preparation (Theme)
  7. Expectations and perceptions related to preparation for class
Language (Theme)
  8. Expectations and perceptions regarding use of Chinese in classroom *(Sub-theme)*
  9. Expectations and perceptions related to use of English in classroom *(Sub-theme)*
Classroom Outcomes (Theme)
  10. Expectations and perceptions regarding expansion of student network, career advancement, and self-improvement

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Figure 3. Themes from student and alumni expectations and perceptions of the
CHEMBA teach-abroad learning environment.

Classroom learning and teaching modes. The students and alumni had entered

the CHEMBA classroom with a wide range of expectations related to learning and

teaching. They also offered their perceptions of their experience as students in this teach-

abroad learning environment.

'*Lecture' mode expectations.* While several of the students and alumni expected

the Carlson School faculty to utilize the 'lecture' teaching mode some of the time, others

hoped that the instructors would not rely too much on this approach. One student

expressed, "the Chinese are very much into, I wouldn't say listen[ing] to stories, but

almost like listening to stories." In contrast, another learner opined, "...I really have

trouble with a few professors that they go and just talk the lecture, you know what I'm

saying, they just run through the lecture; and they do not try to get the students involved."

'*Lecture' mode perceptions.* In the CHEMBA classroom students perceived that

the lecture mode was quite common, with a few learners expressing concern about

reliance on this approach. One student noted that the faculty sometimes assumed learners

would figure out the logic of the theories they presented on their own. Another student

resisted the notion that the professor's role was to present 'objective' truths to the class.

Students also viewed the lecture style as unengaging, with one student opining that he

experienced "...this very academic person who sits in the office with white hair and who

writes a lot of books, gives interviews, [and] writes articles..."

Class discussion and interaction expectations. The CHEMBA students and

alumni based their expectations of class discussion on their previous educational

experiences in China. Many emphasized that Chinese professors typically do not

encourage discussion and that students often do not meaningfully communicate with one

another in this environment. "The teacher is talking—'blah, blah, blah'—and the students, they're doing like this—'okay, okay, okay'," shared one CHEMBA student in her estimation of the Chinese educational system. "We can only say 'okay', we cannot express our own opinions." Other students and alumni acknowledged that Chinese classrooms were changing and that more interaction had started to occur. Regardless, the CHEMBA learners strongly stated their expectation that the Carlson School instructors should engage with and "inspire" them. This hoped-for interaction was described by one student as "...those Western professors getting in the students' face and asking questions..." which would help the students to "...listen, make sure they pay attention."

Class discussion and interaction perceptions. While the CHEMBA students and alumni expected to be engaged by their faculty, they acknowledged that it was often difficult for them to talk in class, due to their lack of experience with speaking up in the classroom setting or their insecurities regarding their English-language skills. "My style, I'm the quiet style," shared one graduate. "I seldom raise[d] my hand…" These learners did express appreciation for the opportunity to share their thoughts and opinions and generally favored the Carlson School instructors' engagement strategies. "It was just not somebody putting up some slides or case studies," observed one student, "but really encouraging discussion, sharing ideas, putting up personal opinions, challenging thoughts." The students and alumni perceived some of the Carlson School professors as better at interacting effectively with their pupils than others and a few students noted their frustration with faculty who seemed to be looking for the "right answer" rather than fostering open discussion.

'*American' education expectations.* Many of the students and alumni expected an 'American' education in CHEMBA and several identified this factor as key in their decision to pursue the program. One graduate shared that "a U.S. education" is "why I enrolled in this program." The learners anticipated varying facets of an 'American' approach to education, including an "active" teaching style and, in one student's case, a focus on finance courses. Two CHEMBA students simply looked forward to something "completely new" without knowing exactly what learning from Carlson School professors would entail—a "feeling that when an American professor was to enter the class, it was going to be a bit of a different experience than…before." One student acknowledged that the experience he would have in the CHEMBA learning environment would probably differ from the typical American classroom, given the greater degree of diversity among students in the United States.

'*American' education perceptions.* The CHEMBA students and alumni perceived their Carlson School professors as "open" in their approach, which the learners often equated with a 'Western' style. The students described their instructors as "doing [it] a different way, they try to encourage you, to motivate you to speak and to give comments." One student appreciated the 'American' emphasis on presentation skills, as they believed they were able to develop greater facility in this area as a result of their participation in the CHEMBA program. A few learners indicated that they discovered some of the same qualities in the teaching approach of Chinese professors who had studied and lived in the United States.

Customization to local context expectations. Most of the students and alumni expected the CHEMBA faculty to customize their teaching modes, at least to some

extent, to the local context. For several learners this adaptation meant "pay[ing] attention to…what happened last month in China, or what happened half a year ago." The students and alumni acknowledged that they also needed to adjust their learning styles to fit with this teach-abroad learning environment. One student argued that top priority should be placed on CHEMBA students to learn from international faculty of other countries rather than relying on a typical Chinese style, while another learner emphasized a more balanced approach of "combin[ing] some of the Western teaching and the Chinese teaching."

Customization to local context perceptions. The students and alumni perceived some CHEMBA professors as better at making connections to the local context than others. In some cases these linkages were enabled by faculty through the assignment of course readings that related to contemporary China. On other occasions the learners' fellow students have served as "very, very valuable resources" for one another in "sharing thoughts about our own companies." Several students and alumni noted that they benefited from connections with their own contexts in terms of knowledge they could directly apply in their jobs and their increased engagement in class discussion. A few of the students and alumni observed limited integration by their instructors of the learners' professional lives in China. "We seldom really share, 'oh, in the real world, what's the operation in my company, and what's my experience in my company'," said one graduate. "I seldom had this kind of experience [in the CHEMBA classroom]."

Classroom content. The students and alumni communicated a variety of expectations related to the content of their CHEMBA courses. In addition, they related

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perceptions of their experiences in the CHEMBA classroom in relation to their own knowledge and the readings and textbooks assigned.

Reading and textbook expectations. The CHEMBA students and alumni expressed opinions regarding the newness and cultural context of their readings and textbooks. Several learners strongly voiced their expectation that their instructors would select 'new' readings and textbooks. One learner anticipated benefits of business cases from any cultural context, while another hoped for readings that were written from a Chinese perspective. A student reminded her professors that her fellow pupils "grew up as the Chinese culture, so we've got to give them some of what they're interested in or what they can relate to…" Three learners shared that textbooks had historically held a prominent place in the Chinese educational system, though they also recognized that their CHEMBA courses could not rely entirely on this information source. One student advocated for a combination of readings and texts from China and the 'West' in order to expose learners to a range of ideas.

Reading and textbook perceptions. The students and alumni generally perceived many of their readings (business cases and articles) as 'too old', while they mostly conveyed satisfaction with the textbooks assigned. One student expressed his concern that some of the cases, even the 'classics', were "far away from the reality of what we have today." CHEMBA learners also offered criticism of their readings' cultural origins, with one student concluding that 70-80% of his readings in the program came from the United States. One student observed that his classmates tended to absorb reading material in a very "literal" fashion. A few learners communicated approval of their faculty members' decision to not rely too much on the textbooks in class, although they

also noted the usefulness of their textbooks beyond the classroom walls. "When I go to the business review meeting," one student commented, "I try to refer to the textbook, what does that mean, what's that concept, to help me to prepare, to ask questions and understand more..."

Knowledge expectations. CHEMBA learners conveyed clear expectations of the knowledge they hoped to gain as students in the program. Many students and alumni wanted to acquire a comprehensive understanding of business across a variety of disciplines. As one student expressed: "I need more knowledge, not only limited to the certain one or two departments…[but] especially in financial, HR, logistics of production..." All of the learners hoped to acquire fresh ideas in CHEMBA that they could apply in their professional lives, including information that was specific to the Chinese business context. The students and alumni explained that the educational system in China had traditionally been geared toward the acquisition of knowledge rather than 'learning how to learn'. "In the Chinese philosophy," one graduate shared, "…if you want to be a student, you must empty your mind. Your mind is like a cup, if it's full, you cannot put any more water."

Knowledge perceptions. The students and alumni perceived that they had benefitted from knowledge gained in the CHEMBA classroom. Learners highlighted perspectives they acquired related to global current events, as well as facility in finance and accounting. One student observed that she could now "see that, okay, we can use statistics for many use[s] in our daily life or our daily work." Students and alumni also appreciated expanding their knowledge beyond the borders of their own industry or profession. The learners reflected that some CHEMBA instructors were more skilled

than others at linking business theory with real-world practice. "Maybe that's the difference between professional managers and professors," one student commented, "… in class, a lot of top things that we learn is more theoretical than practical." Other students communicated disappointment in the leadership content taught in the program.

Class preparation expectations. In their interviews, many students and alumni conveyed that they had wanted to be intellectually challenged in their CHEMBA courses, both by the faculty and by one another. One student shared his "expectation…that when you join the program, you do expect that someone can challenge each other to bring you together to a new level." As these learners noted that their previous post-secondary educational experiences in China had not conditioned them to complete readings and homework assignments in preparation for class, two of them recognized that they would need to increase the rigor of their academics when they enrolled in the CHEMBA program. Two learners acknowledged that their primary focus in joining CHEMBA had been to build their professional network, not to focus on their studies. "Some wanted to achieve a minimum result of 'X'," one student observed of her classmates, "to consider themselves satisfied..." with their intellectual experience in the program.

Class preparation perceptions. Several students and alumni perceived that they had been intellectually challenged in their CHEMBA courses and that this learning environment had encouraged them to prepare for class, while a few did not. Several learners commented that they could have invested more personal effort in their studies— "spend[ing] more time on reading the book, like the teachers, and spend[ing] more time on the homework," as one graduate stated. A few students and alumni expressed frustration with the lack of energy that some of their fellow pupils applied to their

CHEMBA classes when compared with other "hard working" learners in this classroom setting. One student observed that even when she and her classmates adequately prepared for class, they had no guarantee of an intellectually satisfying learning experience.

Language expectations. The students and alumni expected English-language instruction in their CHEMBA courses, as English was the official teaching language of the program. Several learners wanted to augment their English-language ability as students in this teach-abroad learning environment—as one graduate expressed, "...maybe after joining this program, it can help me to improve my English." On the other hand, one learner had hoped there would be an interpreter available in the classroom to translate from English to Chinese.

Language perceptions. Several students and alumni reported that they had struggled with English in the CHEMBA classroom, especially when their professors were from the United States. "I remember…a long time ago, most of the professors [in their previous university studies] were Chinese," recalled one CHEMBA graduate. "So, even [when] they speak English, you can understand them because they speak in the same way we think." Based on her experiences in the CHEMBA classroom, one learner advocated for a mix of English- and Chinese-language instruction in the program. A few graduates concluded that the program had actually helped them to improve their English language skills.

Classroom outcomes expectations. The CHEMBA students and alumni expected to build on the academic knowledge they gained from the program to achieve additional goals. Four learners pointed to growing their professional and personal

network as a desired outcome. One student wanted to expand her network with classmates and instructors in order to learn of "some very good recommendation[s] about some books, maybe the other expertise that we can consult to better understand the study topic." Other learners hoped to utilize their experiences in the CHEMBA classroom to advance their careers. Many students and alumni expected to leverage the business concepts they learned to close the 'gap' between themselves and other up-and-coming managers in the competitive Chinese business environment. Three learners described their wish to develop themselves personally, above and beyond professional rewards. "I reached a certain level of competence," shared one student, "and I thought this CHEMBA is the way to start the path to go to the next level."

Classroom outcomes perceptions. For several students and alumni the CHEMBA program had provided an opportunity to accomplish professional and personal goals. While not all learners perceived a sufficient degree of networking built into this learning environment, a few commented on the value of connecting with fellow students outside of class time. As one student noted, "I think like the post-class, or after-class, activities with the classmates [are] also very important because [we] can learn from them also." Two learners had observed tangible career outcomes resulting from their participation in the CHEMBA program, with one student stating that he had obtained a "senior management position, thanks to CHEMBA..." Learners also reflected upon the impact of their experiences in this teach-abroad classroom on their individual growth. "I have to say that in these two years, well, almost achieved completely the target," concluded one student. "I am definitely a more capable person...now I know where to look for additional resources for taking decisions."

Conclusion

In their interviews the CHEMBA students/alumni imparted a range of expectations and perceptions regarding learning and teaching modes, classroom content, class preparation, usage of Chinese and English in the classroom, and outcomes related to networking, career advancement, and self-improvement.

Both the learner and instructor study participants perceived that some of their expectations of the teach-abroad learning environment were met in their direct experience of the program, while others were not. In the next section of this chapter I report the challenges that each group faced in the CHEMBA classroom and how they responded.

Challenges and Responses

CHEMBA faculty, students, and alumni shared in their interviews the challenges they faced in this teach-abroad context and how they responded to these struggles. To complement the study participants' subjective perspectives I recorded their observable behavior in the classroom setting, which enabled me to compare and contrast their self-reported responses with the ways in which they actually reacted in the CHEMBA learning environment. In their interviews the instructors described challenges and responses related to travel time and course length, student preparation, language, and student engagement; while the students and graduates expressed challenges and responses regarding time management (including preparation for class), language, and staying engaged. As with the study participants' expectations and perceptions, the challenges/responses depicted by the faculty on the one hand and the students/alumni on the other diverged in key ways and their classroom behaviors often differed.

Faculty Challenges and Responses (Research Questions #1c and #1d)

In their interviews the CHEMBA instructors articulated the challenges they

encountered and the primary ways in which they responded. I report the major themes

that surfaced in the faculty comments (interviews) and in their behavioral responses

(classroom observation) in this teach-abroad learning environment (in Figure 4, I have

included an overview of the instructors' challenges and responses).

Faculty Challenges and Responses

Timing (Theme)
    1. Challenges and responses related to travel time and course length
Student Preparation (Theme)
    2. Challenges and responses regarding student completion of readings and
       homework assignments
Language (Theme)
    3. Challenges and responses related to use of English and Chinese in the
       classroom
Student Engagement (Theme)
    4. Challenges and responses regarding in-class participation

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Figure 4. Themes from faculty challenges and responses in the CHEMBA teach-abroad
learning environment.

Timing-related challenges. Several CHEMBA professors highlighted the

difficulty of managing the time required to travel from Minneapolis to Guangzhou and

the strain of teaching intensively while on site. "The biggest challenge has nothing to do

with the students, it has nothing to do with the curriculum," stated one instructor. "It has

to do with the numbers 48 for 16. I spend 48 hours traveling [round-trip]...going to an

airport, on an airplane, waiting in an airport, getting to the hotel. I spend 48 hours doing

that to teach 16 hours." One faculty member noted the need to keep things lively in the

classroom, given the long class hours on Saturday (9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.) and Sunday

(8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) for both professor and students. Other instructors remarked that

the 'jet lag' they experienced while teaching was exacerbated by the fact that they were functioning in a cultural context apart from their daily environment.

Timing-related responses. The faculty interviewed for this study provided little in the way of strategies for coping with the extreme travel and teaching schedules, with one professor expressing relief that he had an ability to "recover rapidly" when flying to China. Based on my observation of one Carlson School instructor's class sessions in Guangzhou, he struggled to keep up with the class timetable in the syllabus; at the start of the lunch break on the first day of instruction, he was an hour behind schedule. In their interviews a few faculty conveyed that it was nearly impossible to cover all of their course material during the two-day teaching period. On the second day of observation, the Carlson professor arrived to class ten minutes past the 8:00 a.m. start time.

Student preparation-related challenges. A number of CHEMBA instructors expressed concerns regarding their students' preparation for class, with many faculty pointing to the challenge of inadequate preparatory work on the part of learners. CHEMBA professors identified insufficient completion of assigned readings and the failure to submit homework on time as troubling patterns among their students. As one instructor explained, one of the consequences of poor student preparation was the difficulty of determining whether specific learners "...have or have not done the reading[s]." CHEMBA faculty also indicated the challenge, at times, of maintaining Carlson School standards around student preparation, given the unique cultural context of this learning environment.

Student preparation-related responses. In response to the challenge of imperfect student preparation, several CHEMBA professors shared in their interviews

that they strongly emphasized with learners the importance of completing readings and homework in a timely fashion. Instructors adopted a range of techniques to encourage and enforce preparatory work on the part of students, including setting time aside in class for students to 'review' their assigned cases (when, in reality, the faculty realized that for some students this would be their first time looking at the readings). Other professors asked learners to submit case 'write-ups' or gave in-class quizzes as "...a catalyst for them [the students] to study," while one instructor referenced specific pages from the textbook in class to demonstrate the connection with the reading material. In the Carlson School faculty member's class sessions that I observed, the professor asked the students to "...refresh my memory regarding the Wal-Mart case"—which appeared to be a way of underlining the learners' responsibility to come to class with a working knowledge of the readings.

CHEMBA instructors also pursued strategies to accentuate the importance of homework assignments and exams. For example, one faculty member instituted concrete grade penalties for late assignments: "[I]f you're one hour late, I'm going to cut 10%. If you're two hours late, I'm going to cut 20%. If you're six hours late, I'm going to cut 30%. 24 hours late, it's going to be 100%." This approach seemed to have the desired effect, as the professor reported that all students submitted their homework on time. In class I observed the Carlson School instructor support learners' preparation for the final exam by specifying that content from the textbook and lectures would be included on the test. He then provided the students with sample short-answer and multiple-choice exam questions for their review. While most CHEMBA faculty members utilized tactics intended to result in stronger student preparation, one professor stated that he "...had to

reconcile myself to the reality that the class is made up of very busy people..." who will not have prepared for class as much as he would have liked.

Language-related challenges. A few CHEMBA instructors discussed the challenge of having learners in class who struggled with their English-language comprehension. One faculty member noted that, "it took them [CHEMBA students], for instance, longer to realize exactly what you are talking about," due to the language barrier. Some professors questioned the value of teaching certain concepts when the learners had significant difficulty understanding them, while a couple unsuccessfully tried to tell jokes in a way that would 'translate'. The instructors acknowledged variation in the English-language skills of the CHEMBA students, with some more proficient learners helping to explain course concepts to their fellow pupils. At least one professor pointed to the fact that he had his own language-based comprehension issues in class, stating that "...for me hearing their [the students'] answers is still a bit of a struggle."

Language-related responses. In their interviews a number of CHEMBA faculty described a variety of interventions based on the language disparities between themselves and their students. One instructor indicated that he had used technological tools such as "Google Translate" to provide Chinese translations of key concepts to learners and the Carlson School professor I observed regularly utilized a lapel microphone to augment the volume and clarity of his voice in class. Other faculty adopted low-tech approaches—for example, I watched the Carlson School instructor regularly write English-language terms from his lectures on the whiteboard and explain their meaning.

Multiple professors talked about altering their English-language speech patterns when teaching in the CHEMBA learning environment, including slowing down the pace

of their words and other adjustments. "You've probably got to repeat yourself," offered one faculty member, "make greater effort to make sure that members of the class have followed the discussion." The Carlson School instructor I observed also employed non-verbal communication to ensure better comprehension among his students. At one point he demonstrated the definition of a "long-arm law" by gesturing away from himself and stretching his arm. Although a few professors mentioned their avoidance of terms specific to U.S. popular culture, the Carlson School faculty member whose classes I sat in on referred to one learner's comments as a "slam dunk" (a basketball metaphor that might not have been understood by all students).

Half the CHEMBA instructors mentioned their use of teaching assistants in the classroom to help bridge the language divide (a t.a. from Lingnan [University] College is assigned to each course) and there was evidence of this strategy in the classroom. Two professors shared that they had periodically devoted 10-minute slots of class time for their t.a. to translate the course content into Chinese for the learners' benefit. In the class sessions I observed this regular translation by the t.a. did not occur, although the faculty member did utilize the t.a. as a conduit for student questions (typically posed to the t.a. in Chinese). After one mid-class break the instructor acknowledged that several students had approached the t.a. with questions regarding cases the professor had covered earlier in the day—and the instructor proceeded to respond to these queries. Another faculty member stated that he "...asked the t.a. after every one of the breaks just to sort of circulate to the class, are there any questions that people would want to raise," but in his class no student queries emerged.

Student engagement-related challenges. The CHEMBA faculty frequently

discussed the challenge of student engagement. Four professors indicated that they struggled with limited in-class participation from learners, which included a lack of response to questions posed by the instructor. Due to limited engagement from students, one faculty member identified the "...hurdle in China...of trying to make it entertaining..." A few CHEMBA professors addressed the challenge of determining whether a learner's lack of participation in class resulted from language-related issues, inadequate preparation, or a combination of these and other factors (such as the cultural context of the students' previous education). The instructors also pointed to student tardiness and Web surfing during class as matters of concern in relation to learner engagement.

     Student engagement-related responses. Based on the CHEMBA professors' interview comments and in-class behavior, three instructors adopted an authoritative mode in engaging with students. One faculty member shared that he would directly ask students to stop talking in class if they were having side conversations while he was speaking. In the Carlson School class sessions I observed, the professor frequently posed a question to the class as a whole—and when there was no response, he often answered his own question. At one point he recognized this pattern by apologizing to the learners and saying: "Sorry—I meant to have you [the class] answer the question." In some cases the CHEMBA instructors leveraged their direct approach in order to connect with the students and to engage the learners with one another. For example, a faculty member stated that he used the "Socratic style" in his teaching whereby he "...question[s] them [the learners] all the time and I ask them to ask questions as well and to engage." In class I observed the Carlson School professor instruct his students to repeat what one of their classmates had just said.

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CHEMBA instructors also utilized a more relational style in interacting with their students. One faculty member indicated that he relied on learners' non-verbal communication, such as smiling or nodding, to help them 'read the room'. Multiple professors mentioned their use of humor in the classroom as a way of engaging with students, although they admitted that their jokes were not always understood by learners, given language and cultural barriers. The Carlson School instructor whose class sessions I observed periodically inserted self-deprecating remarks into his comments to students and on one occasion acknowledged a mistake on one of his PowerPoint slides. CHEMBA faculty stressed that they needed to practice patience as they taught students in this teach-abroad learning environment. Empathy also came into play as I observed the Carlson School professor connect with his learners over their similarly busy schedules.

A few CHEMBA faculty engaged on an individual level with students and their lives. In class the Carlson School instructor addressed some learners by name and asked one student, "Would you like to tackle this question?" The professor sometimes called on individual learners to clarify previous comments they had made. In his interview one CHEMBA faculty member stated that he made an effort to summarize the course content for students to help them see the relevance to their individual professional contexts. Other instructors asked learners to connect their readings to their own working environments. A few professors talked about integrating Chinese current events into their CHEMBA courses, which one faculty member said "...help[s] me relate to people in the classes and to show that I'm not just a drive-by teacher."

Conclusion. In their interviews the instructors discussed the challenges they faced in the CHEMBA classroom related to travel time and course length, student

preparation, language, and learner engagement; and in their comments and classroom

behavior revealed the ways in which they responded to these difficulties. Next I describe

the challenges that the CHEMBA students and graduates encountered and their responses

to these struggles in the teach-abroad learning environment.

Student/Alumni Challenges and Responses (Research Questions #1c and #1d)

CHEMBA students and alumni conveyed the challenges they came across in this

classroom setting and how they responded. I have provided, in Figure 5, a summary of

the themes from their interviews and from observation of learners in the classroom.

Student/Alumni Challenges and Responses

Time Management (Theme)
   1. Challenges and responses related to balancing school, work, and family
Language (Theme)
   2. Challenges and responses regarding use of English and Chinese in the
      classroom
Engagement (Theme)
   3. Challenges and responses related to in-class participation

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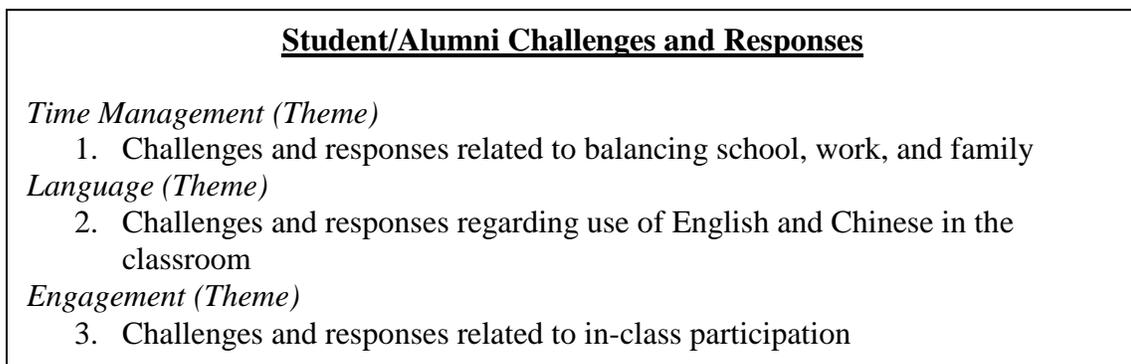
Figure 5. Themes from student and alumni challenges and responses in the CHEMBA
teach-abroad learning environment.

Time management-related challenges. One of the primary difficulties

mentioned by CHEMBA students and graduates was the challenge of managing their

busy lives. Many learners discussed the struggle to balance their work responsibilities,

including travelling for their jobs, with their studies. "To me, challenge wise, [it] is

probably mostly because of my job," shared one student, "and I try to do better, but just

not sufficient time, not sufficient time." Students and alumni also noted their family

duties to spouses, children, parents, and other relatives, which took time away from

focusing on their coursework. As a result of limited time, learners pointed to problematic

consequences such as earning lower grades, missing class sessions that they had to

complete at a later date, and a failure to take advantage of out-of-class opportunities available to them as students (such as special lectures). CHEMBA students and graduates emphasized the impact of insufficient time on their preparation for class, which sometimes meant unfinished readings and homework assignments. As one learner explained, "Sometimes it happens that people are really just too busy and maybe they haven't read all the cases..." A few learners conceded that it was ultimately their personal responsibility to manage their time more effectively.

Time management-related responses. CHEMBA students and graduates described a variety of ways in which they responded to the challenge of managing the time required for their schooling. These learners highlighted the difficulty of intentionally scheduling their lives so that adequate time remained to focus on their CHEMBA courses, and this strategy sometimes included fitting their studies in at all hours. One alumnus shared that she had "...read a book in a week and...finished my homework at 5:00 a.m. in the morning, and then prepare[d] [for] class in three hours time." In observing the Carlson School professor's class sessions I noticed that while most of the students came to class on time, there were two students who arrived in the classroom 1.5 hours late, after the first morning break. A CHEMBA graduate recalled that he had responded directly to one of his instructors when asked to turn off his mobile phone in class. "My phone must be on every day and every night until 11," the learner explained about his work commitments, "and I cannot just throw the phone and tell them [my employer] I'm busy."

For all of the students and alumni, dealing with the stress of time management proved to be a struggle as they balanced their CHEMBA coursework, job, and family

duties. One graduate indicated that she had increased delegation of her professional

responsibilities to co-workers, and a student had taken an eight-month hiatus from

working in order to focus on his classes. Other learners sought support from their

families and grew to accept having significantly less leisure time due to their busy

schedules. A few CHEMBA students and alumni aimed for a positive perspective in

believing that they would be able to get everything done, while others "...realize[d] you

probably can't do it all, can't read it all, but you've got to do the best you could." On

breaks during the class sessions I observed, many learners communicated to me how

stressed out they were with their CHEMBA workload—finishing assignments for

previous courses and the current course, as well as a final group report for their capstone

project.

     Language-related challenges. Many CHEMBA students and graduates revealed

the difficulties they encountered in attempting to function as learners in an English-

language classroom. Several students and alumni indicated that communicating in

English, which was not their native tongue, required them to slow down and take

additional time to understand what was being said and to express themselves effectively.

One graduate explained that "...we can speak English and can understand English, still

it's not our native language. So, sometimes maybe it's really, really very hard for all of

us..." In addition to the dissonance between the official language of the CHEMBA

learning environment (English) and the learners' first language (Chinese), the students

and alumni emphasized that they would have found some of the business content—for

example, statistics—challenging even in Chinese. Furthermore, the learners noted that

they had often not studied 'business English' prior to enrolling in the CHEMBA program, which meant that they needed to acquire a whole new set of terms in another language.

Language-related responses. In their interviews the students and graduates offered few examples of how they dealt with language issues in the CHEMBA classroom. From observing their behavior in class, however, several language-related learner responses surfaced. A few students appeared to convey their confusion through non-verbal communication such as a wrinkled brow (although it can be difficult to correctly interpret non-verbals across cultures). Other learners engaged in conversation with their classmates in Chinese, even while the instructor was speaking in English. On one occasion a student chose to offer a Chinese-language explanation of his group's class presentation, which was originally delivered in English. Several CHEMBA learners had electronic dictionaries sitting on the table in front of them during class that they consulted from time to time. Despite the difficulty with which several students communicated in English, many learners did provide English-language comments in class—on the second day of classroom observation, about half of the students had made a verbal comment in English by lunchtime.

A few CHEMBA students and alumni identified language supports offered by others in the classroom setting. In class I observed a student helping a fellow pupil who was struggling to express herself in English. At another moment multiple learners attempted to interpret the meaning of an English-language word uttered by a classmate. A few students shared opinions regarding the role of t.a.'s in the CHEMBA classroom, with at least two learners concluding that most of their t.a.'s had not provided much tangible language-related assistance. "...[E]ven the t.a.[s] themselves maybe don't really

quite understand what the professor's saying and what's the expectation..." stated one graduate, "[s]o how could they give support to us?" At the conclusion of the class sessions that I observed, the t.a. made some final announcements in Chinese to the class and the students responded by posing a few questions to her, also in Chinese.

Engagement-related challenges. Several CHEMBA students and graduates disclosed that they sometimes struggled to feel fully engaged during class. These learners pointed to a lack of variety in teaching methods on the part of faculty and noted that some professors relied too heavily on a 'lecture-style' method. As one alumnus explained, "Maybe it's just the teacher 'say, say, say' and we just don't have any interest anymore." Learners observed that it was more difficult for them to participate in class discussion if they had not completed the readings and that it was also more challenging to focus in class after the lunch break, especially after a long week at work.

Many CHEMBA students and graduates emphasized the struggle of engaging with the course readings and content when they could not identify a connection with their own professional context. "...[B]efore I joined this program, I did not care much about each P&L [profit and loss statement] and the financial status," one student described, "so sometime[s] it just really difficult for me to link the study with my job." Two learners acknowledged that they needed to devote additional time to preparing for courses that diverged from their areas of previous experience—quantitative coursework such as finance and accounting was mentioned as the most challenging. One student expressed that he appreciated time at the beginning of class to review material for his most difficult courses.

Engagement-related responses. During their interviews CHEMBA learners

described their classroom engagement strategies, and I observed their actual engagement behavior while sitting in on class sessions. The students and alumni noted in the interviews that some of their classmates spoke up in class more than others, and this aligned with the learner responses that I witnessed in the classroom setting. In examining the CHEMBA learning environment I observed some student comments or questions resulting in other pupils adding their own voices to the discussion. One graduate indicated that she had chosen to make her voice heard in her CHEMBA classes even though she was aware that some of her classmates might "...think that someone like me is actually trying to be 'outstanding'." A few students signaled that they wanted to participate in the conversation by raising their hands, though most learners did not utilize this mode of non-verbal communication in class. One student was willing to be particularly persistent—raising his hand on three consecutive occasions to get the instructor's attention. A couple of the learners who did not say much in class explained during their interviews that they viewed 'listening' as a meaningful way to engage. I also observed a handful of students who periodically rested their heads during class.

In interactions with CHEMBA faculty, the learners responded in various ways that highlighted a range of engagement strategies. In the class sessions that I observed, some questions posed by the professor were met with silence on the part of students, while other queries received a verbal response from one or two pupils. On a few occasions multiple learners shouted out answers simultaneously. In their interviews the students and graduates explained that they were more likely to share their perspective in class if the instructor invited them to do so. "...[I]n this way," one learner commented, "those students feel that they want to be listened to and they would like to open their

mouths and tell what they think about something." In the Carlson School faculty member's class sessions, the instructor often posed questions to the students as a whole— in the Lingnan (University) College professor's classes that I observed, the instructor frequently addressed questions to specific learners. Five CHEMBA students and alumni spoke of their willingness to 'challenge' their professors in the spirit of a vigorous discussion. In one instance a student yelled to the Carlson School faculty member that his PowerPoint slide was "wrong" and then went on to explain the error on the screen. Those learners who did not speak much during class regularly took advantage of break times throughout the day to chat with the instructor.

Conclusion

The CHEMBA students/graduates described an array of challenges and responses regarding balancing school, work, and family; the use of English and Chinese in the classroom; and in-class participation.

In their interviews the learners and the professors depicted their responses to the difficulties they faced and in the classroom I observed their behavioral reactions in real time. In the next section of this chapter I detail what the students/alumni and faculty shared regarding the impact of their previous experiences.

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Previous Experiences

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In this section I report how the study participants perceived the effect of their prior experiences, if at all, on their expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses in the CHEMBA teach-abroad learning environment. For faculty and students/alumni, I address perceptions related to international and cross-cultural experiences, as well as previous experience in the teach-abroad classroom.

Faculty Previous Experiences (Research Question #2)

In their interviews the CHEMBA professors discussed their previous

international/cross-cultural and teach-abroad experiences (as illustrated in Figure 6), and

depicted the impact, if any, on their perspectives regarding the CHEMBA learning

environment.

<u>Faculty Previous Experiences</u>

International/Cross-Cultural (Theme)
1. Experiences related to unfamiliar cultural contexts and teaching international students in the United States

Teach-Abroad (Theme)
2. Influence of experiences regarding prior teaching in CHEMBA and other programs abroad

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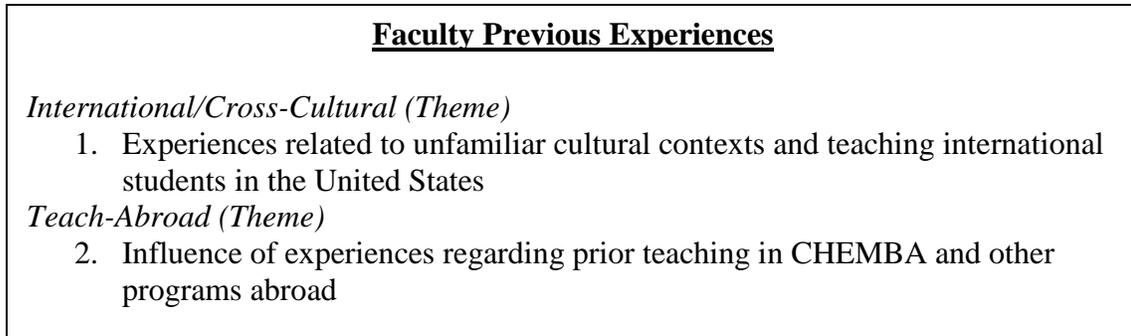
Figure 6. Themes from previous faculty experiences and their influence, if any, on
perspectives regarding the CHEMBA teach-abroad learning environment.

International and cross-cultural experiences. CHEMBA instructors reflected

on their past international and cross-cultural experiences, with a focus on time they had

spent in unfamiliar cultural contexts and teaching international students in the United

States. Two instructors observed a connection between their own cross-cultural

experiences and their ability to perceive the struggles that their CHEMBA students might

encounter in the teach-abroad learning environment. For example, one professor

described participating in a professional conference where the other attendees were

speaking in German, a language in which he was not fluent, and feeling out of his

comfort zone. Another faculty member recalled growing up with grandparents who

spoke a different language and becoming aware that not being conversant in the dominant

language can be difficult.

A few professors highlighted the diversity of learners in their home classrooms at the Carlson School, with as many as 25% of students hailing from China or India, according to one faculty member. Instructors reported the perceptions they had formed of their Chinese pupils in the United States, such as their ability to "...absorb the material extraordinarily well," which in turn influenced their expectations of their CHEMBA students. Based on his interactions with international students at the Carlson School, one professor indicated that he had learned to respond to imperfect English-language skills in learners by "...cut[ting] people a little slack." Other faculty noted differences between their Chinese students at the Carlson School and in the CHEMBA program, with one instructor discerning more verbal participation among his CHEMBA pupils. A few professors acknowledged the impact of having been raised outside the United States and learning to adjust to life in this country on their understanding of the difficulties faced by CHEMBA students needing to adapt to the cultural context of the teach-abroad classroom.

Teach-abroad experiences. CHEMBA faculty described their prior experiences in the teach-abroad learning environment, and the influence on their current teaching in the CHEMBA classroom. Most of the professors interviewed had taught more than once in the CHEMBA program and they indicated how they felt their instruction had changed over the years. A few instructors noted that they had become more "comfortable" in this teaching and learning environment with each experience. Several faculty had responded in their successive CHEMBA teaching endeavors by increasingly customizing their course content to the Chinese context. "In the first year," shared one professor, "I think I used Target, the local company [as an in-class example]. It was okay...but I think over

the later years I switched to a Chinese company that worked even better..." Instructors also reported adding more group discussion in their CHEMBA classes from year to year, while at the same time emphasizing the individual nature of certain assignments.

Many faculty reflected on their previous teaching experiences in the Carlson School's other Executive MBA programs in Vienna and Warsaw, and the impact on their CHEMBA instruction. As a practical matter one professor remarked that he had learned in these programs not to expect his international students to understand all of his jokes. Three instructors observed that they had gained greater awareness of varied student learning styles from their experiences in the Vienna and Warsaw teach-abroad programs, which allowed them to respond by modifying their teaching style as necessary in the CHEMBA learning environment. The professors' responses included a stronger focus on interacting with students in the classroom and fostering a more impactful class discussion. Several faculty had also taught abroad in non-Carlson School programs that helped their ability to perceive a range of cultural differences in their CHEMBA students. One instructor had learned to notice "...things like the way people behave or the way they smile or don't smile, or the way they look with their eyes...it's the way they engage, conversation, things that they find acceptable, or unacceptable."

Conclusion. While CHEMBA professors conveyed a notable degree of influence of their prior teach-abroad experiences on their expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses in this teach-abroad learning environment, they communicated less of an effect of their previous international/cross-cultural experiences. Next I report what the students and alumni had to say about the effect of their own prior experiences on their perspectives regarding the CHEMBA classroom.

Student/Alumni Previous Experiences (Research Question #3)

The students and graduates discussed how their prior international/cross-cultural and CHEMBA learning environment experiences influenced their expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses, if at all, in this classroom context (see Figure 7).

Student/Alumni Previous Experiences

International/Cross-Cultural (Theme)
    1. Influence of experiences related to working with non-Chinese colleagues
Teach-Abroad (Theme)
    2. Influence of experiences regarding length of time in the CHEMBA teach-
       abroad learning environment
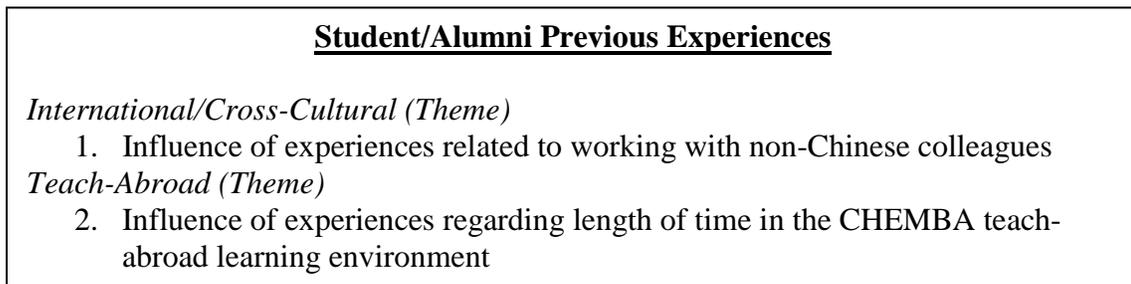
Figure 7. Themes from previous student and alumni experiences and their influence, if any, on perspectives regarding the CHEMBA teach-abroad learning environment.

International and cross-cultural experiences. Many students and alumni imparted professional experiences that had required them to interact across cultures, especially when working with non-Chinese colleagues. One learner shared that she was the only Chinese employee working for her corporation, which was based in the United States. Another student indicated that he had participated in a number of training sessions facilitated by U.S.-American managers. As a result of their cross-cultural professional experiences, several CHEMBA learners expressed that they had developed a more open mind regarding other cultures and the ability to learn 'how' to learn about a new cultural context. "[W]hen you put yourself in the different culture," one student recalled, "...you start to learn everything, to learn about their living style and their thinking style, also their way of...doing business."

The students and alumni noted that the knowledge they gained in working across cultures allowed them to function more effectively in the CHEMBA classroom. Three learners who had previously worked with U.S.-American colleagues stated that these

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experiences had enabled them to better comprehend thinking and communication styles common in the United States—and this understanding encouraged at least one graduate to respond by speaking up in the CHEMBA learning environment. Several learners drew a connection between their experience with 'Western' management practices and the 'Western' approach to teaching that they encountered in their Carlson School professors. One student shared that "...it is quite easy for me to...get used to the CHEMBA Program, understand the professors, how they interact with the class, how to integrate the courses..." Other students and graduates argued that their exposure to U.S. management approaches had not helped them respond to challenges in the CHEMBA classroom due to the fact that the corporate world and academia were ultimately very different from one another.

Teach-abroad experiences. In their interviews, students and alumni reflected on their length of time in the CHEMBA Program and the influence on their perspectives regarding this learning environment. A few learners opined that they had been able to cultivate stronger study habits as they progressed through their CHEMBA courses, and other students observed improved presentation skills in their classmates. "...[A]t the beginning," shared one learner of his fellow pupils, "they just don't know what to say when they face the public [in class], and now you see that they are well conduct[ed] when they stand in front." A few students believed that their English-language reading skills had improved in response to the all-English CHEMBA curriculum, while others contended that they found it just as difficult to complete readings at the end of the program as they did at the beginning. One learner noted that in its first few classes her

student cohort participated actively in class discussion, but in response to a lack of

engagement from instructors the learners became quieter in later courses.

Conclusion

Students/graduates and faculty communicated their prior international/cross-

cultural experiences, as well as experiences related to learning or teaching in the

CHEMBA classroom. Furthermore, the study participants described the ways in which

they felt these various experiences had influenced their expectations, perceptions,

challenges, and responses, if at all, in regard to this teach-abroad learning environment.

In the next section I report the learners' and instructors' thoughts related to preparatory

experiences for this unique classroom context.

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Preparatory Experiences

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In their interviews the study participants shared experiences that helped prepare

them for teaching and learning in the CHEMBA classroom. The professors and

students/alumni also identified experiences that could better support them in preparing

for the expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses of this setting.

Faculty Preparation (Research Question #4)

The CHEMBA faculty discussed the experiences that they felt had assisted them

in this teach-abroad learning environment, and pointed to other potential preparatory

experiences from which they believed they and other instructors could benefit (Figure 8).

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│                      Faculty Preparation                            │
│                                                                     │
│  Actual Experiences (Theme)                                         │
│       1.  Preparatory experiences related to 'learning by doing' and│
│           connecting with other CHEMBA professors                   │
│  Desired Experiences (Theme)                                        │
│       2.  Preparatory experiences regarding travel to China and     │
│           other opportunities for CHEMBA professors                 │
│                                                                     │
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Figure 8. Themes from actual and desired faculty preparatory experiences and their relationship to perspectives regarding the CHEMBA teach-abroad learning environment.

Actual experiences. CHEMBA professors recalled a range of experiences that had helped prepare them for this teach-abroad context. Several faculty emphasized the importance of learning how to teach in the CHEMBA classroom by actually doing so. As one instructor stated, "...nothing beats being on the spot, and learning these things yourself." Two professors noted the value of having a handbook that provided key information regarding the program and gave them the opportunity to manage their expectations. Faculty indicated that this type of resource was especially useful for instructors who were new to teaching in CHEMBA. Other instructors highlighted faculty 'retreats' offered for CHEMBA professors that allowed them to discuss best practices with each other that they could utilize as they responded to challenges in the classroom. Indeed, one of the ways that many professors seemed to have gained insights about teaching in CHEMBA was through speaking with colleagues who had already served as instructors in this teach-abroad learning environment. Faculty also described the benefit of gaining some China-specific knowledge in their area of expertise so they could provide local context when teaching in the CHEMBA classroom.

Desired experiences. Instructors identified a range of additional preparatory experiences that they believed could support CHEMBA professors in this teach-abroad

setting. One professor suggested that the Carlson School fund opportunities for

instructors to travel to China before their first CHEMBA teaching endeavor to become

more familiar with the cultural context and to learn some of the language. This type of

trip could also include a chance to sit in on other faculty members' CHEMBA courses,

which would allow new professors to "...kind of get a feel of what the teaching in

CHEMBA is like compared to other kind[s] of teaching." If traveling abroad to

experience China was not an option for future CHEMBA instructors, another faculty

member alternatively proposed the creation of short videos in which senior CHEMBA

professors would share their insights regarding the Chinese cultural context. For

instructors who had previously taught in the program, at least one professor recognized

the value of creating a space to reflect on his own expectations, perceptions, challenges,

and responses in the CHEMBA classroom as preparation for future teaching experiences.

"Conversations like we are having now [as part of this study] could be helpful," the

faculty member stated. "Actually I think it could be very helpful."

Conclusion. The CHEMBA faculty described the experiences of 'learning by

doing' and connecting with other CHEMBA professors that had supported them in

preparing to teach in this setting. The instructors also indicated a variety of other

experiences that would be beneficial as preparation for this teach-abroad learning

environment. Next I report what the students and graduates communicated about their

own preparation for the CHEMBA classroom.

Student/Alumni Preparation (Research Question #4)

CHEMBA students and alumni pointed to the experiences that had helped prepare them for this teach-abroad learning environment. In addition, these learners imagined preparatory experiences that could have benefited them (see Figure 9).

Student/Alumni Preparation

Actual Experiences (Theme)
   1. Preparatory experiences related to professional training and prior schooling
Desired Experiences (Theme)
   2. Preparatory experiences regarding English-language training and other
      opportunities

Figure 9. Themes from actual and desired student/alumni preparatory experiences and their relationship to perspectives regarding the CHEMBA teach-abroad learning environment.

Actual experiences. Students and graduates discussed the preparation they had received prior to enrolling in the CHEMBA program, especially in regard to professional training and prior schooling. Many learners emphasized their on-the-job experiences 'in the field' as critical to their success in the teach-abroad classroom, as their professional lives had provided them with the opportunity to learn about different facets of business—including working in an international context. A few students and alumni highlighted training courses they had pursued through their employers as helpful in gaining relevant business-related knowledge and skills. Learners also noted their previous schooling, especially in business, as consequential for their ability to succeed in the CHEMBA classroom. One student explained that "...my major in university was business...and I think I'm more prepared for the program than some other students who might have [had] different majors." Other learners identified personal qualities such as the "willing[ness]

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to learn" and having an open mind as essential prerequisites for handling the challenges they faced as students in the CHEMBA learning environment.

Desired experiences. The students and alumni shared their diverse suggestions for additional ways in which learners could better prepare for the CHEMBA classroom. Multiple students and graduates indicated that more English-language training would have been useful to them, given that they sometimes found CHEMBA's English-language instruction challenging. Two learners stressed the need for CHEMBA students to enter the program with stronger presentation skills. "They [fellow pupils] have a lot of information," observed one alumnus, "but they don't know how to present it. And they don't know what a professional presentation should look like." Other students and graduates mentioned that some of their classmates had enjoyed diverse professional experiences in varied aspects of business, but this was not the case for all CHEMBA learners. Therefore, a few students and alumni stated they wished they had worked in a broader array of business functions—such as finance, operations, and international strategy—prior to beginning the program in order to manage their expectations regarding the full breadth of business pursuits. Learners also expressed that they would have found a study abroad experience in the United States valuable as preparation for being CHEMBA students, as their perception was that such an endeavor would have allowed them to become more familiar with common U.S.-American teaching approaches.

Conclusion

CHEMBA students and alumni communicated the preparatory experiences regarding professional training and prior schooling that had been useful to them, and the further preparation in terms of English-language training and other opportunities that they

believed would be helpful in relation to their expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses in this teach-abroad learning environment. Both the learners and the instructors conveyed varied suggestions for better preparation of future CHEMBA students and professors. In the next section I summarize the study's findings.

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter I reported the findings from individual interviews and classroom observation that answered the study's four research questions. The faculty discussed their expectations and perceptions (Research Questions #1a and #1b) of the CHEMBA teach-abroad learning environment with the emphasis being placed on the Chinese cultural context, teaching and learning modes, student preparation, and the use of Chinese and English in the classroom. The students and alumni conveyed their own expectations and perceptions (Research Questions #1a and #1b) of the CHEMBA learning environment, sharing in common with faculty the importance of learning and teaching modes and the use of Chinese and English in the classroom. Learners also focused on themes related to readings and textbooks, new knowledge, class preparation, and classroom outcomes.

CHEMBA professors also articulated the challenges they faced and ways in which they responded (Research Questions #1c and #1d) in regard to travel time and course length, student completion of readings and homework assignments, the use of English and Chinese in the classroom, and student in-class participation. CHEMBA students and graduates verbalized the challenges they encountered and their means of response (Research Questions #1c and #1d) related to balancing school, work, and family, the use of English and Chinese in the classroom, and in-class participation.

Based on the classroom observation research strategy, in-class findings emerged regarding many of the same categories of faculty and student/alumni responses, but from the researcher's perspective.

The instructors shared previous experiences (Research Question #2) in terms of unfamiliar cultural contexts and teaching international students in the United States, as well as prior teaching in CHEMBA and other teach-abroad programs. The students and alumni imparted their own prior experiences (Research Question #3) related to working with non-Chinese colleagues and the length of time in the CHEMBA teach-abroad learning environment. The study participants, both faculty and students/graduates, also indicated how, if at all, these previous experiences influenced their expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses in the teach-abroad classroom.

Lastly, CHEMBA professors communicated valuable preparatory experiences related to 'learning by doing' and connecting with other faculty in the program, and suggested future travel experiences to China and other opportunities for new and returning CHEMBA instructors. Students and alumni highlighted their own preparatory experiences in terms of professional training and prior schooling, and proposed additional English-language training and other preparatory opportunities for learners. Professors and students/graduates also described how their preparatory experiences had been useful in regard to their expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses in the CHEMBA teach-abroad learning environment.

In the next chapter, I discuss how the study's findings can be understood in the context of theory, recommendations for CHEMBA and other teach-abroad faculty, students, and administrators, and implications for further research.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Recommendations

'Ethnocentrism' involves "...assuming that the worldview of one's own culture is central to all reality."

—M. J. Bennett (1993), p. 30.

'Ethnorelativism' requires "the construction of reality as increasingly capable of accommodating cultural difference."

— M. J. Bennett (1993), p. 24.

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The study's findings, related to the CHEMBA faculty and student/alumni expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses in this teach-abroad learning environment, revealed significant 'gaps' between the instructors and learners. In this chapter I explore the key gaps, given the study purpose: "to understand faculty and student expectations and perceptions of the learning environment in the Chinese teach-abroad classroom, to identify the 'gaps' between faculty and students, and to understand how faculty and students respond to cultural differences related to teaching and learning when they occur." I then frame the differences between the CHEMBA learners and professors in the context of intercultural competence theory, which was introduced in Chapter Two, offer recommendations based on the study's findings, and suggest ideas for future research.

Key Gaps

In reporting the study's findings a number of gaps emerged between the teach-abroad faculty and student/graduate perspectives. In this section I illustrate the most

important differences through three metaphors, featured in both English and the corresponding Chinese translation. Each metaphor resulted from a synthesis of the learners' and instructors' interview comments and the researcher's observations in the classroom setting.

Gap #1: The Dance 谁先领舞

It was clear from the findings that the CHEMBA faculty and students wanted to engage with one another in the teach-abroad learning environment, but it was equally apparent that both the learners and professors often lacked understanding of what factors would motivate the other group to engage with them. In general, the instructors wanted an open discussion in the classroom, similar to what they had learned to expect from their experiences in U.S. higher education, while the students and alumni desired more intentional interactions with their faculty. This contrast echoes the literature's depiction of learners' and professors' divergent expectations regarding classroom discussion (Furey, 1986; Liu, 2001). As I considered what I had heard and observed during the course of this study, I came to imagine both the instructors and students as waiting for the other party to invite them to the 'dance'.

The CHEMBA instructors from the Carlson School indicated that they had vacillated between less and more direct approaches in the classroom. Many faculty had the impression that they should not be too direct, as they perceived their students as unaccustomed to speaking in class and did not want them to lose 'face'. Some professors routinely threw questions out to the class, and when there was not an immediate response, continued the 'dialogue' on their own. In the absence of learners' verbal remarks, other instructors tried to 'read the room' from students' non-verbal communication, which can

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prove difficult when operating in an unfamiliar cultural context. On the other hand, out of frustration, some faculty became more direct in style with their learners. Some professors, for example, instituted in-class quizzes or strict grading penalties for late assignments. At times this more direct approach seemed to meet the students' needs, especially when instructors addressed learners by name and asked them specific questions.

This type of engagement strategy, the students and alumni told me, better matched their expectations—an authoritative and upfront presence on the part of their Carlson School faculty. The teach-abroad literature includes references to 'Western' professors' discovery that "...the only way [when teaching in China] to obtain a response was to target a specific student. Somewhat to our surprise, this appeared an acceptable way to elicit student responses" (Bodycott & Walker, 2000, p. 84). It appeared that the CHEMBA learners particularly expected this engagement style from U.S.-American instructors and that they believed a more structured classroom discussion would allow them to learn the most. The students and graduates stated that they did not like when their faculty relied too much on lecturing and they seemed to expect to be engaged by their professors first and foremost, rather than engaging themselves as a first step. For instance, learners made clear that they wanted their instructors to ask them about connections between the course content and their professional contexts rather than volunteering this information themselves. At the same time, some students and alumni noted that they appreciated the 'open' environment fostered by the Carlson School faculty in which they could freely express themselves if they chose to do so.

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Gap #2: A Stand Off 对峙

Perhaps the CHEMBA professors' greatest frustration, as many instructors opined, was that their learners should come to class better prepared, which primarily meant having completed the assigned readings. This concern aligns with the relevant literature (George, 1995), which provides examples of other teach-abroad classrooms in which faculty faced similar struggles. The CHEMBA students acknowledged that they knew they should do more of the readings, but many admitted that they often had not done so. In essence, it seemed that the faculty and learners were entangled in a 'stand off'. Some professors had tried strategies such as requiring the students to submit 'write-ups' that summarized the readings in order to coax them to finish the cases and articles they had been assigned. One primary reason for the learners' failure to do the readings was that they perceived some of them as old and out-of-date, while other students felt that too few related to the Chinese context. In addition, the learners shared that they had not typically had to complete readings for courses in their prior post-secondary education—therefore, they were unaccustomed to this expectation of them as students.

Gap #3: Tongue-Tied 张口结舌

The CHEMBA instructors expressed that their students needed to have sufficient English-language skills to succeed in this learning environment, and they struggled with those learners who had limited English. Many students wanted to improve their English during the program but felt more comfortable relying on their native Chinese when speaking amongst themselves. Learners' reliance on their first language in interacting with one another supports the existing literature on the teach-abroad classroom (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Liu, 2001). Some students and alumni advocated for a small portion of

content to be taught in Chinese while most Carlson School professors thought Chinese

should be used in the classroom only as a last resort. Some instructors tried to

incorporate a little Chinese in their teaching, such as using a few basic Chinese words in

class. Faculty and learners seemed generally unclear on the role teaching assistants could

play in relation to supporting both groups in navigating the language barrier, and it

appeared that the quality of the t.a.'s varied.

Conclusion

Each of the key gaps between the faculty and students in the CHEMBA teach-

abroad learning environment embodied differences of perspective rooted in culture. In

the study participants' voices I heard stories, at times, of misunderstanding and

misapprehension, reflected in the three metaphors depicted above. In the next section I

place these gaps in the context of intercultural competence theory.

<div align="center">

Theoretical Context

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Intercultural competence (IC) theory provides a useful frame of reference for the

learners' and professors' differing viewpoints in the CHEMBA classroom. This

theoretical lens, which focuses on the process by which individuals develop greater

cultural competence, offers a compelling interpretation of the gaps between instructors

and students/alumni given each group's unique cultural context (see Figure 10). The

notions of 'ethnocentrism' and 'ethnorelativism' guide IC theory in that these two

worldviews tell us something important about how human beings relate to each other

across cultures—as well as if, and how, they adapt to others' cultural contexts. Although

IC theory serves as a helpful framework for understanding the dynamics between the

CHEMBA learners and faculty, it is also the case that this study has contributed to theory

<div align="center">

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by testing its relevance in the teach-abroad classroom: an approach that previous studies of these learning environments (George, 1987, 1995; Slethaug, 2007) did not explicitly take.

INTERCULTURAL CONTEXT

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                                               │
│              ┌──────────────────────────────┐                 │
│              │  TEACH-ABROAD LEARNING        │                 │
│              │  ENVIRONMENT (CLASSROOM)      │                 │
│              └──────────────────────────────┘                 │
│                    ↗                ↖                          │
│                              'GAPS'                            │
│  ┌──────────────────────┐            ┌──────────────────────┐ │
│  │ FACULTY EXPECTATIONS, │ ◄────────► │ LEARNER EXPECTATIONS,│ │
│  │ PERCEPTIONS,          │ ADAPTATION?│ PERCEPTIONS,         │ │
│  │ CHALLENGES, AND       │            │ CHALLENGES, AND      │ │
│  │ RESPONSES             │            │ RESPONSES            │ │
│  └──────────────────────┘            └──────────────────────┘ │
│                                                               │
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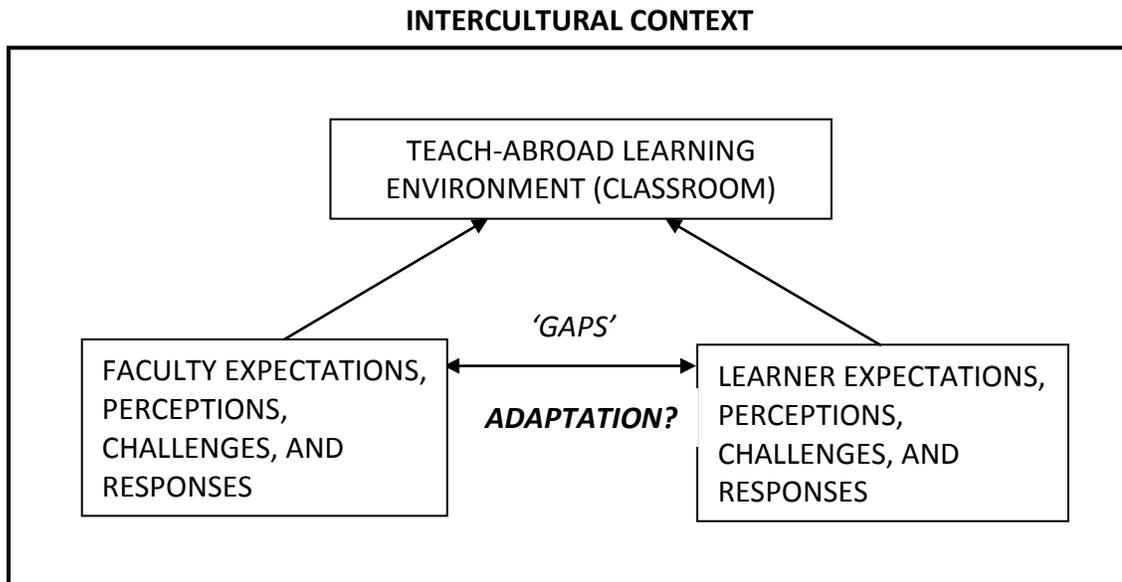
Figure 10. Role of intercultural context in faculty and learner adaptation.

Some of the study participants, both faculty and learners, demonstrated a viewpoint indicative of 'ethnocentrism', while others modeled behavior more representative of 'ethnorelativism'. Milton Bennett defined 'ethnocentrism' as "…assuming that the worldview of one's own culture is central to all reality" (M. J. Bennett, 1993, p. 30), while he explained 'ethnorelativism' as "*the construction of reality as increasingly capable of accommodating cultural difference* [original italics]" (M. J. Bennett, 1993, p. 24). In the metaphors described in the previous section, students/graduates and professors appeared to be stuck in their own perspectives, which limited their capacity for success in this cross-cultural learning environment. Some CHEMBA instructors did not think they would need to adapt their teaching for the teach-

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abroad classroom—for example, engaging differently with learners to encourage in-class participation. Many students hoped for a more interactive style from their U.S.-American professors, but found that they did not always know how to participate fully in this new learning environment, given that these learners had not typically experienced classrooms in which they were expected to speak up on their own.

Both faculty and students/alumni seemed to perceive a lack of adaptation on the part of the other group in the CHEMBA teach-abroad learning environment. Even after teaching in the program, some professors did not think they needed to adjust their approach, in some cases due to their perception that what they taught was 'universal'. At the same time, many instructors were able to point to ways in which they had operated in a more 'ethnorelative' mode when asked to provide examples, such as including more China-specific content in their CHEMBA courses. Several students and alumni acknowledged that they needed to adapt in a variety of ways, but stated that they had struggled to do so. It appeared that some learners and faculty had been able to explore 'ethnorelative' strategies as they spent more time in the CHEMBA classroom, demonstrating their increasing ability to perceive the other party's point of view. For instance, professors had given students time at the beginning of class to review readings in order to generate better class discussion and translated key course concepts into Chinese so that learners could better understand the content. Some learners had amplified their focus on completing readings before class, which allowed them to better meet the expectations of their U.S.-American instructors. The evolving responses of students and faculty as they adjusted to the CHEMBA learning environment illustrated the essentially dynamic nature of IC development (M. J. Bennett, 1986, 1993; Deardorff,

2008).

Implications for Practice

In order for the CHEMBA students and professors to effectively adapt, they need to take into account the "goals," "content," and "process" dimensions of IC development (J. M. Bennett, 1986, p. 117). Regarding goals, instructors and students must become cognitively aware that this classroom context differs from what they have previously come across, on an emotional level they need to tune into feelings triggered by their experience of this unique setting, and they must learn to identify which behaviors will allow them to be most successful in the CHEMBA learning environment. In terms of content, students and faculty need to understand the generic types of cultural differences (e.g., degree of directness in communication), as well as educating themselves about the nuances of their counterparts' particular cultural contexts (e.g., United States and China, respectively). In regard to process, professors and students must pursue both an "intellectual" understanding of how to adapt to cultural difference and an "experiential" embrace of adjusting to this new environment in real time.

The research demonstrates that CHEMBA students and instructors would benefit from 'guided reflection' (Cushner & Mahon, 2009; Paige & Vande Berg, 2012; Vande Berg, Paige, & Lou, 2012) on their journey of IC development. This mentoring could come from program administrators who are trained in facilitating this kind of learning process, but it could also emerge from fellow students/alumni and faculty who have reflected on their own cross-cultural experiences, including those in the CHEMBA classroom. Next, I provide targeted recommendations for professors, students, and program administrators in this teach-abroad learning environment.

Recommendations for CHEMBA Program

Taking into account the key gaps between CHEMBA faculty and students in the context of applied IC theory, I have assembled recommendations for this programmatic setting and possibly in other teach-abroad programs. Given the brief and intense nature of the interactions between professors and learners in the CHEMBA classroom, it is all the more important that these instructors and students have the intercultural skills to adapt effectively to each other's contexts. The ultimate goal is to continuously improve the learning environment so that faculty and learners can optimally benefit. The recommendations below address the specific findings of the study. The overall plan is to incorporate these ideas into initiatives designed to prepare and support faculty and students for the teach-abroad classroom.

Recommendations for Gap #1: The Dance 谁先领舞

Beginning with *instructors*, I recommend the following approach:

- Liu (2001) suggested using "...the role of authority by inviting others to participate" (p. 235). Professors could invite students to the 'dance' by explicitly asking them to participate. This could mean engaging with learners by addressing them individually, at least some of the time, rather than expecting students to always volunteer their own remarks in class.

For *students*, I offer this recommendation:

- Engage in the 'dance' of class discussion by proactively sharing one's own connections with the course content rather than always waiting for the professor to lead.

If faculty and learners intentionally engage with one another in ways that

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demonstrate awareness of the other party's perspective, there is a greater likelihood of rich classroom discussion.

Recommendations for Gap #2: A Stand Off 对峙

Instructors are encouraged to:

- Continue being creative in finding ways to encourage learners to complete their readings, which could include assigning some newer and China-specific cases. These readings would not replace the classic cases that effectively illustrate key course concepts.

Students could:

- Further open one's mind to the possibility of learning from a variety of readings and establish new study habits so as to be more successful in this classroom setting.

Faculty and learners could achieve the outcomes they desire by differently framing the assigned course readings within their own contexts.

Recommendations for Gap #3: Tongue-Tied 张口结舌

I would suggest that *instructors* could:

- More intentionally utilize the teaching assistants as 'bridges' to help communicate course concepts in Chinese to students and to seek learner questions and feedback that can be relayed to faculty. A strong t.a.'s ability to provide Chinese-language summaries to students and to help respond to learners' questions can be very helpful in supporting learning.

I propose that *students*:

- Seek, if necessary, more English-language training before and/or during

the program.

English-language competence, as well as opportunities to communicate in Chinese, will help provide multiple platforms for professors to impart course content and encourage discussion, and for learners to receive and reflect upon new knowledge.

Recommendations for Program Administrators

While it is important that instructors and students follow their own strategies for greater effectiveness in this cross-cultural learning environment, the program administrators from the Carlson School of Management and Lingnan (University) College could pursue a variety of approaches that would help support faculty and learners in the CHEMBA classroom:

- Continue to offer faculty retreats and best practice discussions to support faculty reflection, including self-awareness of the strategies professors are already pursuing in the CHEMBA learning environment and new approaches they could try. It could be helpful to include discussion regarding the key intercultural gaps identified by this study and share more explicit intercultural knowledge, such as Milton Bennett's "Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity," as a way of understanding these gaps.

- Include an alumni panel as part of the new student orientation in which program graduates discuss what they learned about being successful in this cross-cultural classroom setting. In addition, it could be valuable for program staff to facilitate a conversation with students that integrates key findings of the study with intercultural models such as Bennett's DMIS.

- Offer tools such as the Intercultural Development Inventory (based on the DMIS) to instructors and students as a way of providing individual feedback regarding sensitivity to other cultural contexts.

- Shape and communicate a more consistent approach to the training and utilization of teaching assistants for the benefit of both learners and professors. Faculty should be made aware of the ways in which they can advantageously use the t.a.'s to serve as 'bridges' between themselves and their students.

- Actively support intercultural mentoring of new CHEMBA instructors by more senior faculty.

- Continue to evolve the faculty handbook, which can be especially useful for new instructors.

- Vet student applications for cross-cultural experiences (such as working with international colleagues or study abroad) by asking applicants to provide this kind of information in an essay question. This step would hopefully help to recruit learners who are more likely to thrive in the CHEMBA classroom.

- Offer more English-language training support for students, before and/or during the program.

- Provide training on presentation skills for new students at the beginning of the program.

Future Research

This study has shed light on the teach-abroad classroom in the context of one case

bounded by a unique location, participants, and time frame. Although some previous research has been completed on the teach-abroad learning environment, future studies could assess the gaps between teach-abroad faculty and students in other parts of the world and with other types of students. A follow-up study could focus on evaluating the implementation of the recommendations offered in the previous section, whether in the CHEMBA classroom or in another teach-abroad context. It could also be valuable to conduct research that compares the cultural gaps in teach-abroad learning environments with those in U.S. classrooms that include international students.

Chapter Conclusion

In designing this study, the primary research goal was to better understand the teach-abroad learning environment, with a consideration of both faculty and learner perspectives. In the analysis of data resulting from the individual interviews with CHEMBA students, alumni, and professors, as well as the data emerging from observation of CHEMBA class sessions, I endeavored to represent the instructor and learner expectations, perceptions, challenges, and responses in a balanced way. By identifying the culturally-influenced gaps between the CHEMBA students/graduates and faculty, the objective was to provide practical recommendations—informed by intercultural competence theory—that could be put to use in this or other teach-abroad classrooms. The ultimate measure of success for this study will be the impact of these suggestions on the experiences of professors and students in cross-cultural learning environments. As a researcher and as a program administrator, I hope that this is just the beginning of the conversation.

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Dear CHEMBA Faculty,

I am writing to let you know about an opportunity to share your experiences as an instructor in the CHEMBA Program as part of a doctoral research study. This study is looking at instructor, student, and graduate perspectives regarding the learning environment in the CHEMBA classroom. Matthew Goode, who you know as the CHEMBA Program Director, is pursuing his doctoral studies at the University of Minnesota and will serve as the Principal Investigator for this research. The working title of Matthew's study is: "A Case Study of Faculty and Student Expectations, Perceptions, Challenges, and Responses in the 'Teach-Abroad' Learning Environment."

This letter serves as your official invitation to participate in this study of instructor, student, and graduate perspectives on the CHEMBA classroom. Matthew will be conducting individual interviews with Carlson School faculty who have taught in CHEMBA in at least one of the following academic years: 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11, and 2011-12.

If you wish to participate in the study, please contact Matthew directly at mgoode@umn.edu or 612-626-8727. Once you contact him, he will follow up to schedule an interview time with you that fits your schedule. Matthew plans to interview faculty for the study beginning this month; each interview will be in-person and last approximately one hour. If you choose to participate, your interview responses will be confidential.

For your information, Matthew's doctoral adviser is Dr. R. Michael Paige in the College of Education and Human Development, and Dr. Paige can be reached at r-paig@umn.edu or 612-626-7456. Matthew's study has been exempted from full review by the University of Minnesota's Institutional Review Board and the IRB approval number is 1110E05942.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in this important study. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at mhouston@umn.edu or 612-625-2075.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Houston
Associate Dean, Global Initiatives

Dear CHEMBA Students,

We are writing to let you know about an opportunity to share your experiences as a student in the CHEMBA Program as part of a doctoral research study. This study is looking at student, graduate, and instructor perspectives regarding the learning environment in the CHEMBA classroom. Matthew Goode, who you might know as the CHEMBA Program Director at the Carlson School of Management, is pursuing his doctoral studies at the University of Minnesota and will serve as the primary researcher for this study. The working title of Matthew's study is: "A Case Study of Faculty and Student Expectations, Perceptions, Challenges, and Responses in the 'Teach-Abroad' Learning Environment."

This letter serves as your official invitation to participate in this study of student, graduate, and instructor perspectives on the CHEMBA classroom. Matthew will be conducting individual interviews with current students in the CHEMBA Program.

If you wish to participate in the study, please contact Matthew directly at mgoode@umn.edu. Once you contact him, he will follow up to schedule an interview time with you that fits your schedule.

Matthew plans to interview current students (CHEMBA 10 and CHEMBA 11) for the study when he is in Guangzhou from March 16-25, 2012. Each interview will be either in-person or through Skype and last approximately one hour. If you choose to participate, your interview responses will be confidential.

For your information, Matthew's doctoral adviser is Dr. R. Michael Paige in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota, and Dr. Paige can be reached at r-paig@umn.edu.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in this important study. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Michael Houston at mhouston@umn.edu or Yanmei Zhang at flszym@mail.sysu.edu.cn.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Houston   Yanmei Zhang
Associate Dean, Global Initiatives   Deputy Dean
Carlson School of Management   Lingnan (University) College
University of Minnesota   Sun Yat-sen University

Dear CHEMBA Alumni,

I am writing to let you know about an opportunity to share your experiences as a student in the CHEMBA Program as part of a doctoral research study. This study is looking at alumni, student, and instructor perspectives regarding the learning environment in the CHEMBA classroom. Matthew Goode, who you know as the CHEMBA Program Director at the Carlson School of Management, is pursuing his doctoral studies at the University of Minnesota and will serve as the primary researcher for this study. The working title of Matthew's study is: "A Case Study of Faculty and Student Expectations, Perceptions, Challenges, and Responses in the 'Teach-Abroad' Learning Environment."

This letter serves as your official invitation to participate in this study of alumni, student, and instructor perspectives on the CHEMBA classroom. Matthew will be conducting individual interviews with alumni who graduated from the CHEMBA 8 and CHEMBA 9 cohorts.

If you wish to participate in the study, please contact Matthew directly at mgoode@umn.edu. Once you contact him, he will follow up to schedule an interview time with you that fits your schedule.

Matthew plans to interview CHEMBA alumni for the study when he is in Guangzhou from March 16-25, 2012. Each interview will be either in-person or through Skype and last approximately one hour. If you choose to participate, your interview responses will be confidential.

For your information, Matthew's doctoral adviser is Dr. R. Michael Paige in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota, and Dr. Paige can be reached at r-paig@umn.edu.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in this important study.

Sincerely,
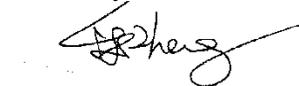
Giggs Zheng
Vice President, University of Minnesota Alumni Association, Guangzhou Chapter

Appendix D: Faculty Consent Information Sheet

INTERVIEW CONSENT INFORMATION SHEET (Faculty)
A Case Study of Faculty and Student Expectations, Perceptions, Challenges, and Responses
In the 'Teach-Abroad' Learning Environment

This study is being conducted by a researcher from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities:
Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development department.

You are invited to participate in a research study of faculty, student, and graduate perspectives on
the CHEMBA classroom. You have been selected as a possible participant because you have
taught in the CHEMBA Program in at least one of the following academic years: 2008-09, 2009-
10, 2010-11, and 2011-12. I, the researcher, ask that you read this sheet and ask any questions
you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Matthew Goode, Organizational Leadership, Policy, and
Development department, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

Procedures
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview about
your experiences as an instructor in the CHEMBA Program. The interview's duration will be
approximately one hour. If you agree, your interview will be audio-taped for research purposes.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study
The risk of participating in this study is identification. Every possible precaution will be made to
protect your identity. No actual names will be used in any report resulting from this study. The
data from the study will be stored in a locked drawer for 18 months, and then destroyed.

Participating in this study has no direct benefits for participants. Participating in this study might
provide insights that will help the CHEMBA administrative staff develop the program in ways
that will benefit faculty and students in the future.

Confidentiality
The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not
include any information that will make it possible to identify a research participant. Research
records will be stored securely and only I will have access to the records. The audio recordings
of interviews will be stored securely for a period of 18 months and only I will have access to
them.

Voluntary Nature of the Study
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not
affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota or the CHEMBA
Program. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any
time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions
The researcher conducting this study is: Matthew Goode. You may ask any questions you have
before the interview. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at the

University of Minnesota, Twin Cities; mgoode@umn.edu or 612-626-8727. His adviser is Dr. R. Michael Paige. Dr. Paige's contact information is as follows: r-paig@umn.edu or 612-626-7456.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, MN 55455; 612-625-1650.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

INTERVIEW CONSENT INFORMATION SHEET (Students)
A Case Study of Faculty and Student Expectations, Perceptions, Challenges, and Responses
In the 'Teach-Abroad' Learning Environment

This study is being conducted by a researcher from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities: Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development department.

You are invited to participate in a research study of faculty, student, and graduate perspectives on the CHEMBA classroom. You have been selected as a possible participant because you are a current student in the CHEMBA Program. I, the researcher, ask that you read this sheet and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Matthew Goode, Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development department, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

Procedures
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview about your experiences as a student in the CHEMBA Program. The interview's duration will be approximately one hour. If you agree, your interview will be audio-taped for research purposes.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study
The risk of participating in this study is identification. Every possible precaution will be made to protect your identity. No actual names will be used in any report resulting from this study. The data from the study will be stored in a locked drawer for 18 months, and then destroyed.

Participating in this study has no direct benefits for participants. Participating in this study might provide insights that will help the CHEMBA administrative staff develop the program in ways that will benefit faculty and students in the future.

Confidentiality
The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a research participant. Research records will be stored securely and only I will have access to the records. The audio recordings of interviews will be stored securely for a period of 18 months and only I will have access to them.

Voluntary Nature of the Study
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota or the CHEMBA Program. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions
The researcher conducting this study is: Matthew Goode. You may ask any questions you have before the interview. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities; mgoode@umn.edu or 1-612-626-8727. His adviser is Dr.

R. Michael Paige. Dr. Paige's contact information is as follows: r-paig@umn.edu or 1-612-626-7456.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, MN 55455; 1-612-625-1650.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

INTERVIEW CONSENT INFORMATION SHEET (Graduates)
A Case Study of Faculty and Student Expectations, Perceptions, Challenges, and Responses
In the 'Teach-Abroad' Learning Environment

This study is being conducted by a researcher from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities: Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development department.

You are invited to participate in a research study of faculty, student, and graduate perspectives on the CHEMBA classroom. You have been selected as a possible participant because you graduated from the CHEMBA Program in 2010 or 2011. I, the researcher, ask that you read this sheet and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Matthew Goode, Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development department, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

Procedures
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview about your past experiences as a student in the CHEMBA Program. The interview's duration will be approximately one hour. If you agree, your interview will be audio-taped for research purposes.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study
The risk of participating in this study is identification. Every possible precaution will be made to protect your identity. No actual names will be used in any report resulting from this study. The data from the study will be stored in a locked drawer for 18 months, and then destroyed.

Participating in this study has no direct benefits for participants. Participating in this study might provide insights that will help the CHEMBA administrative staff develop the program in ways that will benefit faculty and students in the future.

Confidentiality
The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a research participant. Research records will be stored securely and only I will have access to the records. The audio recordings of interviews will be stored securely for a period of 18 months and only I will have access to them.

Voluntary Nature of the Study
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota or the CHEMBA Program. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions
The researcher conducting this study is: Matthew Goode. You may ask any questions you have before the interview. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities; mgoode@umn.edu or 1-612-626-8727. His adviser is Dr.

R. Michael Paige. Dr. Paige's contact information is as follows: r-paig@umn.edu or 1-612-626-7456.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, MN 55455; 1-612-625-1650.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

I will begin the interview process by thanking the interviewee for taking the time to meet with me. In addition, I will share that "the questions I will be asking during our conversation focus on your experiences as an instructor in the CHEMBA classroom." Next, I will review the consent information sheet with them and ask if they have any questions. Before beginning the interview, I will ask the respondent if they are willing to have the conversation tape-recorded.

1) In which year did you first teach in the CHEMBA Program?

2) Have you taught more than once in the CHEMBA Program?

> (*If 'yes'*) How would you say your approach to teaching in the CHEMBA Program has changed over time?

3) Can you share the most meaningful experiences you have had, other than teaching in the CHEMBA Program, which involved you interacting with people from other cultures, both in the United States and abroad?

> (*If applicable*) What influence, if any, do you feel these experiences had/have had on your teaching in the CHEMBA Program?

4) What experiences other than CHEMBA have you had teaching outside the United States, if any?

> (*If applicable*) What influence, if any, do you feel these experiences had/have had on your teaching in the CHEMBA Program?

5) When you first taught in CHEMBA, can you recall some of the expectations that you had of teaching in the CHEMBA classroom?

> (*Prompt, if the interviewee has trouble remembering their initial expectations*) What, if anything, surprised you the first time you taught in CHEMBA?

6) Which of your expectations would you say were satisfied?

7) Which of your expectations would you say were not satisfied?

8) When you think about the CHEMBA students, how would you describe their learning style?

(*If the interviewee struggles with a response to this question*) When you think about the CHEMBA students, in which types of activities did/do they engage in the classroom?

9) In what ways, if at all, did/do the CHEMBA students differ from your students in the United States?

10)   How would you describe your approach when teaching in the CHEMBA classroom?

(*If the interviewee struggles with a response to this question*) When you think about yourself as an instructor in the CHEMBA classroom, in which types of activities did/do you engage?

11) In what ways, if at all, did/does your teaching approach in the CHEMBA classroom differ from your teaching approach in the United States?

12) How would you describe what it was/is like for you to teach in English in the CHEMBA classroom, given that English is a second language for most of the students?

13) In what ways, if at all, did/does the fact that English was/is not the CHEMBA students' first language differ from your teaching experiences in the United States?

14)   What would you say were/are some of the challenges you faced/have faced as a CHEMBA instructor?

(*If applicable*) How would you say you responded/have responded to these challenges?

15) Can you share the experiences, if any, that helped/have helped prepare you for being an instructor in the CHEMBA classroom?

(*If the interviewee struggles with a response to this question*) One example could be conversations with other Carlson School instructors who have taught in the program.

16) What additional experiences, if any, do you think could have been/be helpful to you in support of your teaching in the CHEMBA classroom?

17) What else would you like to share about your experiences as an instructor in the CHEMBA classroom?

I will begin the interview process by thanking the interviewee for taking the time to meet with me. In addition, I will share that "the questions I will be asking during our conversation focus on your experiences as a CHEMBA student in the classroom." Next, I will review the consent information sheet with them and ask if they have any questions. Before beginning the interview, I will ask the respondent if they are willing to have the conversation tape-recorded.

1) In which year did you begin the CHEMBA Program?

2) In which country did you grow up?

3) Before you joined CHEMBA, can you describe any experiences you had interacting with people from other cultures?

> (*If applicable*) What influence do you feel these experiences have had on your studies in the CHEMBA Program?

4) When you began the CHEMBA Program, can you recall some of the expectations that you had?

> (*Prompt, if the interviewee has trouble remembering their initial expectations*) What, if anything, surprised you during your first semester?

5) Which of your expectations would you say have been satisfied?

6) Which of your expectations would you say have not been satisfied?

7) When you think about the Carlson School professors, how would you describe their teaching style?

> (*If the interviewee struggles with a response to this question*) When you think about the Carlson School professors, in which types of activities do they engage in the classroom?

8) How does the style of the Carlson School professors differ from the Chinese professors you have had in your educational experiences?

9) When you think about the CHEMBA students, how would you describe their learning style?

(*If the interviewee struggles with a response to this question*) When you think about the CHEMBA students in the classroom, in which types of activities do they engage?

10) How do the CHEMBA students differ from other classmates you have had in China?

11) What is it like to participate in an English-language program?

12) What would you say are some of the challenges you have faced as a CHEMBA student?

(*If applicable*) How would you say you responded to these challenges?

13) What experiences helped prepare you for being a CHEMBA student?

(*If the interviewee struggles with a response to this question*) One example could be conversations with CHEMBA alumni who shared some advice with you.

14) What additional experiences do you think could have helped better prepare you to be a CHEMBA student?

15) What else would you like to share about your experiences as a CHEMBA student?

I will begin the interview process by thanking the interviewee for taking the time to meet with me. In addition, I will share that "the questions I will be asking during our conversation focus on your experiences as a CHEMBA student in the classroom." Next, I will review the consent information sheet with them and ask if they have any questions. Before beginning the interview, I will ask the respondent if they are willing to have the conversation tape-recorded.

1) In which year did you graduate from the CHEMBA Program?

2) In which country did you grow up?

3) Before you joined CHEMBA, can you describe any experiences you had interacting with people from other cultures?

> (*If applicable*) What influence do you feel these experiences had on your studies in the CHEMBA Program?

4) When you began the CHEMBA Program, can you recall some of the expectations that you had?

> (*Prompt, if the interviewee has trouble remembering their initial expectations*) What, if anything, surprised you during your first semester?

5) Which of your expectations would you say were satisfied?

6) Which of your expectations would you say were not satisfied?

7) When you think about the Carlson School professors, how would you describe their teaching style?

> (*If the interviewee struggles with a response to this question*) When you think about the Carlson School professors, in which types of activities did they engage in the classroom?

8) How did the style of the Carlson School professors differ from the Chinese professors you have had in your educational experiences?

9) When you think about the CHEMBA students, how would you describe their learning style?

(*If the interviewee struggles with a response to this question*) When you think about the CHEMBA students in the classroom, in which types of activities did they engage?

10) How did the CHEMBA students differ from other classmates you have had in China?

11) What was it like to participate in an English-language program?

12) What would you say were some of the challenges you faced as a CHEMBA student?

(*If applicable*) How would you say you responded to these challenges?

13) What experiences helped prepare you for being a CHEMBA student?

(*If the interviewee struggles with a response to this question*) One example could be conversations with CHEMBA alumni who shared some advice with you.

14) What additional experiences do you think could have helped better prepare you to be a CHEMBA student?

15) What else would you like to share about your experiences as a CHEMBA student?

Appendix J: Classroom Observation Protocol

Time	Faculty Role	Student Role	Language