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Teacher Perceptions About Instructional Delivery for Chinese International Students

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Valerie Marchione

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Walden University
2019

Abstract

Teacher Perceptions About Instructional Delivery for Chinese International Students

By

Valerie Marchione

MA Sonoma State University, 1984

BA, Oregon State University, 1977

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

June 2019

Abstract

The problem that prompted this study was that teachers at a local private school were struggling to identify and implement appropriate instructional strategies to promote international student academic and social engagement. The purpose of this study was to examine teacher perceptions and experiences about instructing international students. The conceptual framework of this study was based on Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism. The research questions explored teachers' perceptions about their knowledge, experiences, and perceptions of students' school acculturation and teachers' instructional processes. A case study design was used to capture the insights of 12 high school teachers of international students through semistructured interviews; purposeful sampling was used to select participants. Emergent themes were identified through open coding, and the findings were developed and checked for trustworthiness through member checking and rich descriptions. The findings revealed that teachers perceived students need academic acculturation and that teachers need increased knowledge about integrating constructivist strategies. A professional development project was created to provide teachers with knowledge of Chinese educational practices, international student acculturation, and instructional strategies to promote international student engagement. This study has implications for positive social change by providing a structure to increase teacher knowledge and instructional approaches of acculturation strategies and learning experiences for international students.

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Dedication

This doctoral study is dedicated to my father, Alfred L. Bunting, the man of highest integrity I have ever known. Thank you for modeling for me what it means to give my best effort to every endeavor, to love Jesus, and trust Him with my path. Although you are not here, I know that you are proud of me and I thank you for teaching me to believe that I can achieve anything I am willing to work for. I miss you and thank you with all my heart.

For my children, Candace Lorraine, Stephanie Cheryl, and Curt Michael, thank you for always believing in me, encouraging me, and supporting me through this journey. You have walked with me every step of the way, cheering each milestone, and trusting that I would succeed. I pray I have made you proud. You are my greatest achievement, the joy and meaning of my life.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

The Institute of International Education (IIE, 2017) identified that the number of

high school international students in the United States (US) has tripled since 2004; as of

2017, there were approximately 84,000 international students, mostly from China and

other parts of Asia. International students are defined as students who come to the US to

enroll in school with the intent of earning a high school diploma, followed by admission

to an American university (Redden, 2014). While the statistics vary slightly between

databases, the influx of international students into the United States has increased the

need for U.S. high school educators and administrators to be prepared to meet the

academic needs of this growing high school student population. Teachers must be

educated and aware of the needs of first year international students for them to engage in

classroom instruction (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015). The need is specifically

pertinent to private high schools in California, Texas, and New York due to the large

percentage of Chinese international high school students who choose to attend private

schools in those states (IIE, 2014).

The problem that prompted this study is that teachers at a local private school

were struggling to identify and implement appropriate instructional strategies to promote

international student academic engagement. This local school has participated in a

Chinese international educational program for the past 6 years. Many of the teachers were

struggling to implement appropriate strategies to assist first year international students

with classroom engagement. In the local school, new international students were placed in regular classrooms, without adequate teacher preparation to accommodate their lack of English proficiency and without knowledge of specific instructional strategies that would aid new students' academic learning and engagement.

Students' Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) scores at the local site for 2017 indicated that the first-year international students scored as approaching benchmark or at benchmark in math scores, while the same first-year international students scored below benchmark on the reading and language portions of the 2017 PSAT test. In collaborative department meetings, teachers expressed concerns about how to help the international students, particularly in their first year when the students were most likely to feel overwhelmed and confused. The teachers expressly questioned how to encourage international students to integrate in the classroom with the domestic students, as well as how to encourage the international students to participate in class discussions and work on collaborative assignments. One teacher voiced her concerns about teaching her sophomore English class as a whole with grade level domestic students intermixed with international students with varying language competencies. She expressed concern that she did not know how to integrate the international students with the grade level classroom curriculum, or how to check for their understanding using classroom discussion. A math teacher stated, "There is not adequate preparation provided before the students are placed in their classrooms. I am expected to instantly integrate them into my classroom structure." Liu (2011) found that teachers of East Asian students in Canada

believed that student proficiency in a second target language would develop naturally through the immersion process, and they expected that students with extensive English learning experience in their home countries would easily acculturate both academically and socially.

In addition to the language barrier, the cultural gap experienced by many East Asian students presents significant challenges in terms of acculturating into Western academic and social systems (Liu, 2011). First-year international students frequently demonstrate difficulty with social and classroom interactions and written expression, due in large part to a lack of English proficiency, but also because of cultural tensions experienced as international students learn to navigate within their new cultural academic context (Tong, 2014). Sullivan and Kashubeck-West (2015) claimed that international students face unique challenges when faced with a culturally different academic environment. According to Campbell (2015), specific challenges faced by first year international students include the following: (a) they need to adapt more immediately to the new environment, (b) they are generally younger than other immigrant groups, (c) they arrive without family support, and (d) they are typically more immersed in the local culture upon arrival. Campbell (2015) noted that while international students at all levels are faced with unfamiliar teaching practices, communication challenges, and identity conflicts, school engagement depends on academic competence, language proficiency, and social relationships. In the local school, one teacher expressed the challenge of

assisting first year international students to acculturate with American students in the classroom:

> The international students tend to group together and not participate in active learning. I have tried integrated classroom seating and assigning intercultural partners and groups, but the first-year international students, especially from Asian countries, are not used to active classroom interaction. They only respond when given written work to complete.

> International students must acculturate to changes in culture, customs, and societal standards for behavior at school. Teachers of first year international students often lack the necessary teaching experiences and strategies to promote acculturation necessary for social engagement and classroom performance (Gao, 2012). As the local school continued to accept international students, the concern of the teachers regarding instructional methods to engage first year international students continued to be a topic of discussion at staff meetings. One teacher voiced her concerns about teaching her sophomore English class with grade level domestic students intermixed with international students of varying language competencies. She expressed concern that she did not know how to integrate the international students with the grade level classroom curriculum, or how to check for their understanding using classroom discussion. The need to transition to the new academic setting and culture can impact international student learning and response to instruction, especially when teachers are not fully prepared to meet the instructional needs of this growing student population (IIE, 2017).

Rationale

At a faculty meeting prior to the start of the 2016-2017 school year, a discussion occurred in which a consensus of teachers agreed that they lacked cultural knowledge regarding the international students' backgrounds that would aid them in helping students engage in expectations and practices of their American classrooms. One staff member explained that the new international students experienced difficulties with common classroom strategies such as group and partner work. Students said they were not allowed to talk in classrooms in China. They only took notes to prepare for the test. They seemed uncomfortable with student-teacher interactions, and were reluctant to ask questions for help or clarification. Teachers commented it would be helpful to have ideas regarding how to help them keep up with the class and engage in classroom interaction. The junior class English teacher expressed concern that the curriculum did not engage her first-year international students. She said that perhaps the curriculum and method of presentation should be changed for those students, but she did not know where or how to begin such changes.

Liu (2016) found that Chinese international university students struggle with specific challenges in American higher education related to acculturation including language proficiency, emotional issues, and American pedagogy. While there is much recent research offering insight into the instructional needs of university students, a search for studies related to middle school and high school international students revealed a lack of such research. Papaduik 2010) said, "There is a lack of academic literature that

addresses unaccompanied minors studying in Canada and the United States, despite the fact that these youths have unique concerns given their younger age and more vulnerable status" (p. 1523).

Papaduik (2010) suggested one reason for the lack of research focusing on adolescents may be the research ethics associated with youth, laws protecting minor children, and the complexity of review procedures associated with minors. While there may be a lack of scholarly research regarding younger international students, there is evidence of a growing interest in the subject. International students face challenges including differences in teaching styles and culturally accepted communication norms as they fulfill the academic demands of their institutions, and the instructor has a responsibility to be proficient in reaching and teaching their international students (Campbell, Strawser, & George, 2016). Roy (2013) argued that to understand cultural differences and avoid miscommunication in pedagogy for international students, it is important for American university professors to be cognizant of cultural differences and international students' learning styles. When American university professors incorporated these concepts to alter their teaching styles to meet the needs of international students, the students were more likely to achieve academic success and have an improved learning experience in US higher education (Roy).In his study of educational internationalization at an Australian university, Daniels (2013) noted educators expressed a sense of professional isolation from their peers when working with international students and indicated a willingness to participate in relevant PD and staff

collaboration. Educators agreed they felt a lack of administrative support for teachers' concerns that were not addressed by policy makers and a lack of relevant professional development (PD) opportunities (Daniels). These concerns were also expressed at agency meetings I attended in China in 2016 and 2017.

Each year teachers from private schools in California gather in cities throughout China to meet, collaborate, and visit Chinese schools to investigate both how to start and improve their schools' international programs. Frequently, the dialogue centers on the lack of information regarding best practices for middle and high school teachers of international students. There is very little completed research regarding international students at the high school level. This study may begin to add to the literature about international student education at the high school level. The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of social constructivist strategies to instruct first year Chinese international students and examine teachers' perceptions about professional needs to improve their instructional delivery.

Definition of Terms

The following defined terms are important to this research:

Acculturation: Acculturation is the process by which individuals adapt to a new culture: the experience of moving from the home culture to a new culture (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015).

Cultural gap: The cultural gap refers to pedagogical differences, language skills, and emotional issues first year international students encounter related to acculturation (Liu, 2016).

Institute of International Education (IIE): Each year, the IIE conducts a survey of the number of foreign students studying in American colleges and universities and U.S. students studying abroad. The results of these surveys are reported in the publication Open Doors.

International students: International students in this context are secondary students who come to the US to enroll in a high school with the intent of earning a high school diploma, followed by admission to an American university (Redden, 2014).

L1: Abbreviation for Language 1 used to refer to students participating in educational settings that are conducted in their native language (Ipak, 2009).

L2: Abbreviation for Language 2 used to refer to students participating in educational settings conducted in a second language, not their native language. Although L2 may be used to discuss immigrant students, or students who speak a language at home different than the classroom language, for the purposes of this study, L2 is used to reference international students whose primary language is not English.

Significance of the Study

As the number of Chinese international students in grades 6-12 increases, pedagogic knowledge and instructional strategies need to be acquired by the teachers who will be interacting with these students (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015). Most

completed research has been done at the university level, where inclusive classroom practices and professors' intercultural competence have been found to exert a critical role in creating a positive campus climate for international students. Papadiuk (2010) said that more research is needed to assist school personnel to become more culturally competent in working with international adolescent students. The site of this study involved teachers of Chinese first year international students in grades 9-12. The results of this study may offer insight into teachers' perceptions regarding what knowledge might assist teachers to engage students in grades 6-12 more effectively to enhance their academic performance. The local school had participated in a Chinese international educational program from 2009-2018. Outcomes of this study could serve as a future foundation to create staff development opportunities that may enable teachers to play a positive role in the acculturation process and increase international student academic performance. Providing teachers with the skills and strategies to support international students may contribute to positive social change by offering teachers the knowledge they need to help students engage academically and culturally during students' first year enrolled in a US school.

Research Questions

Teachers at the school expressed that they struggled in identifying and implementing appropriate strategies to assist first year international students engaged in the academic setting. First year Chinese international students were placed in regular classrooms, and many teachers felt unprepared to accommodate their lack of English

proficiency. Teachers expressed concern that they were not equipped with proper knowledge to assist students during the educational acculturation process.

The following research questions guided my study as I explored teachers' knowledge, experiences, and perceptions about students' school acculturation and attempted to identify skills and strategies that may be used to enhance instructional delivery for first year Chinese international students:

RQ1: How do teachers incorporate social constructivist strategies to instruct, engage, and acculturate first year Chinese international students?

RQ2: How do teachers of first year Chinese international students describe areas of need in their teaching practices that could promote academic engagement?

Review of the Literature

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study was based on Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism. Social constructivism acknowledges multiple realities as individuals bring their own experiences to a single context, accepting that the initial inquiry may change form as new realities are uncovered (Lodico et al., 2010). Educational settings and challenges are approached as complex wholes as researchers seek to understand the perspectives of the participants based on their previous experiences and cultural pedagogy.

Vygotsky's social constructivism theory emphasized the teacher and the classroom, where variables such as social interaction, culture, and language affect the

process of learning (Powell & Kalina, 2009). The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is one of the main concepts of sociocultural theory, founded on instructional practice where students who are cognitively ready are able to develop fully through guided interaction with their teachers (Vygotsky, 1978; Vygotsky & Kozulin, 2011). Social constructivism was relevant to this study because teachers of first year international students accepted that their students bring the social and cultural contexts of their prior educational experiences to their new educational setting. However, the teachers needed to focus less on what students learned in their previous classroom experiences and more on guiding the students' acculturation growth to adapt and learn. The social constructivist view supported the importance of student-teacher interaction and the proposed study regarding teacher reflections and assessment of the efficacy of their instructional strategies with first year international students. Effectively exploring teachers' perceptions of international students' academic proficiencies depends on the ability of the teachers to reflect on their teaching practices and strategies within the context of student responses. Within the context of constructivism, I approached this inquiry from the perspective of high school teachers' of first-year international Chinese students.

This conceptual framework related to the instructional strategies needed for first year international students to engage in their new academic environment. The integration of international students was more likely to be achieved when teachers demonstrate adaptations to meet the needs of students by creating environments which are characterized by inclusive attitudes towards cultural diversity. Within educational

institutions, teachers have difficulty helping students engage as they struggle with instructional strategies that meet the needs of students from different cultures (Berry, 2005).

The problem that prompted this study was that teachers at a local private school were struggling to identify and implement appropriate instructional strategies to promote international student academic engagement. The challenge for teachers was to incorporate appropriate strategies into their instructional practices for first year international students. I approached this inquiry from the viewpoint of teachers' perceptions and experiences with international students. This aligned with the research questions that guided the data collection and developed logically from Vygotsky's concept of ZPD, defined as the difference between actual development determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development determined through problem solving with adult guidance. The guidance provided by the teacher should correspond to the knowledge and skills of the learner that are influenced by previous cultural and educational experiences (Hawley, 2007).

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of social constructivist strategies to instruct first year Chinese international students and examine teachers' perceptions about professional needs to improve their instructional delivery. Teachers of first year international students accepted that their students bring social and cultural contexts of their prior educational experiences to their new educational setting, and the social constructivist view supported the proposed study of teacher

reflections and assessment of the efficacy of their instructional strategies with first year international students. Vygotsky's conceptual framework of social constructivism provided the foundation for this study because it offered a framework for assessing and understanding the way teachers interact with first year international students. The empirical implication of this study may be that data derived from teachers' perceptions and experiences can be used to understand and improve teachers' instructional strategies for first year international students.

Review of the Broader Problem

This literature review presented a critical summary and analysis of current literature that described the challenges of international student acculturation and evaluated effective teaching strategies to promote acculturation of first year international students. First, I reviewed the literature indicating the demographic trends of students coming to study at US high schools. Second, I reviewed the concept of acculturation and acculturation needs of first year international students as they adjusted to the US educational setting. Finally, I explored current literature regrading best practices and teaching strategies that have proven to be effective in promoting acculturation for first year international students.

To search for literature sources, I used the Educational Resources Information Center, Google Scholar, and SAGE databases available at Walden University. During the searches, the following keywords were used: *international student acculturation*, *first year international student experiences*, *international student trends*, *teacher perceptions*

of international students, *teaching strategies for international students*, *best practices for teaching international students*, and *educational integration of international students*. Except for teacher perceptions and teaching strategies, each of the search terms provided between 30-50 sources of relevant current scholarly research to support the study. Sources provided information regarding trends in international education and the experiences and reflections of international students, primarily at the university level. When I used the terms teacher perceptions, best practices, and teacher experiences, either independently or in conjunction with other related search terms, fewer responses were returned, and those that were returned often linked to research with university level international students. Only seven sources addressing teaching strategies and teacher perceptions of first year international students at the high school level were initially retrieved. Broadening the search to include the term best practices identified three additional resources. For the purposes of my study, searches using the term acculturation were most effective when used in conjunction with education. Combining the terms acculturation and education eliminated research that focused on other types of acculturation such as those experienced by immigrants or refugees. Research on student acculturation in the educational setting appeared most often in content aligned with psychological assessments of individual performances and comparative studies of international educational settings.

Demographic Trends in International Education

The number of first year international high school students has significantly increased in since 2004 and global mobility of secondary students studying in the US is a growing trend predicted to continue (Cho & Yu, 2015; Farrugia, 2014; Hackett, 2014; IIE, 2014; IIE, 2016). The rate of secondary students coming to the US to earn a high school diploma tripled from 2004 to 2013, while the number of short-term exchange students grew only 13% during the same time frame (Farrugia, 2014). Enrollment patterns for international secondary students indicate that most US high schools emphasize enrolling either international students seeking a diploma or short-term exchange students, but not both, and diploma-seeking students are more likely to enroll in private high schools (Farrugia, 2014). Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) reported 966,333 students with student visa status studying in the U.S. with 28% of F1 students originating from China (SEVP, 2016). From 2005 to 2010, the number of Chinese students studying at American private high schools rose from 65 to 6,725, a large increase, primarily due to middle class Chinese families sending their children to study at private U.S. high schools (Gao, 2012). Consistently increasing numbers of international students, particularly from Asian countries with a growing middle class, are going to study in the United States at younger and younger ages (Farrugia, 2014).

Of the more than 300,000 Chinese students studying in the US, approximately 16,000 are studying at the high school level (IIE, 2016). There is a belief among Chinese families that education abroad will equate with success in their home country, and

students are attracted by perceptions of a better education and greater opportunities in the US than in China (Gao, 2012). A diploma earned in a western country such as the US represents a superior accomplishment over one earned in the home country as experience abroad is a critical element of upward mobility in China (Yan & Berliner, 2011; Wadsworth, Hecht, & Jung, 2008). Students from East Asia have a strong motivation to invest in Western education because they believe it will best prepare them for later successful careers and hope that studying abroad at the secondary level offers the academic, language, and cultural foundations that will aid in acceptance to Western universities (Farrugia, 2014).

Beginning in 1978, international scholar and technological exchanges have been actively promoted by China to increase educational exchange between China and the US (Yan & Berliner, 2011). The IIE reported 328,548 students from China studying in the US, an increase of 8.1% from the previous year. China has sent the highest number of students to study in the US every year since 2007, with South Korea ranking fourth, Vietnam sixth, and Taiwan seventh (IIE, 2016). When China began its policy of international scholarly and technological exchange in the late 1970s, the number of Chinese students studying in the US was nearly zero. Ten years later, the number of Chinese students studying in the US had increased to approximately 20,000, and by 2007, international education had become the fifth largest service export in the US (Yan & Berliner, 2011). International students contributed $35 billion dollars to the US economy, with China accounting for $11.43 billion dollars (IIE, 2016).

Asian students make up the largest proportion of international students at both secondary and postsecondary institutions, while students from India and Saudi Arabia are more likely to come to the US as university students and be less present in the high school population (Farrugia, 2014). Farrugia (2014) attributed this to the Saudi government's scholarship program that subsidizes study in the US at the postsecondary level, as well as India's strong English language secondary education that prepares students for university admission abroad. Students from Mexico and Latin America account for 10% of secondary international students in the US, and generally study in the US through short-term cultural exchange programs, rather than longer term diploma-seeking programs (IIE, 2014). While the number of international students coming to study in the US continues to grow, America's proportional share of the international student market may face competition as other international study destinations compete for students. Russia, China, Singapore, and Malaysia are becoming international student destinations in addition to international education hubs in the Middle East (de Wit et al., 2013).

An F1 Student Visa is issued to students attending a full-time degree or academic program at an approved school, college, or university, and is valid for as long as it takes the student to finish his or her course of study (Department of Homeland Security, 2017). Most international high school students are admitted with an F1 visa allowing long term study leading to a diploma or degree, rather than a J1 visa that allows students to only attend a short-term cultural exchange program (de Wit, Ferencs, & Rumbley, 2013; IIE,

2014;). High school enrollment patterns between J1 exchange students and F1 international students vary by state and region, and the enrollment patterns are related to the availability of programs in the area. F1 international students are most likely to be enrolled in secondary schools in California or on the East Coast, while the Midwest enrolls the largest proportions of J1 exchange students. Farrugia (2014) attributed the enrollment patterns of F1 students to the host states being more active in international education from secondary to postgraduate levels. Seventy percent of international secondary students enroll at private schools with fewer than 300 students (Farrugia, 2014).

International secondary students studying in Anglophone countries share a motivation to earn a diploma that will serve as entry to postsecondary education in the host country or other Anglophone country (Farrugia, 2014). Personal motivation and cultural considerations are factors in choosing a location for international study. Reasons that international postsecondary students chose Canadian universities included visa approval, a sense of safety compared with other Anglophone countries, and perceptions of multiculturalism and lack of discrimination in the host country (Cheng & Fox, 2008). History and geography also impact student choices for studying abroad. Students from Hong Kong are likely to study in the United Kingdom because of historical ties, while Australia has a geographical advantage for Asian students (Farrugia, 2014).

Douglass and Eidelstein (2009) stated that with a perceived rise in quality and prestige of European Union (EU) education, the US would no longer be viewed as the

primary option for studying abroad. While the US, UK, and Australia remain the leading host countries for international students, comparatively, the US currently hosts nearly three times the number of students compared to Canada and the United Kingdom, and more than four times as many as Australia at the secondary level (IIE, 2014).

Experiences of First Year International Students

When international students enter US schools, they must learn to interact with the larger host group and gain intercultural competence. Acculturative stress is one challenge new international students face when encountering differences in terms of social and cultural norms, as well as contextual lifestyle differences regarding food, education, language, and communication between their home and host countries (Hackett, 2014). International students experience behavioral and acculturation challenges when they first enter a new country. The outcomes of social and cultural challenges involving language, food, and education are influenced by the extent to which students choose to acculturate or remain separate from the host culture (Campbell, 2015). Bertram, Poulakis, Elsasser, and Kumar (2014) said study participants expressed difficulties with understanding and speaking English during the acculturative process, and reported that language difficulties impeded their participation in social situations. As a result of the language barrier, international Chinese students expressed a sense of disconnection and isolation from their peers and surroundings, particularly in terms of their ability to engage socially and contextually (Bertram et al., 2014).

The acculturation needs of international students differ from other acculturating groups in terms of the challenge to adapt more immediately to a new cultural and academic environment without a family support network (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015). International students often have fewer resources for educational, social, and cultural integration within the host society (Cho & Hongsik, 2015). In contrast, Chinese immigrant students arriving in the US as teens face the same challenges of sociocultural adaptation, but have greater immediate family and social support outside of the school environment (Tong, 2014). According to Berry (2005), immigrants can retain critical elements of their first culture during the process of integration with the host culture. Immigrant students live with their families, often within a community of people who share their native culture and can retain the values and beliefs of their primary culture as a support while establishing intercultural relationships with American teachers and peers (Tong, 2014).

Academic practice, or pedagogy, provides the framework in which international student learning occurs, and the critical role of teachers in facilitating the learning experience (Kettle, 2011). International students at all educational levels experience new styles of teaching practice, language barriers, and acculturation issues. Yan and Berliner (2011) observed that academic achievement is an honor to the family, and dedication to scholarship is both a personal and cultural goal for Chinese international students. Chinese international students identified academic success as their greatest concern and primary goal when studying in the US (Yan & Berliner, 2009).

Much of the previous research has focused on international students at the university level, with relatively few studies examining the acculturation processes of students at the high school level. Cheng and Fox (2008) identified several ways L2 university students struggle, including the time required to complete academic work, experiencing higher levels of anxiety and shyness when asking for help, and challenges in group-based learning formats. Sharif and Osterling, (2011) noted that students from China attending American institutions of higher education found their oral and written English language proficiency inadequate for participation in US classrooms. Even though participating students had studied English in their home country, the participants indicated they struggled with speaking academic English, understanding lectures, participating in class discussions, and making oral presentations (Sharif & Osterling, 2011). Communication is a critical element of acculturation and a basic tool of social communication and information exchange (Yeh et al., 2008).

Acculturative stress has been linked with the level of social support from the host country, and intentionally developing connections with the host country can reduce acculturative stress and encourage successful adaptation for international students in the US (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015). Developing social peer relationships provides opportunities to practice social and language skills that contribute positively to acculturation. International doctoral students at a US university reported involvement in campus student organizations promoted interaction with students who shared similar interests and experiences as a valuable acculturation support (Campbell, 2015).

Relationships that impact international student acculturation are most likely to occur in settings such as class or spiritual organizations, shared housing, or other student associations that involve repeated meetings between members (McFaul, 2016). International students who develop relationships with host-country students are more likely to experience successful acculturation. However, it is more difficult for international students to initiate and to maintain relationships with host-country students than for domestic students to develop relationships with host-country students. (McFaul, 2016). Bertam et al. (2014) reported that Chinese international students expanded their host country contact groups, but in response to acculturative stressors they continued to rely on their Chinese family and friends as their primary source of social support. Chinese students said they liked the idea of a mentor or peer who could be contacted, yet the Chinese international students were more likely to seek a more experienced Chinese student instead of the assigned mentor (Heng, 2015). Students reported they felt more empathy from other Chinese students and were reluctant to impose on their host country mentor (Heng 2015). When teachers and students share a cultural frame of reference, they communicate and interact with relative comfort as both are familiar with the language and cultural norms of classroom interaction. When cultural disparities are present problems in classroom communication are more likely to occur (Wadsworth et al., 2008). Cultural differences in pedagogy can contribute to international students' perceptions of their academic performance (Lin, 2012; Ren & Hagedorn, 2012). Students from China, where teachers are respected as academic authority figures, may struggle in

the more interactive style of western student-teacher pedagogy (Lin, 2012). Student-teacher relationships may differ from the teacher-student relationships in a student's home country (Cheng & Fox, 2008). International students encounter not only difficulties in language fluency, but also struggles with cultural differences in western-educational practices including expectations for essay writing and oral presentations (Daniels, 2013). Instructors at University of California campuses reported writing was a challenge for their international students because their previous instruction had emphasized test-taking rather than writing (Ferris, Jensen, & Wald, 2015).

If a student has been accustomed to a lecture-and-exam style of learning, participating in a class where discussion is the norm can cause identity conflict (Wadsworth et al., 2008). During the acculturation process, individuals must adapt to the environment and the requirements of the host culture. Western education educators employ a dialogic learning model where knowledge is constructed and assessed through a highly verbal and interactive process (Hodkinson & Poropat, 2014). However, for Chinese students, the practice of volunteering answers, commenting, or asking questions may produce feelings of inappropriate boldness or immodesty (Hodkinson & Poropat, 2014). Successful acculturation is positively linked with education satisfaction, while perceived discrimination, homesickness, and fear can act as barriers to acculturation and negatively influence the quality of educational experiences for international students (Wadsworth et al., 2008).

Best Practices and Teaching Strategies for Teachers of First Year International Students

Pedagogical differences present significant challenges for first year international students. When Chinese international students enter western culture educational institutions the students may struggle with educational formats where teachers expect the international students to engage in learning through oral, written, and visual communication (Campbell et al., 2016). International Chinese students have reported feeling less smart when compared with their American peers because they were unfamiliar with the American educational system and teaching styles (Lin, 2012). International students often experience anxiety and are reluctant to engage in classroom discussions because they lack confidence in speaking in the language of the host country and interacting with native speakers (Kettle, 2011). Classroom communication extends beyond speaking and includes western mannerisms such as eye contact, gestures, and vocal inflections that may differ from students' primary cultures. These mannerisms can influence students' abilities to learn and can interfere with instructors' abilities to assess learning (Campbell, 2016). Acculturation confusion has been associated with unfamiliar teaching and learning cues that Chinese students encounter and often misinterpret in western classrooms (Heng, 2017). Chinese international students reported struggling when faced with unfamiliar styles of assessment, curriculum expectations, and teacher-student relationships (Wu, 2015). Chinese international students at American universities noted greater cultural differences than expected, especially when contrasting the

interactive teaching style of American pedagogy with the lecture-based style prevalent in

China (Bertram et al., 2014).

University professors of international students have professed confusion and

frustration in the challenge of teaching students with limited understanding of both the

English language and western educational processes (Daniels, 2013). Teachers of

international students must be cognizant of different pedagogical practices that

international students may have experienced in their home countries which could affect

learning and assessment in the host culture. One area of students' misunderstanding

relates to participation in classroom learning and teaching activities. Chinese student

experiences are often based on a system of questioning where students answer only when

they can demonstrate a confident degree of knowledge. Chinese student experiences

contrast with the experiences of western students who are accustomed to responding from

the beginning of the learning process (Hodkinson & Poropat, 2014). Hodkinson and

Poropat (2014) referred to the idea of *power distance* for the Chinese learners. Power

distance refers to the behavior of students when they perceive a gulf between themselves

and teachers that creates a reluctance to ask questions that may appear to question the

authority of the teacher. For international Chinese students, the change in balance

between students and teachers is a confusing shift of teacher authority from teaching to

individual student learning (Wu, 2015). The cultural concept of *face* means a Chinese

student may avoid answering a question posed in front of the class for fear of giving the

wrong answer (Wu, 2015). Chinese international students may also fear asking a

clarifying question in front of a group for fear of loss of face (Hodkinson & Poropat, 2014).

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In a survey of what they would like their western teachers to know, student respondents requested that teachers consider the backgrounds of Chinese students in their teaching practices and assessments (Heng, 2017). Wu (2015) revealed that Chinese students studying abroad for the first time identified classroom participation, group learning, teaching style, and assessments as specific challenges. Because they had previously been provided with answers from their teachers as authority figures, Chinese students often did not understand the point of western teaching approaches including group work, questioning, and class discussions. Unfamiliar classroom situations can be mediated for Chinese international students when teachers take the time to explain, equip, and engage students in the new learning style (Wu, 2015). International Chinese students also reported an emphasis on critical thinking as a defining element of learning in western schools (Kettle, 2011). One Chinese student described the difference as western students being good thinkers, and Chinese students being good students (Kettle, 2011).

Host country teachers must realize their international students encounter specific social and academic acculturation challenges that their domestic students do not face (Chue & Nie, 2016). Academic acculturation challenges include minimal social support and connectedness, lack of language proficiency, and unfamiliarity with the host country learning system (Chue & Nie, 2016). The expectation that international students will

quickly adapt to the new academic culture is a source of acculturative stress for new international students. Because international students live away from family and friends, social support offered by the host school plays an important role in reducing stress caused by cultural adaptation (Cho & Yu, 2015). Teachers and administrators at UC campuses evaluated curricular change and instructional strategies in response to increased enrollment of international students, particularly from China (Ferris et al., 2015). Ferris et al. (2015) reported that some respondents in their study complained that the international undergraduate students were unprepared for the course requirements. However, they also observed that effective teaching requires ongoing PD in assessment practices and other pedagogical concerns. Teachers can assist international students to acculturate by (a) providing opportunities to develop more diverse social networks; (b) clarifying classroom and academic expectation through discussion; (c) encouraging a variety of connections to the campus and local community; and (d) promoting an accepting classroom environment (Kashubeck-West, 2015).

Asian students generally have a high regard for their teachers and that developing and maintaining a close relationship with teachers positively influenced their school performance (Lin, 2012). International college students identified study groups, tutors, friends, and mentors as support sources in the acculturation process and expressed a need for help learning how to make friends and interact effectively with host country students (Cheng & Fox, 2008). Chinese international students at American universities expressed a need for a support system to help them cope with the new environment (Lin, 2012).

International students were more likely to participate in classroom activities and discussion when teachers promoted classroom inclusion and emphasized the importance of student contributions (Glass et al., 2015). When teachers created opportunities for one-on-one time with students, the students felt encouraged to participate more actively in class (Glass et al, 2015; Lin, 2012).

Conclusion

Researchers have determined that Chinese international students experience challenges as they acculturate to new academic and social environments (Campbell, 2015; Heng, 2017; Sharif & Osterling, 2011; Tong, 2014; Wu, 2015). However, instructors who teach international students are not always aware of their students' acculturative struggles or the influence learning environments may have on the acculturation process and academic success (Cho & Yu, 2015; Daniels, 2013; Heng, 2017; Liu, 2016). First year international students face differences in classroom pedagogy, teacher-student relationships, and assessment requirements. Teachers often express feelings of being unprepared to help their international students navigate the cultural and academic expectations that will provide for their successful acculturation. Providing teachers with knowledge of international student acculturation is an essential component of the teacher's ability to help students engage and achieve academically in US schools.

Implications

This study had implications for private schools that already host or seek to institute an international program. Most referenced research focused on international students at the university and post-graduate levels that provided useful background data for the overall challenge of helping international students to acculturate. But research on students at the college and post-graduate level does not specifically generalize to student needs at the secondary level (Lin, 2012: Tong, 2014). As younger students without family support, first year international students depend on the social institution of the school and staff to facilitate the acculturation process (Tong, 2014). The findings of this study may be used to inform decisions about what PD may best support classroom teachers to help their international students acculturate both socially and academically within the educational setting.

International students experience behavioral and acculturation challenges when they first enter a new country. An additional implication is recognizing the need for host country teachers to understand the cultural responses of first year international students within the educational setting. Recognizing cultural responses involves understanding the pedagogical differences between Chinese and American educational styles, and the ways these differences influence student responses. Acculturation confusion has been associated with unfamiliar teaching and learning cues that Chinese students encounter in western classrooms (Heng, 2017). The results of this study may provide information to equip teachers to recognize the cultural responses of their international Chinese students

that may impact classroom behavior and learning. Administrators, educators, and school counselors may be informed of the unique acculturative stressors encountered by first year international students and develop possible strategies for helping students to deal with identified stressors.

In her research with adolescent international students Papadiuk (2010) noted the "paucity of studies conducted with unaccompanied adolescent international students," (p. 1523). It is my belief that the same need exists at the secondary level for educators who work with the growing population of international high school students, particularly Chinese students who represent the largest population of international high school students. The results of this study may yield information about teachers' perceptions and experiences about instructing international students which could be used to understand and improve teachers' instructional delivery to support first year Chinese international high school students' academic engagement.

Summary

The number of first year international high school students in the US is a growing trend predicted to continue (Cho & Yu, 2015; Farrugia, 2014; Hackett, 2014; IIE, 2014; IIE, 2016). Yet teachers of first year international students often feel unprepared to assist their international students integrate culturally and succeed academically when the students are mainstreamed upon arrival. When teachers engage international students with effective teaching strategies the students are prepared to successfully acculturate and perform academically. Teachers are essential to the internalization of student academic

learning (Kettle, 2011). To bridge the cultural gaps between international students and school academic and social cultures, educators need the necessary skills to help their students succeed academically (Lin, 2012). The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of social constructivist strategies to instruct first year Chinese international students and to examine teachers' perceptions about professional needs to improve their instructional delivery. Teachers and principals at the local site expressed a desire for PD regarding best practices for instructing international students. The Director of Admissions prepared packets on the educational background of each international student including personal hobbies and interests outside of school. The teachers responded that they would like more specific instructional coaching. Collected data may reveal PD opportunities that could enhance teachers' instructional delivery to support academic achievement for first year Chinese international students. Results of this study may be used to investigate PD opportunities that may offer insight that could enhance teachers' instructional delivery to support first year Chinese international students' academic engagement.

Section 2: The Methodology

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

Researchers use qualitative methods to investigate problems in a systematic manner to provide evidence about how people interpret their world or construct their experiences (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative research seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of a specific population and is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of the involved population (Creswell, 2012). In a qualitative study, the researcher seeks to gather abundant data that provides rich, detailed descriptions within specific social contexts. Although defining specific social contexts takes precedence over larger generalization of the results, case studies can be used to generate and test hypotheses (Merriam, 2009).

Qualitative researchers are concerned with the underlying meaning that offers insight into how people view their own lives (Lodico et al., 2010). Researchers choose case study design because it offers a detailed examination of a single setting, subject, or event (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of social constructivist strategies to instruct first year Chinese international students and examine teachers' perceptions about professional needs to improve their instructional delivery. I selected a qualitative case study design that allowed me to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences in depth by collecting data through semistructured interviews.

In this study of teachers' perceptions and experiences with international students' acculturation, I explored a single phenomenon in a real-life local context. Employing a case study design, I was able to identify themes and patterns that emerged from the analysis of collected data. The research design developed logically from Vygotsky's concept of ZPD that emphasizes the role of the teacher as one whose instructional strategies corresponded to the international students' previous experiences and frames of reference.

RQ1: How do teachers incorporate social constructivist strategies to instruct, engage, and acculturate first year Chinese international students?

RQ2: How do teachers of first year Chinese international students describe areas of need in their teaching practices that could promote academic engagement?

A variety of qualitative methods were considered before selecting case study as the most appropriate option for this study. I explored ethnography as a possibility, but I did not choose it because it emphasizes the firsthand experience of a cultural group based on note-taking and observation. The purpose of the data collection was to identify teachers' perceptions about strategies that may enhance instructional delivery to support first year Chinese international students' academic engagement. I did not choose a narrative design because the number of participants in the study exceeds a practical number of participants for a narrative study. Grounded theory was not chosen for this study because grounded theory does lead to understanding of a phenomenon but seeks to build a theory about the topic (Merriam, 2009). Case studies place emphasis on processes

rather than outcomes. The emphasis on process allows discovery where the researcher does not know the variables (Creswell, 2012).

A case study allowed me to conduct an in-depth exploration of a bounded system. In this study, the case was about teachers' approaches to student acculturation, and the bounded system for this study was the local private school from which the participants were selected. The case study was chosen as the most appropriate method for this study because it could be used to explore in depth teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding international students' acculturation and what PD opportunities might enhance teachers' instructional delivery to first year Chinese international students. According to Vygotsky's framework of social constructivism, teachers must reduce the emphasis on students' previous classroom experiences and focus more on guiding the students through the educational acculturation process. Within the context of constructivism, effectively exploring teachers' perceptions of international students' academic proficiencies depends on the teachers' ability to reflect on their teaching practice and strategies within the context of student response, an approach that is within the social constructive framework.

Participants

Criteria for Selecting Participants

All high school teachers at the local school study site who currently had first year international students in their classes were invited to participate in the study. At the local school site, first year international students were immediately immersed in classes with domestic students. At the school site where the study took place, first year international

students were immediately immersed in classes with domestic students, and there were

no classes with only international students. Acculturation refers to the specific

challenges of first year international students to adapt and integrate into a new

educational, social, and cultural environment which occurs when international students

are placed in classes with domestic students (Campbell, 2015). International students who

are not integrated with domestic students do not face the same challenges in terms of

academic and social integration (Papadiuk, 2010). Each potential participant was

provided with a copy of the informed consent agreement for review. Potential

participants were provided with my phone and email contact information to ask questions

about the study, requirements, or consent form. According to Creswell (2009), the choice

of sample size in qualitative studies should be driven by the desire to reach data

saturation rather than the need to generalize the findings to a larger population. Data

saturation occurs when the data collection process fails to reveal new and significant

additions from the participants (Creswell, 2009). Although the number of participants

needed to reach saturation depends on the context of the study, Creswell (2009)

suggested that on average, saturation can be achieved with 10-12 participants. The target

was for 10-12 participants to take part in this study.

Justification for the Number of Participants

The school site for the study was a tuition-based private school with a student

population of 200 students in grades 9-12. The school was located in a suburban town of

approximately 100,000 residents located in the West Coast. It was the only private high

school in the immediate area. Of the total high school student population, 36 were

international students. The international student population consisted of three Korean

students, two Vietnamese students, two Ukrainian students, and 29 students from China.

Thirteen of the Chinese students were first year international students in grades 9-11. The

school did not accept first year international students for grade 12. The faculty consisted

of 15 teachers for grades 9-11. First year international students were enrolled in all

subject areas, including advanced and AP classes. Students from different countries

experienced differing educational systems, practices, and expectations prior to studying

in the US. Focusing on teachers' perceptions of first year international Chinese students

in a western suburban school setting helped maintain the integrity and validity of the

data, reflecting teachers' perceptions of a specific population and first year international

students who reflect a specific cultural context. Because the site of this study had an

international student population that is 80% Chinese, I decided that focusing on that

population would elicit the most consistent data.

Creswell (2012) defined *purposeful sampling* as selecting the site or participants

that will most help the researcher understand the problem and the research question. I

used a purposeful sampling method to select 12 teachers who had both domestic and first

year international Chinese students in their classes. A purposeful sampling of 12

participants allowed me to gather enough data to gain the perceptions and experiences of

teachers of first year international students about classroom engagement and about PD

opportunities teachers feel could enhance instructional delivery.

Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants

I first obtained a letter of cooperation from the Head of School. I then discussed the study with the school principal and obtained a signed letter of cooperation. After receiving approval from the Head of School and the principal, I began the process of obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Walden University. The IRB approval verified my design to provide an ethical research design and to protect the study participants. Once all approvals were received, I began the process of seeking teachers to participate in the study. Teacher email addresses were available for initial contact through the school's public website. I sent an initial email invitation to all high school teachers at the local research site who taught first year international Chinese students. A copy of the informed consent agreement was sent along with the invitation. Prospective participants responded by email indicating by "I consent," if they agreed to participate. Potential participants were asked to provide a personal email, not affiliated with the school website for future communication. I accepted the first 12 high school teachers who accepted my email invitation and were teachers of first year Chinese international students. There were no additional acceptance responses.

Establishing Researcher-Participant Relationships

As the researcher, I was responsible to collect and analyze data about teachers' perceptions and experiences of international students' acculturation and of PD opportunities which could enhance teachers' instructional delivery to support first year Chinese international students' engagement. Before I initiated contact with potential

participants, I obtained the approval of the Head of School, the school principal, and Walden University's IRB. For this study, researcher-participant relationships were established based on current professional interactions within the school where the study took place. Each participant was a high school teacher who instructed classes that included first year international Chinese students. Teachers indicated they were willing to share their perceptions and experiences of instructing classes that included first year international Chinese students. Participation in the study was voluntary. I accepted 12 high school teachers of international students to participate in the study. Participants were provided with my contact information and were able to contact me at any time throughout the course of the study. The informed consent document stated that participants could withdraw from the study at any time.

As the Dean of Academics at the study site, I participated in the development of the school's International Student Program since 2012. Since 2015 I served as the Co-Director of the International Summer Immersion Program. With the International Program Director I made two trips to China, visiting schools and meeting with agencies in China who facilitated sending students in grades 6-11 to study in the US. I had no supervisory position with either the international students, or their American teachers at any time. My work with the program development fostered a desire to see the program continue to grow and to investigate opportunities that would enhance the experiences of the international students while they are at our school.

Ethical Protection of Participants

Participants were assured of ethical protection and confidentiality when they agreed to participate in the study. Ethical considerations included confidentiality of the data collected and protection from repercussions related to their teaching status based on collected data. Measures for ethical protection of participants included the following: (a) informing participants of the purpose of the study; (b) sharing the purpose of the study with participants; (c) conducting meetings in the private College Resource Counseling room in a spirit of collaboration and respect; (d) respecting the participation of the participants by listening without judgement or leading responses; (e) using ethical interview practices; (f) maintaining confidentiality and anonymity through the use of participant numbers rather than names; and (g) securing all data collected.

Participants selected by purposeful sampling were notified by email of their acceptance into the study. Personal emails were provided by the participants, and no communication occurred through school email following the invitation to participate. All study information was kept confidential and stored on a password-secured computer. All documents, transcriptions, tape recordings, and flash-drive storage units were stored in a locked safe at my home. Records were maintained for the required period of 5 years after the completion of the study.

Data Collection

Qualitative data is conveyed through words, especially direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, and feelings (Merriam, 2009). The process of

collecting qualitative data includes identifying the participants and types of data to be collected, as well as identifying the procedures for recording the data (Creswell, 2012). The technique used to collect the data, as well as the information that is considered data for the study, are determined by the researcher's theoretical orientation, by the purpose and problem of the study, and by the population sample (Merriam, 2009). Case study researchers focus on programs or activities involving individuals to develop an in-depth understanding of the case (Creswell, 2012). One way the detailed information required for case studies can be gathered is through interviews (Creswell, 2009). The most common and most accurate method of preserving data for analysis is to audio record the interview (Merriam, 2009). Merriam suggested a numbered transcription format for clarity with identifying information at the top of each page. Member checking, a process for participants to provide feedback on the consistency of emerging data, is a final step in ensuring internal validity and credibility of the study (Merriam, 2009).

After I received approval from the Head of School, the school principal, and Walden University's IRB and after I received participants' signed consent forms, I began collecting data. I followed Merriam's (2009) guide to conducting effective interviews, using semistructured interviews to collect data from a purposeful sample of 12 teachers of first year Chinese international students. I developed interview questions that aligned with the research questions and conceptual framework in advance as recommended by Merriam (2009). Interview questions and probing questions were prepared in advance, and the semistructured interview model allowed me to modify the questions for

clarification in response to the interview. I asked the participants for permission to audio record the interview for later transcription to increase the accuracy of the data analysis. I took written notes during the interviews to record my reactions to the participant's comments or nonverbal cues for later reflection. All documents, transcriptions, recordings, and flash-drive storage units were stored in a locked safe at my home. Records were maintained for the required period of 5 years.

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of social constructivist strategies to instruct first year Chinese international students and to examine teachers' perceptions about professional needs to improve their instructional delivery. The teachers' perceptions were significant because their perceptions may contribute to finding ways to enhance teachers' instructional delivery. Semistructured individual interviews were conducted to elicit individual participant's personal perceptions. In the semistructured format the interviewer can guide the data collection process, but also change the order, omit, or vary the wording of the questions depending on the direction of the discussion (Lodico et al., 2010). Participants were informed of confidentiality and asked permission to record the interviews for later transcription. My interview model consisted of semistructured interview questions that addressed the research questions to collect rich data that reflected individual perceptions and actions of the participants (see Appendix B).

RQ1: How do teachers incorporate social constructivist strategies to instruct, engage, and acculturate first year Chinese international students?

RQ2: How do teachers of first year international students describe areas of need in their teaching practices that could promote academic engagement?

Interviews took place after school hours to provide enough time for the interviews without distractions. For the convenience of the participants, I offered the option of meeting in one of the private, secure conference rooms at the school site which was accepted by all the 12 participants. Semi-structured interviews were scheduled at the participants' convenience and lasted approximately 45-60 minutes. No participant needed to cancel and reschedule an interview time.

Researchers have also identified a good strategy is to process, analyze, and clarify shared information immediately upon concluding an interview (Merriam, 2009). I recorded each interview with a voice recorder and later transcribed the interviews for content analysis. I implemented this data collection approach because it provided the best data to address the research questions by collecting rich data that reflected individual perceptions and actions.

Creswell (2009) stated that data collection is an ongoing process of continual reflection, where the researcher asks analytical questions and keeps written logs or journals throughout the data collection process. I wrote field notes during the interviews to notate my responses to the oral and more subjective physical responses to the questions. These included tones of voices, hesitations, or emphasis in the participants' responses. I kept a reflective journal to emerging themes and related the collected data to ideas and findings in literature as suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (2007).

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher I collected, analyzed, interpreted, and reported findings related to the research problem. I was an employee of the school where the study took place. I was a teacher at the school for 23 years, working at different times in the elementary, middle school, and high school departments. As Dean of Academic Studies, I oversaw the accreditation procedures for all departments of the school from Early Childhood Education through High School. I met with the principals of the individual schools to review and evaluate the Scope and Sequence for each school and subject area. I also reviewed the yearly overviews submitted by the teachers to the principals for each grade level and subject area. I worked directly with the principals who then decided if and how to implement any suggested updates. I was acquainted with many of the teachers at the school due to my years of employment, but I had no direct interactive or supervisory role with principals or teachers. As the Dean of Academics, I was responsible for maintaining our accreditation status, updating the EE-Grade 12 Scope and Sequences, and working with the International Program Director to facilitate the International Study Program. I did not supervise, evaluate, or manage any teachers or administrators at the study site. As the co-director of the Summer Immersion Institute for first year international students, I did have prior knowledge of the local problem. As the Dean of Academics, I received academic progress reports of the international students. Chinese international students at the site consistently scored above the domestic students in math, but struggled with

sciences, history, and English classes which was indicated by their grades and their need for additional outside tutoring to maintain the pace of these classes.

Yin (2014) contended that biases on the part of the researcher may invalidate the research. Merriam (2009) suggested that the researcher should adopt an exploratory mindset, be sensitive to any personal preconceptions, and implement good communication skills with an awareness of the topic of the study. Throughout the interview process I made every effort to avoid bias based on my personal experience and perceptions. I had previous ideas about what constituted quality instruction for Chinese international students. Prior to the interviews, I wrote down my own answers to the research questions in a reflective journal to maintain an unbiased approach to the data collected. Including probing questions in the semi-structured interviews allowed the participants to reflect and share their thoughts during the interviews. As recommended by Lodico et al. (2010), I practiced active listening strategies that included acknowledging responses without verbal or non-verbal bias, allowed time for reflection, and maintained a neutral and relaxed atmosphere for discussion.

Before beginning each interview, I reviewed the one-on-one interview protocol with the participants (see Appendix B), and then used the protocol to guide the interview and add observation notes. During the data collection process, I communicated to the participants that I would not be evaluating their responses at any time, and that my role as the researcher was to collect data that would provide information from teachers' perceptions and experiences about international students' acculturation and their

perceptions about PD opportunities which could enhance instructional delivery to support first year Chinese international students' academic engagement.

Data Analysis Results

The purpose of qualitative data analysis is to identify, examine, and interpret patterns and themes in data and determine how these patterns and themes help answer the research questions (Lodico et al., 2010). Data analysis is the process used to answer the research questions (Merriam, 2009). Data analysis involves making sense of written data and making an interpretation of the larger meaning derived from the data (Creswell, 2009). In my study, qualitative data were collected through 12 semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview is a data collection method that aligned with the study problem and the research questions (Merriam, 2009). I used Creswell's six steps to analyze and interpret the qualitative data collected through the semi-structured interview process. The six steps were the following: (a) exploring data by coding, (b) using codes to find themes, (c) using codes to develop a general idea of the data, (d) representing findings through narratives and visuals, (e) interpreting the meaning of the results, and (f) conducting strategies to validate the findings (Creswell, 2012).

I approached the data analysis by first transcribing the interviews verbatim from the audio recordings as they were completed. For the transcription process, I used a Microsoft Word program. I listened to each recorded interview at ¾ speed several times to ensure accuracy of the transcriptions. As the transcription for each interview was completed, I reviewed the collected data, and compared them with previously transcribed

data. According to Creswell (2012), the first steps in data analysis are to use inductive strategies by developing a general sense of the data, and coding descriptions and themes about the central phenomenon. My first step was to organize the data first by relevance to the research questions, and then by categories that emerged about the specific wording of the research questions. Reviewing transcribed data and comparing it to previously collected data allowed me to notice certain words, phrases, patterns of behavior and ways of thinking that were repeated by individual participants as suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (2007). In my transcriptions, I looked for words and phrases, and patterns that were consistent with Vygotsky's ZPD approach that emphasizes the role of the teacher as one whose instructional strategies corresponded to the international students' previous experiences and frames of reference.

Coding Process

Creswell (2009) described coding as a process of organizing collected data into chunks or segments that give meaning to the information. I used an inductive process as suggested by Merriam (2009) to examine information collected through the interviews to identify general categories that could be used to organize the information contained in the data. Open coding means being open to all possible interpretations (Merriam, 2009). I used open coding to organize the data into categories and themes. Sample categories may include activities or actions, events and experiences, perspectives of participants, and setting or context, but will be dependent on the emergent themes Lodico et al. (2010).

Open coding is based on the patterns, frequency, and relationships of the coded data (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). Qualitative researchers frequently review their data as they are collected and document their initial analyses and questions in the form of research notations as part of the inductive process (Lodico et al., 2010). I used an inductive process to examine information collected through the interviews to identify general categories that could be used to organize the information contained in the data. I reviewed and compared the data as they were transcribed, using color codes to highlight words or phrases from the transcripts that related to the research questions. I used pink highlights for data that relate to RQ1, and green highlights for data that related to RQ2. I used a coding model developed by Creswell (2012) that used wide margins for tracking suggested codes on the left side of the transcript, and space for ideas or emerging themes on the right side of the transcript. I placed boxes around phrases to identify words that seemed to suggest codes or broad themes. The initial data analysis offered 34 codes which I then reduced. I based the selection of themes as they related to the research questions in the marginal notations, noted repetition by multiple participants, and the inclusion of multiple perspectives on a single phenomenon as suggested by Creswell (2012).

Findings

The study problem was that teachers at a local private school were struggling to identify and implement appropriate instructional strategies to promote international student academic engagement. In the local school, new international students were placed

in regular classrooms without adequate teacher preparation for how to accommodate their lack of English proficiency and without knowledge of specific instructional strategies that would aid the new student's academic learning and engagement. The teachers were struggling to identify and to implement appropriate strategies to assist first year international students in classroom engagement.

Based on the collected data, all participants recognized that first year international students struggled to engage in their new academic tasks. All participants offered the same constructivist strategies to instruct first year international students that they used with domestic students. Examples of these constructivist strategies were repeating information, slowing the pace of instructions, and offering tutoring for the students. Additionally, all teachers recognized that first year Chinese international students were less likely to engage in classroom student/teacher and student/student learning interactions but did not respond with increased engagement when teachers used the same strategies they used with domestic students. For example, teachers reported the following approaches: (a) calling on the international students in class, (b) asking if they needed help, and (c) offering collaborative learning activities in class to increase engagement. Teachers also believed that academic and social acculturation was an important tool first year Chinese international students needed to achieve academic success and invited them to participate in school clubs and other non-academic school events/extracurricular activities.

All the participants indicated a desire for a PD to increase their knowledge about how to better implement instructional strategies based on knowledge of international students' previous educational culture and experiences. All participants indicated similar desires for help with pacing and differentiated strategies to promote student engagement for classes of mixed groups of international and domestic students. They believed that PD addressing these issues would increase teacher instructional efficacy and promote student instructional engagement if teachers were more cognizant of previous experiences that affect international student classroom interaction and response to instruction.

In this section, the themes that emerged from the one-on-one interviews are reported and discussed. The following themes were derived from the one-on-one interviews: (a) teachers used the same constructivist strategies to engage first year international and domestic students so they were not differentiating to meet the needs of international students; (b) teachers needed differentiation strategies that would promote academic and social acculturation for first year international students; and (c) teachers required PD workshops that offer information on the Chinese educational system.. Below, I explain the themes using participants' statements, remarks, and comments from the one-on-one interviews. Participants' identities were protected and concealed using identification numbers in the reported findings.

The problem that prompted this study was that teachers at a local private school were struggling to identify and implement appropriate instructional strategies to promote international student academic and social engagement. High school teachers stated that

when they implemented instructional strategies they had used effectively with domestic

students to promote academic and school social engagement, the international students

did not respond with increased academic or social engagement compared with the

response of the domestic students. The teachers expressed concerns that the strategies

they employed were not effective with the first-year international students, and they

stated that they did not feel equipped with the proper knowledge of their international

students' backgrounds to properly address their classroom instructional, engagement, and

acculturation needs. The following research questions guided the structure of my analysis

to obtain themes and patterns from the experiences and viewpoints of the teacher

participants about international students' responses to classroom instructional strategies

and to identify teachers' areas of need to more effectively promote international student

academic and social engagement:

RQ1: How do teachers incorporate social constructivist strategies to instruct,

engage, and acculturate first year Chinese international students?

RQ2: How do teachers of first year Chinese international students describe areas

of need in their teaching practices that could promote academic engagement?

I examined teachers' perceptions about instructional strategies to promote international

students' academic and social engagement by collecting and analyzing data from one-on-

one interviews. Based on the evaluation and analysis of all data sources, categories of

data were discovered; from the data categories, themes emerged which aligned with the

research questions (see Table 1).

Theme 1: <u>Constructivist Strategies to Engage First-year International Chinese Students and Domestic Students</u>

The first theme showed that teachers implemented the same constructivist instructional strategies with their domestic and international students. This theme was identified from the following data categories: (a) teachers recognized that first year international students struggled to engage in their new academic tasks, and (b) first year Chinese internationals students were less likely to engage in classroom student/teacher and student/student learning interactions. In both situations, participants indicated they offered the same instructional interventions to their international students they had found effective with struggling domestic students but did not find the strategies effective with their international students. The responses of the participants supported Tong (2014), whose study revealed that first-year international Chinese students often struggled with social and classroom interactions not only because of a lack of language proficiency, but due to unfamiliarity with the new academic culture and expectations.

Table 1

Categories of Data and Themes

Categories of Data	Themes
Teachers recognized that first year international students struggled to engage in their new academic tasks and offered the following instructional interventions: • Tutoring (free at the school site) • Repeat the information • Slow the pace of instruction • Allow more time to complete work both in and out of class • Meet one-on-one with students	Teachers used the same constructivist strategies to engage first-year international and domestic students.

Teachers recognized that first- year Chinese International students were less likely to engage in classroom student/teacher and student/student learning interactions and offer the following solutions: • Call on students in class to respond • Check for understanding • Ask if student understands or needs help • Pair with a domestic student • Offer collaborative learning activities in class	
Teachers believed that academic and social acculturation is an important tool for first-year Chinese international student to achieve academic success, and they offered the following solutions: • Invite to join/participate in school clubs • Encourage/require participation in school events/extracurricular activities • Partner with a domestic student in class • Encourage student effort and recognize growth rather than grades • Ask critical thinking questions in class discussion to help close the domestic/international student gap	Teachers needed differentiation strategies for first-year Chinese international students.
Teachers identified specific areas of need for instructing and engaging their international students but expressed awareness that their current efforts were not effective. Teachers wanted to know how to form student/teacher relationships that could promote academic engagement for first-year Chinese international students.	Teachers needed PD workshops that offered information on the Chinese educational system ,

Teachers recognized that first-year international students struggled to engage in their new academic tasks and offered a variety of instructional interventions. Teachers believed that offering free tutoring, repeating information, and slowing the pace of instruction provided all students a variety of instructional supports to understand and master the classroom curricula. Teachers also believed that allowing international student more time to finish assigned work and meeting one-on-one with the international students would offered more intense instructional support for the first-year international students. In one-on-one interviews, I asked the study participants, "What are some classroom strategies you currently use when introducing new material in classes that include first

year Chinese international students as they begin to acculturate in a new academic environment?" The participants shared strategies they used to provide instructional support for first year international students. Several of the participants expressed specific practice techniques used with students to assist with subject area comprehension and classroom integration. Participant 3 stated:

> I realize they will need extra time to complete the work we do in class, so I let them take it home if they need extra time to finish. I try to get them to come to tutoring sessions, so I can work one on one with them and explain anything they didn't get in class lecture or discussion.

Later in the interview, Participant 3 elaborated, adding:

> I try to get them to come to tutoring sessions, so I can work one on one with them and explain anything they didn't get in class lecture or discussion. They don't come, even though the tutoring sessions are free as part of what we offer at our school for all students.

The strategies offered by Participant 3, allowing extra time, offering tutoring and the opportunity to work one-on-one with the teacher, were the same strategies several participants shared as having been effective with domestic students who needed extra assistance. The participants were consistent in sharing that the international students did not take advantage of extra time to complete their work or attend tutoring, indicating that strategies commonly employed with domestic students were not effective in helping international students. Similarly, Participant 8 recognized the need for more individual

support and stated, "I have tried to give them more one on one support during class work time, talking them through at least the first couple responses so they know what is expected."

Participant 4 recognized that the strategies she employed with international students were the same strategies she also used with domestic students stating,

I've done what I would do with a new domestic student. I check for understanding about the assignment or the homework to be sure they know what to do. I ask if they have any questions. But they don't ask questions and they won't admit if they need help or don't know something.

Like the previous responses, Participant 1 used interventions she expected to be effective based on experiences with domestic students but stated the international students did not engage when presented with the opportunity to ask questions or receive individual help. The response of Participant 1 supported the theme that teachers did not differentiate their instructional strategies for domestic and international students. The strategies offered as instructional support for domestic students were based on constructivist pedagogy for students accustomed to a more equal student/teacher relationships, and an assumption of questioning as part of the learning process. The strategies that were familiar to domestic students were perceived from a different cultural perspective by Chinese international students. The same strategies therefore do not align with constructivism that recognizes previous experiences of the international students. When asked a probing question about how they might handle non-engagement issues

with domestic students, participants gave examples of constructivist strategies they used, but noted that those strategies were specifically not effective with international students. Participant 2 stated:

> I could give them [domestic students] a prompt to get the answer started. Or I could do a pair/share where they 'phone a friend' to get help and then give the answer or comment. But that doesn't work with the Chinese kids. I tried giving them the answer and making them repeat it, but that seemed a very negative tactic and I wasn't comfortable with it.

Participant 10 acknowledged he did not differentiate instruction for international students, stating,

> I don't think I really differentiate except to take more time with the Chinese students, maybe breaking things down to simpler meanings and parts to talk them through from the beginning to the idea I want them to get to. But actually, I think they are just humoring me.

Consistently the participants noted a level of frustration that the strategies they used to engage the international students were not effective in the same way they were with domestic students. The responses of the participants indicated they continued to implement the same academic support strategies for domestic and international students, even while recognizing they were not effective. Teachers recognized their strategies were not effective but did not know how to adapt to the needs of the Chinese students. Participant 8 added,

I have tried to give them more one-on-one support during class work time, talking

them through at least the first couple responses so they know what is expected.

But I don't think they are comfortable with that kind of help. They seem to prefer

to work alone, and just wait me out. So far, I guess the strategy is that they find a

way to do it on their own, but I'm not happy with it.

Teachers recognized that first- year Chinese international students were less likely to engage in classroom student/teacher and student/student learning interactions and offered a variety of solutions. Teachers believed international students would benefit from engaging in student/teacher and student/student learning interactions and were intentional in providing opportunities to develop those relationships. During the one-on-one interviews, participants offered examples of strategies they used to promote student/teacher and student/student engagement. Participant 4 stated, "I try to form a relationship. I go out of my way to involve them in class discussions. I set them up with a domestic classroom partner who can check on them and work with them during the class." As a constructivist strategy, forming a student/teacher relationship was inconsistent with the Chinese students' previous educational culture where the learning occurred in a hierarchical setting with the teacher as the authority and the students as passive receivers of instruction.

Participant 11 offered an example of the challenge in motivating the international students to work collaboratively either with domestic students or even with other international students stating, "So while my domestic students are collaborating, unless I

interfere, the Chinese students are working alone to finish whatever it is we are doing."

Participant 9 noted that he had some success when he partnered international students

with other internationals rather than domestic students stating,

> I've tried a couple of things that have worked somewhat. One is to partner them
> with another international student. They are more comfortable with another
> Chinese student and seem more willing to answer when two of them are working
> together. But although this introduces them to collaboration, they are not
> interacting with domestic students.

Participant 10 stated,

> I want the interaction with American kids, so I try to partner them, an
> international with an American. My idea was that working with an American
> student would give them confidence to answer, but it actually doesn't seem to
> work as well as partnering them with another Chinese student.

Participant 2 gave the option of repeating answers to the international students to engage

them stating,

> So, the best thing I've done is to sort of feed them the answer to draw them into
> discussion. I'm not sure they understand the answer they are giving, but this early
> in the year my main goal is more just to get them talking and participating in
> class.

The idea of partnering students with co-nationals and offering correct answers to be

repeated were constructivist strategies that aligned with the cultural identity of the

Chinese students. Partnering an international student with another Chinese student

offered the safety of collectivism familiar to Chinese students in their home classrooms.

Providing them with the answers when they were uncertain of their language skills gave

Chinese students a sense of confidence without the risk of cultural shame that might

result from a wrong answer. In these adaptations the teachers were offering appropriate

constructivist strategies. But the teachers' responses indicated they were now the ones

uncomfortable with the classroom dynamic, even though it may have been effective for

the international students.

Participants also suggested possible reasons they thought international students

were less likely to engage with other students and teachers, and the consequences of lack

of engagement. Participant 5 stated,

Their experience has been more along the lines of having to just absorb

information to pass a test, and at our school, there is a much more personal

emphasis on teacher-student relationships. That takes a long time for them to

understand and in the meantime, they fall behind even though they work very

hard to keep up.

From a similar perspective, Participant 3 stated:

It's hard to help the new Chinese students because they aren't used to having any

sort of relationship with their teachers. We have had some training at our school

to help us know some of the differences between American and Chinese

education so that has made me aware of how they don't really know that I am

here to help them.

The responses of Participants 5 and 3 indicated awareness of the desire the international

students had to succeed. Both participants also realized that the students did not have

previous experience with student/teacher relationships other than that of transmission of

knowledge from teacher to students. Teachers desired a more personal relationship with

their Chinese students but although the students were respectful, they were unresponsive

to overtures of a personal relationship.

Participant 1 also noted the challenge of student/teacher engagement and

addressed it directly with her international students reporting:

I found that the students were shocked and surprised that there was so much

interaction between teacher and student, and I had a hard time getting them to

draw out conversation from them. When I realized what was happening I asked

them, 'what is different about school in America verses what you do in China?'

They didn't even want to answer at first. They said, 'We do not talk back with our

teachers in China. So, to have a conversation with my teacher is very different'.

Participant 4 had a similar response when asked to provide an example of how Chinese

international students struggled either academically or culturally in the classroom. He

stated,

The first-year Chinese international students are not used to asking questions in

class. When the assignments are given they are on task immediately and excel at

the Bible memory verses. Spot checking for understanding has been challenging as they will not speak up when unsure about something.

When participants were asked what they felt they might do to be more effective in helping their international students engage academically and/or socially in class, several participants expressed an emotional response regarding their desire to help their international students. Participant 7 stated, "…and it hurts me when they don't do well because really they work very hard and want to succeed." Participant 3 said,

> This has been one of the most difficult challenges and I don't have an answer. If I slow it to a pace the internationals can work at, the domestic students are bored. I haven't found a way around this yet.

Participant 7 stated,

> The internationals are taking a large majority of my time. But what am I doing about it? Nothing now except hoping that as we get farther into the school year the class will become more equal as the internationals begin to integrate into the school academics and culture of the school.

The interviews took place at the beginning of the school year. Both international students and teachers were struggling to find their way together through the shared educational maze. Participant responses offered a realization that teachers need more cultural understanding of their international students and an awareness that time will be a factor in allowing mutual understanding to develop between students and teachers. Participant 8 offered a hopeful view stating, "I think if they stay here for their education,

exposure to our class dynamics and student/teacher and student/student/ interactions might change their way of thinking. I hope so.

Theme 2: Differentiation Strategies to Instruct First-year International Chinese Students

The data categories that supported this theme were the following: (a) when teachers encouraged or even required international students to participate in school social events they did not do so, and (b) when teachers used the same constructivist strategies they used with domestic students to engage the international students in the classroom inter-action or school social events the teachers perceived the strategies to be ineffective. Participants were asked if they believed the international students struggled more academically or culturally in their classrooms. The participants believed that social participation in extra-curricular activities played an integral part in academic success and encouraged the international students to join clubs and sports teams and participate in school social activities but without success. Participant 8 offered a detailed response stating,

> Academics are far less of a problem than cultural integration. They [international students] struggle with academics in the beginning, but I think that struggle is actually the result of the cultural differences. They are very concerned with their grades and they totally don't understand the social dynamic of the American school culture. Clubs, dances, sports are not part of their experience and it makes it hard for them to make friends. So, they aren't sharing the culture with the

American kids. They don't make friends, and without friends even succeeding in class is difficult. They don't have someone to call when they don't understand. They don't have someone to ask for help.

Participants believed if the international students engaged more in the social culture of the school they would benefit academically through the ensuing relationships. They also recognized that a social component was not part of Chinese school culture. Participant 10 posited a reason for the lack of social integration by the international students stating, "Mostly they seem to want to fly under the radar. It's a very limited world for them. Go to class, and then go home to study. They study far more than the American kids do." Participant 1 commented that the teachers encouraged the international students to join clubs and attend the sporting events that were a part of student life. Related to this comment, Participant 1 also noted, "But they [international students] tell us they don't see any point in those activities, plus they have to spend so much time studying they really don't have time." The observation of Participant 1 was similarly shared by Participants 2 and 11 who each remarked that their international students attended school non-academic events only if it was required as part of their grade or took place during school hours. Participant 11 elaborated on this to say that when attending a non-academic event such as a rally or sporting event the internationals would sit together and not interact with the domestic student or take an active part in the event. Participant 1 supported the benefits of international student social engagement offering evidence of one student's success.

In defense of the need for social integration, the one [international] boy who is

really doing well this year has made it a point to participate in school activities

and he's even starting a dance club of his own. He's doing the best of the

[international] kids academically so I have to think there's a correlation.

In addition to the larger school social culture of clubs, sports, and events,

Participants also recognized that new international students also struggled to fit in on a

more personal level. Participant 4 agreed the international students struggled culturally

and stated, "Some of our American students are not welcoming to change. Many of our

American students have been here 10+ years with the same friends." Participant 9

believed the cultural struggles extended beyond the classroom and commented that the

Chinese students have difficulty with American food. The students claimed it tasted

"bland" or "too sweet," and found it difficult to socially integrate at teen social events

where foods such as pizza and sweet desserts are served.

Teachers believed that academic and social acculturation was an important tool

for first-year Chinese international students to achieve academic success and offered

several solutions. When asked to share an example of how first year Chinese international

students struggled either academically or culturally in the classroom, the teachers offered

several specific examples. Participants attempted to differentiate strategies for the

international students but noted that the differentiated strategies were not consistent with

their own classroom pedagogies Participant 8 stated,

The most effective strategy for them [international students] is actually the least

effective for the domestic students. The international students respond best to a

lecture and study format. But my classroom and teaching style are based on

discovery and collaboration. They don't go together.

Participant 5 stated,

The whole thing is not working. I have been trying to work with the new

international students the way I would approach a new domestic student. Instead I

feel I am making them more uncomfortable. They come here to integrate into an

American school, but they don't respond to what we would consider normal

instructional routines."

Participant 6 stated,

I've done what I would do with a new domestic student. I try to form a

relationship. I go out of my way to involve them in class discussions. I set them

up with a domestic classroom partner who can check on them and work with them

during the class. I check for understanding about the assignment or the homework

to be sure they know what to do. I ask if they have any questions. But they don't

ask questions and they won't admit if they need help or don't know something.

The responses of the participants indicated their awareness of the need for academic

acculturation and their desire to promote it in their classroom pedagogy. Their responses

also suggested a lack of awareness of how to integrate acculturation and pedagogy based

on current practice. New international students encounter acculturative stress when

confronted with lifestyle differences in food education, language, and communication in the host country (Hackett, 2014). Many of the participants expressed that although they reached out to their international students using familiar strategies, the teachers felt the strategies were not effective in engaging and supporting acculturation and learning for their international students.

Theme 3: PD Workshops That Offer Information on the Chinese Educational System

Teachers identified specific areas of need for instruction and engaging their international students, and they expressed awareness that their current efforts were not effective. Teachers in this study believed they could help their international students more effectively if they had more knowledge of the cultural backgrounds of the students prior to attending school. The participants stated feelings of confusion and a lack of understanding about their international students' prior experiences and how best to help them acculturate academically and socially. Participant 6 said:

> I don't seem to know what they are looking for. Did they expect it to be like China? Did they receive any instruction before they came about what it would be like? They have 3 weeks of our Summer Immersion Institute before classes start, but I don't think they are ready for the rigors of 7 classes a day moving at a very fast pace.

Participant 3 said,

Culturally they struggle with classroom interaction. My classroom is very fluid in terms of conversation, discussion, and activities. I want my students to think and analyze the literature presented. I want them to relate it to their own experiences, what we call "connecting" in our class. It isn't just that they can't do it. It's that they don't seem to see a purpose in it.

Several participants indicated a desire to know how to form student-teacher relationships that could promote academic engagement for first-year Chinese international students. Participant 5 said,

I think understanding more about where they are coming from socially in terms classroom behavior and expectations would help me. With an American student who is struggling, or new, or withdrawn, I reach out to them and try to establish a personal relationship that provides safety in the classroom. With the international students, the safety seems to be in the anonymity. They don't *want* [speaker's emphasis] to be noticed.

Participant 5's comments synthesized the responses of other participants who expressed a desire to form a relationship with their international students but could not seem to break through the cultural barriers to begin the process. A PD could address social interaction as well as pedagogy. American teachers frequently use group approaches such as group work, collaboration, or discussion. But Chinese students are often confused by these approaches, having previously been provided with information and answers from their teachers as authority figures (Wu, 2015).

The three themes indicated teachers' perceptions about instructional delivery for first year international students, their belief that social acculturation has an influence on academic achievement, and their desire to have a PD provided that would increase their knowledge about the academic backgrounds of their international students. Teachers discussed specific instructional practices they used to teach and integrate first year international students with their domestic students. Teachers explained that they felt their strategies, while effective with domestic students, did not address the needs and cultural understanding of the international students. Additionally, teachers expressed a desire for training that would enable them to more fully address and understand the academic and social needs of international students. Teachers described various responses of their international students when prompted to engage academically or socially in the school classroom.

Discrepant Cases

One element of ensuring validity is recognizing discrepant data that do not fit emerging patterns and themes (Merriam, 2009). Time spent collecting data should also be spent purposefully looking for data that supports alternative explanations. Merriam (2009) termed alternative explanations as *discrepant* or *negative case analysis.* Honesty in reporting depends on the researcher including all discrepant findings to present a more unified or convincing story (Creswell, 2012). Presenting and discussing data that are contrary to the themes, adds to the credibility of the study (Creswell, 2009). As I reviewed the data and coded emerging themes, I purposefully searched for discrepant

responses in the transcribed interviews to identify and annotate data that contradicted the general perspective of the findings. Presenting and acknowledging discrepant data may offer alternative explanations relative to the research questions providing a more realistic and valid account of the topic (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009). During the examination of the transcripts, I did not locate alternative themes or inconsistent patterns that corresponded to my study.

Research Accuracy, Credibility and Internal Validity

Major analysis of qualitative data involves coding the data, a process that refines the collected data into themes (Creswell, 2012). To implement Creswell's (2012) suggested procedures, I gathered data through participants' oral testimonies, while also recording the interviews for later transcription to maximize validity. As the researcher, I focused on the participants' responses, without indicating my own opinion by gesture or response. Member checking was implemented to allow participants to review my transcripts for clarity and offer additional information to the data collection.

Internal validity relates to how the research questions match reality, and the assumption that reality in qualitative research is "holistic, multidimensional, and ever-changing" (Merriam, 2009, p 213). Trustworthiness is enhanced when the researcher provides a detailed explanation of how the data are collected and analyzed (Lodico et al., 2010). I utilized two of the methods suggested by Merriam to increase accuracy and trustworthiness: multiple sources and member checking. I collected data from individuals with different perspectives and experiences through interviews to increase internal

validity. The participants taught several different subject areas across 3 grade levels. Along with instructional subject and grade level differences, the international students demonstrated a variety of individual competencies and academic skills that required the teachers to differentiate instruction, just as they did for domestic students. Collecting data from multiple sources, each with different perspectives and experiences allowed me to identify themes in a way provided accuracy and credibility in the findings (Creswell, 2012).

Researchers can also check their findings with the participants to check for accuracy and increase credibility (Creswell, 2012) I gave each participant of copy of my findings for review. Lodico et al. (2010) suggested member checking to ensure that the researcher's biases are not reflected in the findings. I implemented member checking by inviting participants to review the findings and asked them if I had captured their perspectives accurately and fairly. Merriam (2009) noted that even though the researcher may use different words, participants should be able to recognize their own experiences in the interpretation or make suggestions to more accurately capture their perspectives.

Credibility refers to the accuracy of the researcher's portrayal of the participants' responses **(**Lodico et al., 2010). To establish the credibility of my study, I included examples of interview responses, and an explanation of my coding process in the findings. Research transparency is the principle that the researcher should make the essential components of the study visible to fellow scholars and readers (Moravczik, 2014) which was addressed by the inclusion of specific interview responses in the

findings section. Finally, I shared the research findings with the participants. That allowed participants to evaluate whether the data had been interpreted or analyzed correctly.

Discussion of Findings

In this section, the following three study themes are discussed in connection to the data of the study and the current literature: (a) constructivist strategies teachers used to engage international students, (b) differentiation strategies that may promote academic and social acculturation for first-year Chinese international students, and (c) PD workshops that offered information on the Chinese educational system.

Theme 1. The first theme showed that teachers implemented the same constructivist instructional strategies for both their domestic and international students. The responses indicated that the teachers offered additional one on one support for the students both in and outside of class. Teachers in the study tried to clarify the concepts and assignments through explanation and modeling, but they did not find the international students responsive to the methods. Offering tutoring and one-on-one help for Chinese students may indicate a lack of cultural awareness on the part of the teacher. Teacher-student relationship differs between China and the US (Cheng & Fox, 2008). Western educators frequently rely on a dialogic learning model (Hodkinson & Poropat, 2014). But for Chinese students volunteering answers or asking questions may be perceived as inappropriate boldness or immodesty (Hodkins & Poropat, 2014)**.**

Previous research was consistent with data revealed in this study, such as the comment from Participant 4 who stated, "Asking verbally if everyone understands is not effective. Chinese international students will just remain quiet even if they don't understand something. This even happens during one on one tutoring." Berry (2005) claimed that teachers often struggle to implement adaptations that meet the needs of students of diverse cultures. According to Berry, the integration of international students was more likely to be achieved when teachers created environments sensitive to cultural diversity. Students from China, where teachers are respected as authority figures, may find the more interactive style of wester student-teacher relationships uncomfortable (Liu, 2012). When the Chinese students have been more accustomed to a lecture-and-exam style of learning, they can be reluctant to engage in a class where discussion is the norm (Wadsworth et al., 2008).

Vygotsky's conceptual framework offered a foundation for assessing and understanding the way teachers interact with their first-year international students and supports the findings of this study. Vygotsky's framework claims teachers can best provide guidance when they understand the previous educational and cultural background of the learner (Hawley, 2007). But when Chinese students first enter US educational institutions, teachers often expect them to respond positively to the same style of pedagogy and intervention strategies that have been effective with domestic students (Campbell et al., 2016). Chinese education relies heavily on a system of questioning where students respond only when they have a confident degree of knowledge

(Hodkinson & Poropat, 2014). For Chinese students, academic achievement is an honor to their families, and academic successes are families' primary concern about their children studying in the US (Yan & Berliner, 2009). Acculturative stress for both students and teachers results when teachers do not understand the context of their international students' responses (Sullivan & Kushubeck-West, 2015). When cultural disparities are present, particularly between international students and their host country peers or teachers, the differences may contribute to the international students' perception of their academic performance (Lin, 2012; Ren & Hagedorn, 2012).

Theme 2. Teachers needed differentiation strategies to instruct first-year Chinese international students. Participants recognized that first-year Chinese International students were less likely to engage in classroom student-teacher and student-student learning interactions than domestic students. Campbell (2015) found that developing social peer relationships provided opportunities that contributed positively to classroom acculturation and that involvement in campus student organizations promoted student acculturation. For international students living away from family and friends, social support offered by the host school plays an important role in reducing stress caused by cultural adaptation (Cho & Yu, 2015). Participants in this study shared that when they used the same constructivist strategies they used with domestic students to engage the international students in the classroom interaction or school social events the strategies were ineffective. When asked to share an example of how first year Chinese international students struggled culturally, several participants shared that the international students

were more likely to engage with another international student than interact with a domestic student. Their responses agreed with a study by Heng (2015) who found that Chinese international students were more likely to seek a more experienced Chinese student instead of a domestic partner or mentor. Although the strategies shared by the participants in this study aligned with constructivism for American students, implementation of these strategies did not support understanding of the previous pedagogical experiences of first-year Chinese students.

The responses of the teachers supported findings by Daniels (2013) who reported that teachers expressed confusion and frustration when teaching student with limited understanding of western educational processes. The social constructivist view supports the importance of teacher-student interactions. The interviews for this study provided participants with an opportunity for self-reflection and assessment of the efficacy of their instructional strategies for their first-year international students. When participants were asked what they felt they might do to be more effective in helping their international students engage academically and/or socially in class, several participants expressed an emotional response regarding their desire to help their international students. The responses of the participants revealed their desire to help their international students acculturate and succeed academically but underscored the need for teachers of international students to be cognizant of the students' previous educational experiences.

Theme 3. Teachers required PD workshops that offer information on the Chinese educational system to help them understand how their students' previous experiences

affect their current classroom interactions and responses. Ferris et al. (2015) reported that effective teaching requires ongoing PD in assessment practices and pedagogy. Classroom communication includes mannerisms such as eye contact, gestures, and vocal inflections that may differ from the student's home country, influencing the student's ability to learn, and interfering with teachers' abilities to assess learning (Campbell, 2016). International students must acculturate to changes in culture, customs, and societal standards for behavior at school. Gao (2012) stated that teachers of first year international students often lack the necessary teaching experiences and strategies to promote acculturation necessary for social engagement and classroom performance. Within educational institutions, teachers have difficulty helping students engage as they struggle to implement instructional strategies that meet the needs of students from different cultures (Berry, 2005). Providing a PD that provides teachers the opportunity to better understand student needs may generate change and enhance student achievement outcomes (Patton, Parker, & Tannehill, 2015).

The conceptual framework of this study was based on Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978). Social constructivism recognizes that individuals bring their own experiences to a single context as educational settings and challenges are approached as complex wholes (Lodico, et al., 2010). Vygotsky's social constructivism theory emphasizes the teacher and the classroom where variables such as social interaction, culture, and language affect the process of learning (Powell & Kalina, 2009). This conceptual framework supported the need for providing teachers with information

they could use to understand the backgrounds and acculturation struggles of their international students that may be used to enhance instructional delivery for first-year Chinese international students.

In a survey of what they would like their western teachers to know, Chinese students expressed that teachers should consider the backgrounds of their Chinese students in their teaching practices and assessments (Heng, 2017). Chinese students expressed a need for a support system to help them cope with the new environment (Liu, 2012), but the participants in this study indicated a lack of knowledge about how to provide a relevant support system for their first-year international students. PD could provide teachers of first-year international students with information about learning cues that Chinese students frequently misinterpret (Heng, 2017). A PD could also offer insight for teachers about struggles with unfamiliar assessment styles, curriculum expectations, and teacher-student relationships that were reported by Chinese international students (Wu, 2015). Teachers may also benefit from a greater understanding of the contrast between the interactive teaching style of many American classrooms and the lecture-based style of teaching prevalent in China (Bertram et al., 2014).

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of social constructivist strategies to instruct first year Chinese international students and to examine teachers' perceptions about professional needs to improve their instructional delivery. The research questions were constructed to reveal teachers' knowledge,

experiences and perceptions about Chinese international students' academic challenges. I reviewed the themes, then I examined each of the research questions to address the discovered themes.

Theme 1 indicated that teachers used the same constructivist strategies to engage first-year international and domestic students. Although teachers offered a variety of instructional supports to aid international students academically in the classroom they did not feel their current strategies were successful in providing for the international students. Theme 2 revealed teachers recognized that first year Chinese international students were less likely to engage in classroom student-teacher and student-student learning interactions and offered a variety of opportunities to encourage classroom engagement but did not perceive their strategies promoted increased student-student or teacher-student engagement. Although teachers responded to their international students with strategies they had previously determined were effective with domestic students, they did not feel they had enough knowledge of the cultural academic and social differences to address their students' needs. Participants shared their practices and strategies, as well as the internationals students' responses to their interventions.

Theme 3 indicated that teachers required PD workshops that offer information on the Chinese educational system. Teachers expressed a need and desire to increase their knowledge and to improve understanding of the cultural and academic challenges faced by their first-year international students. Teachers expressed willingness to participate in relevant PD and staff collaboration opportunities. Teachers believed that they would be

better equipped to help students if they could recognize and understand the students'
responses to the domestic classroom expectations and dynamics. Participants shared their
desire for a PD program that would address the previous cultural and educational
experiences of their international students. The participants believed knowledge of the
international students' previous experiences would help the teachers implement
instructional strategies that would accommodate the academic and social needs of their
international students in the classroom.

Data collected for this study indicated that teachers used the same constructivist
strategies to engage first year international Chinese and domestic students and did not
differentiate to meet the needs of international students. The data also revealed that
teachers needed help with differentiation strategies that would promote academic and
social acculturation for first-year Chinese international students. Liu (2011) found that
teachers expect language skills learned in the home country to transfer into academic and
cultural acculturation. But international students must acculturate to changes in culture
and classroom standards that are not addressed simply by language acquisition and
teachers of international students often lack the strategies necessary to promote
acculturation (Gao, 2012).

Based on my findings, teachers desired to know more about the educational
beliefs and values that Chinese international students bring to their new schools in the
US, and how they can adjust their practice to accommodate the previous experiences of
their first-year Chinese international students. The first concept focused on the heritage

and host culture components in educational contexts. The second was concerned with the

contact between these two cultures from the perspective of the host country teachers. I

proposed that a PD workshop may provide teachers with useful cultural information and

constructivist strategies that could be implemented in their classrooms to make

instructional delivery more effective for first year international students. I addressed the

problem of my study by developing a PD to inform teachers' understanding of Chinese

educational philosophy and use of constructivist strategies to engage Chinese

international students in American classrooms. The PD was grounded in the participants'

perceptions about instructional delivery for Chinese international students and the need

for differentiated strategies that could promote academic and social acculturation for

first-year Chinese international students. I used the information from the findings to

develop a PD to provide teachers with culturally differentiated instructional strategies

they can implement to help first year international students achieve academic success and

social integration.

Section 3: The Project

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences about instructing international students and investigate PD opportunities which could enhance teachers' instructional delivery to support first year Chinese international high school students' academic engagement. Through my data collection, I captured perceptions of high school teachers of first-year international students regarding the teaching strategies they used to instruct and engage first year Chinese international students and areas of need in their teaching practices that could promote academic engagement. The themes revealed teachers' perceptions about instructional delivery for first year international students, beliefs that social acculturation has an influence on academic achievement, and desires to have PD provided that would increase their knowledge about the academic backgrounds of their international students. I developed a project based on the genre of PD. The goal of this project was to provide teachers with culturally differentiated instructional strategies they could implement to help first year international students achieve academic success and social integration.

In this section, I offer a project description, the goals of the project, rationale, implementation, potential barriers and resources, and existing resources to support teachers who would like to use information from this project to foster social change in their school. To offer a deeper understanding of the themes of my study, I presented a review of the literature that illustrated how theory and research support the project

content and themes of the study. This section concluded with a description of evaluative methods with which the PD can be assessed and improved as it is implemented.

Project Description and Goals

This project is a 3-day PD for teachers to improve their instructional delivery to support first year Chinese international high school students' academic engagement (see Appendix A). The project was created from the identified themes, which revealed that teachers wanted information about differentiated constructivist strategies to assist first year international students to succeed academically and integrate socially in their American schools. The primary goals of this PD were to provide teachers with (a) information on the Chinese educational system to help teachers understand how their students' previous experiences affect their current classroom interactions and responses and (b) knowledge about differentiation strategies that would promote academic and social acculturation for first-year Chinese international students.

On day 1 of the PD, I will present an overview of the 3-day PD schedule. Day 1 collaborative activities and presentations focus on identifying the educational experiences of Chinese international students prior to enrolling in American schools, and the effect of their previous experiences on academic and social engagement. Teachers will participate in a collaborative activity to share their observations about academic and social integration of first-year Chinese international students. After the collaborative activity, I will present an overview of the educational beliefs and values that Chinese international students bring with them to their new schools in the US and the characteristics of

pedagogic practices in Chinese schools. I will offer a synthesized review of current

research studies to support and validate the information presented. Teachers will

collaborate in their small groups to suggest how they can integrate constructivist

strategies to modify their practices for first-year Chinese international students based on

knowledge of the students' Chinese previous educational pedagogy. Lastly, I will have

teachers participate in a closing reflection activity to answer this question: If most of

what we thought and much of what we have tried is not really working, what I do now?

The responses to the question will be the basis for the first activity on day 2 of the PD.

The second day of the PD will focus on sharing information about educational

pedagogy as it relates to Chinese cultural philosophy and student expectations. Teachers

will be organized into groups and presented with a selection of published classroom

scenarios. The groups will work collaboratively to evaluate possible cultural reasons for

the responses of Chinese students in each scenario and discuss ways they may have

experienced similar situations in their own classrooms. They will be encouraged to

integrate information presented during the previous day into their responses. The groups

will present their suggested evaluations for large group discussion. As the discussion

moderator, I will offer research that supports Chinese international students' receptivity

to interventions.

During the third and final day of PD, I will present suggested constructivist

teaching strategies teachers can implement with Chinese international students in their

classrooms. The presentation on constructivist strategies will offer information about the

application of the constructivist theory to increase academic and social integration. Teachers will also leave the PD with a handout regarding Chinese educational theory and possible constructivist strategies to be used as a future resource. To obtain feedback about the 3-day PD, I created a written evaluation form for teachers to complete on the final day of the PD.

Rationale

The problem that prompted this study was that teachers at a local private high school were struggling to identify and implement appropriate instructional strategies to promote international student academic engagement. My decision to select the genre of PD was based on the themes derived from the data. The themes revealed that teachers needed information to identify and implement constructivist instructional strategies that promote international student academic engagement. To effect positive change in student achievement, PD should focus on improving teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge that will redirect their responses to the learning requirements of their students (Althauser, 2017). Dzhamalova, Timonin, Kolesov, Pavolv, and Evstegneeva (2016) studied pedagogic functions of university teachers of international students and concluded that although teachers provide the first introduction to pedagogical adaptation for international students, the issue of PD for teachers of international students was poorly addressed by universities. An abundance of research focuses on the experiences of international students, with significantly less research focused on teacher adjustment to teaching international students. Without attention to their roles and needs for specific

pedagogical strategies to address international student acculturation, teachers are not

provided opportunities to extend their knowledge and skills to incorporate effective

strategies for the diverse cultures of their students (Hattingh et al., 2017). Effective

educational strategies for international students must include skills in terms of cross-

cultural interaction, cross-cultural communications, and interactions within the

educational setting (Dzhamalova et al., 2016). PD that provides teachers with strategies

aligned with students' differentiated needs is particularly important where cultural and

language differences exist, as is the case with first-year international students. Schools

enrolling international students often recognize that international students face

acculturation challenges but fail to address expectations about the role of teachers in the

process (Hattingh, 2015).

As the international student population from Asia continues to expand in the

West, teachers have expressed concerns about how to best respond to a new set of student

needs within an established pedagogical framework. One factor contributing to teachers'

concerns about being unprepared to meet the needs of international students is a lack of

shared information from administrators about the students' cultural backgrounds

(Hattingh et al., 2017). My data analysis revealed categories of data and themes regarding

teachers' classroom challenges and their desire for differentiated strategies that might

address the instructional and acculturation needs of first-year Chinese students entering

an American school. I created this project to increase local teachers' knowledge about

Chinese educational culture and assist teachers of first-year Chinese international students to implement effective constructivist strategies in their classrooms.

PD refers to the process and practices that improve the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of school personnel to create a learning environment that promotes the intellectual, physical, emotional, and social development of the students (Casteele & Ballentyne, 2010). For PD to create a positive change in student achievement, the focus needs to be on how to improve not only content, but to inform teachers how to assess student's learning requirements (Althauser, 2015). The expectations that international students will simply adjust to the existing classroom culture limits teachers' opportunities to enrich their teaching practices and incorporate new knowledge and skills (Hattingh et al., 2017). An important aspect of PD for teachers of international students is adapting teachers' perceptions of pedagogical functions. Study results indicate that this approach is lacking in teacher training of international students (Dzhamalova et al., 2016). Dzhamalova et al. (2016) found that a focus of the teachers' instructional position with internationals at the university level was to understand the main social and cultural challenges that occur during the international students' adaptation period.

Linguistic studies have revealed that building language competence and self-efficacy in L2 speakers helps to overcome language anxiety, and for this reason, teachers must have a knowledge of effective L2 learning strategies (Jackson, 2014). Recognizing that class participation results in better learning outcomes and higher grades, teachers

must be educated about how they can help their international students overcome communication anxiety and increase class participation (Hsu & Huang, 2017). According to Hattingh (2015) relatively little research focuses on teacher education regarding the process of student adjustment in the international setting. To effectively accomplish the goals of international student acculturation and overcome barriers to engagement, teachers must understand the main social and cultural challenges that exist for international students during the adaptation period (Dzhamalova et al., 2016).

I addressed the problem of my study by developing a PD that will inform teachers' understanding about the classroom engagement of international students and their current understanding and use of constructivist strategies. Each PD session was grounded in the participants' perceptions about instructional delivery for Chinese international students, and the need for differentiation strategies that could promote academic and social acculturation for first-year Chinese international students.

Review of the Literature

For the review of the literature, I reviewed research studies that aligned with the topics Chinese educational culture, Chinese pedagogy, Chinese international student acculturation, Chinese international student response to western pedagogy, cultural educational differences, and effective PD for teachers, including a focus on effective PD for teachers of L2 and international students. I searched databases from the Walden University Library to access peer-reviewed literature on these topics. The Walden databases used included Education Research Complete, ERIC, Thoreau multiple

databases, and SAGE Journals. To search for additional literature, I used Google Scholar

and Google. I used the following keywords and phrases to conduct the search: *Chinese*

instructional pedagogy, *constructivism, Confucianism, Chinese international student*

acculturation, *teacher professional development strategies, professional development for*

L2 teachers, professional development for teachers of international students, and *adult*

learning. The review of literature allowed me to explore my findings and link the

research topics to 3 themes. Teachers used the same constructivist strategies to engage

first year international Chinese students and domestic students. Teachers needed

differentiation strategies to instruct first-year international Chinese students. Teachers

needed PD that offers information on the Chinese educational system. In the following

review of literature, I present scholarly research that relates to the themes of my study

and supports the PD presentation and activities.

Constructivist Strategies to Engage Students

International students present language, social, and educational constructs that

differ from those familiar to American teachers. Even when their English levels meet

school entry requirements, international students often experience challenges related to

comprehension and critical thinking, as well as tasks requiring large amounts of spoken

or written language (Hattingh et.al, 2017). Teaching is more than the simple transmission

of knowledge. Constructivist teaching and learning theory promotes active student

participation in the learning process (Sithara & Faiz, 2017). Constructivist theory is based

on allowing students to construct their own learning and creating good learners rather

than simply disseminating information. The teacher's focus is on teaching students how to learn, rather than just presenting facts. But teachers of international students often feel that little information is provided about how to address international student engagement in the classroom. A teacher implementing constructivist strategies considers learning to be experiential, grounded in inquiry, collaborative, and revolving around problem solving (Garfoor & Sarabi, 2017). The learner, as active participant in the learning process, is a key element of constructivism. But Chinese international students enter the American classroom with already established ways of thinking and acting that differ from constructivist culture. Chen and Bennett (2012) found that a culture clash existed between students' dispositions, formed by previous educational experiences in China, and pedagogical constructivism. The clash between students' heritage and the host educational setting caused the international students to experience acculturative stress and what they perceived as negative educational outcomes (Chen & Bennet, 2012). Research on individual differences indicated there are a variety of factors that can affect the perceptions and experiences of international students in unfamiliar academic, social, and linguistic contexts, including the willingness to communicate (Rajaram & Bordia, 2013).

Willingness to communicate refers to the probability that a student will initiate communication with others if given the opportunity. International students are more likely to communicate in class and be less fearful when they experience teacher confirmation behaviors (Hsu & Huang, 2017). Teacher confirmation includes elements of teachers' responses to student questions, personal interest in the students, and an

interactive teaching style (Hsu & Huang, 2017). Henze and Zhu (2012) argued that educational systems and learning styles in mainland China and the United States belong to two contrary categories, observing that the constructivist view promotes participation and critical thinking over authoritarian transmission of knowledge and examination prevalent in Chinese educational culture. Yee (as cited in Henze & Zhu, 2012) placed the pedagogical differences into several broad categories including individualism/collectivism, hierarchical/horizontal, active/passive, and argument/harmony. Garfoor and Sarabi (2017) offered a similar view contrasting the Chinese culture as one that values authorities and authoritarian knowledge, expertise and age, and test performance with western constructivism. Jackson (2014) reported differing cultural views on what it means to be a good student and how that interpretation impacted international students' classroom participation. For example, a lack of response may not signify a Chinese student's inattentiveness, but rather his belief that internalizing the information is a more effective way to learn (Jackson, 2014).

Teachers of international Chinese students must understand some key components of Chinese educational and social culture to help their first-year student acculturate. Constructivism is grounded in classrooms that promote student discussion, collaboration, and inquiry (Garfoor & Sarabi, 2017). But for Chinese students the shared sense of not wanting to be an object of focus or to be different from others is culturally embedded in a society where historically being different was more likely to result in suppression or execution that praise or support (Henze & Zhu, 2012)

Obstacles to international student oral participation include fear of making mistakes, fear of teacher assessment, lack of vocabulary and difficulty with pronunciation (Vieira, 2017). Vieira's findings indicated that a learner-centered approach that included a pre-task phase focused on language competencies and topic knowledge increased student motivation and communication, peer interactions, participation, and self-confidence for international students. An effective teaching strategy to promote international students' willingness to talk in class and decrease student classroom apprehension is teacher confirmation (Hsu & Huang, 2017). Three elements that comprise teacher confirmation are: (a) teachers' responses to students' comments and questions, (b) interest in the students and their learning, and (c) an interactive teaching style (Hsu & Huang, 2017).

Social obstacles to participation exist as well as language barriers. For Chinese students discussion may be interpreted as opposition or confrontation that seeks to challenge or find fault with their peers, embarrassing them in public (Zhao, 2018). Being silent when the teacher or peers make presentations may indicate respect, and most Chinese students agree they would rather ask their questions in private after class, to avoid becoming a focus of attention (Zhao, 2018). Effective teaching of international students must exhibit a comprehensive constructivist pedagogy that includes student-teacher and student-student communication and social interaction in addition to the classroom instruction (Dzhamalova et al., (2017).

Differentiation Strategies for First-Year Chinese International Students

The rising numbers of international students in the United States has increased the need for U.S. high school educators and administrators to be aware of the needs of first year international students to help students engage in classroom instruction (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015). The transition to a new academic setting and culture can impact international student learning and response to instruction (IIE, 2017). Vygotsky's conceptual framework of social constructivism offers a framework for assessing and understanding the way teachers interact with first year international students. For a variety of reasons, international students may not fully achieve in the host setting, especially if they struggle with unfamiliar cultures of learning such as discussion-based classrooms (Cortazzi & Jin, 2011). The idea of "cultures of learning" includes "taken for granted frameworks of expectations, attitudes, values and beliefs about how to teach or learn successfully and about how to use talk in interaction" (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006, p. 9). When Chinese students study in the US, they bring with them their own experiences and ideas about learning and teaching from their home environment (Jackson & Chen, 2018). These experiences and ideas include views about the best ways to learn, perceptions of the attributes of "good" teachers and learners, and ideas about when it is appropriate to speak or remain silent in class (Jackson & Chen, 2018).

Culture, communication and learning are interwoven and interdependent (Kai, 2012). For educational institutions to effectively address the needs of their international students, it is critical that teachers understand and appreciate the cultural challenges their

students face in the learning environment. To more fully engage first-year international students, Jackson and Chen (2018) recommended that staff and students in the receiving institutions develop a deeper understanding of diverse cultures of learning. Because the number of mainland Chinese students enrolled in higher education in the United States has grown, the need for higher education institutions to understand the mainland Chinese student's attitudes and beliefs has increased (Bartlett, Han, & Bartlett, 2018). Although much research exists regarding the academic and social acculturation of international Chinese university students, minimal published research has focused on secondary international students. In her research with adolescent international students, Papadiuk (2010) commented on the lack of studies conducted with unaccompanied secondary students. It is therefore necessary to glean from the studies of Chinese university students in the West to suggest strategies teachers of international Chinese students at the secondary level can implement in their classrooms.

When teachers accept that the social, economic, and political factors of the students' previous educational experiences in China influence classroom engagement, they will be better prepared to address the needs of their international students (Gordon & Liu, 2014). The contrasting cultural dynamics between China and the US can be expected to have an influence on the students' learning effectiveness (Jackson & Chen, 2018; Rajaram & Bordia, 2013). Understanding the cultural aspects of education in the international student's home country is a key element in designing optimal teaching and learning strategies effective to engage and support Chinese students studying in the US.

Most children born in China after 1979 have been born into China's "one-child" policy (Gordon & Liu, 2014). In China's rising middle class, families' identities and hopes are tied to the single child's success, where education is the means to higher social position and status for the family (Gordon & Liu, 2014). The situation has created an unprecedented educational competition. A recent cross-national survey showed that Chinese upper secondary students experienced the heaviest pressure compared with students in Japan, South Korea, and the United States (Kai, 2012)

Chinese learning is historically Confucian, and Western teachers' understanding of its concepts is important to enable first-year Chinese international students to adapt to new learning environments (Rajaram & Bordia, 2013). Confucianism teaches that discussion occurs only to achieve agreement and students are taught that there is one right answer (Ding, 2009). In contrast, Western pedagogy often takes a Socratic approach that encourages critical thinking and participation in discussion where teachers prompt students to express their views and even debate with the teacher and each other. Chinese students exposed to western education observed more informal student/teacher relationships, a more open and relaxed learning environment, and students were more willing to share their views. (Jackson & Chen, 2018).

Teachers who follow the Socratic tradition act as facilitators, working to create a safe learning environment that provides for the expression of multiple ideas, options, and solutions. Students from Mainland China are generally more accustomed to didactic forms of instruction, and the transition to discussion-based pedagogy may be challenging

(Cortazzi & Jin, 2011). In China's educational context, successful learning means to give the right answer, not a new answer or perspective, and a good teacher is someone who provides knowledge clearly, so students will understand and do well on the standardized test. (Zhao, 2018). Educators of international students must try to learn about their students' concerns and expectations, and to clearly explain the rationale for discussion and project-based pedagogy (Jackson & Chen, 2018; Zhao, 2018).

Research findings have revealed multiple explanations for international Chinese students' reticence to participate in class discussions and collaborative or project-based work (Ding, 2009; Hsu & Huang, 2017; Jackson & Chen, 2018; Zhao, 2018). Students expressed limited self-confidence in their ideas, weak L2 self-efficacy, language anxiety, and the fear of standing out as reasons not to engage in classroom interaction (Jackson & Chen, 2018). Perceiving themselves as different from the domestic students, Chinese students may be reluctant to engage with them, fearing a lack of acceptance, and prefer to work with other Chinese students (Jackson, 2014). International students may be sensitive to the way domestic students perceive them and doubt their own ability to communicate as a L2; and as a result, they may feel too uncomfortable to speak up in class (Hsu & Huang, 2017). One Chinese international student remarked on the absence of critical thinking in Chinese educational philosophy, adding that differing ideas are not encouraged (Ding, 2009). Culture shock may also play a role in international students' hesitancy to participate in classroom discussion or collaborative work. The new international student may be overwhelmed by the intensity of the impact of the new

environment, encountering more of a language barrier than had been anticipated (Ding, 2009). Chinese students who were more familiar with teacher dominated instruction expressed feeling overwhelmed by the amount of reading they need to do to prepare for interactive classroom sessions (Jackson & Chen, 2018). Interviews with Chinese students revealed that culturally, project collaboration presented the risk of shame or embarrassment either to the self or a member of the group (Zhao, 2018). Posing a question that a peer could not answer could cause shame or embarrassment to the peer, as could posing a question that might seem silly or foolish and bring shame or embarrassment to the self (Zhao 2018).

International students' preference for a particular instructional strategy largely depended on their comfort in the learning style and the more familiar the students were with the instructional techniques, the higher the learning effectiveness was for these students (Rajaram & Bordia, 2013). Maxwell et al. (2000) found Chinese students were most likely to learn through passive styles and content-based learning. Rajaram & Bordia (2013) reported that Chinese international students rated lectures, videos, guest speakers and classroom presentations higher than active learning such as classroom discussions and presentations, and individual research projects were rated least effective in terms of learning. One explanation for the ratings might be linked to Chinese students' preference for a collective rather than an individual learning environment. This explanation would be consistent with student familiarity with pedagogical Confucianism (Zhao, 2018).

When the receiving educational institution has a better understanding of the commonalities and differences in their international students' foundational educational experiences, they will be better able to help newcomers acculturate academically and socially. Teachers will have knowledge of how to modify their existing practices in ways that will address and optimize the learning experiences of their first-year international students. After the initial weeks of listening to their domestic classmates, Jackson and Chen (2018) found that some first-year international students expressed confidence that their ideas were just as worthy of expression as their classmates and they became more willing to express their ideas. Tangential to Jackson's findings, Rajaram & Bordia (2013) concluded that students did change their preferred style of learning after prolonged exposure to less guided instructional strategies they experienced in western education. The research supports the need for educators to clearly explain the rationale for teaching methods and provide support for newcomers such as tutoring, and supportive learning environment that considers the learning styles of all students.

PD That Offers Pedagogical and Cultural Information for Teachers of First-Year International Students

Well-designed and implemented PD that makes a positive impact on teachers' practices has a direct influence on student achievement (Althauser, 2015). The PD process should engage participants as learners, offering a variety of opportunities to apply new knowledge and skills (Casteele & Ballentyne, 2010). Effective PD for teachers integrates   specific key elements which include the following: (a) being centered around

critical components of teaching (e.g., lesson planning, student work assessment, and curriculum development); (b) evaluations of practice that include questioning, analysis, and critique; and (c) a foundation of professional communication and analysis that builds a spirit of collegiality and discourse (Garfoor & Sarabi, 2017).

PD should focus on content and strategies (Althauser, 2015), and emphasize participation and experience rather than discussion (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Matherson and Windle (2017) identified the key elements teachers desired in a PD as learning opportunities that are interactive, engaging, and relevant for their students. PD should offer a practical way to deliver content that is teacher-driven; and that can be sustained over time (Matherson & Windle, 2017). PD that provides for collaboration, planning, analysis, and reflection is more likely to promote and sustain ongoing improvement than more passive approach (Althauser, 2015). PD sessions should offer relevant active participant engagement that provides hands-on practice prior to classroom implementation so teachers do not feel they have wasted their time (Matheson & Windle, 2017). Exploring content and concentrating on pedagogical strategies for instruction requires time and support. Enough time must be allotted for the PD to be communicated and absorbed (Althauser, 2015).

Most research studies on the challenges Chinese students face report that language difficulty is the first obstacle to overcome. In addition to a lack of language proficiency that prevents international students from participating in classroom discussion and intercultural communication, the speaking pace, use of slang, and off-

topic references by instructors and students present problems (Henze & Zhu, 2012). One common assumption is that faculty members are knowledgeable about pedagogy for classroom internationalization and that implementation will occur naturally (Osakwe, 2017). Teachers cannot integrate skills they lack unless intentional effort is made to address the lack through intentionally planned PD (Osakwe, 2017). One feature of effective PD is that it is based on teachers' participation in identifying their learning needs and focuses on the unique contexts of their schools, recognizing the teachers' prior knowledge and experience (Patton, Parker, & Tannehill, 2015). Garfoor and Sarabi (2017) found that the same constructivist strategies effective in schools were equally effective in teacher education. Constructivist elements in teacher learning rely on recognizing previous knowledge, being learner (teacher) centered, fosters critical thinking and active learner involvement (Garfoor & Sarabi).

Conclusion

The literature review includes scholarly research related to my themes and planned PD. The literature supported that teachers of international students lacked the information and support they needed to implement constructivist strategies that would engage first-year international students in their classrooms. Research also supported that an assumption existed that teachers can encourage international student engagement and achievement without specialized training or PD, and that such training was not routinely offered to teachers of internationals. My review of the research indicated that PD that provides teachers with pedagogical understanding of their international students'

backgrounds and offering constructivist strategies to implement in the classroom can increase teacher efficacy in promoting international student academic and social engagement.

The literature review offered constructivist PD strategies that aligned with the PD I designed for teachers of international students. To engage participants in the development of international student acculturation objectives and learning outcomes, I began with a collaborative activity to assess teachers' current knowledge of Chinese pedagogy and provide an opportunity to share and assess their current practices with international students. Next, I provided an historical overview of Chinese pedagogy and its effect on Chinese student classroom engagement. Subsequent activities offered further opportunities for teachers to integrate new information with their previous experiences and understandings through presentation of published student scenarios. As facilitator I provided teachers with constructivist strategies they can implement with international students in their classrooms.

Project Description

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

PD reflects a process that offers reinforcement opportunities for professional growth and development to teachers who participate as active constructive learners (Gheith & Aljaberi, 2018). PD offered within a specific context connects the training with real classroom experiences; this allows teachers to use previous knowledge to construct new knowledge and develop professionally (Gheith & Aljaberi, 2018). As the

facilitator of this PD, I provided teachers the opportunity to increase their knowledge of international Chinese students' previous pedagogical experiences that may affect the academic and social engagement and to offer strategies they can implement in their own practices to increase international student classroom participation.

Before implementing the PD, I met with the high school principal to share the results of my study and the proposed timeline and expected outcomes for each of the 3-day PD sessions. Teachers, the principal, the vice-principal, and the International Program Director were invited via email to participate in the PD program. The email included an overview of the session offerings and a request to respond if they were available to participate in the sessions.

Each of the PD sessions will be held in a conference facility on the school site. A smartboard will be available to show PowerPoint presentations to participants. Each participant will receive printed copies of the handouts, including the PowerPoint slides with space for writing notes. A whiteboard will be available for sharing collaborative responses with the group. 3x5 cards will be available for written individual and group responses to learning tasks and exit tickets. A basket will be provided to collect the note cards.

Potential Barriers and Solutions

A potential barrier that may occur is the time devoted to the PD at the cost of other teacher preparation time. No instructional time will be used, but the sessions are scheduled during teacher work times prior to the start of school. Teachers may find that

other job-related responsibilities conflict with the scheduled PD. To minimize this

potential barrier, I will work with administrators to schedule the PD sessions when

teachers are expected to be onsite without conflicting responsibilities. Once the PD

program is approved and scheduled, I will reserve the appropriate facility for the specific

dates and times needed.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

I will seek input from the principal and vice-principal to select dates for

implementing the proposed PD to be offered during the staff orientation prior to the start

of the academic year. Dates will be checked against the school calendar to avoid conflicts

in teacher schedules. The proposed timeline is presented below (Table 2).

Table 2

Proposed Timeline

Date	Task	Person	Deliverable
April	Meet with principal, vice-principal, & International Program Director	Principal, vice-principal, & International Program Director	PD PowerPoint slideshow
April	Schedule PD dates & reserve the location	Principal, vice-principal	PD program announcement & invitation
April	Identify key participants Add PD dates to school calendar	Researcher, principal	Provide dates to Administrative Asst. to add to school calendar.

July	Update participant list for new hires or staff changes	Potential participants	Email invitation with response request
	Email invitation to participants with response request		
Early August	Email reminder to participants	Researcher	Tracking of participant responses
Late August	PD Sessions held over 3 days during Staff Orientation weeks prior to the start of the school year	Participants & Researcher	PD PowerPoint & handouts, schedule, participant supplies for collaborative work

Roles and Responsibilities

As the researcher, my role will be to organize and facilitate the planning and communication between the administrators and myself, and to lead the PD presentation sessions. The principal and vice-principal will provide support to the teachers to assist them with integrating new strategies into their classroom instruction with international students. The International Program Director will serve as a resource if teachers have questions about the background or current progress of a specific international student. The support of the administrators is a critical element in the success of the PD

development and implementation. The teachers need to feel that administrators value and support the time teachers invest in the PD. It is equally important that the participants see a benefit to their time investment in the PD and can identify the expected outcomes at the beginning of the PD.

To ensure successful implementation of the PD, I will include opportunities for collaborative learning during the sessions that will help teachers explore and identify strategies to increase academic and social engagement for their international students. The PD experience will provide a resource to inform teachers about strategies they can implement to improve instructional strategies with internationals students. My role will be to develop, organize, and facilitate the PD for stakeholders and participants.

Project Evaluation Plan

Formative Assessment

Formative assessments can be used to support instruction and learning by providing feedback to both the students and the instructor (Adkins, 2018). When active learning is provided as during instruction learners can explore topics through interaction, rather than passively receiving information (Adkins, 2018). The purpose of formative assessment is to provide an opportunity for PD participants to ascertain their current knowledge of international students' previous pedagogical experiences and to identify strategies to promote international student classroom engagement.

In this PD, formative assessments will be provided through a collaborative activity at the start of day 2 and exit tickets on day 1 and day 2. Following the group

activity, Would You Rather..., on day 1, the groups will participate in a collaborative task to share examples of what strategies they have previously implemented to engage their international students, and whether they felt the strategy had been effective or not effective in promoting international student engagement. Exit tickets at the end of day 1 will offer a tool for formative assessment. 1 will ask participants to provide an example on the exit ticket of how the information presented about Chinese pedagogy might be used to make a modification in their practice. A basket will be provided to collect the exit tickets. The information gleaned from the exit tickets will help me assess what the participants have learned that may inform their future understanding of international students' learning culture. Responses to the exit tickets will offer an opening activity on day 2. I can also use the exit ticket responses to modify PD sessions to better meet the needs of the participants.

Day 2 will begin with a formative assessment activity to summarize the previous day's presentation in a single sentence that includes the purpose, content, and take-away of the first day of the PD. After the summarizing activity collaborative groups will discuss and suggest possible interventions or modifications to their practices based on information presented the previous day. Each group will share with the larger group and a list will be written on the whiteboard. Exit tickets at the end of day 2 will provide an additional formative assessment opportunity. For the exit tickets I will ask participants to provide an example of how understanding barriers to Chinese student acculturation may

be demonstrated through modification of specific teaching strategies. A basket will be provided to collect the exit tickets at the end of day 2.

At the start of day 3, I will ask participants to consider the previous day's presentation of barriers to Chinese student acculturation and engagement as they review a selected scenario. I will ask participants to suggest a modification that might promote Chinese student engagement in the presented scenario. The group discussion will provide a formative assessment as the participants discuss the content that was presented and consider how the knowledge might be applied in an actual class situation. An additional formative assessment will be offered after the final presentation on day 3. Participants will be asked to complete a lesson plan template that includes a strategy discussed in the PD that they might incorporate into their classroom or subject area to promote international student engagement.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessments are used to evaluate student learning and performance to support future learning beyond the current course of study (Houston & Thompson, 2017). At the end of the 3-day PD, the participants, principal, and vice-principal will be asked to complete an evaluation on the efficacy and value of the PD content and the PD facilitator. A PD evaluation form will present participants with questions to evaluate the content presented during the PD and how the information may be used to inform instructional strategies in their practices to encourage international student engagement. Summative assessments can be used to gauge student achievement at the end of a course, and provide

for reflection and a bridge between theories and practice (Houston & Thompson, 2017). The responses to the evaluation form will help me to reflect on the PD program and evaluate how to plan and structure future PD workshops to equip teachers with constructivist strategies to engage international students in classroom learning and acculturation.

Overall Evaluation Goals

The overall purpose of the PD is to provide teachers with planned learning activities that can offer information on strategies to increase and support their classroom instruction and integration of international students. The formative and summative assessments of the PD align with this purpose. Teachers who participate in the PD may increase their knowledge and understanding of Chinese pedagogy as it influences Chinese student classroom engagement and reflect on new knowledge to implement constructivist strategies to promote international student classroom engagement. At the start of the first PD session, I will include a collaborative activity to allow participants to reflect on the strategies they currently use to integrate international students into the classroom and promote their academic engagement. At the end of the first day I will provide a Cliff Hanger exit ticket that asks participants to answer a question and make a prediction about what strategies might be presented the following day. The Cliff Hanger will be turned in to a collection basket for review by the facilitator and used to generate discussion at the start of day 2 of the PD. At the end of day 2 a new Cliff Hanger exit ticket will provide participants with a question for reflection as they respond to the

question, If I experience in a safe setting what my international students experience in a

new setting, how can I make their new setting a safe setting? The Cliff Hanger" exit

ticket will be turned in to a collection basket. On day 3 a formative assessment activity

will allow teachers review a given scenario and offer a modification that might promote

Chinese student engagement based on the previous day's presentation of barriers to

Chinese student acculturation and engagement. As part of the final session of the PD

teachers will have a reflection time to complete a lesson plan template that includes

incorporating a strategy discussed in the PD to promote international student engagement.

Following the final session of the PD I will ask participants to complete a 10-question

evaluation of their PD experience that will serve as a summative assessment for the

participants. The results of this summative assessment will provide feedback about the

participants' learning outcomes as a result of participation in the PD. The evaluation is

also useful as an opportunity for summative reflection by the participants, offering a take-

away they can use in addition to the PD handouts to support their practices. The

summative assessment may also indicate for the facilitator modifications or additions that

may be made to future PD presentations to improve its value and efficacy for teachers of

first-year international students.

Key Stakeholder Group

I based my PD on themes revealed by data collected in my study. The data

revealed that teachers and administrators lack knowledge of the previous pedagogical

influences on international student academic and social engagement and how to integrate

constructivist strategies to help the students acculturate in their new academic setting.

The essential participants in the 3-day PD will be high school teachers who teach

international students in their classes. Working collaboratively benefits teachers by

hearing others' experiences while offering an opportunity for critical thinking and

reflections about one's own practice (Adkins, 2018). The overall purpose of the PD is to

provide teachers with planned learning activities that can offer information on strategies

to increase and support their classroom instruction and integration of international

students.

The principal and vice-principal will be invited to attend and participate in as

much of the 3-day PD as their additional school obligations and schedules allow.

Attendance and support by administrators will indicate their support of the value of the

PD for the teachers. Attendance by the administrators may promote better understanding

of how to they can encourage and support the teachers as they implement new strategies

with their international students. The principal will play a key role in the scheduling and

planning process of the PD prior to its implementation.

Project Implications

Social Change Implications

International students experience acculturation challenges including differences in

pedagogy and culturally accepted communication norms. My study explored teachers'

perceptions and implementation of social constructivist strategies used to instruct first

year Chinese international students. Data analysis from this study revealed participant awareness of the need for academic acculturation and suggested a lack of knowledge about how to integrate constructivist strategies with international students into current practices. Data collection revealed teachers felt the strategies they used were not effective in engaging and supporting acculturation and learning for their international students.

Using these findings to develop my PD for teachers may promote positive social change by providing teachers with instructional strategies to implement with international students at the secondary level. The outcomes of this study may offer teachers the knowledge they need to help students engage academically and culturally during their first year enrolled in a US high school. Providing teachers with the skills and strategies to support the international students, may contribute to positive social change by enabling teachers to play a more positive role in the acculturation process and increase international student academic performance.

Importance of the Project to Local Stakeholders

The local high school administrators have been actively recruiting Chinese international students and expanding the international student program for the past six years. As the enrollment of Chinese international students increases, new international students are placed in regular classrooms, without adequate teacher preparation for how to accommodate their lack of English proficiency. Many of the teachers struggle to implement appropriate strategies to assist first year international students in classroom engagement.

This project is potentially important to local stakeholders because the PD I developed may be offered to the school as a resource for the teachers who have international students in their classrooms. Based on my findings, teachers at the school desired to know more about the educational beliefs and values that Chinese international students bring to their new schools in the US, and how they can adjust their practice to accommodate the previous experiences of their first-year Chinese international students. The teachers could benefit from participating in the PD that provides teachers with information about their students' previous educational pedagogies and offers strategies to increase and support their classroom instruction and integration of international students. School administrators could benefit from implementation of the PD when teachers are empowered by information that will help them support their international students' learning styles and acculturation. An additional benefit may include creating a stronger educational support system for teachers and students that may help the international program continue to expand.

Importance of the Project to the Larger Context

The trend of Chinese international students coming to study in US high schools continues to increase annually, particularly in California, Texas, and New York (IIE, 2017). Most completed research has focused on students at the university level, but additional research and training are needed to assist secondary school personnel to become more culturally competent in working with international adolescent students as their enrollment numbers in US secondary schools continues to rise. International

students are more likely to acculturate when teachers implement adaptations to meet the social and cultural needs of the international students. If teachers understand the pedagogical differences of domestic and international students, they can focus on strategies to encourage academic and social engagement in a classroom environment that offers an inclusive attitude toward cultural diversity.

I have made several educational exchange visits to schools in China, specifically to meet with Chinese teachers about how to prepare their students to enter US high schools. I have met with Chinese teachers in the US who come to observe our schools to learn what their students will encounter when they arrive to study in the US. As the high school population of Chinese international students continues to grow in California, I have been invited by several schools to present seminars to teachers, administrators, and schools about how to serve their international students and increase teacher instructional efficacy with Chinese students.

The development of this PD is an outgrowth of those seminars, offering an opportunity for teachers and administrators to collaborate and reflect on the needs of their schools, teachers, and students. I created the project to provide teachers and administrators with planned learning activities that can offer information on strategies to increase and support their classroom instruction and integration of international students. In the PD setting, teachers and administrators can reflect on the understanding of constructivist strategies they use with international students and gain knowledge of how to revise strategies to make them more effective. I plan to continue the development and

refinement of this PD to share with schools and educators across California who are initiating or expanding international student programs and with teachers in China on future educational travel opportunities.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Project Strengths and Limitations

Strengths of Project

The strengths of this project are its research foundation and relevance to the findings revealed by the data analysis. Research and data analysis indicated that teachers recognize a gap in practice related to teacher implementation of constructivist strategies with their first-year international students, as well as the teachers' desire to address the gap through effective PD. Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism provided the conceptual framework for the study. The framework guided the development of PD that could inform teachers regarding how variables such as social interaction, culture, and language affect the learning process and how they might modify instructional strategies to address those variables for international students.

Reflection during the PD process informs future activities based on insight that directs planning with intentionality toward the instructional goal (Gheith & Aljaberi, 2018). I have endeavored to create a PD for teachers and administrators that would allow participants to gain familiarity with the previous pedagogical experiences of their international students and reflect on their current practices with the goal of integrating new knowledge into their classroom planning and instructional strategies.

An effective PD for teachers of international students should provide participants with awareness of the cultural norms and values needed to overcome barriers to acculturation for students (Dzhamalova et al., 2016). I have structured the 3-day PD in

sessions to engage participants in collaboration, problem-solving, and reflection. The collaborative approach of the PD will allow participants to do the following: (a) share and discuss descriptive data about their international students and instructional strategies, (b) plan interventions and revised instructional strategies to integrate into their classroom pedagogy and (c) reflect on new information that may offer a new perspective regarding international student engagement. During sessions, teachers will reflect on their own practices while collaborating with colleagues to problem-solve using new information to increase international student academic and social engagement.

The strength of this project is that through participation in the PD, teachers may increase their current understanding of international student acculturation challenges and responses and gain information to modify their individual practices while engaging with other teachers. An additional outcome of the collaborative PD format may be that it would increase the interaction between teachers of international students that will exist after the PD as teachers continue to analyze, modify, and reflect on their instructional strategies with international students.

Limitations of the Project

A limitation of the study is the proposed 3-day sequential format. Planning for the PD to occur over 3 days during staff orientation prior to the start of the school year is an effective method of reaching all teachers during noninstructional time when they are already required to be on campus. But it does not allow for reflection of new strategies

implemented to replace previous strategies, or offer further collaborative analysis regarding implemented new strategies. Gheith and Aljaberi (2018) argued that reflection is a continuous formative process. Reflection provides a cognitive structure that enables teachers to modify actions in a way that relates to their goals (Gheith & Aljaberi, 2018). Using reflection to develop understanding encourages teachers to evaluate their actions and use critical thinking to achieve a deeper understanding of the problem and develop appropriate solutions (Rayan, 2014). Within a 3-day consecutive format prior to the start of school, teachers can only reflect on previous experiences and will not have opportunity to implement and evaluate new instructional strategies between PD sessions.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

Alternate Approaches to the Problem

Effectively exploring teachers' perceptions of international students' academic proficiencies depends on the ability of the teachers to reflect on their teaching practice and strategies within the context of student response. This approach aligns with the social constructive framework. One alternative approach could be for only the first PD session to be scheduled during staff orientation prior to the start of the school year. Two additional PD days could be scheduled during the year as staff in-service noninstructional days. Date selection would include input from the high school principal, vice principal, and myself. This type of PD schedule is effective because teachers can connect new learning with ongoing experiences that allow opportunity for reflection and modification throughout the process, as well as ongoing peer interaction. Another alternative approach

could be to provide a brief period during designated staff meetings to share and discuss ongoing modifications to teacher instructional strategies and student responses to the interventions. Alternative reflective and collaborative activities may be options that require less time for implementation, while still providing peer feedback and idea exchange. Teachers could keep a record of new strategies as they are implemented and their evaluation of their efficacy in promoting international student engagement.

Alternate Definitions of the Problem

The problem that prompted this study was that teachers at a local private school were struggling to identify and implement appropriate instructional strategies to promote international student academic engagement. Teachers recognized that first year international students struggled to engage in their new academic tasks and were less likely to engage in classroom student/teacher and student/student learning interactions. The data collected from interviews with 12 teachers of first-year high school international Chinese students revealed that teachers perceived instructional strategies that were effective with domestic students but not effective for the international students. Teachers expressed feelings of confusion and a lack of understanding about their international students' prior experiences and how best to help international students acculturate academically and socially.

The PD I created supports the professional growth and development of teachers who desire to increase their knowledge of the cultural norms and values needed to overcome barriers to acculturation by the students and develop effective interventions to

promote academic and social engagement. Participation in this PD will offer teachers the opportunity to reflect on their current practices with the goal of integrating new knowledge into their classroom planning and instructional strategies. However, one limitation of the project is its 3-day sequential structure prior to teachers interacting with their international students in the classroom setting. I have proposed 2 alternative definitions of the problem to alleviate the limitation. Teachers of international students need regular opportunities such as staff meetings or department meetings where they can share ongoing reflection and collaboration of instructional strategies they are currently implementing with international Chinese students and evaluate their efficacy and suggest possible modifications. Teachers of international students would benefit from participation in a collaborative network with other schools that offer international programs where teachers can share their experiences via an online chat or blog site, offering reflective insight and encouragement to other teachers of international students.

The alternative definitions of the problem are congruent with the problem that prompted this study. Each problem statement shows how teachers can advance their understanding of effective instructional strategies for international students. I chose to create a PD for the local school site as a first step in preparing teachers to help international students successfully integrate into the school academic and social culture. In place of the PD or after the PD, the alternative definitions of the problem could be used to address ongoing teacher development through substitute collaborative and reflective opportunities.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

I explored the perceptions of high school teachers about strategies they use to promote academic and social engagement of the first-year international students in their classes. I gathered data from 12 individual interviews with teachers who integrate instruction for first-year international students with domestic students. Findings from the data analysis revealed that teachers used the same constructivist strategies with international students they used with domestic students but did not feel the strategies were equally effective for the international students compared to domestic students. The teachers needed more information about the background pedagogy that influenced the academic interaction of the international students, and how to implement more effective strategies in their classroom instruction.

In my role of co-director of the Summer Immersion Institute for incoming international students I have met with teachers who struggle to understand why strategies that are effective with domestic students do not have equal efficacy for international students. I have met with Chinese agencies, schools, and families who send their students to study in the US and heard from them what their students expect when they arrive at their new school and what the students report as struggles once they begin classes. Through my work with Chinese international students both in China and in the US, I identified a need to present local teachers with more understanding about the acculturation struggles Chinese international students face in the classroom and offer strategies teachers might find effective to mitigate the acculturation process. In the

interviews, teachers expressed a desire to see international students engage more both academically and socially in the school culture.

As I collected data through the interviews, I learned that the teacher participants lacked knowledge of Chinese pedagogical practices that formed the foundation for their international students' responses to instructional strategies. I learned that although the teachers could identify when and how Chinese international students failed to engage in the classroom dynamic or culture, they lacked understanding of how to change their instructional strategies to achieve more classroom response and interaction from the international students. The data collection revealed teachers were very interested in learning ways to modify their strategies to meet the goal.

As a researcher, I had to be cognizant not to engage in dialog about potential strategies, but to focus only on gathering data about the perceptions of the teachers relative to the interview questions. I found it challenging at times to work within the interview structure. One reason is because as I work with international students when they first arrive in the US, I have been able to dialog with them about their challenges. Another reason for the challenge is my own experiences observing in Chinese schools and meeting with teachers in China about their pedagogical styles and instructional expectations. My experiences with Chinese educators and administrators in China made it difficult at times to set aside acquired knowledge and stay focused on the interview components and participants' views rather than initiate conversation on additional relevant side topics.

The literature review for my project highlighted the need to support teachers by investigating PD opportunities which could enhance teachers' instructional delivery to support first year Chinese international high school students' academic engagement. Research offered evidence that international students face specific social and academic acculturation challenges (Chue & Nie, 2016), and that support offered by the host school is an important factor in reducing the stress caused by cultural adaptation (Cho & Yu, 2015). Findings by Chue and Nie (2016) and Cho and Yu (2015) aligned with earlier seminal work by Berry (2005) who found that teachers often struggled to adapt their pedagogy to the needs of diverse cultures. These findings prompted me to research teachers' perceptions about their current instructional strategies for international students to enhance teachers' instructional delivery to support first year Chinese international high school students.

Once I received IRB approval I sent invitations to high school teachers at the local school to participate in the study. All teachers at the school have international student enrolled in their classes. The small size of the school made it possible for all teachers to participate in the study. I was surprised by the quick responses of the teachers indicating their willingness to participate, and their interest in the eventual outcome of the study. I was able to reserve a conference room at the school that provided a private place for the one-on-one interviews at times that were convenient for the teachers. The data collection was completed faster than I anticipated because of the scheduling convenience and the interest of the participants. I began transcribing the interviews as I completed them rather

than waiting until all were completed. This strategy had an unexpected benefit of allowing me to see how the findings were developing and overlapping as the interviews progressed. I could also see where my interview techniques needed improvement, with the result that the later interviews yielded more data than the earlier ones.

I needed the help of my doctoral study chairperson to differentiate the categories and themes in my findings. Once I identified the themes I was able to use them to guide the project development. I chose PD for my project and research helped me identify a PD structure. I chose a PD format that could be used to assist teachers to achieve more classroom response and interaction from the international students through collaboration and reflection.

As a researcher, I found that I needed additional research to create the PD. I was confident of the information I wanted to present, but expanding my research presented me with a variety of options for the learning emphasis of the PD. I wanted the participants to have opportunities to reflect on their individual strategies and practices, so I included times of reflection following collaboration and exit tickets that could be reviewed and discussed in follow-up sessions. I found the additional research I pursued to support my findings and create the PD lead me to consider possible questions for future inquiry.

Reflective Analysis of Personal Learning

Completing the literature reviews gave me better understanding of how to focus on a topic and synthesize information. I found a wealth of literature to explore, but

frequently determined that the literature was not closely enough related to my topic. For example, I had to differentiate between research that targeted L2 students in general, and studies that focused on international students studying not only in a second language but also in a second culture.

An additional area of growth has been synthesizing the presentation of research. As I began writing the review of literature to support my findings I learned not to present research as a summary, but as an integrated analysis of support for my topic and deliverable project. Gaining an ability to synthesize gave me a better perspective and understanding of my study that formed what I wanted to present as a deliverable PD.

Growth of Self as a Scholar

My own experiences sparked an interest in the acculturation challenges international students face. As I worked toward the completion of the project study, I learned to understand the process of producing a scholarly study. I learned to synthesize the findings of previous scholars who had also explored the topic of international student acculturation. I could use the results of their research to shape my inquiry and increase the depth of my analysis and understanding. Researching published literature led me to an awareness of the seminal works that appeared frequently in the literature reviews of developing research. I found it beneficial to my understanding of the broader topic to review how the seminal studies frequently formed the foundation for more current research.

I struggled with the first interviews. I was so focused on maintaining impartiality and not straying from the prepared questions that the interview seemed more of an interrogation than an interview that would elicit reflective responses from the participant. Using that first interview as a starting point I grew in my ability to offer a more conversational approach to an interview. I became better at engaging the participants and was able to elicit more detailed and reflective data.

My most significant area of growth as a scholar was learning how to approach inquiry and data collection in a sequential and systematic manner. I had to learn to take each step sequentially and to rely on the previous step to form the substance of the next step. I can now see how the PD is an outgrowth of the questions, data collection, and data analysis. Knowing the roots of the PD gives me confidence that I have created something that will serve the expressed needs of the teachers.

Growth as a Practitioner

The knowledge I gained through research has positively affected the way I approach inquiry and project development. Reviewing seminal research supported my initial interest in the study topic from a variety of viewpoints. As a teacher working with international students I hear their confusion with classroom expectations and instructional procedures, but IRB restrictions make it problematic to gather research from high school students. Reviewing seminal research on acculturation gathered from the student perspective helped me develop deeper understanding of how to approach the problem from an instructional perspective.

I anticipated what strategies might be shared by teachers in the data collection, but I was surprised by the uniformity of analysis the participants offered about what worked and what did not work in the classroom. Teachers expressed their desire for PD on the topic of international student academic and social acculturation that would address the issues they had identified in their classrooms. Integrating my experiences with my research and the responses of the participants provided an opportunity to create a PD to assist teachers in my own community to develop strategies they might find effective with their international students.

The research process offered me opportunity to reflect on my growth as a professional educator. My initial choice to obtain a doctoral degree in teacher leadership was based on my desire to step out of the secondary classroom and grow as an educator and influencer of teachers and their practices. Engaging in scholarly research practices, I have grown in my ability to explore ideas and synthesize information to present to colleagues. My most significant development has been growth in data collection processes. As a teacher, it has more often been my role to disseminate information. As a researcher, I have embraced the role of receiver of information that may be used to inform and benefit my peers.

Growth as a Project Developer

Creating the PD allowed me to step into the teacher leadership role I sought when choosing teacher leadership as my course of study. The research process gave me confidence to prepare and share information with teachers of secondary international

students. I discovered during the review of literature that most of the research on international student acculturation and effective instructional strategies has been pursued at the university level. By developing a PD program focused on the needs of secondary students and teachers I was able to address an identified problem where little research exists. I reflected on the categories and themes of the data collected through one-on-one interviews to design a PD that would address the gap in practice expressed by the participants.

Teachers desired a PD to provide understanding of the international students' responses to instruction so teachers could better support the academic and social engagement of their international students. To accomplish this, I needed to concentrate the PD elements on presenting information that would most effectively address the teachers' gap in knowledge of international student's previous pedagogical experience. Once that gap was addressed, I provided an opportunity for teachers to reflect on and modify their current practices based on integrating new knowledge. My review of research showed that teachers benefit from a PD based on practical activities relevant to their own classrooms and that can be immediately put into practice. I created a 3-day PD program that offered teachers information on Chinese pedagogy and an opportunity to examine and refine their own practices through peer collaboration and reflection. The 3-day PD format, supported by the school administrators, can provide teachers with non-instructional collaborative time to form intentional modifications based on a scholarly researched presentation.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

This research study is important because I obtained findings from the perceptions of high school teachers about the perceived efficacy of the strategies they implement to engage first year international students. Most of the existing research on the acculturation needs of international students focuses on university students and instructors. Researchers have approached the topic from personal perspective (Liu, 2011; Zhao, 2018), from the students' perspectives (Bartlett et al., 2018; Cheng & Fox, 2008; Heng, 2017), and from the instructional perspective (Campbell, 2015; Cho & Yu, 2015; Ferris et al., 2015). Only two studies (Papadiuk, 2010; Tong, 2014) examined international student engagement at the secondary level. The participants in this study are high school teachers who currently teach first-year international students in integrated classroom of domestic and international students. Data collected from teachers in this setting can help form a foundation of knowledge that can be used to inform other teachers and school stake holders as the international high school student population continues to grow in the US. This study and the PD that evolved from the findings could help assist teachers to understand and implement more effective strategies in their practices. When teachers have a deeper understanding of their students' previous experiences, they are better able to promote international student academic and social engagement, resulting in higher academic achievement for international students in US high schools. The PD I created may be used to provide the information teachers need to assist international students acculturate and succeed academically. Offering the information presented in the PD to

teachers prior to the start of school may enable them to alleviate acculturation challenges earlier in the school year, providing better transition to the school setting and instructional practices for both students and teachers at the local site.

Data collected from teachers in the local setting may help form a foundation of knowledge that can be used to inform other teachers and school stake holders as the international high school student population continues to grow in the US. This study and the PD that evolved from the findings could help assist teachers to understand and implement more effective strategies in their practices. When teachers have a deeper understanding of their students' previous experiences, they are better able to promote international student academic and social engagement that may result in higher academic achievement for international students in US high schools. The PD I created may be used to provide information teachers need to assist international students acculturate and succeed academically. Offering the information presented in the PD to teachers prior to the start of school may enable them to alleviate acculturation challenges earlier in the school year, providing better transition to the school setting and instructional practices for both students and teachers at the local site.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

This study contributes to the literature about teachers' perceptions about instructing international students and PD opportunities which could enhance teachers' instructional delivery to support first year Chinese international high school students' academic engagement. This project study addresses a gap in local practice pertaining to

the acculturation and instructional needs of first-year international students at the secondary level. Through one-on-one interviews with high school teachers of first-year international students in integrated domestic-international classrooms, I documented the experiences, and challenges they expressed about their efforts to promote international student academic engagement. Data analysis revealed three themes that formed the basis for a PD I created to help teachers identify and implement appropriate instructional strategies to support international student academic engagement.

Potential Impact for Social Change

When international students enter western secondary educational settings, they arrive with previous experiences and ideas about learning and teaching from their home environment (Jackson & Chen, 2018).   Teachers are a key component in bridging cultural gaps between international students and school academic and social cultures, but many teachers are not adequately prepared to meet the instructional needs of first-year international students entering their classrooms and school populations. When teachers engage international students with effective teaching strategies, the students are better prepared to successfully acculturate and perform academically.

The PD I developed for this study provides teachers with information about Chinese pedagogy and its influence on Chinese student classroom response and engagement. The information presented in the PD assists teachers to more effectively assess and modify their current practices to meet international students' needs as both teachers and students mutually engage in the students' acculturation process. The PD

equips teachers and stake-holders to better recognize and understand the motivation behind Chinese student responses to western pedagogy. When teachers have more knowledge, they can incorporate instructional strategies that will bridge the differences and promote engagement on the part of the students.

The PD created for this study may positively affect social change by empowering teachers to assist international students to more fully engage academically and socially in the local school culture. When teachers become proactive in promoting student acculturation and engagement, they facilitate social change in their students and schools. As international students become more immersed in the local academic setting, domestic students may also benefit from cross-cultural interaction. As the number of secondary international students continues to increase in the US, the PD project proposed for this study may be shared with other schools seeking to increase their teachers' understanding of international student acculturation and engagement.

Methodological, Theoretical, and Empirical Implications

The methodology and theoretical implications of this study align with the stated purpose of the study and the constructivist framework that formed the foundation of the inquiry. The problem that prompted the study focused on teachers' need for strategies which could enhance instructional delivery to support first year Chinese international high school students' academic engagement. Data collected from one-on-one interviews with teachers revealed perceptions about everyday classroom challenges and suggested possible solutions to address the teachers' needs for reform. A review of scholarly

research supported the findings of the data analysis and the structure of the PD that emerged as a result of the findings.

I determined qualitative case study design to be the best design for this study because qualitative research is effective in revealing detailed information about the cultural values, behaviors, and social contexts of a specific population (Creswell, 2012). Case study design offers a detailed examination of a single setting, subject, or event (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of social constructivist strategies to instruct first year Chinese international students and to examine teachers' perceptions about professional needs to improve their instructional delivery. In my study of teachers' perceptions and experiences with international students' acculturation, I explored a single phenomenon in a real-life local context. Selecting a qualitative case study design allowed me to investigate teachers' perceptions and experiences in depth by collecting data through semistructured interviews. Categories and themes emerged from the data analysis. The finding suggest that teachers need and want a PD that will offer information they can implement to modify their instructional strategies to increase student academic and social engagement for international students. Theoretical implications of the findings align logically with Vygotsky's concept of ZPD which recognized that instructional leadership should correspond to the knowledge and skills of the learner (Hawley, 2007).

The empirical implications of this study are that teachers are able to identify specific areas of need for instructing and engaging their international students and that

they recognized their efforts were not effective. Teachers believed increased knowledge of the cultural backgrounds of their students could assist them in acculturating and engaging their international students. Teachers recognized a need for increased knowledge, and they expressed a desire for PD that could enhance their instructional practices with international students.

Recommendation for Practice and or Future Research

The findings of this study highlight the need for increased study and support for teachers of first-year international students at the secondary level. First-year international secondary students are immersed almost immediately into a new academic and social environment. Without family support, they encounter unfamiliar teaching practices, acculturation challenges, and identity conflicts (Campbell, 2015). International students are more likely to acculturate when teachers implement adaptations to meet the social and cultural needs of the international students. The social constructivist view supports the importance of teacher-student interactions, but the findings of this study indicated that teachers did not feel their current strategies were successful in providing for the instructional needs of their international students. If teachers are knowledgeable about the pedagogical differences encountered by first-year international students, they can implement effective strategies to encourage academic and social engagement while offering an inclusive attitude toward cultural diversity.

When American university professors incorporated constructivist concepts to meet the needs of international students, the students were more likely to achieve

academic success and expressed an improved learning experience in US higher education

(Roy, 2013). More scholarly research focused on the acculturation and academic

integration of younger international students is needed. One reason for the lack of

research regarding students at the secondary level may be related to the ethical

restrictions of research associated with minors. This difficulty may be somewhat

remediated by approaching the topic from the teachers' perspective as I did in this study.

An additional approach to future study may be the need for PD specific to

teachers of international students. Educators who enroll international students often

realize that international students face acculturation challenges, but they do not prepare

teachers for their responsibilities in the process (Hattingh, 2015). Participants in this

study responded positively to the need for a PD that would help them better understand

and meet the needs of their international students. Scholarly research reported university

teachers' perceptions about a lack of PD opportunities for educators of international

students. At the university level, educators felt a sense of professional isolation from their

peers when working with international students and stated their willingness to participate

in relevant PD and staff collaboration opportunities (Daniels, 2013). I encountered

similar attitudes expressed by teachers I met on trips to China. Research on how to

provide teachers of international students at all levels may serve the educational

community. Focusing PD research to assist secondary teachers in the classroom may be

even more important as younger students are more reliant on the teacher-student

relationships for acculturation support and academic achievement.

Conclusion

When international students first encounter the new academic environment, they experience behavioral and acculturation challenges (Berry, 2005; Chu & Nie, 2016). This qualitative study explored current instructional strategies teachers implemented with first-year international students and identified PD opportunities they felt might enhance their instructional delivery for first-year Chinese international students. I invited the teachers at a local high school who have first-year Chinese international students in their classes to participate in interviews to share their perceptions and experiences about instructing international students. As I collected and transcribed the data from the interviews I attempted to identify emerging themes and patterns that would clarify teachers' perceptions and experiences of social constructivist strategies they used to instruct first year Chinese international students. I also reviewed the data to examine teachers' perceptions about their need for PD to improve their instructional delivery. Although it is the students who face acculturation challenges in the academic and social setting of the school, I chose to address the topic strictly from the point of view of the teachers and how they interacted with the international students in their classrooms due to IRB restrictions on interviewing minors.

The problem that prompted this study was that teachers at a local private high school were struggling to identify and implement appropriate instructional strategies to promote international student engagement. This observation was supported by teachers who shared in staff meetings that although they noticed the international students were

struggling with classroom engagement, they did not know how to address the problem. Strategies they had previously perceived effective to engage domestic students were not at all effective in engaging Chinese students. Teachers could identify the problem but were not equipped to pose a solution.

As I analyzed the data based on the research questions, 3 themes emerged that provided a foundational understanding of teachers' perceptions about a lack of engagement exhibited by their international students and their desire for more knowledge about strategies they could implement to promote more academic and social engagement for their international students. I relied on data analysis from the study and a review of current literature to create a 3-day PD that would provide teachers with information and strategies they could implement in their practices to promote and encourage international student academic engagement.

This study is important because it focused on the perceptions and needs of teachers of Chinese international students at the secondary level, a student population that continues to grow in US high schools. The integration of international students into US schools provides a rich resource for domestic students because having already crossed cultural boundaries international students offer a rich resource for promoting diversity and global engagement. To realize the potential contributions offered by international students, schools must be informed and responsive to opportunities for the cultural interaction and global influence international students bring to their schools. Many schools have welcomed and absorbed international students without addressing needed

pedagogical changes. Faculty and administrators lack the knowledge to meet and respond

to the needs of their international students, presenting a gap in PD that needs to be

addressed if globalization is to occur in the school setting. US high schools need to

address internationalization in a strategic manner. The findings and project that were

developed in this study could be used to inform teachers and school stakeholders who

work with high school Chinese international students about how they may assist

international students acculturate and succeed academically, thereby avoiding missed

opportunities for global diversity offered by internalization of US high school student

bodies.

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Appendix A: The Project

Goals: In this 3-day PD**,** I will provide teachers with information about first-year Chinese international student acculturation challenges and how to recognize and address pedagogical adjustments international students must make in the new educational setting. I will present how the Chinese pedagogy previously experienced by their first-year Chinese international students formed students' perceptions of appropriate classroom interactions. Presentations and group discussions will offer ideas about identifying possible cultural foundations that influence international students' behaviors. Teachers will be presented with strategies to engage international students in classroom dialog and learning as the students acculturate to styles of western pedagogy. The PD will offer group collaboration and discussion activities to increase teacher understanding of international student acculturation, and to support teachers in implementing effective strategies to promote international student academic and social engagement. Teachers will have time for reflection at the closing of each day to consider how the information presented may be integrated with their instructional strategies for international students.

Learning Outcomes: Teachers can enhance their knowledge and understanding about Chinese educational philosophy and practices, international student acculturation, develop awareness of barriers to international student engagement, and learn to identify and implement strategies to promote international student engagement. Teachers will participate in small group discussions to share their current understanding of international student responses and their current needs about intervention strategies to increase

international student classroom engagement. In the final session of the PD, teachers will

be provided with a resource handout containing a review of Chinese educational

pedagogy and practices, along with possible strategies to promote academic and social

engagement for Chinese international students.

Target Audience: The target audience is high school teachers in the local school

who have first-year Chinese international students in their classrooms. Administrators

will be invited to attend and participate in the PD sessions to gain understanding of

international student acculturation and strategies that promote school-wide engagement

for the international student community and to show support for teacher growth and

learning.

Components: The PD will be organized by topic to help participants achieve the

PD goals of learning to recognize cultural barriers to international student engagement

and to identify intervention strategies to promote international student academic and

social engagement. Topics will be presented in a spiral structure to allow participants to

reflect throughout the PD and to integrate new learning as it is presented.

Day 1: Chinese philosophical pedagogy and its influence on international student

engagement; sharing current strategies teachers implement to engage students in

classroom learning. Reflect on potential modifications based on day 1

presentation.

Day 2: Teacher perceptions of international student response to western

pedagogical integration strategies; strategies to help international students

acculturate and engage in the local learning environment.

Day 3: Integrate understanding of how culture influences student responses to

classroom instruction and school engagement. Explore how to differentiate or

modify existing teaching strategies to promote academic and social engagement

for international students.

To create this PD, I used themes revealed by the data as a guide to construct a PD

that would address teachers' desires for information on differentiated constructivist

strategies to implement with their international students and for information on their

students' prior educational experiences that could be used to inform current practices. I

planned days 2 and 3 of the PD to integrate new information presented to the participants.

The day 2 and 3 schedules also provide for collaborative work time for teachers to

integrate new understanding of Chinese pedagogy and culture into their current

instructional practices. At the end of the PD, participants will be provided with time to

engage in a collaborative review of the PD to discuss and share what information they

believe would be most helpful in planning for their international students. Participants

will be given time for personal reflection to consider how they might adjust their

instructional strategies to better provide for the acculturation of their international

students.

PowerPoint slides and facilitator notes were used to organize and present the PD information and collaborative activities. The PowerPoint slides offer an outline of each session's format and information that will be presented to support each session. This will serve as a guide for the facilitator. Collaborative activities will provide opportunities for formative and summative assessments of the PD. The following chart outlines the schedule, activities, and presentations for each day of the PD.

PD Session Schedule - Day 1

Time	Activity	Method
8:00 – 9:00	Sign-in, and distribution of PD handouts for Day 1, and assignment of collaborative groups. Continental breakfast provided	Registration at table in lobby of conference location, pick-up PD handouts for Day 1, and table assignment for collaborative groups
9:00 – 9:30	Welcome Overview of 3-day PD, and Goals and Learning Outcomes	Lead by PD facilitator using PowerPoint slides Participant handouts of slides with note-taking component
9:30 – 9:50	Group activity: "Would You Rather…"	Present activity guidelines and purpose. Laminated cards for group activity participation
9:50-10:00	Break	

10:20-12:00	Collaborative group activity.	Introduced by PD Facilitator. Group discussion and collaboration.
12:00 – 1:00	Chinese Pedagogy and Its Influence on Chinese Student Behavior and Academic Response	PowerPoint presentation by PD facilitator. PowerPoint handout with note-taking component
1:00 – 2:00	Lunch	On your own
2:00– 2:30	Share group results of collaborative activity. Discuss suggestions & student responses reflecting on Chinese pedagogy presentation.	PowerPoint presentation- presented by PD facilitator; Handout
	Closing Session Formative Assessment	Exit Ticket: "Cliff Hanger"

PD Facilitator Notes for Day 1

Registration: Each participant will receive a name tag and a packet with the PD handouts, group assignment, and the "Cliff Hanger" exit ticket for Day 1.

- A white board with markers will be in the front of the room for documenting group responses for discussion and review.

- Post guidelines for group discussion as table tents on each table.

- Breaks are scheduled between presentations. Please silence phones and step outside if you must take a call.

- A basket for the exit tickets will be placed by the exit from the conference room.

Facilitator Presentation Notes:

- Welcome participants and share the 3-day PD schedule in their packet and on the PowerPoint. Introduce the Day 1 copy of the PowerPoint slides with note-taking option.

- Explain that the goals and expected outcomes are: (a) to help teachers increase their knowledge of Chinese pedagogy and its influence on Chinese international student classroom engagement and acculturation; and (b) provide teachers with information and practice to develop constructivist strategies they can implement to engage their international students academically and socially in the school and its culture.

- Check that teachers are in their assigned groups for collaborative work.

Guidelines: Present guidelines for group discussions and indicate the table tents.

- Listen actively but without interrupting

- Be accepting of others' views

- Offer corroborating or alternative views with respect

- Give everyone an opportunity to contribute to the discussion

Session I

- Group activity: Would You Rather… For the activity, each table will have an envelope containing 10 discussion prompts. Prompts may be used in

any order and should be randomly selected from the envelope without reading them first. A group member will share the question. Each participant will silently decide their answer to the question each group member will share their answer and why.

- Note: Remind participants of the guidelines on the table tents and the purpose is to get to know each other, not to persuade anyone's point of view. Groups may respond to 1 or 2 questions as time allows. Future sessions will allow time for additional Would You Rather… responses.

- 10-minute break

- Collaborative Activity (20 minutes) Scribe & Sage to engage participants in a discussion using the following questions:

1. What teaching strategies do you currently use to instruct and engage first year Chinese international students?

2. How would you define acculturation?

3. What information might help you promote academic engagement?

   - Each person will serve as the scribe for one question. The scribe presents a question from the list and transcribes the oral responses of other participants but does not answer the question themselves. The purpose is to gather data responses to the questions. It is not necessary to match a response to a name. Bullet points are sufficient to document a response. Change scribes for each question so everyone has a turn to answer.

- Facilitator-lead PowerPoint presentation: "Chinese Pedagogy and Its Influence on Chinese Student Behavior and Academic Response."
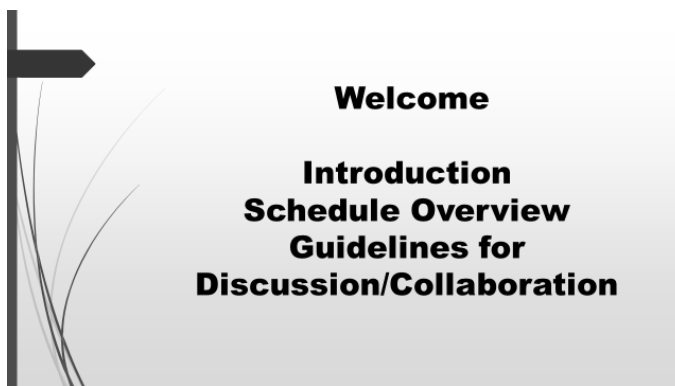
Lunch Break

Session 2

- Group activity (10 minutes): Would You Rather… Choose one question from the envelope to answer.

- Share group results of Session 1 collaborative activity. Discuss suggestions and student responses using information presented in Session on Chinese pedagogy. The facilitator may promote discussion by directing participants to specific elements of the Session I presentation.

- Inform participants that tomorrow's PD will focus on strategies to help international students acculturate and engage in the local learning environment. Complete the session by reflecting on the activities of Day 1 and answering the following question on your Cliff Hanger exit ticket:

  If much of what we thought and most of what we have tried isn't working, what do we do now?

  No names are needed on the exit ticket. Participants should place their completed ticket in the basket by the exit door as they leave the session for the day.

- The PowerPoint presentation slides for PD Day 1 are found below:

Day 1 PowerPoint

Addressing Teachers' Perceptions About Instructional Delivery for Chinese International Students

Welcome

Introduction
Schedule Overview
Guidelines for
Discussion/Collaboration

Professional Development Goals

❖ To provide teachers with information on the Chinese educational system to help teachers understand how their students' previous experiences affect their current classroom interactions and responses

❖ To increase teachers' knowledge about differentiation strategies that will promote academic and social acculturation for first-year Chinese international students.

Desired Outcomes

Participation in the PD will

❖ Increase teachers' knowledge and understanding of Chinese educational philosophy and practices as it influences student response and classroom engagement.

❖ Develop teacher awareness of barriers to international student engagement.

❖ Learn to identify and implement strategies to promote international student engagement.

❖ Generate change that provides teachers the opportunity to understand student needs and to enhance student achievement outcomes

Group Activity
"Would You Rather…"

➤ Review the conversation guidelines on your table tent.

➤ Choose a group member to randomly select a question from the envelope on your table.

➤ Present the question to the group.

➤ Wait a few seconds for each participant to silently decide their answer to the question

➤ Each group member will share their answer and the reason for their choice.

Collaborative Activity
"Scribe & Sage"

■ Each person will serve as the scribe to present a question from the list and transcribes the responses of other participants. The scribe should not answer the question themselves. The scribe's purpose is to gather data and they should not answer the question themselves. Bullet points are sufficient to document a response. Change scribes for each question so everyone has a turn to answer.

■ What teaching strategies do you currently use to instruct and engage first year Chinese international students?

■ How would you define acculturation?

■ What information might help you promote academic engagement?

How does Confucianism influence student response?

Teacher offers more time or tutoring.

- Student acts embarrassed at being singled out.

- Student says s/he understands the assignment and doesn't need help.

- Student says s/he will come to tutoring but doesn't come.

Result: Student does not complete the assignment or relies on another Chinese student to provide the answers but doesn't learn the material.

"Cliff Hanger"

- Reflect on the information presented in today's sessions and strategies you currently use in your practice with international students to reflect on the following question and complete the response card.

"If most of what we thought and much of what we have tried isn't really working, what do I do now?"

PD Session Schedule - Day 2

Time	Activity	Method
8:00 – 8:45	Sign-in, and distribution of PD handouts for Day 2, and assignment of collaborative groups. Continental breakfast provided	Registration in lobby of conference location, pick-up PD handouts for Day 2, and table assignment for collaborative groups
8:45 – 9:15	Welcome Overview of Day 2 PD schedule. Whole Group Collaboration: In one sentence summarize Day 1 presentation.	Lead by PD facilitator Write the group response on white board. Participant handouts of Day 1 slides with note-taking component
9:15 – 9:30	Small Group activity: Would You Rather…	Review activity guidelines. Laminated cards for group activity participation
9:30 - 10:00	Cliff Hanger Response Discussion	Lead by PD Facilitator Share responses to the Cliff Hanger exit ticket from Day 1.
10:00 - 10:10	Break	

10:10 – 10:30	Group Activity: Experiencing Acculturation Challenges	Lead by PD Facilitator French classroom experience: Cendrillon reading and French response handout.
10:30-12:00	International Student Acculturation Challenges & Barriers to International Student Engagement.	PowerPoint presentation by PD facilitator. PowerPoint handout with note-taking component
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch	On your own
1:00 – 2:00	Share responses to acculturation activity: What challenges & frustrations did you experience? Discuss possible barriers to participation.	PowerPoint presentation-presented by PD facilitator; Handout
2:00– 2:30	Closing Session	Exit Ticket: Cliff Hanger

PD Facilitator Notes for Day 2

Registration: Each participant should pick up a name tag and a packet with the PD

handouts for day 2, group assignment, and the Cliff Hanger exit ticket for day 2.

Facilitator will ensure that the meeting room is clean and prepared for the sessions with

white board, markers, table tents, and a basket for exit tickets.

Facilitator Presentation Notes:

- Welcome participants and share an overview of the day 2 PD schedule. Check

  that each participant received a copy of the day 2 PowerPoint slides handout.

- Explain the goals and expected outcomes for the day are: (a) recognizing and

  identifying acculturation challenges; and (b) recognizing how acculturation

  challenges present barriers to international student classroom engagement.

- Check that participants are in their assigned groups for collaborative work.

- Remind participants of guidelines for collaborative work (table tents)

- Whole Group Activity: Facilitator will lead a whole group collaboration using

  the white board to create a single sentence summary of the day 1 presentation.

  Small Group activity: Would You Rather… (1 question only)

- Facilitator-lead discussion (20 minutes). Facilitator will share selected

  responses from the Cliff Hanger exit tickets to generate discussion addressing

  the following questions:

  1. Why might the suggested strategy have been ineffective?

2. Why might an international student not have a positive response to the proposed strategy or intervention?

3. How might the proposed strategy or intervention be modified to be more effective for an international student?

- 10 - Minute Break

- Whole Group Activity: Experiencing Acculturation Challenges. Listen and follow along on your handout as the facilitator reads *Cendrillon* (Cinderella) aloud in French. Look for words you might recognize as similar to English words and pay attention to how you respond when you don't understand the story or words. Be prepared to share what confused you and what you found helpful during the reading and response exercise. What challenges might they encounter? What might be helpful in completing the task? Facilitator-lead PowerPoint Presentation: Acculturation Challenges and Barriers to International Student Engagement.

Lunch Break

Session 4

- Group activity (10 minutes): Would You Rather… Choose one question from the envelope to answer.

- Share responses to Session 3 experience activity. The facilitator may promote discussion by directing participants to specific elements of the Session 3 presentation or asking questions that descriptions of teachers' emotional responses to the situation.

      o   What did you find confusing or challenging in the reading?

      o   What might be helpful in completing the task?

- Inform participants that tomorrow's PD will focus on strategies to help international students acculturate and engage in the local learning environment.

- Complete the session by reflecting on the activities of day 2 and answering the following question on your Cliff Hanger exit ticket:

  If I experience in a safe setting what my international students experience in a new setting, how can I make their new setting a safe setting?

  No names are needed on the exit ticket. Participants should place their completed ticket in the basket by the exit door as they leave the session for the day.

The PowerPoint presentation slides for PD Day 2 are found below.

Day 2 PowerPoint

Addressing Teachers' Perceptions About Instructional Delivery for Chinese International Students

Day 2 Goals & Desired Outcomes

❖ Be able to recognize and identify acculturation challenges international students encounter.

❖ Be able to recognize how acculturation challenges present barriers to international student classroom engagement.

Reviewing Day 1

▪ In <u>one</u> sentence summarize the content and learning from Day 1.

▪ Include the <u>purpose</u>, the <u>content</u>, and the <u>take-away</u> in the sentence.

Group Activity
"Would You Rather…"

- Review the conversation guidelines on your table tent.
- Choose a group member to randomly select a question from the envelope on your table.
- Present the question to the group.
- Wait a few seconds for each participant to silently decide their answer to the question
- Each group member will share their answer and the reason for their choice.

"If most of what we thought and much of what we have tried isn't really working, what do I do now?"

- Consider and discuss the "Cliff Hanger" responses from Day 1 in response to the following questions:

    - Why might the suggested strategy have been ineffective?

    - Why might an international student not have a positive response to the proposed strategy or intervention?

    - How might the proposed strategy or intervention be modified to be more effective for an international student?

Cendrillon

Listen and follow along as the facilitator reads a short story in French.

What do you think is the title of the story?

What clues help you make a guess?

Language Challenges and Barriers to International Student Engagement

I passed my language test...

The teachers don't use the words I studied...

I got an A in English in China...

There is so much MORE English and I don't know the history/science/math words.

I understood my teacher in China...

The teachers here talk so fast and sound different than my English teacher in China.

Result: Student is unable to keep up with in-class instruction and discussion.

Time Challenges and Barriers to International Student Engagement

I studied 3 hours for my science test and but still have history/math/English homework.

Chinese students spend an average of 6-8 hours after school doing homework just to keep up.

The teacher says I should go to the dance/game/play a sport/join a club/make American friends...

I want to please my teacher and make friends/fit in but I need extra time to study.

I can't use my phone at school but China is 15 hours ahead of the US...

The only time I can talk with my family in China is during school hours but I can't.

Result: Student works to succeed in class but feels out of place in the school social culture. Without friends conversational language and social acculturation does not improve.

Pedagogical Challenges and Barriers to International Student Engagement

I don't understand what the teacher wants me to do...

If I ask a question in class the students will think I'm not smart.

I don't know why we have to work in a group...

The teacher is the authority. I won't learn from students.

I don't know why we have to do a project...

A project isn't learning. There aren't questions on the test about a project.

That's not cheating...

I was just finding a way to show the teacher the right answer.

Result: Student is confused.

Cultural Challenges and Barriers to International Student Engagement

What if I don't get an A?	Any grade other than an A is failing. I must study harder and longer to be sure I get an A.
My parents expect me to get top grades.	My parents expect me to succeed in the US and bring honor to the family.
I have to get into Harvard/Yale/MIT...	Only getting into the top schools will bring honor to my family and make them proud.
I can't go back to China.	I gave up the chance to get into a Chnese college when I came to the US.
	Result: Academic success is the greatest concern and primary goal for Chinese students in the US.

Cendrillon

What challenged you in listening to the story?

What helped you understand the story?

What might be challenging in completing a response handout?

"Cliff Hanger"

➡ Reflect on the information presented in today's sessions and strategies you currently use in your practice with international students to reflect on the following question and complete the response card.

"If I experience in a safe setting what my international students experience in a new setting, how can I make their new setting a safe setting?"

PD Session Schedule - Day 3

Time	Activity	Method
8:00 – 8:45	Sign-in, and distribution of PD handouts for Day 3. Continental breakfast provided	Registration in lobby of conference location, pick-up PD handouts for Day 3.
8:45 – 9:00	Welcome Overview of Day 3 PD Schedule, and Goals and Learning Outcomes	Lead by PD facilitator using
9:30 – 9:50	Collaborative activity: Choose a scenario from previous day's handout and strategize how to address it in the classroom.	Facilitator Lead
9:50-10:00	Break	
10:00 – 10:20	Share possible solutions from collaborative activity.	Facilitator Lead
10:20-12:00	Identify and Implement Strategies to Promote International Student Engagement.	PowerPoint presentation by PD facilitator. PowerPoint handout with note-taking component
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch	On your own
1:00 – 2:00	Formative Assessment:	Facilitator Support

	Complete the lesson plan template implementing a strategy discussed in the PD to promote international student engagement.	
2:00– 2:30	Closing Session Summative Assessment: Complete the PD Evaluation Form and put it in the basket as you leave.	PD Evaluation.

PD Facilitator Notes for Day 3

Preparation:

Registration: Each participant should pick up a name tag and a packet with the PD handouts for day 3. There are no assigned groups for day 3. Form new collegial groups for collaboration.   Facilitator will ensure that the meeting room is clean and prepared for the sessions with white board, markers, table tents, and a basket for evaluation forms.

Facilitator Presentation Notes:

- Welcome participants and share an overview of the day 3 PD schedule. Check that each participant received a copy of the day 3 PowerPoint slides handout.

- Explain the goals and expected outcomes for the day are: Identify and implement strategies to promote international student engagement.

- Check that teachers are in groups for collaborative work.

- Collaborative Activity: Collaborative activity: Choose a scenario from previous day's handout and strategize how to address it in the classroom.

Break

Session 5

- Share possible solutions from collaborative activity.

- PowerPoint Presentation: Strategies to Promote International Student

  Engagement.

<div align="center">

Lunch Break

</div>

Session 6

- Individual Reflective Work: Complete the lesson plan template implementing a

  strategy discussed in the PD to promote international student engagement

  appropriate for your grade and subject area. Participants will be asked to complete

  a 10-question evaluation form about their PD experience. Evaluation forms will

  be placed in a basket before leaving.

The PowerPoint presentation slides and Evaluation Form for PD Day 3 are found below:

Day 3 PowerPoint:

Addressing Teachers' Perceptions About Instructional Delivery for Chinese International Students

Day Goals & Desired Outcomes

❖**Be able to**: Identify and implement strategies to promote international student engagement.

Reviewing Day 2

"If I experience in a safe setting what my international students experience in a new setting, how can I make their new setting a safe setting?"

➦**Collaborative activity:**

➦**Choose a scenario from previous day's handout and strategize how you might address it in the classroom.**

Pre-Task Strategies to Promote International Student Engagement

- Provide lesson vocabulary reference handouts in advance of the lesson to prepare students for language specific to the lesson or topic.
- Provide lecture notes or copies of PowerPoint before the lesson so students can better receive the information.
- Let international students work together at the beginning of a lesson to avoid embarrassment.
- Give students discussion questions in advance so they can prepare to participate more confidently.
- Tell students in advance what question you will ask them the next day so they can practice their answer in English before being called on in class.

On-Task Strategies to Promote International Student Engagement

- Let international students work together at the beginning of a lesson to avoid embarrassment.
- Instead of "Do you have any questions?" ask, "What questions do you have?"
- Instead of "Do you need any help?" ask, "What can I do to help you?"
- Instead of "Do you need more time to finish?" say, "You can come in after school to work on this," or "Would you like to turn this in tomorrow?"

Post-Task Strategies to Promote International Student Engagement

- Review student work before grading. Give students a chance to revise their work when appropriate before grading.
- When reviewing graded work, ask students to explain their answers to differentiate a wrong answer from a language error.
- Review graded work privately with the students.
- Build their confidence. Affirm their efforts and recognize their achievements.

Assessment Strategies to Promote International Student Engagement

- Allow international students to use language resources as appropriate when completing an assignment. If it's not a language class, strive to isolate the subject content from language proficiency in assessment.
- Consider cultural background in assessment. Chinese students are uncomfortable sharing personal information in group settings. Some responses may be better presented in written format.
- Chinese students are willing to work hard and want to succeed. Set goals for and recognize improvement when needed rather than for A's.

In their words...

We want teachers to know _

We are shy – don't be mean.

Try to pronounce my Chinese name.

My English is not good. Please slow down when you speak.

We don't have good ideas. Please don't ask us any questions.

Our English is not good. Can we use a dictionary?

We want to be American. Please treat us like American students.

Student Quotes: Summer Immersion Institute 2018

Professional Development Evaluation Form

Location of PD_____   **Date**_____

Please circle the response that you best believe reflected your PD experience.

1. I understood the overall goals of the PD as presented by the facilitator.

     Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree

2. I understood the desired outcomes presented for Day 1 of the PD.

     Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree

3. I feel I better understand how Chinese pedagogy influences my students' class engagement.
     Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree

4. I understood the desired outcomes presented for Day 2 of the PD.

     Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree

5. Based on the information presented on Day 2 of the PD I feel better prepared to identify barriers

    and challenges to classroom engagement for international Chinese students.

     Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree

6. Based on the information presented on Day 2 of the PD I feel better prepared to modify and

    implement strategies to increase academic and social integration of international students.

     Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree

7. Based on the information presented on Day 3 of the PD I can recognize and identify specific

    contexts of the lesson where intervention may promote Chinese international student engagement.
     Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree

8. Based on the overall content of the PD I feel better able to implement constructivist strategies that

    reflect understanding of Chinese international students' cultural response in the classroom.

     Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree

9. The presentations were relevant to my practice.

                Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree

10. The facilitator was well prepared and knowledgeable about the topics.

                Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree

Please offer any additional comments or constructive suggestions below.

Appendix B: One-on-One Interview Protocol

Hello. I appreciate your willingness to share your time and knowledge by participating in the interview for my doctoral study. My name is Valerie Marchione, and I will be conducting this interview. Your participation in the interview will offer me the opportunity to gather information that will further my study. You have been selected to participate in this study based on the qualifications noted in the consent form: high school teachers who have first year Chinese international students in your class. Your experiences and perceptions about international students' acculturation and professional development opportunities which could enhance teachers' instructional delivery to support first year Chinese international are valuable to the study.

Please remember that your participation in this study is voluntary and all collected data is confidential. The interview is expected to last 45-60 minutes. With your consent it will be audio recorded for later accurate transcription. Please speak in a loud and clear voice to ensure a good quality recording that can be accurately transcribed.

Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin?

Participant: _____

Subject: _____ **HS**

Date: _____

Research Question #1: How do teachers incorporate social constructivist strategies to instruct, engage, and acculturate first year Chinese international students?

1. What are some classroom strategies you currently use when introducing new material in classes that include first year Chinese international students as they begin to acculturate in a new academic environment?

    Probe: Tell me about a teaching strategy that was well received by one or more of your students. What was it about the strategy that appealed to the student(s)? For example, was it repetitive, rhyming, game-related, etc.?

    Probe: How do you perceive first-year Chinese international students respond to the strategies you mentioned?

Probe: Can you recall any instances where first year Chinese international students expressed unfamiliarity with cultural or pedagogical experiences in your classroom practices or expectations?

2. Please share one or more strategies you might identify as least effective when instructing first year Chinese international students.

   Probe: How have you adapted this classroom strategy to become more effective for first-year Chinese international students? How?

3. Please share one or more strategies you would identify as most effective when instructing first year Chinese international students and tell why you think it is effective within the students' cultural and academic context or experience.

   Probe: Based on your observations and experiences, do you believe first-year international students struggle more academically or culturally in your classroom? Why?

   Probe: Please share an example of how first year Chinese international students struggle academically or culturally in your classroom. Explain how you adapt your teaching to address such struggles. What could help you to be more effective?

Research Question #2: How do teachers of first year Chinese international students describe areas of need in their teaching practices that could promote academic engagement?

1. Tell be about some perceived challenges you have encountered in your classroom when working with first year Chinese international students.

   Probe: Are there specific strategies you have implemented to address these challenges in helping first year Chinese students to engage in classroom learning activities?

2. Based on your observations and experiences, do you believe first year international students struggle more academically or culturally in your classroom? Why?

> **Probe:** Please share an example of how first year Chinese international students struggle academically or culturally in your classroom. Explain how you adapt your teaching to address such struggles. What could help you to be more effective?

3. Please share some observations you may have about how your first-year international Chinese students have responded to the classroom management and teaching strategies you implement in your classroom.

> **Probe:** How have you adjusted your teaching practice to address a need or response exhibited by first year Chinese international students in your classroom?

4. What are some questions you would like to ask that could improve your classroom strategies when working with first year Chinese international students?