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Becoming a Chinese student: a practice-based study of Chinese students' learning in an Australian university

Jinqi Xu
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BECOMING A CHINESE STUDENT:

A PRACTICE-BASED STUDY OF CHINESE STUDENTS' LEARNING IN AN AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the award of
Doctor of Philosophy

2016

DECLARATION

I, Jinqi Xu, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the School of Management, Operation and Marketing, Faculty of Business, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

.....

Jinqi Xu

28 July 2016

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DEDICATION

To my daughter Amelia.

ABSTRACT

A growing concern in studies of internationalisation relates to Chinese students studying in the West. In business studies, Chinese students are the largest cohort of international undergraduates. Areas of concern include differences in learning styles, language and socio-cultural barriers. Institutionally, learning is considered to occur when students can demonstrate the learning outcomes achieved and learning is assured against learning criteria. However, research has shown the limitation of this view or what Hager et al (Hager, Lee & Reich, 2012) term the dominant paradigm of learning and that learning occurs in many forms (Boud, 2006; Stone, Boud & Hager, 2011). There is an absence of discussion about how learning actually occurs, or the practices that Chinese students use in order to learn. Drawing on Hager and Hodkinson's (2011) use of *becoming* as a metaphor for learning, this thesis aims to examine the experience and practices of Chinese business students studying in an Australian university. The principle research question focuses on the contribution that a practice-based study makes to investigations of undergraduate Chinese business student learning in an Australian university. Drawing on a practice theoretical framework influenced by the Chinese philosophical concept of Yinyang, and a practice methodology, the research is an in-depth investigation of the everyday practices used by five Chinese business undergraduate students to support their learning. The study uses interpretative methods including interviews, observations, reflexive groups, document analyses, collections of artefacts and field notes. The findings demonstrate how students *put things together* in different ways that are inseparable from their becoming. Study practices, such as *memorising* and *translating* are used by students together with socio-cultural practices. Study and socio-cultural practices are entangled in multiple relationships usefully described using Yinyang concepts (Wang, 2012). The findings highlight how student learning occurs, or *becomes*, as they adapt and adopt what they see as appropriate study and socio-cultural practices in different contexts. A practice-based approach, with the inclusion of the notion of Yinyang, can help explain the tensions and contradictions of students' performance as learners and the process of becoming that makes up their learning journey. Many institutional and historical tensions and contradictions shape students' learning practices. I conclude that Chinese students' learning is characterised by

complexity and that the possibility and impossibility of Chinese students' learning is inseparable from particular practices, settings and arrangements. The implications for students and teachers are that learning cannot be pinpointed in a static snapshot but is better understood as a constant process of becoming and that institutions and teachers need to be able to deal with complexity when supporting students by developing appropriate curricula and structures.

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PSEUDONYMS

This summary list of participant students and teachers is used to help readers identify their names while reading through the thesis. The names of the research participants have been changed in accordance with the confidentiality agreements.

Ting:

Ting was a student in her first year majoring in Accountancy. She completed high school in China before she enrolled at UOW and was the only student granted a UOW scholarship.

Su:

Su was a student in her first year majoring in Finance, she completed a diploma in China and was granted credit for her prior learning.

Lin

Lin was a student in his first year majoring in Finance, he completed a diploma in China and was granted credit for his prior learning.

Chuchu

Chuchu was a student in her first year majoring in Finance, she was granted credits for her prior learning.

Haitao

Haitao was a student who transferred from Telecommunication Engineering in Faculty of Engineering to International Business in Business faculty.

Jason

Jason was the leader of CCAD, PhD candidate, a Dean Scholars student in his Bachelor degree.

Sophie

Sophie was a lecturer and tutor of a Finance subject. All five participant students were enrolled in her class when the data were collected.

Melody

Melody was a tutor for one of the participant students.

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ACRONYMS

List of acronyms

AACSB	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
ABDC	Australian Business Deans Council
AHRT	Australian Human Resources Instituted
AIG	The Australian Industry Group
APR	Annual Percentage Rate
AQF	The Australian Qualifications Framework
BCA	Business Council of Australia
CCAD	Chinese Commerce Academic Development
CHC	Confucian Heritage Cultures
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CFA	The Chartered Financial Analyst
CPA	The Certified Practising Accountants Australia
EAR	Effective Annual Rate
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EQUIS	EFMD Quality Improvement System
HDR	Higher Degree Research
HECS	Higher Education Contribution Scheme
IELTS	International English Language Testing Systems
IDP	International Development Program
PASS	Peer Assisted Study Sessions
SOLS	Students Online Services
SWP	Studying, Writing and Presentation
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
UOW	University of Wollongong
WCSSA	The Wollongong Chinese Students and Scholars Association

CHAPTER 1

A MORE DYNAMIC APPROACH TO CHINESE STUDENTS' LEARNING

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1: A MORE DYNAMIC APPROACH TO CHINESE STUDENTS' LEARNING

Chinese students and students from a Chinese background are the largest international student cohort studying in the Western higher education system (Altbach, 2015; Liu, 2015). Chinese students studying in the West face a number of challenges, as do the academics and institutions who host them. For students, the transition to a different education system, dealing with new learning approaches and adapting to different social and cultural contexts can, in addition to performance challenges result in their feeling disorientated and overwhelmed. For academics, frustration with student performance, often related to language problems and different learning styles, is common. For institutions, the increasing dominance of neoliberal policy in higher education means they rely more on fees from Chinese students for economic sustainability and therefore need to retain them despite high failure rates.

Researchers have identified some of the problems and difficulties faced by Chinese students and those from Confucian Heritage Cultures¹ (CHC) when studying in Western institutions (Barron, 2004, 2007; Watkins & Biggs, 1996; Clark & Gieve, 2006; Heng 2016; Holmes 2004, 2008, Holmes and O'Neill, 2012; Jin & Cortazzi, 2006; Ryan, 2010a; Song & Cadman, 2013; Volet, 1999; Wu, 2015). Areas of concern include differences in learning style and linguistic and communication barriers (Holmes, Bavieri, Ganassin & Murphy, 2016). Some have pointed to the limitations of general stereotypes about Chinese learners, such as the notion that they rely excessively on rote learning (Watkins & Biggs, 1996). Others have identified students' specific deficits, inadequacies and cultural differences including language problems, dislocation, culture shock, homesickness and inadequate accommodation programs (Volet 1999; Barron 2004, 2007).

Many early approaches criticise the use of simplistic metaphors, such as surface and deep learning or acquisition and transfer, to explain Chinese students' learning (Watkins & Biggs, 1996; Volet, 1999). Sociocultural, language-based and

¹ CHC: Researchers have used CHC to include countries and areas such as China, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan etc. that have been influenced by Confucian thinking (Biggs, 1996; Phung-Mai, Terlouw and Pilot 2005).

communication-focused approaches have made useful contributions to research examining Chinese student learning (Holmes 2004, 2008; Holmes and O'Neill, 2012; Jiang, Ma & Wu, 2009; Ryan, 2011a). However, Wu (2015) suggests that further studies should extend cultural approaches to examine “the dynamic interrelations between international students’ learning and their changed learning environment” (p. 754). This call to examine the dynamics and complexities of Chinese students’ learning suggests the need for longer-term studies capable of capturing students’ practices more precisely and examining them more deeply. It also suggests an absence of discussion about how learning actually occurs and the everyday practices students use in order to learn.

Taking up this call, this study aims to provide a detailed, in-depth examination of Chinese students’ everyday practices as they relate to their learning in the context of one university in Australia. I adopt a practice-based theoretical approach to examine the dynamics of this complex social phenomenon. In recent times, the turn to practice has provided a new means of examining complex and entangled social phenomena (Nicolini, 2013; Reckwitz, 2002). From a practice-based point of view, learning is not fixed or static. Rather, it is conceived as a performance or *doing*, and always involves action (Fenwick, 2011, 2012a; Hager et al., 2012). The aim of this thesis is therefore to investigate Chinese business undergraduate students’ learning using a practice-based approach. In order to achieve this aim, the overarching research question is: what and how do practices shape Chinese business students’ learning in Australia? More specifically, I will address the following two research questions:

- How might a practice-based approach help in understanding Chinese business students’ learning in undergraduate studies in an Australian university?
- How do institutional practices shape Chinese students’ learning in an Australian university?

This chapter is structured as follows. First, I briefly introduce myself as a researcher, my positioning in this research and articulate some of the experiences that have shaped my approach and interest in researching Chinese students’ learning. I then locate the study in the context of internationalisation, followed by a brief introduction to the theoretical framework and methodology used in this research. Finally I give an overview of the structure of this thesis.

Positioning the researcher

A brief personal introduction is necessary in order to clarify my positioning as a researcher. I grew up and was educated in Xi'an the capital city of Shaanxi province in northwestern China. After completing high school, I studied a Bachelor of Arts and went on to teach for 9 years in a high school and then in a university before completing a Masters in Philosophy. I migrated to Sydney, Australia in 2003 to study a Masters in Professional Accounting and later a third Masters degree in Strategic Management and was at this time employed as a high school teacher. After working in various administrative roles at UOW, I commenced working in the Business Faculty as a Tutor in the School of Management.

It is evident both from reading the research literature and my personal observations as a former teacher in China and now in my roles as a PhD student and Tutor, that Chinese business students face multiple challenges when studying in Australian universities. I have observed students struggle and lose confidence as they try to adapt to a new culture and education system. They struggle to use English and to fit in with Australian norms, values and ways of doing things. These experiences can contribute to their feeling devalued and reinforce their sense of being outsiders. Students experience pressure due to parental expectations and dreams that they finish on time and succeed. Academically, they understand the ways of studying they found useful in China, but these are now rejected as inadequate. New ways of learning are demanded, but remain foreign to them. Frustration and tension are evident as, on the one hand, students' previous ways of studying are not fully understood by many of their teachers and on the other hand, the new ways of studying are not explained to them adequately to prepare them for their studies.

I have observed many academic staff struggling to understand their Chinese students' learning approaches. Academics often express frustration when they consider Chinese students to be using *surface approaches*, such as rote learning and memorisation and not demonstrating *deep approaches* like many of their Western peers (Marton & Saljo, 1976; Biggs, 1996). It seems to me that many Australian teachers do not understand the complexities of memorisation as a learning approach used by Chinese

students. Chinese students have developed effective skills in memorising Chinese characters since childhood and used these to pass entrance exams and learn English. I am disappointed when I see this way of learning misunderstood by well-meaning teachers.

My experiences in both China and Australia, including as an international student in Australia, have enabled me to emphasise and identify with the problems, concerns and worries of Chinese business students and teachers. Over the last 13 years, I have encountered different, and at times fascinating and frustrating experiences including pain, reflection, understanding and acceptance as both a student and a Chinese background teacher. These experiences and observations and the lack of in-depth research in this area in Australian universities inspired me to investigate in more detail how Chinese students learn.

Locating the study: internationalisation in the changing context of Australian higher education

Recently, there has been a rapid expansion of higher education in Australia and a growing internationalisation of the sector due to globalisation and the adoption of neoliberal economic policies (Altbach, 1999; Dobson, 2001; Guri-Rosenblit, Šebková & Teichler, 2007; Schuetze & Slowey, 2002). *The Bradley Review* (Bradley, Noonan, Nugent & Scales, 2008), a recent major review of Australian Higher Education, called for a national push towards universal participation higher education system linked to the achievement of greater national productivity. The review also offered a model for the policy settings needed to achieve this outcome (Freeman & Hancock, 2011; King & James, 2013). The intention expressed in the review is to expand higher education participation by making universities more responsive to market opportunities in which quality and relevance are the driving factors (King & James, 2013).

This expansion of higher education is linked to the neoliberal marketisation of higher education that commenced in the 1990s, when throughout the globe, higher education underwent a process of massification that transformed what had once been an elite institution (Altbach, 1999; Dobson, 2001; Guri-Rosenblit et al., 2007; Schuetze &

Slowey, 2002). By 2000, total enrolment in higher education institutions world-wide was about 100 million students compared with only about 500,000 students at start of the twentieth century (Guri-Rosenblit et al., 2007; Schofer & Meyer, 2005). The impact of the Open Door policy and related economic reforms on higher education in China as a result of globalisation are also important for this study. China has opened its doors to both Western ideas and economic policy and allowed students to pursue their studies in the West. Due to the enormous population in China, the number of Chinese students studying in the West, as cited above, is huge and continues to grow.

The majority of international students in Australia are of Chinese nationality or Chinese ethnicity. In 2014, according to Project Atlas², 91,089 Chinese students were enrolled in Australian Universities, comprising 33.8% of the total international student population.

A practice-based theoretical framework and methodology

This research aims to go beyond studies those that have focused on the social, cultural and linguistic barriers faced by Chinese students by examining the often over-looked practices that relate to their learning. I will therefore focus on the everyday, embedded study and sociocultural practices used by undergraduate Chinese business students. I draw on earlier work that shows that, in order to encourage successful learning, educators must consider factors other than just the cognitive and also take into account students' motivations and emotions (Grimshaw, 2007; Heng, 2016; Holmes, 2004; Wu 2015).

In order to undertake this investigation, I use a practice-based theoretical framework and methodology. While there is not one universally accepted definition of practice, Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina and Savigny (2001), explain that many practice researchers agree that practices are “embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organized around shared practical understanding” (p. 11). A practice-based approach privileges *doings* and *sayings* (Schatzki et al., 2001) and *relatings* (Kemmis

² *Project Atlas* Partner: Australian Department of Education and Training: Responsible for national policies and programs that help Australians access quality and affordable early child care and childhood education, school education, higher education, vocational education and training, international education and research.

in Hager et al., 2012) in everyday life. Practices are interconnected and do not exist in isolation from one another (Rouse, 1996). “The attraction of the practice approach idiom stems in particular from its capacity to resonate with the contemporary experience that our world is increasingly in flux and interconnected” (Nicolini, 2013, p. 2).

Practice-based theories and approaches have been used in research in organisation studies and management (Gherardi, 2006; Nicolini, 2013; Orlikowski & Yates, 2002; Yanow, 2009) and to look at social inclusion (Keevers & Abuoduha, 2012; Sykes & Keevers, 2016). There is a growing body of work that uses a practice-based approach to examine aspects of education (Boud & Hager, 2012; Fenwick, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012; Boud, 2006, 2009; Reich and Hager 2014; Hager et al., 2012; Fenwick, 2011, 2012b; Raelin, 2007a). These include assessment (Boud, 2009); professional learning (Hager & Hodkinson, 2009, 2011; Hager et al., 2012; Kemmis, 2009a), and work-based learning (Beckett & Hager 2002; Sykes and Dean; 2012). This thesis is distinctive in its application of a practice-based approach to investigate Chinese students’ learning.

A practice-based approach to learning shows that it involves multiple, recurrent, complex interactions (Fenwick, 2011, 2012a; Hager et al., 2012). Learning is inseparable from the performance of practices. It is not always visible, not always linear and not always comprised of discrete steps. In seeking to go beyond the inadequacies of what is termed the standard paradigm of learning (Beckett & Hager, 2012), Hager and Hodkinson³ (2009, 2011) use a meta-analysis that relies on metaphors. They highlight the inadequacy of the acquisition and transfer metaphors that emphasise knowledge as a thing that can be passed from one to another. Instead they adopt a metaphor of learning as *becoming* that shows knowledge not as a thing but as a process that is inseparable from the student's life (2009, 2011). In early studies of Chinese students’ learning, the acquisition and transfer metaphors were commonly used, but these tended towards simplistic treatments (Watkins & Biggs,

³ Hager and Hodkinson wrote two articles about learning using the metaphor of becoming. There is considerable overlap between the two articles. In this thesis, when talking about the metaphor of learning as becoming, I have cited both articles as the ideas are often cited in both works. In other instances, I have cited one only which means the cited article makes the specific point that is referred to in the thesis.

1996). This study seeks to deal with the complexity associated with learning for Chinese students and to show that learning is not separable from who they are. Students' learning is shaped by implicit power relationships in the new education system and institutional practices. I adopt the view that students' learning is part of their becoming.

I have adopted the view in this research that the phenomena under investigation are complex and messy (Law, 2004) and therefore, a practice-based methodology offers a good fit for this study (Nicolini, 2013). Nicolini's practice methodology presents a coherent practical package of theories and methods that generate a *world* made of practices (Nicolini, 2013). This approach uses different but related theories and methods in what he terms *a tool kit approach* (Nicolini, 2013). In using a tool kit approach there is an implicit assumption that studying practice requires choosing different angles for observation and interpretation frameworks (Nicolini, 2009a). The research questions presented earlier require an in-depth investigation of students' practices. Therefore, the research is designed as an ethnographic study. The study investigates five Chinese undergraduate business students using interpretative methods including interviews, observation, reflective discussion groups, document analyses, collection of artefacts and making field notes.

Structure of the thesis

In Chapter Two, I locate the study in the literature on internationalisation in Australian higher education. I then discuss the evolution of Australian higher education policy as it relates to Chinese students studying offshore. Over time, these policies have tended to produce standardised institutional, curricular and pedagogical practices for dealing with international students, including Chinese students. I introduce various approaches to learning, drawing in particular on the work of Hager and Hodkinson (2009) and their concept of metaphors for learning before examining previous studies of Chinese students in more detail. In order to show the continuities and discontinuities that mark Chinese students' experiences in Australia, I briefly examine the literature on the Chinese education system with a particular focus on the strong Confucian influence.

In Chapter Three, I discuss what practices are and how practice studies have been used to study learning as a complex social phenomena. Second, I introduce Yinyang as complementary approach to Reich and Hager (2014) six threads ⁴of practice-based learning research. Third, a practice methodology is outlined followed by an introduction of the ethnographic methods used in the research, including reflective discussion groups, interviews, observations, document analyses, collections of artefacts, field notes and photographs. Finally, the setting of the study and a description of the data analysis process are presented.

In Chapter Four, I introduce the setting for the study and briefly introduce the student participants. I show how students are shaped by their experience of *running a course* through institutional teaching and learning arrangements including material settings, learning support and social networks. I then analyse how students link different practices in their learning journey in order to show how each student *puts things together* in different ways in their learning. The analysis demonstrates how students put things together in unique ways and at the same time share many commonalities in order to adapt to their new learning environment. It shows that student learning is complex, that there are many contradictions both in the context and what students do. Learning happens over time and related to each student's performance of practices and ways of doing things.

In Chapter Five, I first discuss *study* and *sociocultural* practices that are commonly practiced by Chinese students. Examining these practices makes Chinese students' learning visible in a manner that was not possible in previous studies of Chinese students' learning. I then turn to the example of the Chinese Commerce Academic Development (CCAD) program, a Chinese-language tutoring scheme sponsored by the Faculty of Business, to show more explicitly the tensions and contradictions that shape students' learning practices. These practices are shown to be relational, entangled and complex. The entanglement of study and sociocultural practices with institutional practices is usefully described using Yinyang concepts (Wang, 2012). In the second part of this chapter, I extend the discussion by examining how students

⁴ The term "six threads" adopted by Reich and Hager (2014) is a shift from Hager et al.'s (2012) early work, which articulated five overarching "principles" for theorising professional practice. In this thesis, I used six threads.

adapt and adopt different practices. Finally I highlight how the practice-based approach, with the inclusion of the notion of Yinyang, can help explain the tensions and contradictions of students' performance as learners and the process of becoming that makes up their learning journey.

I conclude the thesis in Chapter Six with a summary of the research and reflect on the opening arguments. I conclude that Chinese students' learning is characterised by complexity. Also, by using the concept of Yinyang, this study highlights the complexity of the issues, contradictions and tensions involved in Chinese students' learning and the multiple relationships between different practices. The possibilities and impossibilities of Chinese students' learning are inseparable from particular practices, settings and arrangements. The implication of the study for students and teachers are that learning cannot be pinpointed in time or space but is better understood as a constant process of becoming. Institutions and teachers need to be able to deal with complexity when supporting students by developing appropriate curricula and structures. I conclude the chapter by highlighting the contributions the study makes to the field and finish with an acknowledgement of the limitations of the approach adopted here and some suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2
CHINESE STUDENT LEARNING IN WESTERN
UNIVERSITIES

LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER 2: CHINESE STUDENT LEARNING IN WESTERN UNIVERSITIES

In Chapter One, I briefly introduced the complex challenges faced by Chinese business students studying in Australia and the implications of these challenges for teachers and institutions. I also briefly introduced the policy and political background to the internationalisation of higher education. In this chapter, I examine the existing literature to provide a context to my examination of the learning experience of Chinese students. The chapter is structured as follows. First, I situate the experience of Chinese students via a brief introduction to the literature on the internationalisation of Australian higher education. Second, I discuss the growing body of literature on Chinese students, including their positioning in the Western education system, their ways of knowing and learning, and the challenges they face. Third, I clarify the Chinese students' learning experiences prior to their arrival in Australia. I briefly introduce the Chinese educational system and its conceptualisations of learning, ways of knowing, cultural influences and the influence of recent economic reforms. Finally, I give a brief summary of some of the contradictions and tensions associated with dealing with the complex phenomena of Chinese students' learning. In this way, the chapter sets the stage for the practice-based theoretical framework and methodology detailed in Chapter Three.

The internationalisation of higher education in Australia

This study of Chinese students' learning is situated in the general literature on internationalisation (Hayward & Siaya, 2001; King & James, 2013; Knights, 2004; Marginson, 2004, 2008, 2014; Ryan, 2010a). According to Knights (2004), a leading researcher in this area, the study of the internationalisation of higher education is complex, multifaceted, diverse, controversial, changing and challenging. She describes the challenges associated with balancing the issues, which arise at the sector level with those that arise at the institutional level.

The national/sector level has an important influence on the international dimension of higher education through policy, funding, programs, and regulatory frameworks. Yet it is usually at the individual, institutional level that the real process of internationalization is taking place (Knights, 2004, p. 6-7).

Knights (2004) proposes a definition of internationalisation as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education” (p. 2). She explains how the term *process* conveys that internationalisation is a complex and ongoing effort, while the term *international* is used in the sense of relationships between and among nations, cultures, or countries. It is not possible in this literature review to cover all of the complexities of the internationalisation process. Therefore, I have limited the discussion to a selection of research in key areas relevant to this study. First, I present a brief summary of important aspects of the evolution of internationalisation in Australian Higher Education. Second, I summarise the processes and policies that have shaped the internationalisation of the curriculum in Australian Higher Education. Third, I examine a number of studies that show the communication and social challenges faced by students from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds as they undertake studies in English. Finally, I discuss the institutional responses to these challenges.

The evolution of internationalisation in the Australian higher education sector

In a recent paper, King and James (2013) identify three major periods of reform and expansion in evolution of Australian higher education since World War II. Each of these periods influenced the positioning of international students within the Australian higher education system. First, from 1972–1975, the Whitlam government introduced the principle of equality of opportunity to education, which aimed to expand access to tertiary education by abolishing tuition fees and providing living allowance support. This equality politics emphasised the quantitative expansion of places, broadening the socioeconomic composition of the participants, and measures to broaden access for the most disadvantaged groups (Marginson, 2004 cited in King & James, 2013).

Second, the principle of equality of opportunity continued to influence educational programs into the 1980s. The Commonwealth introduced two overlapping set of changes influenced by the marketisation and globalisation of the higher education sector. Drawing on Marginson’s (2004) work, King and James (2013) suggest that 1984 and 1985 saw the beginning of a new policy discussion inspired by the neo-liberal “revolution” and policies of privatisation and deregulation. Marginson explains

the development of the view that, while Australia should expand participation in tertiary education, it could no longer afford to provide it for free. He also discusses the view that an increase in market competition via the introduction of tuition fees, industry funding, international marketing and private universities would produce a more efficient system (Marginson, 2004 cited in King & James, 2013).

Third, the reforms led by Federal Education Minister John Dawkins included the introduction of the innovative Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS), an income-contingent deferred tuition payment scheme. This policy was designed to fund growth in participation without creating negative effects on access for financially disadvantaged people (King & James, 2013). The Dawkins reforms had a dramatic influence on the shape of internationalisation policy and practice in Australia. For example, between 1990 and 2002, the number of international students enrolled in Australian universities increased substantially. The education of a growing number of international students was, however, not part of the egalitarian equation of national equality of opportunity policies. King & James (2013) consider that increasing the number of international students clearly worked against the logic of the equality project that accompanied neo-liberal policy reforms. Later, universities were allowed to set their own prices and increase the number of students without limit. The growing scarcity of public funding for universities encouraged the rapid growth of international education. This growth in the number of international students studying in Australia continued to expand over the next two decades (Marginson, 2004 cited in King & James, 2013). In more recent times, the internationalisation of the sector has continued under the Australian Higher Education Framework (Murray, 2013; Marginson, 2013).

The development of the higher education sector in Australia has occurred against the backdrop of the broader history of the sector in the West and has been influenced by European, British and North American policies and practices (Marginson, 2013). The Australian higher educational landscape continues to undergo significant change (Boud, 2000; Boud & Costley, 2007; Freeman & Hancock, 2011; Leask, 2009, 2012; Marginson, 2008, 2011, 2013). A new national policy was designed to guide the current demand-driven system—a higher education system shaped by patterns of student demand and by institutional responsiveness. This policy has been described as

a landmark in Australian higher education as it announced a dramatically new approach to the allocation of undergraduate university places. It is intended to increase participation in higher education through the mechanism of university responsiveness to market opportunities where quality and relevance are the driving factors (Marginson, 2013).

In response to this new policy, various bodies have developed different sets of higher education standards. The growth in the number and range of standards and policies creates a complex interplay of factors influencing Australian higher education. For business faculties, which are the focus of this thesis, a number of bodies are implicated. First, the Australian government as the legislative body and its Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA, 2016) and Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) set the standards for and guide Australian higher education. TEQSA registers and evaluates the performance of higher education providers against the Higher Education Standards Framework, which all providers must meet in order to enter and remain within Australia's higher education system (TEQSA, 2016). Second, accreditation associations, such as the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and the EFMD⁵ quality improvement system named European Quality University Improvement System (EQUIS) set standards for business schools to meet. Accreditation by these bodies provides an independent quality assurance measure, which makes accredited institutions more desirable in the market place. Third, academic associations influence universities through representation and support for their members. For example, the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) supports academics in conducting research into learning and teaching. The ABDC has a particular emphasis on project collaboration with disciplinary leaders through deans' councils to improve business education through curriculum development, and by forging strong relationships with the business community and government (ABDC, 2016). Professional associations wield influence through providing employment opportunities for graduates who have attended universities accredited by the association. For example, Certified Practising Accountants (CPA, 2016) Australia, the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA, 2016)

⁵ EFMD: EFMD is not an acronym, see their website for more details, <https://www.efmd.org/accreditation-main/equis>

Institute and the Australian Human Resource Institute (AHRI, 2016) have their own disciplinary standards and guidelines that guide professionals. Finally, organisations such as the Business Council of Australia (BCA, 2016) and the Australian Industry Group (AIG, 2016), provide an industry perspective. They influence Australian business higher education by supporting the placement of graduates in the same way as professional associations.

Internationalisation of the curriculum

Over the past 20 years, there has been a steady trend towards internationalisation of the curriculum in the higher education sector in the Western world. This reflects public recognition that tertiary students require international skills and competencies (Hayward & Siaya, 2001; Knights, 2004; Leask, 2009, 2012; Marginson, Nyland, Sawir & Forbes-Mewett, 2010; McGowan & Potter, 2008; Ryan, 2011b). In Australia, Denise Bradley (who later chaired the Bradley Review 2008) suggests specific objectives relating to the “internationalised curriculum” that include developing graduates capable of:

- thinking globally and incorporating multiple perspectives
- exercising choice in their own professional practice based on an understanding of the cultural construction of knowledge and its application
- engaging in their profession at an international level
- living and working in a diverse cultural environment (Bradley, 1997, p.4 cited in McGowan & Potter, 2008).

These objectives indicate that “an internationalised curriculum should focus on developing higher-order competencies that appreciate the social construction of knowledge” (McGowan & Potter, 2008, p. 186). However, while this focus on students' competencies is important, the emphasis of the internationalised curriculum must be extended to include the intercultural competence of teachers and institutional representatives (Leask, 2009). Taking into account the needs of international students may refer only to addressing issues such as language deficiencies, different study methods, and the cultural background of international students, rather than adding a truly “international dimension” to the curriculum (McGowan & Potter, 2008). Leask's (2009) work in this area suggests that it is important for academics to develop intercultural competence, not just students. McGowan and Potter (2008) agree,

suggesting “curriculum internationalisation extends beyond international students and staff to a curriculum that is explicitly designed to develop intercultural competencies and international perspectives” (McGowan & Potter, 2008, p. 183). Moreover, an internationalised curriculum should produce outcomes that are relevant to both domestic and international students (OECE, 1996; Haigh, 2002 cited in McGowan & Potter, 2008). Schapper and Mayson (2004), drawing on Schoorman’s earlier work (2000), understand internationalisation as a basis for establishing ground rules for curriculum development. They suggest the need for the curriculum to accommodate multiple embedded perspectives within a global model to provide a creative direction for academic teaching practice.

The impact of internationalisation: communication and social challenges faced by students

For international students studying in a foreign country, proficiency in written and spoken English is vital for their well-being and a pre-requisite for success in both academic and social life (Andrade, 2006; Holmes, 2004, 2005; Holmes & O’Neill, 2012; Holmes, Fay, Andrews & Attia, 2013; Marginson, 2011; Ryan, 2011a, 2012, 2013; Woodrow, 2006; Yates & Wahid, 2013). However, many international students struggle academically due to problems related to using the English language in their learning and social relationships. For example, in one study, many first-year international students at one Australian university were shown to have difficulty understanding lectures in terms of vocabulary and speed, and with tutors who spoke too fast or gave too little input (Andrade, 2006). Additionally, in social communications, these linguistic difficulties are compounded by cultural difficulties including understanding when and how people converse and what they talk about, such that international students may have difficulty finding suitable topics and strategies for meaningful conversations (Halualania, Chitgopekar, Morrison & Dodge, 2004). Woodrow (2006) unpacks this further, showing that the anxiety experienced in communicating in English can be debilitating and influence students’ adaption to the learning environment, and ultimately whether or not they achieve their educational goals. Woodrow (2006) finds that second language anxiety is reflected both within and outside the classroom in everyday communication situations. Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland and Ramia (2008) show that it is especially so in everyday

communication, in which many Chinese international students find themselves missing their own cultural and linguistic setting. This can trigger feelings of loneliness, as contact is lost with those who share one's concerns or view of the world. Other studies report students who experience a profound sense of loss and isolation, as well as anxiety, confusion, and disappointed expectations (Brislin & Yoshida, 1994). As the level of loneliness increases, academic achievement decreases (Brennan, 1982; Demir & Tarhan, 2001; Sawir et al., 2008).

As communication skills are essential for satisfying everyday needs, many scholars argue that student competence in intercultural communication and in the language of the host society is crucial for fulfilling those needs and attaining a sense of well-being through cross-cultural adjustment (Holmes, 2008, 2012; Leask, 2009; Noels & Clement, 1996; Yang, Noels & Saumure, 2005). Good social networks help students to feel supported and more in control of their lives. International students require many resources to facilitate their studies in a foreign country. International students' expectations and patterns of life in their new environment change as they learn to cope by extending their social circle and making new kinds of friends. If this transformation does not occur, loneliness can become emotionally entrenched as social alienation (Moroi, 1986). This loneliness can become "extremely debilitating and related to a loss of motivation" resulting in academic attrition (Brennan, 1982, p. 271).

Research in Anglophone countries has shown that many international students are disappointed by their inability to develop relationships with local students (Lee, Maldonado-Maldonado & Rhoades, 2006). Many international students do not connect with the new learning environment or local communities because they lack the level of proficiency in English necessary to interact successfully with locals (Lee & Rice, 2007; Marginson et al., 2010; Montgomery, 2009; Sawir, 2005; Yates & Wahid, 2013). The difficulty those international students have in engaging with members of the community impacts on their overall experience, including their ability to cultivate individual agency, develop an understanding of their new cultural environment and their spoken competence in English (Marginson, 2011, p.297). Many students are keenly aware of the importance of speaking skills for their career

prospects and are, therefore, very keen to acquire them (RocheCouste, Oliver, Mulligan & Davies, 2010; Yates & Wahid, 2013). Student's may undertake language preparation courses at university that usually focus on English reading and writing (literacy) skills demanded by their future courses (Barratt, Hanlon & Rankin, 2011; Evans, Tindale, Cable & Hamil Mead, 2009; Yates & Wahid, 2013). The impact on their spoken skills has implications for how they are able to engage with their studies, their teachers, domestic students and local communities. Furthermore, this communication problem could potentially affect their prospects of employment in their chosen profession in the future, if the use of English is a requirement.

Institutional responses

Institutions have attempted to address issues faced by students in a number of ways. The preparation of a supportive student learning environment and the design of appropriate curriculum and learning activities within educational institutions are crucial to international students' learning experience in Australian universities. From the teacher's perspective, the responsibility for achieving proficiency in English is usually seen as belonging to students (Holmes 2004, 2005; Ryan & Viete, 2009; Yates & Wahid, 2013; Marginson 2008, 2014). The Bradley Review found that international students need more support during their courses, including the integration of English-language tuition into the curriculum to ensure they develop and maintain high levels of English-language competence. It is also argued that improved English-language support “ . . . should not be seen as a remedial program . . . but as part of the teaching which the university offers international students to prepare them for work in the global economy” (IDP Education Submission p. 7 cited in Bradley, Noonan, Nugent & Scales, 2008). Yates and Wahid (2013) maintain that Australian universities have a responsibility as hosts of international students to ensure that their expectations are met. This extends beyond academic performance to the students' whole experience in Australia and should include both a qualification and English proficiency. They stress that good spoken English skills in addition to written skills are a vital part of that proficiency.

The power of space and its influence over learning and educational settings is also important in the discussion of institutional responses to the challenges associated with

internationalisation (Fisher, 2004; McGregor, 2004). The physical aspects of space have been shown to be a part of and to mediate social relations in teaching and learning environments in ways which impact international students (Cleveland & Fisher, 2014). Turner (2009) claims that in the higher education learning space, one of the most difficult aspects is the degree to which higher education classrooms remain configured according to implicit local norms that silently privilege home students over others. For example, tutorial rooms are often set up with desks placed together face to face to facilitate group work. This configuration implicitly orients the learning towards participatory approaches that may be foreign to international students. The formal structures of program design, the values and practices of teachers, the sociohistorical structure of institutions, and their local settings may also mitigate against the institutional positioning of the higher education learning spaces as an international one (Samuelowicz & Bain, 2001; Turner, 2009; Walker, 2004).

Knights (2004) points out that the complexity of working in the field of internationalisation requires an additional set of knowledge, attitudes, skills and understanding about international and intercultural issues and the global dimensions of higher education. In this view, internationalisation creates a complex and ambiguous context for teaching and learning (Schapper & Mayson, 2004). This changing context includes both the materials and the dimensions of space and time that shape learning (Hager and Hodkinson, 2009; 2011).

Chinese students in Western universities

In the following section, I review the research on Chinese students' experiences studying in Western universities and highlight the approaches to learning that underpin them. A number of different approaches to learning are evident, although often implicit, in the literature on Chinese students studying in Western universities (Watkins & Biggs, 1996; Clark & Gieve, 2006; Jin & Cortazzi, 2006; Ryan, 2010b; Dahlin & Regmi, 1997; Marton, Hounsell & Entwistle, 1997; Purdie & Hattie, 2002; Rao & Chan, 2010; Tan, 2011; Brick 1991; Flowerdew & Miller, 1992; Grimshaw, 2007; Rastall, 2006; Holmes 2004, 2008; Holmes and O'Neill, 2012; Holmes et. al, 2016; Wu 2015; Heng 2016). Underpinning these studies are distinct theories of

learning, therefore, before turning to examine the literature on Chinese student learning, I present a brief introduction to learning approaches.

A learning framework

Learning is a particularly difficult and abstract concept that is hard to conceptualise and tie down either philosophically or practically (Hager & Hodkinson, 2009; 2011). Hager and Hodkinson say that:

Learning is a conceptual and linguistic construction that is widely used in many societies and cultures, but with very different meanings that are at least partly contradictory and contested. Put differently, there is no external, reified entity that is 'learning'. Rather, people construct and label certain processes/activities/products as 'learning' (Hager and Hodkinson; 2009, p 621).

It is therefore useful to draw on frameworks or meta-analyses of learning in order to discuss groups of theories. One useful approach is that of Hager and Hodkinson (2009; 2011), who use metaphors in order to group together different approaches to learning. Metaphor is used effectively as an analytical tool in educational research (Haskell 2001; Emerson & Mansvelt, 2014; Sykes, Moerman, Gibbons, Dean, 2014). The most commonly used metaphors for learning are *acquisition* and *transfer*. These metaphors are based on three assumptions about learning (Hager & Hodkinson, 2011, p. 33). First, that what is learnt is a product, a thing or substance that is independent of the learner. Second, that learning involves movement of this thing or substance from place to place. Finally, they assume that what is learnt is independent of and separate from the context in which it is learnt (Hager & Hodkinson, 2011). In this view, the use of the metaphors of acquisition, possession and transference assumes that learning is a *thing* that is located in the head or in the body of the learner (Hager & Hodkinson, 2009, 2011). As we shall see, this view is consistent with the evolution of the notion of "the Chinese learner," whose learning is viewed through the acquisition and transfer metaphors. In this view, Chinese learners are considered to have specific, generic characteristics as learners that position them and are stable across different contexts. Hager and Hodkinson (2009, 2011), argue strongly that the acquisition and transfer metaphors mislead us in our thinking about learning as they omit the crucial importance of changing contexts to the learning process. They suggest that there may be many different types of learning and so they do not attempt to give a single,

generalised account of learning. They argue instead that learning may be viewed more fruitfully as an ongoing process rather than as a series of acquisition events (Hager & Hodkinson, 2009, 2011). They present three alternative metaphors as a means to go beyond the limitations of transfer and acquisition: participation, construction and becoming (Hager & Hodkinson 2009, 2011).

A second and contrasting metaphor to acquisition and transfer used by Hager and Hodkinson (2011) is “participation”. This approach draws on Lave and Wenger's (1991) work on communities of practice. The key idea is that learning arises from learners participating in communities of practice, or what Lave and Wenger (1991) refer to as “situated learning”. In this view, learning is seen as highly contextual as it is situated within a community of participation. Using the participation metaphor, learning becomes a process that is inseparable from the complexity of social relationships and the socio-cultural setting in which it occurs. This contrasts sharply with the common sense idea that learning involves the acquisition and transfer of a product or thing (Hager & Hodkinson, 2009, 2011). For example, Chinese students arrive in the West having already established a set of skills and practices that they have learned in their communities of practice in Chinese school and college contexts. They then move to the West and need to develop new ways of learning practices that are part of their new communities of practice within Western institutions.

A third metaphor suggested by Hager and Hodkinson (2009, 2011) is the “constructivist” metaphor. In this view, the substance of learning is a complex social construct, one that subsumes the individual learner. In this account, learning results from active participation in social practices and “when a learner constructs or reconstructs knowledge or skills, they are also reconstructing themselves” (Hager and Hodkinson 2009, p. 633). Thus, learning is located in the social situation, not in the individual learner. “Rather than what is learnt being separate from and independent of the context in which it is learnt, learning is inherently part of and shaped by its context” (p. 631). They suggest that this “student-centered approach” reflects and is rooted in a constructivist philosophy of teaching (McCombs & Whistler, 1997; Schuh, 2004; Weimer, 2013).

Hager and Hodkinson's (2009, 2011) preferred metaphor is of learning as *becoming* to emphasise the notion of ongoing development. In a related work titled *Becoming a Professional*, Scanlon (2011) says "*becoming* is used to make a distinction between *being* and *becoming*" (p.14). The idea of being in relation to learning suggests having arrived at a specific point. In contrast the idea of becoming "highlights the evolutionary, processual nature of developing . . . it is an iterative concept that eschews notions of arrival and end-point achievement of expertise" (p.14). The term *becoming* includes the idea that learning occurs over the whole of one's life - lifelong learning (Boud and Falchikow, 2006). The term *becoming* has been used to describe the ongoing learning of those in a number of fields including medical professional (Bleakley 2011), researcher (Lee, 2011), doctor (Foster, 2011) and nurse (Davey & Bredemeyer, 2011).

In Hager and Hodkinson's use of the metaphor, the notion of becoming includes the metaphors of participation and construction and shows them to be continually changing and relational. At the level of the individual learner, becoming involves the re-construction of the learner as inseparable from what is learned. Becoming also includes participation in the sense that learning occurs in ongoing, situated practices as learners participate in various communities of practice and social groups (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Learning entails participation in a specific or situated context, whether the situation is a classroom, a workplace, a leisure activity or family life (Hager & Hodkinson 2009, 2011). Becoming is a socially embodied process, it is the whole social person who becomes (Hager & Hodkinson 2009, 2011). People construct and reconstruct their understanding, knowledge, skills and practices:

Learning is viewed as a relational web, a process of ongoing change. It connects the learner to the surrounding world in an evolving way. Learning is transactional in that it changes both the learner and the context, viewed both widely and narrowly. Most generally, learning is a change in both the learner and their environment (Hager and Hodkinson, 2009, p. 631).

Therefore, the content of learning may change through the learning process as it involves the construction and reconstruction of content as well as of learners (Hager and Hodkinson, 2009, 2011). Learning is shown to be an ongoing, dynamic process involving the whole person and their experiences in a social and material context:

There is not always a clear endpoint to learning, though sometimes, of course, either the learner or others may be explicitly concerned with one... the process of learning as becoming was already well underway before the course started...This process of living also entails learning as becoming: in the family, the local community, in leisure. Even when a person sees their educational learning as separate from the other parts of their life, strong influences remain (Hager & Hodgkinson, 2009, p. 633).

The metaphor of becoming points to the idea that students change and grow in particular ways based both on their dispositions and experiences within particular communities. It also involves their adapting to new contexts and drawing on their previous skills and knowledge in unique, individual ways.

The use of metaphors as a meta-analytic tool for learning makes clear the different conceptualisations of learning that often remain implicit in discussions of student learning, curricula and pedagogy. In the following section, I review the literature on Chinese students' learning. I begin with a brief discussion of the substantial body of literature that focuses on the notion of "Chinese learners". Then I examine the literature on the challenges Chinese students' face. Third, I examine the notion of Chinese students as "rote learners" that is associated with their use of memorisation techniques. Finally, I discuss the more nuanced approach to differences in learning styles that is contained in cultural studies approaches.

"Chinese learners"?

The number of students from a Chinese background studying in Australia grew markedly in the 1960s and 1970s, with most coming from the old British Imperial enclaves of Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong (Marginson, 2011). At that time, no distinction was made between the CHC and domestic students. CHC students were assimilated with other international and domestic students in Australian universities. Therefore, CHC and international students' specific social, cultural and educational needs were largely ignored. After this time, Chinese international students flooded to Western universities to pursue degrees due to dramatic changes in the political and economic environment and the increased demand for higher education in both Australia and China (Marginson, 2011). The growth in the number of Chinese

students seeking to study in Western countries such as Australia was strongly linked to changes in China's social and economic policy (Bexley, 2013; Heng, 2016; McGowan & Potter, 2008). In the late 1970s, the Chinese government promoted modernization aggressively, through expanding the activities of international scholars and technological advances that supported forms of online and distance education (Yan & Berliner, 2010). At the same time, China was also strongly influenced by accelerated globalisation driven by IT development and the widespread adoption of neoliberal economic policies internationally (Tan, 2011).

By the 1980's, researchers had begun to focus their attention on the unique learning needs and characteristics of people from CHC (especially the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea, and Japan). A substantial body of literature has since developed investigating these students, who have come to be known as "Chinese learners" (Watkins & Biggs, 1996; Clark & Gieve, 2006; Jin & Cortazzi, 2006; Ryan, 2010b).

Scholars have asked to what extent there is a particular way of learning that is peculiar or unique to CHC students? The main points of this discussion relate to the supposedly unique characteristics of the Chinese learner. The first of these ideas is that CHC students are generally receivers who use passive rote learning techniques in which particular forms of memorisation are viewed as inferior ways of learning (Watkins & Biggs, 1996). When attention first turned to examine the notion of the Chinese learner, CHC students were stereotyped negatively in Western educational settings as passive rote learners primarily concerned with memorising material (Ballard & Clanchy, 1984; Ballard & Clanchy, 1997; Murphy, 1987; Ryan, 2010b; Samuelowicz, 1987). This stereotypical view of the Chinese learner relies on the acquisition metaphor of learning in which learning is viewed as the transfer of a product, or substance that is acquired by the Chinese learner. The learner is positioned as being independent of and separate from the context in which the learning takes place (Hager & Hodkinson, 2009; 2011).

A number of scholars have criticised this approach by showing that the Chinese learning style is more complicated than it looks on the surface (Watkins & Biggs, 1996); Dahlin & Regmi, 1997; Marton, Hounsell & Entwistle, 1997; Purdie & Hattie,

2002; Rao & Chan, 2010; Tan, 2011). The homogenising view of the Chinese learner is criticised as anecdotal and stereotypical, developed by expatriate teachers who are faced with large classes of Chinese students rather than on empirical evidence (Biggs, 1998); Kember & Gow, 1990; Ryan & Louie, 2007; Watkins, Regmi & Astilla, 1991). If this stereotypical image presents many Chinese students as surface learners, it may imply that Western students are more likely to be deep learners whose intention is to understand the meaning of the material by virtue of their culture alone. This analysis has been criticised as naïve and simplistic because there are actually multiple factors that contribute to all learning approaches (Mathias, Bruce & Newton, 2013; Tan, 2011). Some researchers completely reject the term Chinese learner, which they regard as unhelpful (Ryan & Louie, 2007). They criticise the flawed assumption of the homogeneity of students and the acquisition model on the grounds that it fails to differentiate between the diverse features of students from mainland China, and Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea and other CHC countries. These learners differ in terms of their respective histories, social policies, educational systems, values, and beliefs, all of which have an influence on their learning style (Back & Barker, 2002).

Chinese students are often judged pejoratively by Western educators (Beckett, 2012; Watkins & Biggs, 1996; Helmke & Tuyet, 1999; Jiang & Smith, 2009; Kingston & Forland, 2007; Volet & Renshaw, 1995). These educators view Chinese students as reproductive rote learners of the facts presented to them who only apply a surface learning approach (Watkins, Reghi & Astilla, 1991). They are regarded as a “problematic” group (Tan, 2011) that is treated as a “reduced other” (Grimshaw, 2007) who need to change their ways in order to fit into the higher education agenda (Tan, 2011). Jiang & Smith (2009) show that Chinese students are often described as passive learners and low-level strategy users. The widespread belief that the Chinese teaching and learning model is based on the categories of teachers’ transmitting knowledge and students as passive recipients are too simplistic. Other theorists have documented the way Chinese students are characterised as reluctant to speak up or give their opinion; relying heavily on memorization; lacking critical thinking; respectful of the authority of the teacher; and expecting to be spoon-fed (Durkin, 2011b; Turner, 2013; Wu, 2015). According to Hu (2002), Chinese students have been categorised in terms of the learning strategies they use, including reception,

repetition, review and reproduction. In other words, Chinese students are viewed as receivers who repeat to acquire knowledge and understanding, consider review as a key step for consolidating old knowledge, and reproduce textual knowledge as required by teachers (Jiang & Smith, 2009).

A growing and influential body of research has examined the importance of understanding how cultural differences influence or shape learning approaches (Hu, 2003; Jiang & Smith, 2009). These studies adopt a more constructivist approach to learning and are focused on the cultural knowledge and behaviour of Chinese students as a group of learners in terms of the influence of their national and ethnic backgrounds (Brick, 1991; Flowerdew & Miller, 1992; Grimshaw, 2007; Rastall, 2006). Other scholars have unpacked the implications of cultural differences in identifying specific areas of behavior and actions. They have found that attitudes (Resnick, 1987), dispositions (Bereiter, 1995), mindfulness (Salomon & Globerson, 1987) and motivation (McKeachie, 1987), also cannot be ignored in understanding how students learn (Volet, 1999).

In a recent paper, Wu (2015) warns that caution needs to be exercised in making generalizations about Chinese students and their learning behaviors. Wu points out the problematic nature of this conception of Chinese students and argues that ambitious generalisations about Chinese students are not useful in understanding this group of students. Drawing on Kettle (2005), Wu's research on the experience of Chinese students suggests that they are active learners rather than passive recipients of knowledge. She positions them as change agents in their new academic contexts. Wu also draws on Ryan's (2011b) work to propose that Chinese students should not be seen as a problem to be solved, but as contributors to the development of good practice in the internationalisation of higher education. This view is firmly supported by Marginson (2014) who concludes that international students can break out of the influences of their own cultures and become active participants in the new environment.

Pedagogical and curricular challenges

Chan (1999) notes that Chinese students often find management programs that emphasise student participation in classroom activities challenging. Holmes (2004) suggests more specifically “for Chinese students, the Western classroom practices of volunteering answers, commenting, interrupting, criticising, asking questions, or seeking clarification may be seen as bold and immodest ” (p. 296). Therefore, it can be confusing for Chinese students when university teachers’ request student involvement in the decision-making process regarding course content (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998).

There is evidence that students were familiar with very different pedagogical and curricula practices in the Confucian heritage countries (Clarke & Xu, 2008). Ramburuth and McCormick (2001) point out the nature of pedagogical diversity in Australian tertiary classrooms and the significant differences between Australian and international students in terms of their preferred learning styles and choices, in particular with regard to the use of small groups. Turner (2009) shows that most international students had not previously participated in small educational groups. These students face a new way of learning through interaction with their peers. Turner (2009) warns that challenges can arise from the simplistic adoption of group work as a tool for promoting learning. Furthermore, Volet and Ang (1998) find that Chinese students lack motivation to join Australian students for group work, as they believe that Australian students are too individualistic. Similarly, they say Australian students tend to prefer low levels of cross-cultural interaction (Volet & Ang, 1998). Holmes work shows that Chinese student learning styles contrast strongly with their Western peers in areas such as need for harmony (2008) and communication styles (2005). In relation to maintaining harmony, she says "students indicated that Chinese students sought to maintain harmony in interpersonal relations, evidenced in facework, role recognition, the place of listening and silence, and managing group work interactions" (2008). Nguyen, Terlouw and Pilot (2005) argue that, in a group setting, Chinese students tend to suppress their personal desires, avoid conflict and hence avoid criticising their peers or claiming any authority. By contrast, Australian students are more familiar with group learning practices and participative and constructivist approaches (Nguyen et al., 2005). Interestingly, some studies have found that Chinese

students learn from experience, and prefer visual and auditory learning styles to group work (Song-Turner & Willis, 2011). In summary, differences between acquisitive and participative and constructivist approaches to learning are shown to pose significant challenges for international students.

Beyond rote learning: re-viewing memorisation

A key debate in the discussion on the Chinese students' learning concerns the central importance of memorisation in the learning process. As discussed above, Chinese learning styles are more subtle and complex than they appear and memorisation well illustrates this point. The notion that memorising and understanding are mutually exclusive may be in need of reappraisal (Kennedy, 2002). A number of authors have suggested possible trajectories for such a reappraisal. For example, Masemann (1982) argues that rote learning is simply the initial step that leads to a deeper form of learning for Chinese learners. Biggs (1996) agrees, arguing that Chinese students may be repetitive learners rather than rote learners and suggesting that Chinese learners' strategic use of memorisation is purposeful rather than mechanical (Jiang & Smith, 2009). Marton et al. (1997) suggest that when Chinese learners appear to be rote learning, they may be memorising what is understood and understanding through memorising. This view is supported by others who suggest that learners with a Confucian cultural background do not view memorisation and understanding as mutually exclusive (Dahlin & Regmi, 1997; Marton et al., 1997; Purdie & Hattie, 2002; Tan, 2011).

Memorisation plays an important role in the learning process for Chinese students and is a traditional way of learning in CHC countries (McMahon, 2011). In the Chinese tradition, an educated and cultured person was one who could memorise the classics. This approach is still used to teach children social and moral obligations (Chan, 1999). Mastery of the Chinese writing system also requires significant memorisation. McMahon (2011) claims that it appears that Chinese students develop memorisation skills because of cultural factors and academic needs, and that there is a cultural understanding that the best way to acquire knowledge is through memorisation.

Memorising is very common in Chinese primary and junior high school education where language teachers constantly ask the students to recite from texts and test them on their recall of the content. Chinese students develop certain memorisation skills in their childhood as they are asked to memorise classical texts from ancient times. The Chinese concept of memorisation “背诵” (Beisong) or “背” (Bei) encapsulates the distinctive process/activities of learning. The word Beisong is made up of two Chinese characters. The first of these, *bei* (背), means piggyback, and the latter *song* (诵) means to recite a song or poem. The compound suggests an activity in which remembering piggybacks on the recitation of a song or poem and can be fun (Tan, 2011). Ask any Chinese learner who has memorised the multiplication tables, he or she would relate to you that the experience of learning them is like “singing a song” (Tan, 2011).

From this discussion, it is clear that memorisation is not just an acquisitive approach to learning. Memorisation has never been seen as an end in itself by Chinese learners but as a prelude to deeper understanding and may include elements of constructivist learning (Kennedy, 2002). In this view, memorisation enables the learner to taste and reflect appreciatively on concepts later, and, finally, to integrate them with his/her prior learning and experience. Kennedy (2002) also points out that there is a clear difference between rote learning (mechanical learning without meaning) and repetition for memorising of content. Others claim that Chinese students use the latter more than the former, especially when they prepare for exams (Ho, Salili, Biggs & Hau, 1999). They claim that Chinese students memorise words or already understood facts and concepts that may be required to ensure success.

McMahon (2011) concludes that Western educators have undervalued Chinese students’ learning strategies by confusing learning through memorisation and repetition with rote learning. Mathias et al. (2013) agree and draw on the earlier work of Trigwell, Prosser and Waterhouse (1999) who suggest that both deep (by understanding) and surface (only by memorising) approaches should be considered to be simultaneously present in the students’ learning.

Cultural differences and learning approaches

Many cross-cultural studies of international students have examined the importance of the sociocultural or sociohistorical settings of students' learning practices and beliefs (Durkin, 2011a; Edwards et al., 2007; Gu, Schweisfurth & Day, 2010; Holmes, 2004, 2005, 2008, 2012, Holmes et. al, 2016; Ryan, 2011b; Tian & Lowe, 2013; Turner, 2013; Wu, 2015). One common approach is to apply a binary logic that portrays the Chinese and Western education systems as exclusive and definite entities. In this view, Western and Asian values are contrasted and described as discrete, homogeneous and unchanging (Ryan & Louie, 2007). Tan (2011) adopts a more constructivist approach using Shaules (2007) concept of deep culture. Tan (2011) demonstrates why Chinese learners use memorisation when learning from a different cultural perspective. *Deep culture* comprises elements of culture that function without awareness; they are hidden basic assumptions which include elements such as linguistic relativity and cognitive processes. Shaules (in Tan, 2011) claims that it is crucial to understand the unspoken assumptions from deep culture that underlie many cultural dilemmas. Tan (2011) also cites in Jiang's work (2002) contemporary Chinese philosopher Zhang Dongsun, to advocate that the form or the structure of language expresses the character and psychology of a nation or "a way of thinking" (p.72). Chinese written characters consist of ideographs that represent meanings as opposed to the English alphabet, which represent sounds (Tan, 2011; Tse, Marton, Ki & Loh, 2007). For the alphabetic English language, understanding phoneme blending would enable most learners to form words as the systems and patterns are explicit for learning the language (Tse et al., 2007). By contrast, every individual Chinese character has a distinctive meaning. Chinese students apply intense effort to memorise thousands of written characters in order to become competent in using their own language (Kennedy, 2002). Therefore, it is not surprising that with years of repetition and memorisation from childhood, "memorisation has become a culturally and intuitively ingrained approach to learning" (Tan, 2011, p. 125). This view challenges the traditional essentialist view of the social world (Grimshaw, 2010). The essentialist view in intercultural communication focuses on a collection of discrete and exclusive cultures which constrain and determine the actions of individuals (Grimshaw, 2010). From an essentialist perspective, cultures are homogeneous, monolithic entities that are associated with specific places and languages (Gudykunst, 2003 cited in

Grimshaw, 2010; Gu, 2009). Essentialists also assume that people's beliefs and behaviours are determined by national and ethnic groupings. This view has been the default way of thinking about how people are different from one another (Grimshaw, 2010; Holliday, 2005). From an essentialist point of view, Chinese learner's needs and their responses to education and life are cast as totally homogenous and culturally determined (Gu, 2009).

By contrast, non-essentialists advocate that "individuals are influenced or make use of a multiplicity of cultural forms" (Holliday, Hyde & Kullman, 2004, p. 5). This concept highlights the complexity and dynamism of the cultural environment within which individual identities are formed; an environment where global, national, local and individual realities overlap and interact (Grimshaw, 2010; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Therefore, Gu (2009) challenges cultural stereotyping, and argues that other factors are influential in Chinese students learning. These include "the backgrounds and aspirations of learners, their specific motivations for learning, the setting in which interactions take place, and the nature of the relationship between teachers and learners" (p. 40).

As Grimshaw says, "it is important to recognise that the 'otherisation' of cultural out-groups is a universal phenomenon" (Grimshaw, 2010, p. 247). Learning in China is often related to a long-established Orientalist discourse within which the liberating, modernising "West" is opposed to an unenlightened and culturally deficient "Rest" (Clark & Gieve, 2006; Grimshaw, 2007, 2010; Holliday, 2005; Pennycook, 1998). However, people in the West are becoming increasingly aware of China's global importance as China presents itself as "a nation which prides itself on its distinct cultural identity and avowed antagonism towards imperialism" in its communications with Western communities (Adamson, 1998, p. 142 cited in Grimshaw, 2010). In contrast to the Western tradition of orientalism (Said, 1978, 1993, cited in Grimshaw, 2010), *occidentalism* represents "the Western Other" within the Chinese imagination (Grimshaw, 2010).

Research in intercultural communication increasingly emphasises the diversity that exists within cultures, and the blurring of boundaries that occurs when communities interact (Holmes, 2004, 2008; Holmes et al., 2016; Holmes & O'Neill, 2012; Ryan &

Viète, 2009). Holmes and O'Neill's (2012) work in intercultural communication and intercultural competence demonstrates that "developing intercultural competence encompasses processes of acknowledging reluctance and fear, foregrounding and questioning stereotypes, monitoring feelings and emotions, working through confusion, and grappling with complexity (2012, p.707). Wu (2015) reviews the terms "multiculturalism" and "interculturalism", and suggests that interculturalism encourages people of different cultures to engage with each other and learn from each other and emphasises the importance of direct exchange of ideas, principles, and behaviors. Wu (2015) suggests that learning from cross-cultural interactions is a crucial part of the education process. Intercultural education builds on the benefits of multicultural education, which acknowledges and respects other peoples and cultures, and encourages students to come to know and understand each other and accept diversity in order to integrate. Therefore, Wu (2015) suggests that intercultural pedagogy filters the teaching and learning process and practices through intercultural aspects. Intercultural pedagogy highlights the interactive nature of intercultural learning, which consciously values and integrates complexity and diversity (McLean & Ransom, 2005 cited in Wu, 2015). Wu (2015) goes further, drawing on Ryan (2011) arguing that intercultural learning will not occur spontaneously simply by students of different nationalities coexisting in the same classroom. Instead, in truly intercultural education, the diversity of international students must be recognised as an asset by teachers facilitating students in sharing their culturally relevant views and understandings (Ryan, 2011, 2013; Wu, 2015).

In summary, the notion of the Chinese learner might have been useful to highlight and identify the specific needs and concerns facing Chinese-background students in the 1980s. However, using a fixed picture of the Chinese learner may also impede deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Heng, 2016; Wu, 2015). Studies drawing on cultural approaches show that student learning is not pre-determined and context free and that Chinese students use different learning approaches in combination for different contexts.

In order to better understand how Chinese students adapt and re-shape their learning practices after arriving in Australia, it is necessary to have a clearer understanding of the ways their learning experiences have been shaped by the Chinese cultural and

educational system. In the next section, I present a brief introduction to the Chinese education system. I show the profound influence Confucianism has had on traditional approaches to learning before moving to briefly discuss the educational reforms of the last three decades.

Chinese education system and policy

China's education system has been shaped by its culture and history in many ways. China is a rapidly changing society in which considerable tensions exist between its traditional culture of Confucianism and Taoism, the Maoist ideology of the 20th century, and the emphasis on a capitalist economy and an Open Door policy that has become dominant since the 1980s (Kolstad & Gjesvik, 2014). Important philosophical influences on Chinese culture include Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism and Maoism. Cultural and historical influences such as the dynasty system, periods of isolation and openness to the West, trading practices and linguistic practices have also had important influence. Arguably, however, the greatest and most pervasive influence has been that of Confucianism (Kolstad & Gjesvik, 2014; Tweed & Lehman, 2002).

Confucian influences on pedagogy

Confucian philosophy has dominated the Chinese way of life for centuries and this is evident in the education system. Confucianism is a formalised philosophical ethical and political system of thought based on the teachings of Confucius that provides the foundation for social behaviour and the ideals of government and education in China (Choi & Nieminen, 2013). Yao (2000) explains that Confucianism is a tradition with deep roots in Chinese culture that was nurtured by Confucius and Confucians rather than having been created or initiated by Confucius alone. According to Choi and Nieminen (2013), the link between Confucianism and education in China is often mentioned in Western writings, but their intertwined working mechanisms may not be well understood in practice by Western education providers.

In the following sections, I discuss a number of key Confucian concepts common in Chinese thinking and culture that strongly shape education. These concepts are not always explicit, but they have deep roots and are influential in shaping the Chinese way of thinking. They have therefore come to provide an underpinning philosophy for

many educational structures and practices (Kolstad & Gjesvik, 2014; Tweed & Lehman, 2002). Many Chinese students are strongly influenced by ideas and concepts arising from Confucianism before they arrive in Australia (Choi & Nieminen, 2013; Tweed & Lehman, 2002).

The Confucian view of learning differs significantly from what is meant by learning in the West. Confucian views of learning are complex and do not fit easily into any one of the metaphors analysed by Hager and Hodkinson (2009, 2011). In the Confucian view, learning encompasses ethics, including the virtuous and moral parts or aspects of living, rather than only the cognitive abilities of a person. Generally, Confucianism values effortful learning, behavioral reform, pragmatic learning, the acquisition of essential knowledge, and respectful learning (Tweed & Lehman, 2002). There are two levels of learning referred to in Confucius' educational philosophy. One is the accumulation of knowledge (through transmission) and the other is the discovery of knowledge (through reflection) (Li & Wegerif, 2014).

Confucius believed in universal education. In the *Analects*, he says "everyone, without distinction, is educable; education should be provided for all without distinction" (*Analects* 15: 39, trans. in Song & Cadman, 2013). According to Yao (2000), Confucian learning includes a process of reading, understanding and deliberating, but it is more than a purely academic work. "Confucian learning is the study of the Way of Heaven both in the inner self and in external practices. The only purpose of learning is the promotion of virtuous action and the cultivation of a moral character, as Confucius made clear that 'a person of virtue studies the Way in order to love people'" (*Analects* 17: 4, trans. in Yao, 2000). Similarly, Wu (2011) points out that "the ultimate purpose for learning is to become a better polished person (Junzi)" (p. 574). He explains that the purpose of teaching is to facilitate the passage of learners to becoming a Junzi (君子). Such a person will polish their Ren (仁), meaning humanity or humaneness, and satisfy the external commandments of Li (礼), rites or propriety. A Junzi is therefore a moral person who embodies both Ren and Li (Cheng & Xu, 2011).

In the Confucian view, filial piety (孝), or respect for one's parents, elders and ancestors, is an important virtue. Traditional Chinese culture has a hierarchical/vertical culture of ethics that strongly influences teacher-student relationships (Armstrong & Swartzman, 2001 cited in Kolstad & Gjesvik, 2014). The concept of the five ethical relationships (Wulun) refers to an order of priority and the superiority–inferiority of the roles and relationships in the family and in society at large. The five ethical relationships are: (a) ruler–minister; (b) father–son; (c) elder brother–younger brother; (d) husband–wife; and (e) friend–friend (Mackerras, 2006). Confucius believed that society can only be ordered and harmonious when everyone performs well in his or her role. Let the ruler be a ruler; let the minister be a minister; let the father be a father; let the son be a son. In this view, Confucius' teaching philosophy is bound together by the roles of teacher and student “let the teacher be a teacher, the student a student” (Wang & King, 2008).

Confucian pedagogy is mainly composed of individual face-to-face dialogues with students, and dialogue has specific meanings in certain contexts (Cheng & Xu, 2011). Confucian teaching was dialogic not only in the superficial sense that the teacher taught through dialogues with students, but also because it was clear that words had meaning in the context of relationships and were not intended as universal abstract generalizations (Li & Wegerif, 2014). Confucius emphasised students' different learning styles when he advised that educators “teach students in accordance with their aptitude, adjust measures to local conditions” (Antalects, 11: 23 Leys, trans. 1997, in Huang, Webster, Wood & Ishaya, 2006). In the Analects, Confucius responds to the same question quite differently depending upon who has posed the question. For example, when four different students asked about the concept of Ren, Confucius gave four different answers (Li & Wegerif, 2014). He responds to his students' questions based on their psychological state, personality, and social background (Cheng & Xu, 2011). Nisbett (2003) refers to Confucius' way as dialectical in the sense that it tolerates contradictions and is aware of a “complex holistic interrelatedness whereby opposites contain each other and often turn into each other over time” (Nisbett cited in Li & Wegerif, 2014). Confucius' dialogic approach to teaching facilitates the development of those who are keen to learn. “I do not open up the truth to one who is not eager to get knowledge, nor help out any one who is not

anxious to explain himself ” (Antalects, 7:8 Legge trans. 1893, in Li & Wegerif, 2014). According to Kim (2003), Confucius saw thinking as a reflective process. Reflective thinking comprises two layers: reflection on the materials of knowledge and reflection on oneself. Kim explains these two layers of thinking. The first involves a reflection on knowledge in order to synthesise and systematise the raw materials into a whole, and to integrate them into oneself as wisdom. Reflection on oneself is necessary to ensure that such synthesis, systematisation and integration proceed in an open-minded, fair and autonomous way, and in order to integrate knowledge with the self, thus internalising it until it becomes oneself.

Confucius understood reflective learning as an active process. He said, “if I raise one angle and they do not come back with the other three angles, I will not repeat myself” (Antalects, 7:8, Legge trans. 1893, in Li & Wegerif, 2014). He required his students to think for themselves about his teaching in order that they might come back to him with new ideas and questions (Li & Wegerif, 2014). One aspect of self-reflection includes identifying one’s own learning attitudes, weaknesses and strengths. Li and Wegerif (2014) claim that this view of learning is similar to contemporary ideas of meta-cognition. For Confucius, knowing one’s state of knowledge is fundamental to learning. “What you know, you know, what you don’t know, you don’t know. This is knowledge” (Antalects, 2:17 Dawson trans. 2000, in Li & Wegerif, 2014). Clearly, Confucius’ focus was not on acquiring information so as to become more knowledgeable, but on developing one’s awareness of one’s own knowledge (Li & Wegerif, 2014).

Reflection also involves challenging other people’s views and learning from peers (Li & Wegerif, 2014). Confucius emphasised the need to know how to learn rather than simply acquiring specific knowledge. “When I walk along with two others, they may serve me as my teachers. I will select their good qualities and follow them, their bad qualities and avoid them” (Antalects, 7:21 Legge trans. 1893, in Li & Wegerif, 2014). Confucius also said that one can teach oneself through revision: “One is worthy of being or becoming a teacher if one is able to derive new understanding while revising what he has learned” (Antalects, 2:11 Legge trans. 1893, in Li & Wegerif, 2014). He encouraged his students to review and think reflectively about what they had learned,

to come up with new understandings and to be able to offer alternative suggestions or solutions (Li & Wegerif, 2014).

Confucius also placed a high value on silence. He emphasised the importance for students of silent reflection before speaking and pointed out the danger of speaking incautiously. But he also claimed that this silence is not merely an individual reflection but goes beyond the individual (Li & Wegerif, 2014). In one dialogue, Confucius says, “I would prefer not-speaking ” Zi Gong says, “If you, master, do not speak, what shall we, your disciples, have to record”? Confucius replies, “does Heaven speak? The four seasons pursue their courses and all things are continually being produced but does heaven say anything” (Antalects, 17:19 Legge trans. 1893, in Li & Wegerif, 2014). Confucius proposed a view of thinking as a silent, inner dialogue involving multiple virtual voices. He advocated questioning oneself and one’s motivation from different points of view, thinking about the interests of the community of which one is a part and finally trying to understand the view of universe (Ha & Li, 2014; Li & Wegerif, 2014; Sun, 2008). The key concepts of Confucian thought explained above define the key social relationships and norms that underpin the Chinese educational system.

Economic growth and the Open Door policy

A second major influence on contemporary Chinese education relates to globalisation and Chinese economic growth and what is termed the Open Door Policy. In 1978, China adopted its Open Door Policy, triggering huge changes in the country. First, it allowed foreign direct investment into the country. Second, it began to move towards a socialist market economy. Third, it created a demand for Western science and technology (Cho, Roberts & Roberts, 2006; Hao, 1999; Zweig, 1997). Fourth, for the first time in its history, there was unprecedented global transfer of knowledge, information sharing and cultural learning (Faurea & Fang, 2008).

The Open Door Policy and related economic reforms on education in China has had a multi-dimensional impact. China’s education system has changed as rapidly as its politics, economy, culture and society. The forces of globalization, modernization and economic development have led to substantial changes in China’s educational policy

and governance, curriculum and pedagogy (Liu & Fang, 2009; Paine & Fang, 2006). China's *1993 Outline for Educational Reform and Development* emphasised that education and science were of crucial importance to China's modernisation drive (Wang 2013). In order to achieve an accelerated growth of higher education, it called for decentralization of the administrative structure and expansion of university autonomy; reorganization of universities for efficiency, effectiveness, and reasonable expansion; and diversification of the sources of funding for higher education institutions (Liu & Fang, 2009; Zha, 2009). Practices such as academic exchange, international cooperation and joint research, were introduced as well as including international staff and students and international competitions through global rankings (Wang, 2013).

China's basic education policy reform

Over the last decade, China has undertaken a wide-ranging pedagogical and curricular reform at all levels of its education system. The scale of this reform is huge with China's population of over 1.3 billion, it is regarded as among the most important events in the history of China's educational system (Guan & Meng, 2007; Paine, Fang & Wilson, 2003; Ryan, 2010b; Ryan, Kang, Mitchella & Ericksonc, 2009; Zhong, 2006). The reform encompasses fundamental and extensive revision of curricular content and pedagogical approaches, including systematic reform of curriculum objectives, standards, structure and content; teaching and learning strategies; textbooks; assessment and evaluation; teacher professional development; and curriculum administration (Liu & Fang, 2009). These reforms were launched with the release of *The Guidelines on Chinese Basic Education Curriculum Reform (Zhongguo jichu jiaoyu kecheng gaige gangyao)* published by the Ministry of Education in 2001 (Ryan, 2010b). This program of reform has entailed a move from the philosophy of the "two basics" (knowledge and skills) to that of "quality education" and the promotion of new and innovative teaching and learning approaches that aim to develop autonomous and collaborative learners (Mitchell, Ryan, Kang & Erickson, 2007; Paine & Fang, 2006; Ryan, 2010b; Zhong, 2006; Zhu, 2005).

Analysis of the reforms suggests that the relationships between the different components of the education system are complex and that the recent reforms have

added more layers of complexity (Law, Yuen, Chan, Yuen, Pan, Lai & Lee, 2009). There is evidence that Chinese students are adapting to the changes in the educational system and that they are developing new strategies as they engage in new experiences during the course of current reforms. However, many tensions and struggles exist for the teachers and students in the course of change (Law et al., 2009). The new curriculum reform is a complicated process. There are substantial differences in terms of implementation, both in the interpretation of the curriculum reform and in reflecting ideas articulated in the literature on education. Liu (2013) suggests that these differences are largely based on individual teachers' experiences and beliefs, and their understanding and interpretation of the curriculum reform.

A teacher-centered pedagogy

A teacher-centered pedagogy that relies on the acquisition approach to learning is still the main approach adopted in Chinese primary and secondary school teaching system (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998). When compared with Australian schools, classrooms in China contain a large number of pupils and generally appear to be highly formal and teacher focused environments where strict discipline is maintained. Primary and secondary school classes commonly have 50–60 pupils (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998). Students are not encouraged to ask questions and there is an emphasis on students acquiring knowledge (facts) from the teacher. There is great pressure to pass large set-piece assessments, which are the indicators of academic progress and success (McMahon, 2011).

Similarly, classroom teaching in Chinese tertiary institutions is usually conducted in an authoritarian, teacher-centered environment, in which students follow the lecturers' instruction just like "the planets round the sun" (Shi, 1990). In universities, classroom instruction has long been dominated by teachers (Han, 1992). Even though some reformers demand change from over-dependence on teachers to student-centered approaches, the changes have not really occurred (Leng, 1996). Student learning needs have rarely been considered by teachers, and students usually participate in the classroom in a quite and passive manner (Wu, 2004; Yin, Lu & Wang, 2014).

There are clear contradictions and tensions in the traditional Chinese approach to teaching (Foster & Stapleton, 2012). On the one hand, Chinese traditional teaching

adopted teacher-centered practices by focusing on the teacher transmitting the knowledge to students in a predesigned and well-prepared manner. On the other hand, Confucian teaching emphasises the use of dialogue and reflection in different contexts between teachers and students. There is a strong desire for harmony, but at the same time Confucianism highly values dialogue, contradiction and argument (Li & Wegerif, 2014). These contradictions and tensions are ongoing issues in the Chinese education system.

Chinese teacher-centered teaching practices have consistently been depicted as following a transmission model in which the roles of teacher and learner are clearly defined and the teacher retains control of the learning process (Chen, 2014; Schuh, 2004). Within this framework, instruction is the activity via which information is moved or transmitted to and into the learner (Schuh, 2004). The teacher is supposed to be a respectable expert or authority in the field that is able to deliver the knowledge to learners through predetermined procedures. Good teaching is condensed in a carefully prepared lecture that captures the essence of the textbook. In this framework, there is an assumption that the teacher needs to do things to and for the learner (Chen & Bennett, 2012). The teacher manipulates the learning situation to obtain the desired outcomes guided by a generalised understanding of the learners' characteristics. Teacher-centered instruction typically includes more teacher talk and questions than student talk and questions, more whole group instruction and a greater reliance on textbooks with other sources playing a supporting role. In the classroom, desks are arranged in rows facing the board with the teacher's desk nearby (Cuban, 1983). The learners' role is to concentrate on the content delivered in class and follow the instructions given by the teachers (Chen, 2014).

Chinese students are under constant pressure from exams throughout their schooling and come to expect that the teacher have a major responsibility to coach them to pass these exams (Kember, McNaught and Ma 2006 cited in Chen, 2014). To meet this expectation, a teacher-centered approach to instruction is utilised partly because it allows more content to be covered in a shorter time, thus giving students an advantage in their exams (Yuen & Hau, 2006).

Teacher and student relationship

Under the influence of Confucianism, the relationship between teachers and students is premised on inequality (Clarke, 2010; Hu, 2002; Zhang & McGrath, 2009). In the acquisition and transmission approaches to learning, students are supposed to treat the teacher as a knowledge-delivering person with sufficient knowledge to teach. Chinese students are likely to accept unequal relationships between teachers and students due to the unequal distribution of power in relationships in Chinese culture. Students expect teachers to demonstrate correct behaviour, especially in terms of modeling unequal relationships (Clarke, 2010). The traditional Chinese saying “teacher for a day, father for life” advises that students are expected to accord teachers with lifelong respect. The teacher–student relationship is commonly seen as comparable to that between parents and their children. One Chinese word for teacher is composed of two characters, that roughly translates as ‘teacher father’ (Hu, 2002; Zhang & McGrath, 2009). It is widely claimed that such unchallengeable authority constitutes a key part of the Confucian heritage of learning.

Teachers are expected to be authoritative figures who embody knowledge (Liu & Kelly, 1998). Students do not challenge teachers and always shows them lifelong respect, expecting knowledge to flow from teacher to student and never in the opposite direction (Nguyen et al., 2006). Disrupting the power structure could also affect the orderliness of the atmosphere and introduce disharmony, which may have an adverse impact on learning. If teachers look foolish in their role it might be shocking for Chinese students and might disturb the equilibrium of the class completely. Similarly, in a group with no leader, the concept of unequal relationships is again disturbed as there is no hierarchy (Nguyen et al., 2006). In addition, it would not be appropriate for the students to appear to be more knowledgeable than teachers by constructing knowledge collaboratively, or by questioning the teacher’s knowledge (Clarke, 2010). Accordingly, there is a clear expectation of orderliness, authority and morality in Chinese culture, which is permeated by Confucian ideas.

Examination driven

In contrast to many Western cultural traditions, the strong hierarchy of Chinese society is a significant factor in accounting for this didactic form of pedagogy. This is evident in the measurement of success via examinations (Chen, 2014). Li (2010)

argues that the emphasis on exams in CHCs persists due to a Confucian moral emphasis on the “equality of education for all regardless of personal background” (p. 41). Chen (2014) goes on to argue that this principle entails the practice of using objective and ostensibly impartial assessment methods because they supposedly ensures that everyone’s advancement in education depends solely on their own effort.

Examinations have a very long history in China (Pong & Chow, 2002). National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), known as Gaokao (高考) is a highly centralised testing system used in China today. Students are admitted into different universities solely based on their NCEE test scores. The subjects tested by the NCEE are based on the “3+X” system. This system requires all students to take exams in three common areas: Chinese language, mathematics and foreign languages (Yu & Suen, 2005) and take an additional comprehensive test in either art or science, depending on the track chosen by the examinee.

Parents’ expectations

Parents’ dreams for their children’s future, together with their perceived social obligations to the family, make many Chinese young people feel trapped by the pressure to perform (Kolstad & Gjessvik, 2014). The concept of “education fever” refers to the phenomenon of China’s national obsession with education and in particular to parents’ feverish aspiration and support for their children’s educational attainments (Kim, 2003; Yu & Suen, 2005). According to the 2013 Chinese Household Finance Survey (CHFC), family expenditure on education amounted to 10.84 per cent of the family budget and surpassed both housing and clothing to become, after food, the second highest expenditure for households in China.

Traditional Chinese thinking is likely having a crucial role in determining the specific characteristics of Chinese parenting (Wu, 2008). Parenting is one of the most significant factors contributing to children’s academic performance and their emotional and social development in China. Chinese parenting is generally identified as authoritarian and controlling. Chinese parents tend to view success less as the result of innate ability than of single-minded effort and consistent practice (Wu, 2008). Huang and Rinaldo (2007) explain that this belief is founded on the Confucian

idea that success follows hard work, not ability.

Chinese and Australian education systems: similar or contrasting?

The education systems in Australia and China are built upon different social, cultural and educational approaches. There are contradictions and tensions in both education systems. In the West, it is often found that different teaching pedagogies co-exist in everyday practice. First, in understanding some key learning approaches or educational concepts, obvious problems exist in the institutional teaching practices, which indicates inconsistency in teaching practices. Ryan (2010b) argues that “Western” learners are often equally stereotyped. Critical thinking, deep learning, lifelong and “lifewide” learning are promoted as the outcomes of Western education, but these concepts are often under-theorised or lack agreed meanings, particularly pivotal concepts such as “critical thinking.” The notion of “critical thinking” is highly contested, even within “Western” educational contexts. Hang’s (2005) study of the perceptions of this term by academics in a business faculty at a large Australian university found a remarkable lack of common understanding of the term (Hang 2005 cited in Ryan, 2010b).

Learning and teaching theories and approaches as expressed in metaphors often overlap and intersect in teaching practice (Hager & Hodkinson 2009; 2011). A preference for constructivist pedagogy is often blended with transition or acquisition approaches due to the necessity to teach large cohorts in lecture theaters with limited resources. Growing tutorial sizes and the move to implement digital technologies, often poorly, as a vehicle for student’ learning, also contribute to this pressure. Transmission-based, participative and constructivist models of learning co-exist in many Western institutions and tensions exist between the process of massification and its effects, and the pedagogical requirements for quality control (2009; 2011). Learning aims to move beyond simple knowledge acquisition to promoting student engagement and higher order cognitive functions such as problem solving and critical thinking. Achieving these goals in light of the very large classes that are part of higher education in business is very challenging (Cooper and Robinson 2000; Hornsby & Osman, 2014).

Between the government push for higher education institutions to be self-funded and the simultaneous push for the development and implementation of international quality standards (Marginson 2008, 2011; Freeman, Hancock, Simpson and Sykes, 2008) full-fee-paying international students such as those from China are seen as a way for universities to maintain revenue flows. Therefore, attracting them in large numbers is a strategic focus but it also results in low entry standards that are in tension with the requirements of the Higher Education Standards Framework.

Tensions also exist between the implementation of a complex standards framework and embedded institutional and academic practices. The standards require the development and implementation of consistent professional standards across all Higher Education institutions in line with international policy (Boud 2014). However, complex institutional and academic practices relating to disciplinary knowledge, academic freedom and faculty resourcing may be in contradiction with the Standards Framework (Boud, 2014).

The Chinese education system also contains its own set of contradictions. The education system is a complex mixture of Confucian social and family influences and educational policies. The Confucian tradition has been embedded in the Chinese culture for more than 2000 years and influences most aspects of Chinese culture including the education system. In relation to pedagogy, foundational ideas relate to ethical learning, the promotion of virtuous action and the cultivation of a moral character. Teachers and students are positioned as separate and discrete. The teacher is seen to need to be a polished person, while students are positioned in silence as a corollary of ethical learning and virtuous action (Ha & Li, 2014; Wang & King, 2008). The basic Chinese education reform, which has been implemented as a result of globalisation, as well as the sheer size of the Chinese population and the education system drive the need for standardisation and efficiency. The acquisition and transmission model can facilitate this standardisation and efficiency. However, they may not facilitate a Confucian pedagogy concerned with ethical learning and virtuous action.

Educational reform in China has promoted a move from the “two basics” (knowledge and skills) to “quality education” and the promotion of new and innovative teaching

and learning approaches that aim to develop autonomous and collaborative learners using alternative methods of assessment (Liu & Fang, 2009; Ryan, 2010b). However, the whole education assessment system is still driven by a model for measuring successes based on exams, which reflects the strong hierarchy in Chinese education (Chen, 2014). The reform of the national education system requires the development and implementation of national standards and policies including standardised curriculum objectives, teaching and learning strategies; assessment and evaluation; and teacher professional development. However, due to the massive population and geographical differences, implementing consistent educational practices across the nation are very challenging, making the achievement of standardised objective very difficult (Wang, 2011).

Western researchers tend to conceptualise teaching as either “teacher centered and content oriented” or “student centered and learning orientated.” However, many years ago, Biggs and Watkins (2001) argued that teaching in the Chinese classroom is both “teacher centered” and “student centered”. Equally, students do not construct knowledge independent of their teachers. The student centered approach contained in the education reform calls for the independent development of creative thinking, collaborative inquiry and lifelong capacities (Ryan, 2010b). There is a general assumption, that the Chinese education system assumes a transmission teaching model, and teacher-centered pedagogy, which is in contrast with that of Western universities that are more constructivist and student centered in their approach. However, some researchers argue that experiences and teaching practices in higher education in both developing and developed countries are substantially the same (Cortazzi & Jin, 2001). For example, in both environments, it is a struggle to deal with diversity in student approaches to learning, and how to promote student engagement and higher order cognitive skills such as critical thinking (Hornsby & Osman, 2014). Researchers also find that Chinese teachers “craft the teaching process with sophistication” (Paine, 1990, cited in Rao & Chan, 2010), orchestrate student involvement in large classes (Cortazzi & Jin, 2001), and obtain meaningful understanding (Rao & Chan, 2010).

There is no single teaching pedagogy covering the needs of all students in Chinese education (Wilhoit, 1994 cited in Sun, 2013). On the contrary, teachers adopt a

variety of pedagogies and often skillfully combine them to form a cohesive pedagogy (Sun, 2013). For example, according to Holmes (2004), some teachers ensure that knowledge is co-constructed through student-student and teacher-student communication rather than being passively absorbed by students. Sun (2013) claims that using different pedagogies serves the purpose of deep learning and higher-order thinking and improve students' problem solving skills.

From a practical pedagogical perspective, similar complexities exist in both China and the West and different teaching approaches and practices exist concurrently. Therefore, due to many tensions and contradictions, categorising Chinese and Australian teaching practices and pedagogies using one metaphor is an oversimplification. In today's globalised world there is no clear line between teaching pedagogies in the West and the East but rather a blurred boundary.

In this study, in order to engage more fully with the complexity of Chinese students' learning, I will therefore examine what students actually do to learn in their everyday practices in one Australian university. As discussed in the next chapter, this research adopts a practice-based theoretical framework and practice methodology to examine the practices of five students in an in-depth study. Drawing on Hager and Hodgkinson (2009, 2011), I describe learning as an ongoing, dynamic process of change involving the whole person and their experiences in a social and material context.

CHAPTER 3

A PRACTICE-BASED STUDY

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
AND METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER 3: A PRACTICE-BASED STUDY

As discussed in Chapter One, the primary aim of this research is to explore the learning experience and practices of Chinese business students studying in an Australian university. The main research question is: what and how do practices shape Chinese business students' learning in Australia? In order to address this question, we need to understand how a practice-based approach might help in understanding Chinese business students' learning in undergraduate studies in an Australian university? How is Chinese students' learning shaped by institutional practices in an Australian university? In order to develop a theoretical framework consistent with the research questions that are focused on what students do in order to learn, in this section I introduce practice-based approaches. First, I discuss the notion of practice and how the study of practice has enabled understanding of learning as a complex social phenomenon. Second, I introduce Reich and Hager's (2014) six threads of practice used in their studies of learning. Third, in order to bridge the divide between the static and more fluid conceptions of reality that are part of the learning process, I extend the six threads processually by including the notion of Yinyang that deals with change and transformation, contradictory tensions, complexity and multiplicity. I outline a practice methodology and describe the ethnographic methods used in this research, including participant observation, interviews, reflexive groups, document analyses, the collections of artefacts, the use of field notes and photographs. Finally, I describe the data analysis process.

A practice framework

The recent turn to practice provides a conceptual base for the interpretation of complex and messy social phenomenon (Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki et al., 2001). Nicolini (2013) suggests that:

The contemporary interest in practice is fueled by the search for a new breed of social theory based on the intuition that basic phenomena such as knowledge, meaning, human activity, science, power language, social institutions and historical transformations occur and are components of the field of practices (p. 214).

Scholars from different traditions have appropriated theories of practice in their work and so there is no one unified definition of practice (Schatzki et al., 2001). Some useful ideas that are contained in many practice-based approaches are found in the work of the philosopher, Schatzki, who defines practices as “bundles of related activities and arrangements that are used in the performance of social order and relations” (Schatzki, 2002, p. 74). From the perspective of theories of practice, “the social” is a changing field of materially interwoven practices (Schatzki et al., 2001). Attention is thus focused on the actions of the everyday and the life-world (Reckwitz, 2002). Yanow and Tsoukas (2009) take a slightly different approach. They suggest that practices are characterised as “organised human activities regulated by goals and standards” (p. 1347). Drawing on MacIntyre (1985), they propose that practices have three constituting features. First, practice involves the cooperative effort of human beings and is bounded by rules and extended in time. Second, practices have outcomes that cannot be achieved other than through *participating* in them and every practice establishes a set of *internal goods* - qualities or benefits that accompany skillful performance. Third, joining and participating in a practice necessarily involves attempting to achieve the standards of excellence in the practice at that time (MacIntyre, 1985, p. 187 cited in Yanow and Tsoukas, 2009). In this view, practices are more than routines or habitualised actions. Although there are contrasts in the philosophical and theoretical views that underpin practice-based approaches, scholars agree on the utility of practice as a unit of analysis (Nicolini, 2013).

In discussing how to deal with multiple, and at times conflicting, concepts of practice, Hager et al. (2012) suggest placing accounts of practice along a continuum ranging from more inclusive to less inclusive. More inclusive approaches accept groups of simple activities. For students studying, this could include asking questions or writing notes in a lecture. In less inclusive approaches, these activities might not be considered as practices in themselves but be included in more broadly conceived practices such as tutorial practices. Nicolini (2013) discusses this issue:

There is also a consensus that practices are molar units; that is that they are complex wholes composed of other “smaller” elements—for example, bodily motions and simpler actions. Practices are thus configurations of actions which carry a specific meaning: moving a hand forward is thus not a practice but can

become a component of the practice of “greeting by shaking hands”. However, how big or small these units are and what counts as a practice again varies across theories (p.10).

Schatzki et al. (2001) suggest that there are two types of practices: dispersed and integrated practices. Dispersed practices are the simple order or bundle of activities. Integrated practices are structured in three or four ways, understanding, rules, practical intelligibility and teleoaffective structures (Schatzki, 1996; Schatzki et al., 2001). For example, taking notes is a dispersed practice that forms part of the integrated practice of writing an essay. Schatzki (1996) says that “an integrative practice is a set of doings and sayings that are linked by shared understandings, explicit rules and teleo-affective structure” (p. 103) and that they are “temporally evolving” (p. 97).

Practice-based approaches have been used to examine complex phenomena in many different areas, including organisational studies (Chia and Holt, 2006; Gherardi, 2006, 2012, Nicolini, 2013, Orlikowski, 2002, 2007; Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011); community organisations (Keevers and Sykes, 2016), telemedicine (Nicolini 2011), governmentality (Reich and Girdwood 2012), professional learning (Hager et al., 2012; Reich, Rooney and Boud, 2015; Reich, Rooney, Gardner, Willey, Boud & Fitzgerald, 2015; Boud & Hager, 2012). Nicolini (2013) described the benefits of using a practice-based approach, saying:

The appeal of what has been variably describes as practice idiom, practice standpoint, practice lens, and a practice-based approach lies in its capacity to describe important features of the world we inhabit as something that is routinely made and unmade and re-made in practice using tools, discourse and our bodies . . . The attraction . . . stems in particular from its capacity to resonate with the contemporary experience that our world is increasingly in flux and interconnected (2013, p. 2).

Practice-based approaches in higher education

In recent times, a number of researchers have turned to practice-based approaches in order to examine the complex process of learning (Boud & Hager, 2012; Fenwick, 2012b; Hager et al., 2012; Hopwood, 2016). In Chapter Two, I presented Hager and

Hodkinson (2009, 2011) framework of learning metaphors. I identified the metaphor of learning as becoming as a useful theoretical tool for the current study of learning by Chinese students in Australian business schools. In this section, I continue to discuss the work of Reich and Hager (2014) and Hager and Hodkinson (2009, 2011), with regard to practice-based approaches to learning.

The practice-based approach has been widely used in educational research on professional practice (Green, 2009; Kemmis, 2009a; Hager and Hodkinson 2009, 2011, Boud 2014; Hager et al. 2012; Fenwick 2008, 2009; Beckett and Hager 2012), vocational practice (Billett, 2010; Usher & Edwards, 2007), workplace practices (Wenger 1998, Hager & Halliday 2006), literacy practice (Baynham & Baker, 2002), pedagogic practice (Billett 2002), doctoral practice (Boud, 2009; Boud & Lee, 2009), work-integrated learning placements (Sykes & Dean, 2012), and students' teamwork (Sykes et al., 2014). Practice-based approaches to learning in educational research, have drawn upon many different theories, for example, activity theories (Daniels & Warmington, 2007; Engeström & Kerosuo, 2007; Engeström, 2001) and communities of practice (CoPs) (Amin & Roberts, 2008; Keay, May & O'Mahony, 2014; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998, 2009).

Reich and Hager's (2014) recent articulation of the six threads of practice is a comprehensive approach to the notion of practice that draws on different theoretical orientations. They do not restrict their understanding of practice to one particular definition instead their framework contains six threads. This broad approach fits well with the ontological positioning of the research and is therefore adopted as the practice framework for this research. This approach focuses on learning and investigates the relationship between the characteristics of learning and practice. Practices are conceived as patterned, embodied, networked and emergent. They entwine with learning via everyday work practices. Reich and Hager's (2014) view is supported by the work of Schatzki (2012) who, in relation to practices and learning "challenges prominent paradigms in learning theory by conceptualising learning as practice and as occurring via and in practices" (Schatzki, 2012, p. vi).

Although Reich and Hager's (2014) approach focuses on professional learning, there are many parallels with the present study of learning in Australian business schools.

Reich and Hager set out six threads, which I draw upon in this thesis. First, practice is a “collective and situated process ... linking knowing, working, organising, learning and innovating, a ‘knowing in practice’” (Reich & Hager 2014, p.4). Gherardi (2006, 2009b) and others (Orlikowski & Yates, 2002; Raelin, 2007b) use the notion of *knowing-in- practice*. In this view, knowledge is a process of knowing-in-practice (Gherardi, 2009b, p. 523). “Knowing is an activity that itself constitutes the practice, and it is a collective and distributed “doing”, ... situated in time and space, and therefore as taking place in practices” (Gherardi, 2009, p. 353). This contrasts with the commonly held understanding of knowledge as a *thing* that can be possessed in the mind and transmitted to others (Hager et al., 2012).

In their second thread of practice, Reich and Hager (2014), like other recent theorists, conceive of practices as sociomaterial phenomena that involve not only human actors but other living beings and material objects in space and time (Barad, 2003; Fenwick, 2010; Gherardi, 2000; Hager et al., 2012; Orlikowski, 2007). These phenomena are no longer conceived of as merely a “backdrop” or “interwoven with social life but, stronger, are a dimension of it” (Schatzki, 2010, p. 141). Schatzki (2012) suggests that “a practice is an open-ended, spatially-temporally dispersed nexus of doings and sayings ... embodied, materially mediated” (p. 79). Similarly, Gherardi (2006) suggests that knowledge is also entwined with materiality. She uses the term “constitutive entanglement” to emphasise that “the social and material are considered to be inextricably related - there is no social that is not also material, and no material that is not also social” (Gherardi 2006 cited in Orlikowski, 2007, p. 1437). Knowledge and practice are anchored in material objects, artifacts and tools (Gherardi, 2009a, p. 354). Fenwick (2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012a), another prominent higher education researcher, also emphasises sociomaterial practices in order to understand learning. She shows how materiality may be included as a focus for human learning, shifting away from the traditional conceptualisation of learning as consciousness, intention, meaning, inter-subjectivity and social relations (Fenwick, 2012). The notion of materiality is much broader than the traditional concept of the material as brute or implanted by nature. It includes “tools, technologies, bodies, actions and objects” (Fenwick, 2012, p.122). As the material is interwoven with meaning, it also includes texts and discourses (Fenwick, 2012). In other words, the shift to the socio-material goes beyond a limited focus on human meaning.

Reich & Hager's (2014) third thread is that practice is embodied. Many theorists have developed the notion of embodiment as a key dimension of practice (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; Gherardi, 2009a; Hager et al., 2012; Nicolini, 2013; Orlikowski, 2007). Practices do not just happen in people's heads but are embodied in themselves and in their relationships with other bodies and material things. Green (2009) explains that practice consists of speech (what people say) plus the activity of the individual or bodies in interaction (what people do, more often than not together)—this becomes a play of voices and bodies. In this view, “practice is inherently dialogical, an orchestrated interplay and indeed a matter of coproduction” (Green 2009, p. 49 cited in Reich & Hager, 2014). However, this perspective moves beyond Cartesian dualisms and dichotomies and supports the inherent relationships and continuities between elements such as mind and body, cognition and action, objective and subjective, structure and agency, individual and institutional, and free will and determinism (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; Reckwitz, 2002).

The fourth thread of practice relates to the positioning of practices as relational, that is, as interconnected, entangled and mutual constituting (Gherardi, 2009a; Nicolini, 2013; Orlikowski, 2007; Reckwitz, 2002). The relationality of practices encompasses a diversity of types of relations (Reich & Hager, 2014). For example, in this study, relationships between diverse human actors and the material world, and between different groups of human and material things such as students, academics, and institutions are part of practice. Furthermore, the relationships themselves change over time, as do the spaces in which practices occur. Practices are mutually constituting, their becoming is in relation to one another; one phenomenon cannot be taken to be independent of other related phenomenon (Bradley & Lichtenstein, 2000; Østerlund & Carlie, 2005). Rather, as Feldman & Orlikowski (2011) observe, “they always exist in relation to each other, produced through a process of mutual constitution” (p. 1242).

The fifth thread concerns the temporality of practice. Practice exists in time and space, and evolves in historical and social contexts and power relations shaped by complex social forces (Reich & Hager, 2014; Dawson & Sykes, 2016; Keevers and Sykes 2016). Orlikowski and Yates (2002) identify the enactment of time in practice

and propose a practice-based understanding of temporality in order to bridge the gap between objective notions of time such as clock-time and more subjective understandings such as the feeling of time passing. In this anti-dualist ontology, *chronos* is connected with *kairos*, improvisation with design, serendipity with intentionality, and personal initiative with collective memory (Tsoukas & Dooley, 2011). Hernes (2014) points out the recursive relationships between practices and temporal structures, “temporal structures are both shaping and being shaped by ongoing human action, and thus are neither independent of human action (because they are shaped in action) nor fully determined by human action (because they are shaping that action)” (p. 6). Like all social structures, temporal structures simultaneously constrain and enable. When taking action in the world, people routinely draw on shared temporal structures in order to organise their ongoing practices. Schultz and Hernes (2013) discuss the notion of periodic temporality. This notion facilitates the temporal representation of students’ university life as it follows academic calendars that restrict their activities to certain times or days (Orlikowski & Yates, 2002), such as the academic year, semester, exam period and session break. In each period, temporality is represented as periods of time within which practices are assumed to remain relatively stable (Hernes, 2014). Different temporal structures constrain and enable different kinds of actions (Orlikowski & Yates, 2002), such as attending lectures and tutorials, completing assignment, preparing for presentations and preparing for exams in a certain period of time in order to meet university and ultimately degree requirements.

The sixth and final thread is that practices are emergent (Reich & Hager, 2014). The ways practices change and evolve cannot be fully specified in advance. Fenwick (2012b) outlines how, in educational research, “concepts such as emergence, non-linear dynamics, nested systems and interaction among large numbers of diverse phenomena seems useful for analysing processes through which a practice or nest of practices emerges and changes” (p. 740). Similarly, Davis’s (2012) investigation of management education deploys a perspective of practice as complexity to understand contemporary hierarchical public sector organisations as complex systems. She challenges more conventional understandings of management education to encourage “processes [which] favour interaction and negotiation in situ rather than the

predetermined processes, fixed content and preconceived models of management” (p. 146).

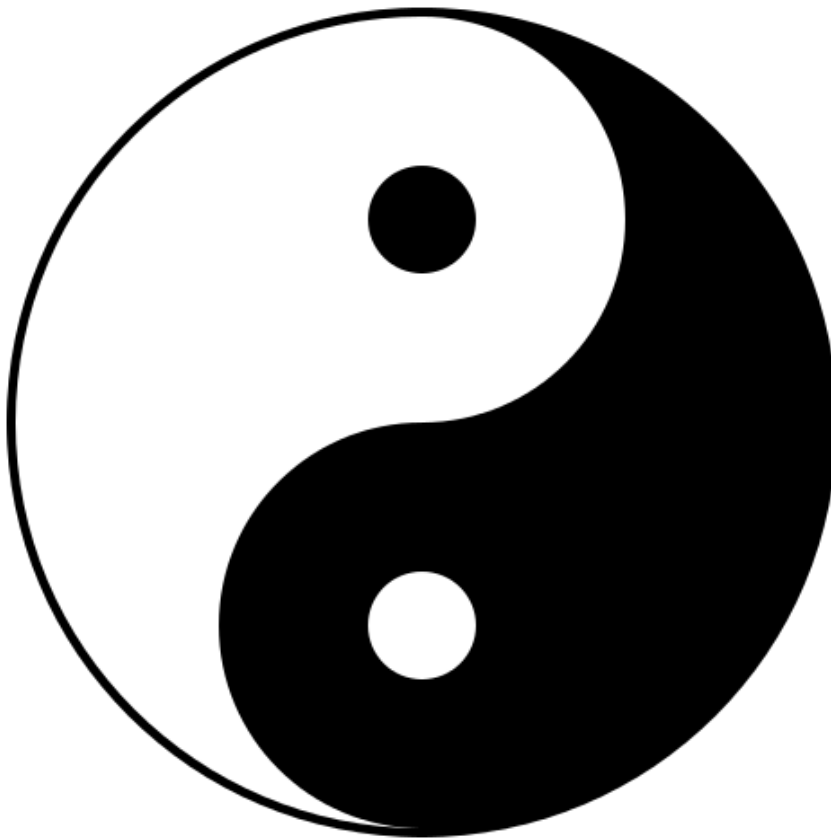
In summary, Reich and Hager’s (2014) six threads extend beyond a single practice theory and in this regard is similar to Nicolini’s (2013) work. Such an approach opens opportunities to examine students’ actions that are related to learning from multiple perspectives that illuminate the complexity of practice. In the authors’ words, “The six threads serve to move conceptualisations of learning towards more collective and sociomaterial understandings, which acknowledge and account for bodies, relationalities, space and time in more nuanced and complex ways” (Reich & Hager, 2014, p.11).

Yinyang

In seeking to further extend the six threads of practices, I will introduce the Chinese concept of Yinyang. The concept of Yinyang has ontological and epistemological implications in that it is a theory of wholeness and how all *things*⁶ hold together (Wang 2012). It includes the idea of ongoing change and becoming and embraces multiple and complex relationships of difference and contradiction.

⁶ Things: The Chinese word Wu (物) does not refer to entities in isolation, (what in Western philosophy would be substances), but rather phenomena, events, and even histories (Wang, 2014).

Figure 1, Yinyang



In recent times, a number of practice-based approaches are incorporating a process philosophy that conceives of the world as changing, indeterminate, in a state of flux, emergent and becoming (Helin, Hernes, Hjorth & Holt, 2014). Nicolini (2013) suggests “practice approaches are fundamentally processual and tend to see the world as an ongoing routinised and recurrent accomplishment” (p.3). And that “the great promise of the practice lens is that of explaining social phenomena in a processual way without losing touch with the mundane nature of everyday life and the concrete material nature of the activities with which we are all involved” (p. 9). Like other practice theorists, he is less clear as to how this is to be done, either theoretically or methodologically. By linking a practice-based approach to the principle of Yinyang, this thesis aims to acknowledge the threads outlined in Reich and Hager’s work and the complexity, contradictions and changes that occur as part of the learning processes. In this way, learning as becoming will be connected with the practice theoretical framework.

In their recent process theory handbook, Helin et al. (2014) identify some key process philosophers from the Chinese tradition, including Laozi, and Zhuangzi, for whom Yinyang was a central, though implicit, concept. Chinese philosophers from Yi Jing and the Daoist tradition such as Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi show how all phenomena are indeterminate and incomplete. Everything is inseparably related to everything else. In contrast to Western philosophy, Chinese philosophy has no view on ontology (Jullien, 2009), but has a strong and ancient tradition that emphasises the notions of change (变), changing (变化), inseparability and the unification of nature and human beings. It does not focus on being and presence as the Western traditions influenced by Plato and Aristotle have done. Some scholars use the term onto-epistemology to explain China's holistic traditional epistemology, which is inseparable from ontology, because in the Chinese view of the world, there is no distinction between cognition and the objects of cognition (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2014). Cheng (2008) introduces the concept of onto-hermeneutics (*benti quanshi xue* 本体诠释学) in order to demonstrate that in Chinese philosophy, the perception of comprehension and the interpretation of the existing world can not be separated from the holistic but changeable and totally individualised existence of objects of cognition (see also (Nelson 2011).

Though Yinyang is a central concept in Chinese philosophy, it is often misunderstood as Yinyang uses a correlative way of knowing and thinking ⁷. Hall and Ames (1995) identify that cultural differences arise from different ways of knowing by contrasting Western and Chinese traditions. They suggest that a major problem of understanding Chinese modes of thinking. “Han thinking”, also refers as “correlative thinking”, which “depends on the acceptance of ‘images’, and ‘metaphors’ as the primary means expressing the becoming of things” (p. 40). Correlative thinking connects disparate things, joins things in horizontal relationships. It is used to link things together that

⁷ In Han thinking or correlative thinking, “correlations are spontaneous in a sense that neither analytical nor dialectical procedures can be” (p. 135). Therefore, “concepts based on correlative thinking are image clusters in which complex semantic associations are allowed to reflect into one another in such way as to provide rich indefinitely ‘vague’ meaning” (p. 136). Therefore, Hall and Ames propose a notion of *vagueness* to capture the correlative thinking, as it opens to rich and diverse interpretations. Consequently, they suggest that the search is most satisfying when we find ourselves moving away from “sterile clarity”, away from “coherent understanding”, but into an increasingly rich muddle. Then we find we come close to “properly understood, the world is vague and getting vaguer” (p. 168).

may seem as if they do not fit, but the connection is one of resemblance. The connections are not logical but evocative and vague. For example, Chinese medicine makes connections between specific acupuncture points and internal organs in the body, or 8 and 9 as Chinese lucky numbers, or the importance of balance, locations and directions represents good or bad luck in Fengshui. In contrast, Hall and Ames (1995) identify causal language is the discourse of substances and logical order is disclosed by pattern regularity or unity (p. 138).

Yinyang began by correlating the process and patterns of everyday life with cosmological relations between heaven and nature and was later extended to include the human body (Wang, 2012). For example, the sun is Yang, the moon is Yin; man is Yang and woman is Yin. The mountains include both Yin and Yang, as do the rivers. Mountains can be correlated with the skeleton of the human body while rivers can be correlated with the flow of blood in the human body.

The concept of Yinyang is not reducible to the simplistic Western notion of dualism. Yinyang deals with contradictory tensions, complexity, multiplicity, change and transformation (Wang, 2012). In the philosophy of Yinyang, everything that exists is thought of as being bound up in a plurality of simultaneous relationships: things relate to multiple other things and to the same thing in multiple ways. These relations are not distinct, but reflect the actual complexity of life and nature. Yinyang points of reference are defined by location (*wei* 位) and time (*shi* 时). In traditional Chinese philosophy, Yinyang is produced by Dao⁸. Through the interaction of Yin and Yang, Dao produces all existing phenomena. Dao permeates space and time, without being identical with any particular place or moment (Wang, 2012).

⁸ The concepts of Dao and Yinyang are not easily comparable to separate Western notions or concepts. In contrast with Western ways of separating concepts discretely in order to comprehend them easily, Chinese ways of thinking hold the separate together. Laozi's *Daodejing*, one of the foundational Chinese philosophical texts, describes Dao as the origin of things, "the Dao produced the One, The one produced the two, the two produced the three, and the three produced the ten thousand things" (*Daodejing*, 42, trans. Chan, 1963). The Dao is the unitary source of heaven, earth, and human beings, and it is the model or pattern to follow (Wang, 2012). Oneness is the core of Dao, and ties together heaven, earth, and human beings, all of which are generated from the Dao and model its spontaneous and generative capabilities. Dao is a primary concept to understanding Yinyang in Chinese philosophy, as Dao becomes the source of all existence such that there is nothing beyond the Dao.

Yinyang links the oneness of Dao to the multiplicity of the myriad things through the interaction of its component principles of yin and yang, change and transformation. Yinyang causes the becoming of things and is embedded in the structure of all things. As Wang (2012) explains: from ancient times, the communication with heaven, the root (ben, 本) of life has been rooted in Yinyang.

Along with constant change there is an underlying stability both in things and their patterns. This study uses Wang's (2012) six concepts that constitute and explicate Yinyang⁹ understandings.

⁹ First, *maoduan* (矛盾), contradiction and opposition, the basis of any Yinyang distinction is difference, opposition and contradiction. *Maodun* shows that two sides are connected and related, but they are also opposed in some way, like light and dark. The tension and difference between the two sides allows for the dynamic energy that comes through their interaction (Wang, 2012). Second, *xiangyi* (相应), interdependence, one side of the oppositions cannot exist without the other. This includes the independence of opposites as relative concepts, for example, high and low, good and bad. It also points to the interdependence of opposites. It refers not only to relativity, but also to how things exist, grow and function in themselves. This interdependence appears most clearly through the alternation of yin and yang. The sun, as the yang, bright, warming, stimulating growth, and giving a rhythm, but when the power of that yang is developed to the extreme, it is necessary for it to be anchored, regenerated, and sustained by the force of yin. The sun must set. So yang cannot thrive without attention to yin. In contrast, the moon as the yin is the dark and night, nursing growth (Wang, 2012). The third concept is *huan* (互换) or mutual inclusion. Interdependence is closely linked to mutual inclusion. If yin depends on yang, then yang is always implicated in yin. In other words, yin can not be adequately characterised without also taking account of yang. The same is true of yang, it necessarily involves yin. Furthermore, the constant alteration between yin and yang also entails that yang always hold some yin and yin holds some yang. For example, summer is the most yang of the seasons, yet it contains a yin force, which will began to emerge in the summer, extend through the fall, and reach its culmination in the winter. On the other hand, winter is the highest stage of yin, yet it unfolds a yang force that will attain its own swing through spring and summer (Wang, 2012). The fourth concept, *jiaogan* (交感) means interaction or resonance. Each element influences and shapes the other. If yin and yang are interdependent and mutually inclusive, then a change in one will necessarily produce a change in the other. Thus, as yang decrease in the autumn, yin strengthens, and as yin declines in the spring, yang grows (Wang, 2012). The fifth concept is *hubu* (互补). It means complementarity or mutual support, with each side supplying what the other lacks. Given that yin and yang are different but interdependent, properly dealing with a situation often requires supplementing one with the other, which is a way of achieving the appropriate balance between the two. This complementarity is different from the submission of one to the other, because both sides stand on equal ground in performing different roles (Wang, 2012). Sixth, *zhuanhua* (转换), means change and transformation (Wang, 2012, pp. 8–12) where one side becomes the other in an endless cycle. Yinyang thought is fundamentally dynamic and centers on change. In nature, there is decline, deficiency, decrease, and demise, as well as flourishing, surplus, increase, and reproduction. Reversal is a constant theme in Chinese thought, especially in the *Daodejing*. For example, “beautiful and ugly adorn each other: this is called returning to the full cycle. Things develop to their extremes and then reverse. This is called circular flowing”. Yinyang are mutually connected, like a cycle without beginning. Thus, one knows that attack and defense always follow each other (Wang, 2012).

In summary, in this section I outlined the practice-based theoretical and methodological approaches used in the thesis. I first discussed what practices are and how practice-based studies have been used to study learning as a complex social phenomenon. Second, I introduced and linked Reich and Hager's (2014) six threads of practice-based learning research. Third, the concept of Yinyang was linked to the six threads of practice as an overarching approach that insists on ongoing change and becoming and embraces contradiction and difference.

The research methodology

In this section, I explain and justify the methodology used in this research to ensure consistency with my theoretical framework. It provides a methodological structure to examine how a practice-based approach helps in understanding students' learning. The section is organised as follows. First, I introduce the research methodology and how it will be used in this study. Second, I discuss the specific methods used in this research including semi-structured interviews, participant observation, reflexive groups and the collection of artefacts. I conclude with a discussion of the ethical considerations raised by this research and an outline of my methods of data analysis.

A variety of methodologies have been used to investigate practice. Ethnography (Gheradi & Nicolini, 2003; Hopwood, 2013; Nicolini, 2006; Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006; Yanow, Ybema & van Hulst, 2012; Ybema, Keenoy, Oswick, Beverungen, Ellis & Sabelis, 2009), in which the researcher describes and interprets the shared and learning patterns of values, behaviour, beliefs and language of a culture-sharing group (Creswell 2007; Bourdieu, 1990; Geertz, 1973, 1983) has been one popular approach. Participatory action research (Keevers & Sykes, 2016; Keevers, Treleaven, Sykes & Darcy, 2012; Kemmis, 2009b; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005) in which the researcher positions action and research as a cycle of learning in a constant movement between reflection and action (Fisher & Somerton, 2000), is another important method. Other approaches include grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1975; Glaser, 1992), in which the researcher aims to generate or discover a theory from participants who have experienced the process (Creswell, 2009) and phenomenology (LeVasseur, 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Moustakas, 1994; Van Maanen, 1986), in which the researcher focuses on experiences of phenomenon

to describe the universal essence, to grasp of the very nature of the things (Creswell, 2009).

Understandings of the world as comprised of a certain set of specific, determinate processes are not helpful for examining the complex practices students use to learn (Law, 2004). In this study, I use a practice theoretical framework that includes a Yinyang perspective. Therefore, following Law (2004), I consider the world and the phenomena in the study as becoming, complex and messy. I give up simplicities in applying the methodology, with the implication that no one approach is sufficient to investigate such a complex phenomenon. Law (2004) suggests that complex social phenomena such as practices are “messy”. He suggests the world is “vague, diffuse or unspecific, slippery, emotional, ephemeral, elusive or indistinct, changes like a kaleidoscope” (p.6). This stands in contrast to the common assumption underpinning much social science research, which claims that the world can be understood “properly as a set of fairly specific, determinate and more or less identifiable processes” (p.6).

I turn to Nicolini’s (2013) practice methodology in which he suggests a coherent practical package of theories and methods that generate a “world” made of practices. He removes the distinction between theory and method in order to develop a flexible, “tool kit approach” that uses different but relevant theories and methods to address the research aims and questions. Furthermore, the use of a tool kit approach implies that the study of practice requires choosing different angles for observation and interpretation without necessarily giving prominence to any one of these vistas (Nicolini, 2009c).

Following Nicolini, I used a practice tool-kit in this research in order to examine the research questions developed in Chapter One. I will adopt the structure used in his theory-method package in which he links theoretical resources to a particular concept or focus, and sensitising research questions. Nicolini (2013) draws from theories about language and discourse, Marx, Heidegger, Wittgenstein and Foucault. He focuses on the concepts of *sayings* and *doings* sensitising his research questions as follows:

What are people doing and saying? What are they trying to do when they speak?
What is said and done? How do the patterns of doing and saying flow in time?
What temporal sequences do they conjure? With what affects? Through what
moves, strategies, methods and discursive practical devices do practitioners
accomplish their work (p. 220)?

These sensitising questions demonstrate the partial relationship, or what he terms, family resemblance of practice-based approaches through a complicated network of similarities and dissimilarities (Nicolini, 2013). The family of theories and methods used in this thesis will include the practice-based theoretical framework that consists of the six threads of practice linked to the concept of Yinyang and learning as becoming. The theoretical framework will be used together with relevant ethnographic methods detailed below. Therefore, it is possible and legitimate to adopt a theory-method package for investigating practice.

Zooming in and zooming out

A second component that informs Nicolini's (2009b) methodological approach in terms of research positioning, or what it is that the researcher does, is the notion of *zooming in and zooming out*, by which he means the "recursive moment of zooming in and zoom out on the data and between the data and theory" (p. 120). He argues that in order to understand practices we need to both zoom in, by focusing on particular instances at a local level, and zoom out, to understand the ways in which practices are always inevitably shaped by and related to other practices.

Zooming in focuses on the "details of the accomplishment of a practice in a specific place to make sense of the local accomplishment of the practice" (Nicolini, 2009b, p. 120), while zooming out is the expansion of the scope of observation, following the trails of connections between practices and their products. Zooming in allows one practice to reveal the connections that link it with many others. Practices never occur in isolation and are always immersed in a thick texture of interconnections (Nicolini, 2009b). In terms of research focus, I zoom in to investigate specific practices at a local level in order to focus on the details of the teaching and learning practices. I examine specific practices in detail, like how and why students take notes in lectures. And how students prepare for their assignments both in and out of class. By tracing

the connections between practices, I will use the term zooming out to mean the ways in which practices are related to and tangled with other practices. In this way, I address questions such as how is a particular practice related to or incorporated in others? How do students link practices? On what basis?

The processing of data in this methodology requires the researcher to “study the practice at hand, engage with his or her data, trace connections and re-interpret the findings in the light of the insight provided by the new positioning in the field (Nicolini, 2009b, p.121). Zooming out is also used to explore the relationships between academic practices and students’ learning, and institutional perspectives and their relationship to students learning practices. Utilising this approach supports the investigation of how academics design and conduct lectures, tutorials and how they consider lectures and tutorials support student learning. I will also examine whether and how students think lectures tutorials and other support materials are useful for their learning. What are the institutional and faculty requirements for the students to achieve their outcomes from a degree perspective? And how are these requirements reflected in the design of assessments from the academic perspective? Zooming in and zooming out both enrich the understanding of the thick textural performance of mundane practices.

Researcher positioning

A major and persistent problem for qualitative researchers relates to the paradox of how the researcher positions themselves in the research study, whether as an insider or outsider. Insider research refers to when researchers conduct research with a population, in which they are also members (Kanuha, 2000), where the researcher shares the language and experiential base of the study participants (Asselin, 2003). The complete membership role status or position of the researcher may create both legitimacy and/or stigma (Adler & Adler, 1987). The insider’s role allows for more rapid and more complete acceptance by the participants. Therefore, participants are typically more open with researchers giving a greater depth to the data. On the other hand, for those who consider that all research must be objective, the heightened level of researcher subjectivity may be perceived as detrimental to the data collection and analysis (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Although the argument of whether and how to be

an insider or to be an outsider is longstanding, being an insider is not without its potential problems. The qualitative researcher's role is an "ultimate existential dual role" (Adler and Adler, 1987), and researchers might struggle with role conflict if they find themselves caught between "loyalty tugs" and "behavioural claims" (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007, p. 70). The dual relationship may also result in role confusion when the researcher responds to the participants or analysis of the data from a perspective other than that of researcher (Dywer & Buckle, 2009). However, as Rose (1985) argues, "there is no neutrality" (p. 77) for qualitative researchers in their positioning. As long as the researcher weighs the respective costs and benefits, both insider and outsider may be appropriate. The researcher needs to be aware of and carefully assess the positive and negative elements of each approach (Dywer & Buckle, 2009).

As a Chinese PhD student, teacher and researcher in an Australian university, my role is clearly much more that of an insider in this research than an outsider. My experiences and assumptions about Chinese business students' practices are inseparable from my experiences. It is possible the students who participated in this research will make assumptions of similarity and fail to explain their individual experiences fully to me due to my insider positioning.

As a Chinese business student, my insider research positioning has several dimensions. First, I am an insider coming from a Chinese background and studying in an Australian university so I have insights into Chinese culture and speak Chinese. For example, as I undertake the research interviews and observations students will see me as sharing some understandings—as an insider, as someone able to speak Chinese and as someone from a Chinese background. My membership automatically provides a level of trust and openness in my participant students, as they feel "you are one of us and it is us versus them (those on the outside who do not understand)" (Dywer & Buckle, 2009). Second, I am an insider because I have worked at the university and been a teacher for many years. My familiarity with teaching pedagogy and the education systems both in China and Australia allows me to identify students' needs and approaches. Third, I am an insider as I was formally an international student while undertaking my postgraduate business studies in Australia. I am therefore familiar with the practices and arrangements in a business faculty. Fourth, I am an

insider as a tutor in the Business faculty at the University of Wollongong. I understand the frustrations of teachers who teach Chinese business students through my interactions and conversations with my colleagues. This relationship also reminds me to consistently reflect on my multiple roles in the research and reflect on the research itself so as to avoid the potential of overly influencing the research and the participant students.

Despite my clear insider status, I also can see my position in this research as an outsider. I still see myself as new in Australia in terms of cultural norms and in the higher education context. Although I am strongly influenced by Chinese culture, I am not familiar with many of the subcultures that have shaped the student participants' lives (Asselin, 2003) I have been in Australia for more than 10 years and so I did not live in China when the students who participated in this study underwent their high school education. Therefore, I do not have a clear picture of the latest education and schooling systems in China. This outsider positioning requires me to investigate the subcultures and individual students' practices and arrangements in the research. Also, as I do not have an undergraduate degree in business, I am unfamiliar with the details of the subjects that the participants are studying. This outsider positioning triggers my interest to find out who they are and how they learn. In addition, the participant students also position me as an outsider as I am a teacher/tutor, and a PhD student.

Reflexivity

A third dimension of research positioning relates to research reflexivity (Alvesson, 1996; 2003; Carroll, 2009; Gherardi & Nicolini, 2000; Mauthner, 2003; Nicolini, 2013), Alvesson (2003) explains that reflexivity "stands for conscious and consistent efforts to view the subject matter from different angles and avoid or strongly a priori privilege a single, favoured angle and vocabulary" (p. 25). Reflexivity as critique implies the need to question one's own practice and assumptions. As a critique of inquiry it means searching for patterns of knowing while continually questioning existing practices (Higgins, Smith & Mirza, 2013). Alvesson (2003) claims that a reflexive approach does not privilege a particular ontology but is able to combine with various paradigms and specific theories. Furthermore, reflexivity aims to "inspire a dynamic, flexible way of working with empirical material and escapes a simple

theory/method divide” (p. 26). Furthermore, reflexivity requires the researcher to constantly review the congruence between the theoretical framework and methodology in the research (Petit & Huault, 2008).

In this research, as well as ensuring congruence between the theoretical framework and the methodology, I adopted a reflexive stance in my data collection practices (Mauthner, 2003; Hopwood, 2004, 2007; Srivastava, 2006, Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009). Iedema and Carroll (2011) suggest that “what happens in situ” is established observationally and then tested through discussions in the interviews. The reflexive strategies I used during the course of my research include descriptions and analysis of my position when I undertook the research, such as: testing my perspectives and comparing with participants’ perspectives and experiences; reflective writing to organise my thoughts and continually reflect on the research process; conducting reflective conversations with my supervisors and questioning my ideas and assumptions, and those of participant students in order to explore spaces of alternative actions in conducting this research (Higgins et al., 2013).

Methods

In this thesis, I address my research questions using a tool-kit methodology that includes multiple interpretive methods because “practice can never be captured by a single method or reproduced through one single style of writing” (Nicolini, 2009a, p.196). In this section, I outline the range of methods used in the research including the use of interviews, participant observation and reflexive groups; the collection of artefacts, documents, and photographs, as well as my field notes and reflections. I then present a brief description of the data collection process and practices used.

Semi- structured or participative interviews

Interviews as social conversation are a common occurrence in everyday life. Although talk is sometimes seen as trivial, it is increasingly becoming recognised as the primary medium through which social interaction take place (Alvesson 2003; Silverman 2011). Interviews are widely used as a qualitative method to investigate the social interactions that occur as part of everyday practice (Alvesson, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Schwartz-Shea, 2006; Silverman, 2001; Yanow, 2006). Different types

of research interviews “share some common features, such as the eliciting of information by the interviewer from the interviewee and the operation of rules of varying degrees of formality or explicitness concerning the conduct of the interview” (Bryman, 2008, p. 291). Interviews cover a wide range of circumstances, referring to a context in which the interviewer has a series of questions that are in the general form of an interview schedule but can be adapted to change the sequences of questions and participant’ responses to them (Bryman, 2008). Interviews are a flexible and useful method of data collection and are especially appropriate for collecting information on participants’ experiences, beliefs and behaviours (Ryan, Coughlan & Cronin, 2009). The flexibility of the interview structure is one of its greatest strengths. It allows for unanticipated responses and issues to emerge through the use of open-ended questioning (Tod, 2006).

There are a number of critiques of the interview as a research methodology. Alvesson (2003) points to the potential problems that arise due to the complexities involved in the interviews, questioning whether a rich set of accounts of the interviewee’s experiences, knowledge, ideas and impression may exactly represent the participants’ lived experience. The interview is not just a tool for data collection, but is unavoidably viewed as a social interaction. Therefore, it is naive to propose that genuine experiences can be captured through interviews. An interview is a context-dependent social situation and therefore, it is expected that the participants speak in accordance with norms of talk and interaction in this specific learning practice situation (Alvesson, 2003). The social norms and interaction can unnoticeably influence the participant in the interview. Furthermore, the value-laden nature of interview interaction increases the complexity of the social dynamics (Creswell, 2009). He questions whether the use of techniques or interviewer’s skills can minimise the errors and the quality of empirical material produced, suggesting there are always sources of influence in an interview context that cannot be minimised or controlled (Alvesson, 2003).

Bearing the above potential issues in mind, I conducted the interviews for this research in Mandarin to allow students to more easily communicate thoughts or ideas that are deeply embedded in their culture (Davies, 2008; Ryen, 2001). Interview is a useful technique to understand how students make sense of their learning and the

issues they think important. They can also help students to articulate what they learn and how they learn (Barley & Kunda, 2001). Conducting interviews in order to investigate students' learning experiences in this research allowed me to elicit implicit information and to make it explicit both for me and for the participant students. The interviews also acted as a means of cross checking with other research methods such as observation and field notes.

Participant observation

Participant observation is one of the best-known methods of research in the social sciences. More than just a method, participant observation is one of the most basic resources in all social research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Kawulich, 2005). It is defined as the systematic description of events, behaviours and artefacts in the social setting chosen for study (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Kawulich 2005). It is a qualitative method with roots in traditional ethnographic research. Its objective is to help researchers understand participants' own perspective. It entails the relatively prolonged immersion of the observer in a social setting. The researcher observes the behaviour of the observed in settings so as to elicit the meanings they attribute to their environment and behaviour (Bryman, 2008). In the case of this study, the focus of observation is practices and the social material settings.

Silverman argues that all social research is a form of participant observation because we cannot study the social world without being part of it (Silverman, 2011). From this point of view, participant observation is a mode of being-in-the world characteristic of researchers (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994). Guba and Lincoln (1989) argue that the observer cannot (and should not) be neatly disentangled from the observed in the activity of inquiring into constructions between the observer and the observed. Meaning making is participative and conversational between the observer and the observed. Agreement as to what is trust, for example, is subject to negotiations between all the parties participating in the research (Guba & Lincoln 1989; Petit & Huault 2008).

In practice-based research, participant observation is extremely important (Gherardi & Nicolini, 2002). Because some learning practices are so contextually implicit that

people often cannot articulate how they do and what they do outside the context of actually doing it (Barley & Kunda, 2001; Pader, 2006; Suchman, 1987). However, these seemingly little things are very important because they act as a cross check in understanding the participants' doings and sayings discussed in the other methods, such as interviews. In addition, using this method is consistent with the goal of the research that is to create a more nuanced understanding of the participants' practices that shape students' learning including their perspectives rather than simply those of the researchers (Pader, 2006).

There are limitations in using the method of participant observations. First, it ought to be used with other methods in order to position the research using different frames of reference and to understand that any interaction changes the observed object (Guba & Lincoln 1989). Second, it requires researcher reflexivity at the beginning of the research to help understanding of the potential issues that may arise in the research and shape the interpretation of what is observed (Kawulich, 2005).

In this research, an extended period of time of participative observation enabled me to acquire an appreciation of practices, arrangements and configurations of practices that shape participants' learning and the learning contexts of which the participants themselves may be unaware (Barley & Kunda, 2001). Participant observation was useful to cross check and make sense in interviews, and also for participants to check the accuracy of my notes. I was able to interpret and clarify participants' non-verbal cues by observing embodied practices such as body language, facial expression and eye contact. This observation is useful to enhance the understanding what is being said and sensemaking both in the fieldwork itself and in the interviews. Therefore, this process of participant observation allows me to probe and explore hidden meaning (Ryan et al., 2009) in participant' learning practices.

Reflexive groups

The reflexive groups used in this research involved planned gatherings of the five participating students in which students were asked to discuss with their peers specific questions relating to their experiences as they undertook their studies. The conversations that took place were recorded for later analysis. Reflexive groups are

commonly used by researchers to collect qualitative data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Reflexive group discussion is a method that focuses upon a particular issue or topic by encouraging discussion amongst participants and the sharing of perceptions in an open and tolerant environment (Krueger & Casey, 2009; Silverman 2001). Reflexive groups are “a way of listening to people and learning from them” (Morgan, 1998, p. 9, in Madriz 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003), of facilitating collective conversations and group interviews. This method offers a particularly fruitful approach for thinking through qualitative research (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011). Reflexive group discussions possess elements of participant observation and interview techniques while maintaining their uniqueness as a distinctive research method. Using reflexive groups also allows access to research participants who may find one-to-one, face-to-face interaction scary or intimidating. It offers participants a safe environment where they can share ideas, beliefs, and attitudes in the company of people from the same background (Madriz, 2003). In addition, some group participants find the experience more gratifying and stimulating than individual interviews (Madriz, 2003). However, there are limitations in using reflexive groups as they take place outside of the settings where social interaction usually occurs (Madriz, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Other important areas of using reflexive groups include the ability to focus on the multivocality of participants' attitudes and experiences. As Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) argue they enable the gathering of large amounts of information about such interactions in limited periods time at the beginning and the end of the sessions. Observing the interactive processes occurring among participants helped me to explain and explore concepts (Saunders, et al., 2012). Reflexive groups allow spontaneous responses from the members of the group to emerge during the discussion. This allows the participant students to consider points raised by other groups members and to challenge one another's views (Saunders et al., 2012; Madriz, 2003). They also help to identify key themes in the group discussions used in the beginning of the session for the subsequent parts of the data collection. This helped me to have a clear focus in the later interviews and observations (Saunders et al., 2012).

Collection of artefacts

Collecting artefacts involves gathering public and private documents that support the practices and relate to specific arrangements (Nicolini, 2013). Collecting documents such as personal statements, study journals, participants' diaries and posts on social media enabled me to obtain students' written reflections and notes as they studied. This method provides an opportunity for the participants' to share their reality (Creswell, 2003). For example, Wechat, instant message software, is a unique media used by most Chinese international students. All of the participants' in this study used Wechat. They also preferred me to communicate with them via Wechat rather than via email, as they do not access their email regularly. I also collected official public documents, such as information from the university website; university academic and learning policies and accounting, human resource and accreditation documents.

Reflective writing and field notes

During the course of research, I took notes in a number of areas. I made reflective notes after each interview and reflexive group. In these notes, I included those points that I considered were the most significant in terms of the aims and research questions. I also wrote reflective notes when I observed students' in different teaching and learning environments. These notes focused in particular on what students were doing and saying as well as the effects of their practices. I took notes of my own research positioning in different situations and times throughout the course of research. I also asked the students to write study journal or diaries to record and reflect on what they considered helpful or unhelpful for their learning (see appendix J).

Taking reflective field notes is a way of using writing as a method. Writing can also be used as a way of finding out about researcher positioning and the research topic. It is a research practice through which researchers can investigate how they construct the world, themselves and others and how standard objectifying practices of social science limit them unnecessarily (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). Writing is a way of *knowing*, it is a method of discovery and analysis (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). It also offers multiple ways for the researcher to learn to do it, and in return, it nurtures the researcher as a writer (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005).

When I was writing my thesis, I was always writing in inquiry, and in different ways, as it is a different way of knowing. Through the writing process, I needed different styles and writing skills in different chapters. I noticed myself getting clearer about my research aims and questions, and how to answer these questions. I also became clearer about my positioning as a researcher and a PhD candidate in this research and in this writing process. I understood more deeply that my writing process was not static, it did not happen when all the points were organised and outlined, and I knew clearly what I wanted to say gradually. Writing works as a method of discovery because writing is a creative process, it is always becoming (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005).

Data collection process and practices used

The data collection process occurred over the course of the cycle of three semesters. First the recruitment process was in line with the UOW ethnics policy for Human research that specified that a third party assist with the recruitment process in order to reduce risks of coercion. Therefore, a generic email was sent by a Subject Coordinator ¹⁰to the tutors of a large first-year management subject requesting them to invite Chinese business students in their tutorials to participate in a reflective discussion group.

I followed five students studying the Bachelor of Commerce in the Faculty of Business at the University of Wollongong over an 18 months period. The methods were used concurrently and informed one another. In the table below, I have detailed the methods used and their frequency and locations.

¹⁰ The Subject Coordinator is also the principle supervisor and Chief Investigator for ethical purposes of this student research project.

Figure 2, Summary of the data collected:

Items	Ting	Su	Haitao	Lin	Chuchu	Teachers	Total
Semi-structured interviews (Hours)	23	20	18	23	22	12	118
Informal interviews (Hours)	15	20	15	25	16	14	105
Reflective discussion groups (Hours)	4	4	4	4	4	n.a	20
Observations (Hours)	12	12	13	11	10	28	86
Reflective writing & field notes (Pages)	50	59	70	54	46	35	314
Artefacts collected (Number of document)	40	23	13	38	37	n.a	151

In figure 2, I present a summary of the data collected for the study. I have included samples of my notes and documents used in the data collection and analysis process in the appendices. The main methods used were observations and interviews. Approximately 100 formal interviews were undertaken over the 18 months at different locations that included consultation rooms, classrooms, library and coffee shops. In support of the formal interviews, approximately 90 informal interviews were conducted over this period. These informal conversations enabled me to explore more in-depth information on specific issues and clarify my observations identified in my reflective notes (see example in appendix G). A series of interviews were conducted with teachers in which I asked them questions about their experience of working with Chinese students. I audio-recorded all the interviews with my iPhone and took interview notes while I was conducting the interviews and later reflected on the interviews and notes in reflective notes.

In this practice-based study, it was necessary to observe what they were doing and saying and how they related to different contexts. I therefore undertook 55 hours of observations of the students in different locations such as in lecture theatres, tutorial/workshop rooms and in the library. I took observation notes and reflected on the notes and identified important issues requiring further clarifications that I later

took up in informal interviews. A number of important artefacts were collected such as subject outlines, university policies, student handbook, tutorial homework, marked assignments, students' study journals and photos. I took handwritten reflective and observation notes while I undertook the interviews and observations in specific contexts through the data collection. The reflexive purpose of the reflective notes was to clarify my thoughts, question my assumptions, generate new questions and explore new lines of inquiry.

Ethics

Ethical issues in social science research are complicated as they usually involve dealing with people and groups to collect and analyse the data (Denzin and Lincoln 2011). Ethics refers to the standards of behaviour that guide the researcher's conduct in relation to the rights of those who participate in the research. It raises the issues of loyalty, honesty, integrity (Denzin and Lincoln 2011), also involves accepted codes of ethics such as informed consent, privacy and confidentiality (Denzin and Lincoln 2011).

Prior to commencing my research, I submitted a research proposal to the UOW Human Research Ethics Committee in line with the University's Ethics Policies and Guidelines and received approval to conduct the research (approval reference number HE14/079, see appendix 1). Throughout the research I was committed to ensuring each participant's contribution was respected and valued. Before each data collection activity, I sought consent from individual participants and asked them to sign a consent form. I also respected each participant's right to privacy and their right to protection from embarrassment, intrusion and harm. In line with the Ethics approval granted for this study, all participants' interview recordings and transcripts were de-identified. Participants whose data was used in this research were given pseudonyms to protect their privacy. The documents, such as, study journals, field notes, pictures and other relevant artifacts collected from the participants and the institutions were also de-identified. In addition, the above data was stored in a secured filing cabinet and in locked digital files.

Rigor in qualitative research

There is a long and complicated debate as to what constitutes rigor in qualitative research (Schwartz-Shea, 2006). Miles and Huberman (1994) emphasise the enabling side of certain criteria and the potential for improving scholarly production, communication and judgment in conducting qualitative research. Some commonly accepted criteria or techniques developed from the initial concepts in the foundational work of Lincoln and Guba (1989) and other scholars extended their work to include creditability, transferability, dependability, conformability and trustworthiness (Schwartz-Shea, 2006; Denzin and Lincoln 2011).

Schwartz-Shea (2006) develops two sets of criteria for evaluating the quality of research: first-order terms include thick description, trustworthiness, reflexivity and triangulation; second-order concepts are informant feedback/member checks, audit and negative case analysis (pp. 101-108). First order terms are ubiquitous and readily found in text indexes. The notion of thick description (Geertz, 1973) is characteristic of ethnographic writing, but has developed as a standard to recognise and judge interpretive research (Schwartz-Shea, 2006). In this approach, the researcher is expected to present sufficient narrative details of an event, setting, person, or interaction to capture context-specific nuances of meaning from the data. Trustworthiness focuses on the need for the research to be seen as trustworthy, that is to say, reliable and valid. It involves a *scientific attitude* and a systematic approach that potentially allows the research results to be revised later (Schwartz-Shea, 2006). This is achieved by using a number of steps that researchers take throughout the research process to ensure transparent and ethical practice. The development of reflexivity on the part of the researcher by keeping a reflexive journal is recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985), who suggest using a diary in which the researcher records their thoughts on a daily basis (see the section on reflective writing and field notes).

In response to the second-order criteria, some commonly asked questions are used by researchers (Schwartz-Shea, 2006). First, how do you know that my study's representations are recognisable by the people I studied? How do the readers know these words and these views are theirs, rather than mine? In order to deal with these

questions, I used information feedback or member checks to test my own meaning making by going back and asking for feedback from the participant students.

Second, how exactly did I do this research? Asking this question made me think about how to document a set of practices of study procedure to achieve what Lincoln and Guba (1985) describes to demonstrate dependability and conformability. The record is as complete as possible and details the processes, procedure and steps I took in the research. Third, how does the reader know that I did not look only for confirmatory evidence? To address this question, I was aware of the negative case analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) that relates directly to my own struggle to check my own preliminary meaning making. It helps me to makes sense of interactions observed in the field, or patterns I see in the documents or interviews and possible inconsistencies. This prevented me from settling too quickly on a pattern, answer, or interpretation. Consequently, I consciously searched for any negative evidence that might force a reexamination of my initial impressions and ideas (Schwartz-Shea, 2006). Before I submitted my ethics application, I asked myself the following questions: how would I feel if I were asked these questions, observed doing these things, or if your records and papers were examined for research purpose?

Data analysis

I organised the data analysis process into six stages as shown in the table below. As discussed above, I first transcribed all the interviews and translated into English (see appendix L). I then asked each of the participants to read and comment on the samples of transcriptions of their interviews and observations to ensure accuracy. Once the documents had been checked and students had approved the transcription, I read and re-read the relevant data in full. As many of my notes of the observations and interviews were written quickly in Chinese, I first made some brief notes in English for clarification of key points (an example is attached in appendix G). I extracted and categorised the key points so as to gain a comprehensive view of each student's story. Then I used an Excel spreadsheet and organised the data based on the date of the interview or observation and made selections of the key ideas based on provisional themes (an example is provided in appendix H, I & J). In order to understand how to group the clusters of practices, I then mapped them by hand on A3

paper with provisional clusters of practices and the brief selection as supportive evidence from the data. Having done so, I developed three key domains: *curriculum*, *teaching practices* and *student' learning*. As I wrote up the results of this analysis I moved iteratively between Chapters Two, Three and Four in order to make them to talk one another.

Figure 3. Data analysis process in Chapter four

Stages	Procedures	Data analysis procedures
1	Transcribe interviews and proof check by students	Transcribing the audio-recorded interviews from Chinese to English. Students check their interviews and observations
2	Read and re-read the data for each student in full, type brief notes into a word document	Underlying the key ideas to gain comprehensive view of each student, using brief notes to locate the data quickly in analysis
3	Categories/provisional themes developed on Excel spreadsheet	Making selections of the key ideas based on provisional themes
4	Clusters of categories on A3 paper and coded	Mapping the practices and relationships between practices and clusters
5	Three key domains developed	Draw key domains from the data: <i>curriculum</i> , <i>teaching practices</i> and <i>student' learning</i>
6	Writing up the chapter	Iterative moves between Chapters Two, Three and Four in order to make in line with each other

Summary

In this chapter, I have introduced a practice-based theoretical framework that is useful for the examination of what students do in order to learn. I examined different approaches to practice so as to explain what practices are and how the notion of practice has been used to study complex social phenomena. In this study of students' learning as becoming, the practice framework was extended processually by including the notion of Yinyang that deals with contradictory tensions, complexity, multiplicity, change and transformation (Wang, 2012). A tool kit practice methodology was outlined followed by a discussion of each of the interpretive methods used in this research. Finally, I explained the settings of the study and described the data analysis process.

CHAPTER 4

STUDENTS PUTTING THINGS TOGETHER

DATA ANALYSIS

CHAPTER 4: STUDENTS PUTTING THINGS TOGETHER

As discussed in the previous chapter, in this thesis I employed a practice methodology in order to investigate what and how practices shape Chinese business students' learning in Australia? In order to provide an in-depth view of what students do in their learning, in this research, I followed five students in the Faculty of Business at the University of Wollongong over an 18 months period. I adopted this extended timeframe in order to develop a complex view of the ongoing practices used by students rather than a fixed snapshot. In this chapter, I discuss the data collected in the fieldwork interviews alongside my own observations and reflective notes and the documents and artefacts collected during the course of the research. Supported by multiple methods that enables a variety of data sources and cross checking in data analysis, I attempt to identify students' practices and make them more explicit and more visible. I supplement these observations with a description of the materials students used and the spaces in which studying and learning took place.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the practice-based approach has been widely used in education studies (Hager & Hodkinson, 2011; Hager et al., 2012) and in organisational and management studies (Gherardi, 2006; Nicolini, 2013; Orlikowski, 2007; Orlikowski & Yates, 2002). As discussed in Chapter Three, for Hager and Hodkinson (2011), learning is considered to be a process of becoming and occurs through students' practices and actions in their everyday life-world. My approach is distinctive in its application of this approach to the examination of Chinese students' learning. In the light of growing interest in Chinese students' learning, Wu (2015) has called for the use of more dynamic approaches. The practice-based approach employed in my research is one response to this call to better understand how this cohort learns. In particular, the six threads of practices provide theoretical lenses to view different aspects of what students do in order to learn. The concept of Yinyang underpins this practice-based approach and will be used to unpack and make visible the contradictions and tensions.

In analysing the data, some key questions will help to identify the important areas of practice and learning for the study. For example, in relation to practice, what do

students do, what do they say and how do they form relationships in their learning environment? Are any of the six threads of practices (Reich & Hager, 2014) visible in the data? Are contradictions and tensions evident and if so, how they are resolved or remain unresolved? What are the relationships between different practices and the circumstances in which they occur in this new context? Are there contradictions?

In this chapter, I first present two meanings of the word curriculum, what I term *running a course*. I then present students' journey of running the course through the institutional teaching and learning arrangements including material settings, learning support and social networks and how students shape and are shaped by their experience of them in the learning environment. Second, I examine what students are doing in detail by identifying different practices in their learning journey. I ask what students are doing and what practices they employ in their learning journeys? I develop the five participant students' stories in order to show how each student puts things together during the course of their learning.

The curriculum: running the course

What and how students are able to learn depends on the configuration of the curriculum. The curriculum is both a representation as in descriptions of subjects in a degree and curriculum is also a practice when the subjects are enacted. As I discussed in earlier chapters, the learning process in action is very complex, messy (Law, 2004) and tangled. Therefore, the curriculum cannot be easily simplified to only a representation that determines or covers exactly how and what the students learn (Snyder, 1973). The etymology of the term *curriculum* is derived from ancient Greek and means, *to run a course* (see Figure 4. p.82). Curriculum is said to have two meanings. It can refer to a series or *course*¹¹ of lectures and lessons in particular subjects, or to a certain *course*, direction or path (Moore, 2011). In this chapter, I use both meanings of course in order to structure the many separate items that make up students' learning journeys.

¹¹ Course: the word *course* is used in different ways in Australian higher education. At UOW, the term course is used to denote "a program of study consisting of a combination of subjects and other requirements as specified in the relevant course structure that leads to a higher education award" (UOW, 2016a).

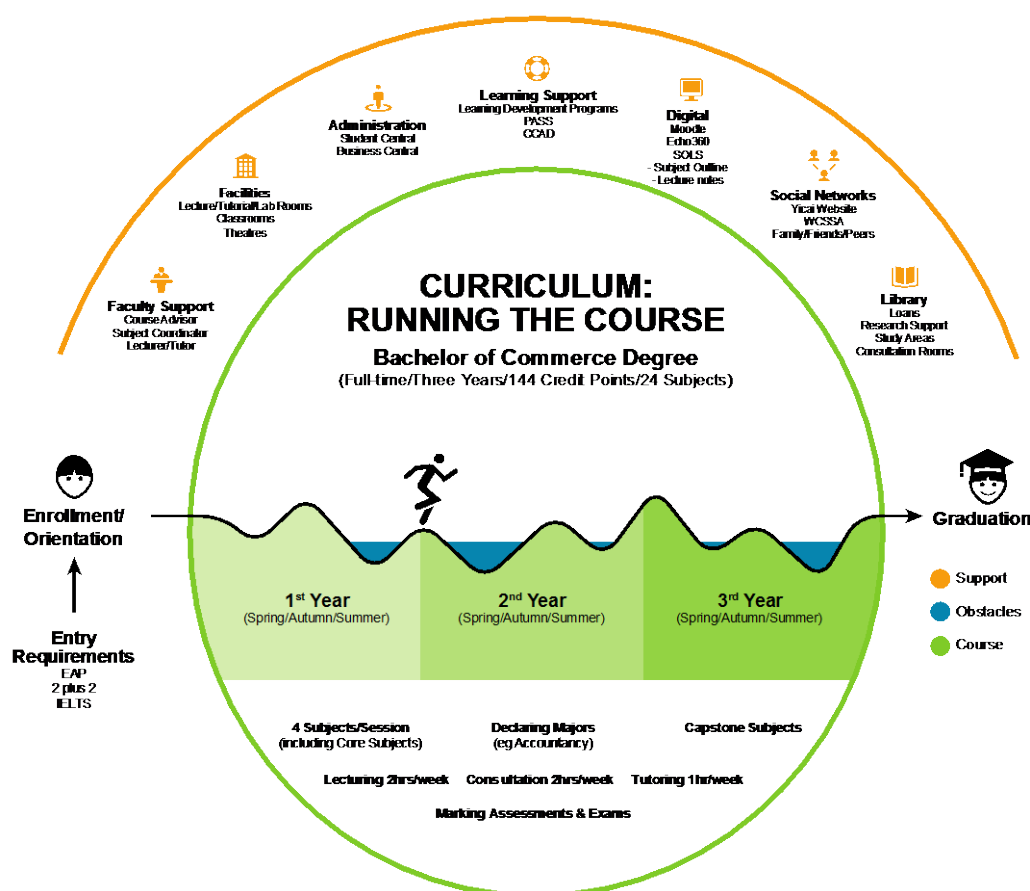
By examining curriculum as a series of lessons, I examine how the students fit into the series of pedagogical structures and practices they encounter in Australian universities. I show how students as newcomers to the system adapt to the new curriculum structure. Specifically, I discuss how they organise their lives and perform different practices that suit them. I also look at how the students interact or engage with bundles of teaching practices and to what extent these practices facilitate their learning. As Boud (2014) has shown, in the academic world, curriculum is also a practice. Academics not only teach subjects but also interpret the related curricula and teaching policies and use various materials in their teaching activities within the constraints of institutional requirements.

In considering the second meaning of curriculum as the direction or path of learning, I focus on how it functions in practices that position students' learning in a process of becoming. In particular, how the students "construct and reconstruct their understanding, knowledge, skills and practices" (Hager & Hodkinson, 2011, p. 43) in their learning. Their engagement in a learning trajectory or course inevitably entails changes to "deep-seated dispositions (*habitus* in Bourdieu's term) and/or in identity" (Hager & Hodkinson, 2011, p. 43). I am interested to trace the becoming of each student by examining their doings, sayings and relatings in particular practice arrangements. In order to do so, I trace academic and cultural practices adopted by students in the course of their education both in China and at UOW.

Students' journey through their course

In order to explore students' journey through the course, it is necessary to describe the formal structures that shape and constrain them. As discussed above, when courses are enacted they are much messier than they appear. This section describes the journey along the course as represented below. This idealised picture helps the reader to see each of the areas and their relationships to one another in the institution.

Figure 4. Curriculum: domains and their practice arrangements



At UOW, (in line with AQF requirements) the student journey along the course or curriculum, starts with enrolment and ends in graduation when students complete their course (see Figure 4). For students,¹² the Bachelor of Commerce requires three-years, full time study, and the completion of 144 credit points (24 subjects) (UOW, 2015a). The entry requirement for international students is completion of an acceptable senior high school studies award or other relevant qualifications. Students must also demonstrate their command of English by providing evidence of an overall score of 6.0 in the International English Language Testing Systems (IELTS) examination or 79 in the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) (UOW, 2015b). Students run the course chronologically in accordance with institutional requirements and the university calendar. Typically, they start first year core subjects

¹² When students enrol in a double degree or double major, the course can be longer. The course can be shorter if they are granted credit from prior learning.

in either one of two primary teaching sessions¹³ (designated as Autumn and Spring sessions at UOW) in the academic year. They then enrol in a major with specific, designated subjects taken in the following two years. To qualify for their degree candidates need to accrue an aggregate of at least 144 credit points. This involves the satisfactory completion of 8 core subjects, one elective subject and one capstone subject and 8 major subjects (UOW, 2015a). Majors are offered in various programmes, including accountancy, economics, finance, management, international business and marketing. The Faculty employs a Course Advisor to help students select specific subjects in each session so as to navigate their way through the course. Additionally, in order to comply with their visa condition as international students, they need to enrol on a full time basis, which at UOW means taking at least four subjects in each session (UOW, 2015c).

Institutional teaching and learning arrangements

The students' institutional learning environment is situated in different contexts, each of which contains different practices and arrangements. I categorise their experience in institutional teaching and learning arrangements as follows: material settings, learning support and social networks. In this section, I will first introduce each aspect, and then discuss their formalised purposes in supporting students' journey along the course.

Material settings

In most business faculties in Australia, lectures and tutorials or workshops/labs are a dominant feature of the student study journey. Lectures, tutorials, workshops and computer labs form a central part of the institution's commitment to student learning. Lecture theatres (see Appendix M, photograph 4 & 5) usually have tiered seating with tilting desks and seat from approximately 100 up to 500 students. The lecturer uses presentation software such as PowerPoint, or Prezi along with a microphone, desk, large screen, video and a clicker in performing the lecture. The academics' practice of lecturing is a bodily performance undertaken in the lecture theater. The positioning of

¹³ UOW also offers courses during an optional third summer session for students who need to catch up on their studies.

the lecturer at the front of the lecture theatre presenting PowerPoint slides suggests a transmission approach to knowledge.

Students typically have access to a copy of the lecture notes either in print or on their laptop and they refer to and annotate these notes during the course of the lecture. The lecture notes provided to students contain summaries, often in dot points of what the lecturer regards as the most important lecture content. If students do not attend the lecture or listen to a recording of it online, the lecture notes become disconnected from the lecturer's narrative and the performative aspects of the lecture. The lecture notes lack the explanation, discussion, unpacking of key concepts, bodily affects, and examples that are included in the lecture. Formally, students may fail a subject unless they attend 80% of lectures, tutorials, workshops and seminars in each subject (UOW, 2015d). It states "students are expected to attend all lectures, tutorials, workshops and seminars" (see appendix E). However, as discussed in the literature review, lecture attendance is problematic. In practice, not all the students attend lectures (from 50 - 470 students) as they are not compulsory, and the rule is not enforced by most lecturers. Students have to attend the tutorial, workshops and labs (from 20-40 students) for small group discussion each week, in order to maintain the minimum 80 percent attendance for the subject.

By contrast, tutorials classes include up to 30 students along with a tutor. The rooms are level classrooms with movable desks and chairs and a whiteboard, computer and projector at the front (see Appendix M, photograph 6 & 7). Students often sit in groups and discuss tutorial questions and undertake activities designed to reinforce the concepts discussed in the lecture. Teachers often adopt a participatory approach based in a constructivist pedagogy using group work, presentations and student discussions.

Digital resources

In contemporary learning environments, students not only use the physical space of university buildings but also have access to digital spaces. The digitalisation of learning and teaching has become a key strategy at UOW (UOW, 2015b). The digital

learning services allow academics to upload teaching materials to Moodle¹⁴ (UOW, 2015e), the university's main digital platform for facilitating teaching and learning. Using Moodle, academics provide students with digital materials such as subject outlines, lecture slides, readings, case studies and quizzes. Subject outlines include key information including delivery mode, learning outcomes, assessments, location of delivery, tutorial and laboratory times and readings (see Appendix E).

In order to offer the students alternative access to lectures, some lecturers upload audio-visual recordings of the lectures to an online platform known as Echo360 (UOW, 2015f). This platform is accessible via the subject's Moodle site. In the Faculty of Business, all first year core subjects are recorded and made available via Echo 36. The decision as to whether to record the lectures in other subjects is usually made by the Subject Coordinator.

Another important digital space students must access in order to successfully complete their course is the Students Online Services (SOLS) platform. SOLS allows students to access lecture notes, lecture recordings, readings, quizzes and tutorial solutions, which their lecturers have uploaded via Moodle. SOLS also enables student self-management of enrolment and personal information. Students can access their enrolment record, lecture and tutorial timetables and eLearning materials (UOW, 2015g).

The library

The library provides both physical and digital learning spaces where students can access study materials (see Appendix M, photograph 1, 2 & 3). Libraries are considered by academics and students to be central services for student learning. The library provides different services including the ability to borrow books and other materials (long term and short loans), a Research Support desk, a variety of learning spaces including quiet study and group study rooms, computers and desks and free WIFI (UOW, 2015h).

¹⁴ Moodle: Moodle is the University of Wollongong's online learning environment for staff and students. Subject-based Moodle sites are used for interaction, communication, content delivery, assignment submission, quizzes, and other resources. Moodle facilitates flexible delivery of subjects and provides the opportunity for students from regional campuses to participate in on-line activities with other students.

Learning support

UOW provides a number of formal and informal learning supports to students. The Subject Coordinator has overall responsibility for the teaching, coordination, design and administration of all teaching activities in a given subject and leads the teaching team for that subject. Lecturers, who are often also the Subject Coordinator, are usually required to hold a doctorate and are responsible for providing weekly lecture content. This content is usually in the form of a lecture presentation and a copy of the lecture notes in PDF format that is available for students to download from Moodle. The university requires subject coordinators and lecturer to allocate two hours consultation time for the subject they teach. This is the only time when students can meet one-on-one with their lecturer or subject coordinator to seek help. However, this presents a difficulty for some students due to time constraints relating to students' busy schedules. This issue will be discussed further below in the case studies. Tutors teach the tutorials or workshops/labs for the subject as designed by the subject coordinators. They are required to have an award higher than the level they are teaching. For example, to teach at Bachelor level, a tutor must possess a Masters or Honours degree. They may teach a large number of classes across different subjects.

During their study journey, students may take part in programs delivered by the Learning Development unit. These programs are intended to help students to improve their performance and overcome learning difficulties (UOW, 2015i). The various programs provided by Learning Development are designed to assist students to develop specific academic literacies, and also to contribute to the overall educational quality of the university. For example, the Studying, Writing and Presentation (SWP) program includes various workshops. These workshops cover effective learning strategies, analysing the assignment questions, paraphrasing, summarising and quoting, using evidence and referencing, report writing and essay writing (UOW, 2015i).

Another learning support program provided by the university is Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) program. PASS is a free academic assistance program that utilises peer-led group study to help students succeed (UOW, 2015j). PASS usually targets subjects which over time have proved challenging for many students or courses which need to promote the establishment of discipline-specific learning communities. The

sessions are facilitated by PASS Leaders who are current students that have already successfully completed the target subject. The sessions are designed to maximise students' understanding of the subjects in a casual and relaxed environment. The sessions also integrate study tools and successful exam techniques specific to the target course. Students who attend PASS consistently have been shown to produce higher results than those who do not attend (UOW, 2015j).

CCAD (Chinese Commerce Academic Development) is a voluntarily organised, bilingual, peer teaching program for Chinese business students that is used mainly by accounting and finance students (Cui, Huang, Cortese & Pepper, 2015). The program also utilises leaders who are high-achieving students in the Faculty of Business, including Higher Degree Research (HDR) students, Dean's scholars¹⁵ and casual academic tutors (Cui et al., 2015). The classes are bilingual and are conducted in English and Mandarin, with Mandarin being the principal language used. In contrast to the peer mentoring approach used in PASS, where re-teaching is strictly avoided, CCAD classes involve “deliberate re-teaching of academic content covered in lectures and tutorials” (Cui et al., 2015, p. 288). A typical CCAD class combines aspects of lectures and tutorials, the leaders run through the prepared slides in a lecture room or tutorial room. Up to 100 students participate in these sessions, which are conducted twice per session for two to three hours per session. These sessions specifically target exam preparation. According to CCAD organisers, the program is “designed to assist students of all academic abilities to have a better understanding of subjects and offers the opportunity for students to build relationships with other participating students” (Cui et al., 2015, p. 291). Statistical data collected from CCAD reveals that classes were conducted in up to 25 subjects with 1069 students attending the Autumn session program in 2012, 1124 students attending in Spring 2012 and 849 students in Autumn 2013 (Cui et al., 2015).

Social networks

The university puts effort into supporting learning as discussed above, especially in facilitating formal teaching activities, digitised teaching and the learning environment. However, from my observation, interviews and work experience at UOW, social

¹⁵ Deans Scholar program: the Bachelor of Commerce (Dean's Scholar) program is designed for high achieving students who wish to undertake a degree in the principle areas of business and commerce.

networks act as a crucial aspect in the student study journey in a foreign country as they serve students' emotional and networking needs. They also help the students feel a sense of belonging and settle into their new environment, thus providing a foundation for academic success (Sawir et al., 2008).

Yicai website

The Yicai Chinese-language website is a space where most Chinese students join together. Designed and maintained by Chinese international students, the website aims to provide a social platform for Chinese students. Through this platform, students share information on topics such as accommodation as well as learning materials. For example, the CCAD leaders normally post the session timetables on this website to communicate with Chinese students.

The Wollongong Chinese Students and Scholars Association (WCSSA)

Additionally, WCSSA (UOW, 2015k) is a university-wide organisation that aims to showcase and disseminate Chinese culture and bring Chinese and international students together. Students with an ethnic Chinese background constitute the majority of the club membership, with the remainder made up of staff with an ethnic Chinese background and people fascinated with Chinese culture.

In the following section, I narrate¹⁶ the journeys of each of the students as I followed them over the course during three semesters. These stories highlight the similarities and differences in each student's learning and show how they put things together in unique ways and at the same time how they share commonalities.

Chuchu

Brief introduction

Chuchu was 22 years old when I interviewed her for this thesis and had finished her first two years of study in a transnational diploma program used in Chinese universities (in which students who have completed two years study, receive a one year exemption for their Bachelor's degree). At UOW she enrolled in a Bachelor of

¹⁶ I first introduced each student in a brief summary that requires me to write in past tense, I then present their stories as I followed them in the present tense.

Commerce, majoring in Finance. She had an excellent academic record and learned good time management skills during her studies in China. Chuchu studied hard and had a clear plan for her future career in finance. She also registered for the CFA course in her last year, even though she was a full-time student.

Chuchu's story

Her story illustrates the ways she puts things together in the new context. Chuchu's parents are both professors at a university and live on campus in China. Having grown up on a university campus, she is familiar with university life. Once at UOW she quickly learns how to use the relevant facilities and services provided by the university, which helps her to adapt to her new environment. She says that because of her background, she is under a lot of pressure to perform well. At the beginning of her undergraduate studies she is already thinking about postgraduate studies.

I grew up on a university campus. The lecturers' kids all work hard and have a high level of qualifications. Many of them have won different prizes in maths or in other areas. I am under a lot of pressure to study as my parents keep comparing me with other kids who are very good students . . . They expect me to at least get a masters degree as they believe this makes it easier to get a job in China (Chuchu, Int, 05092014, p.4).

From the data I collected, it is evident that of the five students in the study, Chuchu is characterised by her passion for knowledge and learning.

I study not just for a certificate but also for the useful knowledge . . . I study for new knowledge, not just for passing exams. I love my major, so I have a passion to learn (Chuchu, Int, 05092014, p.2, 4).

In the following section, I trace her journey and identify the practices that she uses as she pursues her passion for knowledge and learning.

Induction: learning to use institutional resources

During the induction period, Chuchu takes the opportunity to learn how to use the university facilities and resources to help her settle in. While other students thought

Startsmart, a compulsory induction program provided by the UOW library, is not useful, Chuchu finds it useful.

I get most of the information about how to use the resources of the university from Startsmart program (Chuchu, Int, 14082014, p.4).

In an initial group discussion, she tells the other students how the induction and introductory programs are useful in helping her in her new environment:

I find the proof reading service in building 11 for my assignments. They also have some workshops for students, for example, how to use the uni website to search for the information that you need [for assignments]. For the library, I have learnt [from the program], how to find a book, borrow a book, how to book a study room in the library (Group discussion, 09042014, p.6).

A few months later in an interview, she tells me how she continues to utilise different university resources:

I try to use all the resources the university provides. I came here not only to study the course [but to experience different university life]. I attend the activities or programs offered by the university if I find them useful (Chuchu, Int, 14082014, p.4).

Her approach to the program is to maximise her use of the institutional support available. By attending and doing all these activities, she learns through her doing, or as Reich and Hager (2014) suggest her knowing is in her practices. A second thread of practice, relationality (2014), is evident in how she sees value in relating the new institutional practices to her existing way of doing things.

After induction, she is clear what resources are available at UOW and is keen to use the resources to help her learn. Chuchu is aware of the difference that material settings and arrangements have on her study. When she prepares for exams, she prefers working in the library as she says that the arrangement of the space helps her to improve her performance:

I like the desks in the library because they are very big and comfortable. Big desks make me feel productive and improve my efficiency (Chuchu, Int, 14082014, p. 5).

On another occasion, the socio-material thread of practice is evident in working in the material setting of the library with other students. She points out that the library atmosphere and her relationship with other hard working students supports and motivates her study:

So I decide to go to the library and stay in the library longer than usual. The atmosphere is very good for study as other students work hard, which can motivate me (Chuchu, Study journal, 06042014).

She also includes the use of technology in the range of things she puts together. She recognises when she does not know something and uses the recorded lectures provided by the university to help her:

I did not quite understand the lecture this week, so I have listened to the Echo recording of the lectures. [After that], I understood what the lecturer was trying to teach. Echo360 is a very good service, it allows students to replay the lectures as many times as they like, and it can help me to deepen my understanding. And for those difficult concepts I can replay [the recordings of lectures](Chuchu, Study journal, 07022014).

In Chuchu's experience, Echo360 recording is a useful tool as it acts as a supplement when she needs to repeat the lecture to deepen her understanding.

As well as her commitment to institutional practices, she is also keen to participate in many social activities and make friends. Her enthusiasm for these social events is evident in her comments recommending other students to become involved in social practices in the university accommodation,

I recommend the new international students to choose university accommodation. It is easier to make some new friends there. It can also help to improve English . . . we had lots of activities, parties and events. There were lots of international students . . . we used Facebook to communicate about the events. I tried to attend all the events as I paid the event fee (Chuchu, Int, 14082014, pp. 6–7).

As she participates in social practices with other students, these also help her deal with the pressure of her study:

The social club has a lot of activities very often. For example, we go camping, climbing mountains. I know a lot of people. This can really help to release the pressure of me. I participate in the all of the activities. I do not just focus on study. If I only study without participating in other activities I will go mad . . . I would like to recommend this to new international students. When I first came here, I did not know anyone in this country. After I join the student association, I meet a lot of students. They are fun . . . some of them are good at study, some are PASS leaders, some are masters students, PhD students. If I have questions and bump into them in the library, I can ask them. Also, some of them have been here for years, they can tell me their experiences about this university (Group discussion, 09042014, pp. 4–5).

There is no clear line in the Chinese student social club separating outdoor social practices with her peers, the emergence of friendships and networking practices and study practices. Her practices are relational and emergent (Reich & Hager, 2014), such as asking questions, sharing experience, climbing mountains, camping, and socialising with her friends are useful for her study and in dealing with stress and pressure. Her practices show the important but seemingly contradictory relationship between the things she puts together to help her.

Lectures, teachers and tutorial practices

Chuchu complies with lecture attendance as she considers it as an important part of her learning. In particular for those lectures that relate to her major, her practice is in line with institutional expectations.

I attended lectures all the time, especially finance and accounting subjects, I definitely attend those lectures (Chuchu, Int, 29052014, p. 4).

Similarly, Chuchu develops clear planning and reflective practices in order to help her recognise how to approach different types of assessment:

I only read lecture notes for exams. I did not read the textbook . . . I realised that the lecture notes were important for the final exam. But for mid-session [exams], lecture notes are not necessarily important. We can be tested from the textbook, not just lecture notes (Group discussion, 09042014, p. 9).

She then adjusts her practice to use different resources depending on how the concepts are delivered and explained:

Lecture notes are key, but textbooks are a very important supplement. I read the textbook for my final exam as well. After I read the textbook for FIN111, I answer exam questions with the textbook information, not lecture notes. There are also some examples in the textbook to help me understanding the concepts more deeply. Lecture notes only tell me the concepts, but do not give me specific examples (Group discussion, 09042014, pp. 9–10).

She is also clear about what sort of classes is most useful for her learning. She prefers classes with a teacher rather than PASS-style peer learning programs that rely on students' questions being answered by groups of students:

I prefer workshops to PASS as tutors conduct workshops. They are better at teaching and they are much clearer. They also can go deeper in explaining the concepts, and their way of explaining can help my comprehension and leave a strong impression (Chuchu, Int, 22052014, p. 10).

Organisation and time management are very important to Chuchu as she carefully plans and balances her study and social life. For example, when she has difficulty understanding certain concepts she chooses to attend PASS:

I go to some PASS classes for ACCY200 if I do not understand the week's lectures (Chuchu, Int, 02052014, p. 3)

She is clear that teachers are very important to support her study in a number of ways. First, she says she finds one teacher who helps students identify difficult areas:

She points out the tricky part of questions, and then we will be aware of those (Chuchu, Int, 15052014, p. 4).

Second, she says that in order to help her with the language barrier it is very helpful when teachers provide detailed information and use a systematic teaching practice:

I like the teachers who are very detailed in teaching as then I learn more.... I learn the concepts more deeply and, clearly remember what I have learned. Also I learn all the subjects in my second language, it is important to have the detailed teaching style . . . she lists the steps to work out these questions on the handout

in detail. We follow the process and do it again. The questions she uses are the difficult ones or very typical questions. After I have done it, I understand these types of questions (Chuchu, Int, 15052014, p.5).

She recognises that the teachers can help her with detailed instructions, she also recognises that, at times, she does not need to rely on teachers and says that she is confident, as she knows how to work out some questions by herself:

When I have a problem, I still prefer to resolve it by myself as a habit. I also want to know whether I have the ability to resolve it by myself (Chuchu, Int, 29052014, p. 5).

She develops her own study practice that works for her and she does not always defer to the teacher. This becomes clear when one teacher is inflexible and does not appreciate her use of a different way to work out tutorial questions:

One of my tutors asked us to do the questions in his way. Sometimes I found there was different way more suitable for me, but he pushed us to use his way to deal with the questions as he thought that was the best way. In the tutorial, he said why haven't you used my way to do the question (Chuchu, Int, 15052014, p. 5).

On the one hand, Chuchu is respectful to teachers and teachers' practices. On the other hand, if it does not fit to her way of doing things, she will not do it but is not confronting or challenge the teachers' authority. She shows her respect, in keeping to what she has been taught in China, "Be a father, be a child". The external harmony is maintained on the surface, but her actions are not compliant.

The influence of past practices learned in the Chinese education system remains. For example, following the Confucian practice of remaining silent in front of teachers, she only answers questions in class if other students do not respond. However, remaining silent brings her into conflict with another Confucian practice, that of ensuring that the teacher remains the teacher and does not lose status and become comprised by losing face in front of class:

I only answer questions when the teachers ask students, and no one responds to them. The teacher might be embarrassed if no one answers her questions in class (Chuchu, Int, 15052014, p. 3).

Similarly, the deep influence of the Confucius background is also evident in Chuchu's trust in her teachers:

I listen to teachers and parents as I always find what they say is right and useful (Chuchu, Int, 22052014, p. 4).

She adopts a most compliant attitude to her teachers:

If all the teachers tell me the same thing, and every book says the same thing, for example, everyone needs to have a good plan for doing things, there must be a reason and this must be right. So I will do it (Chuchu, Int, 22052014, p. 10).

She trusts the judgments of teachers and parents:

If everyone says it is very important, it must be important. I will listen to what I think they are right. I am not rebellious person to everything (Int, Chuchu, 22052014, p.10).

A contradiction is noticeable in her actions here and the early discussion of her non-compliance with teaching practices that she does not find helpful. Here she says she will listen to teachers but she also knows when not to.

Her difficulties with tutorial practices also include the contradictions and tensions of handling relationships with group members. While she wants to get high marks, Chuchu chooses to maintain harmony rather than speaking up in case it causes conflicts between team members. To save face and maintain harmony is a strong cultural influence for her:

I find one of my team members used a different reference style. But I am worried that if I said too much about it she would not like it. On the other hand, I don't want to lose marks on references. I feel contradictory inside (Chuchu, Int, 02052014, p. 5).

She still chooses to work for a common group goal, as she thinks it is important to make everyone happy:

As a team, we have a common goal. If everyone is happy and motivated, we will work more efficiently. If I make someone in the team unhappy, this can influence the work for the future. We will need to work on a report soon as a team. Poster marks are lower than the report. If a trivial thing makes the team member unhappy, the team goal can be affected (Chuchu, Int, 02052014, p. 5).

Planning and organising her studies

Chuchu uses planning, organising and managing practices to help her learn. Chuchu identifies that her practice of planning and organising is longstanding and started in high school:

I started to do this in junior high school. I like to have a plan. It saves me time and never gets too messy if there are too many things. Before the exams, I would have a very detailed schedule for study (Chuchu, Int, 22052014, p. 10).

She organises and plans and then implements her plans with great care. These practices help her to have the appearance that is always calm:

I like to plan and do things quickly in advance, not drag them out over time . . . I normally set up a plan first, and follow up my plan to finish the tasks. At a time when most students have not started, I am already working very hard. By the time others have started to do the assignment, I have already finished. So they feel I am not stressed at all (Chuchu, Int, 22052014, p. 8).

In the group discussion, she tells the other students about how she uses a temporal practice or thread (Reich & Hager, 2014) of planning for subject review before exams using her diary:

I use the diary to remind me to plan time for each day in reviewing the subjects for exams . . . For example, the day before one subject exam, I would review this subject specifically (Group discussion, 09042014, p. 11).

She also manages her subject selection strategically so that she does not take too many difficult subjects at the same time in order to help her keep her balance and focus:

I also combine the hard subjects and the easy subjects to plan my time. It works well for me as I have a better balance and am able to focus (Group discussion, 09042014, p. 11).

I noticed she was always organised and seemed to be more relaxed than other students in the study:

It was very interesting Chuchu is very relaxed in her study pace; she hardly showed me she was stressed in the assignments or exams. She stayed calm all the time. She talked with Ting as well to help her to work out the logic of the assignment, when they were both enrolled in the same subject. However, Ting seemed stressed out with her study most of time (Reflective notes, 10092014).

Her planning and management are not sufficient in themselves as she has to carry out her plans. She recognises the importance of repetition and working step by step. She recognises the need to have other everyday bodily practices, including sleeping, aligned with her study schedule. She says that she finishes her tasks well in advance because tries to work consistently over time:

I never stay overnight to work on assignment. I go to bed on time everyday. I prefer to do some gradually day by day, and then I can finish the assignment one week early normally (Chuchu, Int, 22052014, p. 10).

Listening to music also helps her focus and relaxes and forms an important part of her study practices:

I listen to music when I am studying; music blocks noise out for me, and the whole world out for me. I can focus on my studies while listening to music (Chuchu, Int, 05092014, p. 3).

Chuchu from her childhood learns to manage pressure related to her studies by carefully planning and managing her time strategically. Her way of putting disparate and seemingly contradictory things together works for her, as she carefully plans and organises ways of holding them together.

Career orientated

Strongly influenced by her parents' aspirations for her future, Chuchu tells me about how her academic path became clear when she was in high school:

I made the decision to do a master's degree when I was in high school... It is also because of the job-hunting pressure in China . . . my parents keep influencing me with this thought (Chuchu, Int, 29052014, p. 7).

She is clear about her future goal and links her love of learning to her career goal. She is motivated and chooses to have a busy schedule by doing her bachelor's degree and the CFA course at the same time:

I enroll in CFA course in this session and also the four subjects of my degree, I need to study six textbooks for the exams.... I have a very full schedule everyday. When I get up . . . I study CFA, after lunch . . . CFA again. I also schedule homework for the subjects I am enrolled in this session... If I pass the level one exam [CFA], then I will do the level two exams when I enrol in the first year of my master's degree. And then I will do the level three exams in the second year of my master's degree (Chuchu, Int, 14082014, pp. 6-7).

Chuchu carefully puts things together that seem to be contradictory, and presenting them as a list is useful in showing the difference and seeming contradiction, such as, her passion for learning, strategic approach, joining institutional practices, social activities, mountain climbing, camping, networking, going to parties, using her diary, planning, going to classes, compliance, listening and not listening teachers. She uses a combination of practices very effectively in some ways uniquely and in others she shares commonalities with other students in the study.

Haitao

Brief introduction

At the time of the study, Haitao was 23 years old and had recently transferred from the Faculty of Informatics to the Faculty of Business. He had initially enrolled in telecommunications engineering but after a year and a half he realised that it was too difficult as for two sessions he failed more than half of his enrolled subjects. The repeated fail grades meant that his enrolment status was probationary and he realised he was likely to be excluded by the university and sent back home (according to the international student visa policy of the Department of Immigration) if he continued to fail subjects. Consequently, he chose to transfer to the Bachelor of Commerce and to major in international business, as a friend told him this course was easier than the telecommunications engineering degree. Haitao had a real passion for new technologies, especially in relation to mobile phones and cars. Despite changing degree programs, he continued to commit a lot of time to following this interest. Haitao's parents are wealthy and have been successful in business. This privileged

background enabled him to continue to pursue his passions by giving him access to the latest innovations in information technologies. He had what I thought was a very unusual reason for choosing to study at UOW. He chose the university because the name Wollongong sounds like the Chinese word *crouching dragon*. This made sense to him in that in Chinese, the dragon symbolises luck and he believed that studying at UOW would bring him good luck in his studies. Haitao had a relaxed attitude that is evident in relation to his decision-making and in relation to his future.

Haitao's story

In presenting Haitao's learning journey, I identified three main areas, his networking and passion for technology, studying to pass and his close relationship with his girlfriend.

Networking

In relation to his study practices and interests, Haitao appears to be strongly influenced by his Chinese networks. His initial decision to come to UOW is influenced by his networks in China. He has a family connection to UOW as his father's friend's son had completed a degree there. He maintains connections with Chinese friends and they are important in helping him achieve his goal of fitting in and feeling comfortable at UOW. The influence of network friends also helps him when he needs to change degrees. He chooses his new major in international business because his friend told him it was the easier:

Because this major is easier . . . one of my friends has influenced me. He told me this is the easiest major in the Faculty of Business, compared with other majors (Haitao, Int, 18092014, p. 5).

On one occasion, I observed Haitao and his girlfriend studying in the library, I noticed that when they could not work out the answers to an assessment question, they decided to leave it and call their friends later.

They first read the question and try to work out the questions by themselves, then Haitao ask some questions to his girlfriend, then he started to work by himself again. He talked with her a few times when they try to work out how to put some figures in a spreadsheet. It seemed they were both stuck. They have

spent at least one hour on a small question . . . I asked them what they wanted to do with that question; they said they will call their friends in the evening (Observation notes, 10042014).

Haitao says he uses the Yicai website a lot as he can access much useful information to meet his social needs:

I heard about this website from my friend. It includes a lot of information: renting, jobs, all those sort of things. I post information as well very often myself (Haitao, Int, 05092014, p. 8).

Haitao uses networking practices in many areas of his life that spill over into his study practices. Networking in his studies is socio-material in that he uses technology to connect with social contacts by phones and websites to help him study. For Haitao, networking enables him to move beyond individual study practices that are challenging for him.

Studying to pass

As business is not his main interest, Haitao puts things together to maintain his passions and interests in IT and cars, and aligns his day-to-day study practices so as to include his interests:

Reading [the new model information] about cars [goes first] . . . I spend two to three hours reading car information first even [one week] before the exams . . . After I have read the car evaluation for about two hours, then I study for two hours, and then it is time to sleep (Haitao, Int, 11042014, p. 6).

He purposely manages his time in order to relax and the contradiction is clear in organising his time allocation by spending two hours on study and two hours on entertainment.

Nevertheless, it is not surprising given that his dream is to become a telecommunications engineer and work with new information technologies but at the moment he is only able to study in the Business Faculty.

I was enrolled in information technology before. I would like to be a telecommunication engineer. But I found that [major] was too difficult and I

failed a few subjects. As a consequence, I had to transfer to Business faculty; this is not what I dreamt about. I have to change to a different way [otherwise I would be excluded by UOW] (Int, Haitao, 18092014, p. 5).

He therefore expends the minimal effort necessary to pass his subjects and gain certification. He says, “as long as I can pass the exam, it is ok for me” (Haitao, Int, 11042014, p. 4). This strategic approach is reflected in his way of doing things, for example, relying on lecture notes as the main source of subject content:

The lecture notes are very detailed, so there is no need to buy a textbook (Haitao, Int, 20082014, p. 8).

He procrastinates and does not complete his work until the last minute:

I am not good to do thing ahead, I like to drag things out to the last minute. I always do my assignment at the last minute. But I always make sure I have finished it by the due date . . . I like to wait till the last minute to finish the homework or assignments (Haitao, Int, 30052014, p. 8, 28032014, p. 12).

His procrastination is a practice that he uses strategically to manage pressure and boredom. This procrastination practice is very different from the way his girlfriend deals with pressure.

I am different from my girlfriend [she can concentrate in study immediately and as she is stressed about exams and she spends a lot time reviewing for exams]. I first read the news, and check my phone messages etc., then study. Then I read the news again, check my phone message again. I do not concentrate very well in one activity for long, normally max 20 minutes (Haitao, Int, 28032014, p. 11).

From the data I collected, it is clear that he only pursues his studies and learning in order to get a degree. He does not follow a number of the institutional practices that students are expected to adopt. For example, even though he has the money, he chooses not to buy textbooks:

I have not bought any textbooks this session at all. I do not need to buy textbooks. The textbooks are only useful for tutorial questions . . . I can borrow the library copy from the short loans section if I need the tutorial questions (Haitao, Int, 20082014, p. 8).

He has worked out how to get the information he needs with minimum effort:

For those subjects, the tutorial questions are not available in the Moodle, I can ask my friend to take photo of the questions and send it to me (Haitao, Int, 20082014, p. 8).

When other students in this study are faced with similar challenges and lack of understanding they turn to CCAD for peer learning support. However, Haitao does not see the need to attend CCAD sessions:

I have heard about CCAD, but I have never attended the classes of CCAD. Some students said it was useful for exams (Int, Haitao, 05092014, p. 9).

Haitao tries to do summaries and remember formulae in order to reduce the need to read the textbook:

I do some summary for the concepts, as I need to understand the concepts first. But for those subjects that require more calculation, as long as I know how to use the formula, that is enough. I do not need to read the book to understand the concepts very much (Haitao, Int, 18092014, p. 6).

Sometimes he expects the teachers to take more responsibility to organise his learning, for example, by collecting homework:

I think the tutor is more responsible to push the students to do more work before the tutorials. In doing the tutorial questions, the students will know where their problems are... I don't like the tutor not collecting the tutorial questions. If they are not collected, no one does the tutorial questions, so we have to spend time in the tutorial doing the questions first before the discussion. It reduces the interaction between students and tutor (Haitao, Int, 10052014, p. 10).

It is evident that he transfers some of the responsibility for his learning to his teachers, as it is difficult for him to focus on a course in which he has little interest.

Haitao likes to have lots of practical examples that are easy to understand and help him understand the more difficult concepts. This is evident in the written lecture notes:

I have really not reviewed the tutorial questions but only the lecture notes; I do not quite understand the concepts, so I do not do well in the exams because the lecture notes only have one or two examples for this type of questions, the tutorial questions have more examples, which are more helpful in understanding (Haitao, Int, 18092014, pp. 9-10).

This is also important for him in the lectures. He says that he engages more when the Lecturer uses examples:

At the beginning of the lecture, the lecturer has discussed quite a few new concepts continuously. The more concepts she introduced, the more I got lost. So I became irritated and couldn't focus. I did not want to listen and wanted to consult the key words I did not understand. Later on, when the lecturer started to talk about examples related to the concepts, I started to understand how to use them (Haitao, Int, 11042014, p. 4).

Haitao tries to summarise the concepts as he learns them to save time and energy:

I do some summaries for the concepts, as I need to understand the concepts first. But for those subjects that require more calculation, as long as I know how to use the formula, that is enough, I do not need to read the book to understand the concepts very much (Haitao, Int, 18092014, p. 6).

Influenced by his girlfriend

Haitao's girlfriend's positive attitude towards learning has an influence on Haitao. Haitao is enrolled in the same degree as his girlfriend and as they study the same subjects, they spend most of their time together. As discussed above, he struggles with individual study practices, and this all changes when he forms a relationship and his study can become more social by working with his girlfriend. Although he does not like studying, and can not concentrate very long, a new contradictory practice emerges (Reich and Hager, 2014) as he now studies with his girlfriend almost five days a week in the law section of the UOW library.

I used to stay at home a lot, but after I knew her, I changed and now come to the library to study . . . We go to classes together, then the rest of time we stay in the library till five everyday except Saturday. It is good study atmosphere in the library. There is too much distraction at home (Haitao, Int, 20082014, p. 3-5).

In my interviews with Haitao, he keeps on mentioning how his girlfriend has influenced him positively and shaped his study practices because she is motivated:

I can do things a bit in advance, not like before, I used to do my assignments in the last minute . . . I can do things a bit faster than before as she influenced me [she is very focused and efficient] . . . bit clearer than before about when I should do what (Int, Haitao, 09052014, p.7).

However, he also relies on copying his girlfriend's work when he finds his studies too difficult:

I rely on my girlfriend a lot in learning. Sometimes if I find the tutorial questions are very hard, I copy her answers, then I do not have to do the thinking process of how to get the answers for the questions to make it easy for me . . . I am a bit lazy (Int, Haitao, 28032014, p.4).

Pressure to complete the degree from his father who pays for his studies within the allocated time makes him prioritise passing and he is prepared to act strategically to achieve this. His limited use and development of study practices, his reliance on his girlfriend and his decision to do just enough work to get through lead him to choose to copy from his girlfriend to finish his tutorial homework.

During the last semester of my work with him, Haitao's girlfriend becomes very sick and is hospitalised. In my discussions with him, it is clear that he is very worried about her and is very tired as he is trying to study and look after her at the same time. Interestingly, he tells me that when his girlfriend becomes unwell, he starts to worry about his studies, because she is no longer there to help him and he has developed a social studying practice with her.

In reflecting about my own responses to Haitao and his involvement in the research, I had mixed emotions. It was also difficult to see what he was doing in relation to learning when I observed him in his routine university life and at times I found this frustrating. He often struggled to articulate how he learned and sometimes did not want to talk at all:

He is a quiet person; I even do not know whether he would like to talk...
(Reflective notes, 05082014).

I wrote the following notes:

I noticed from his body language that Haitao was very uncomfortable when talking with me today. He frowned a lot and paused repeatedly . . . (Reflective notes 05092014).

When I re-read my field notes of the interview, I wrote,

I struggled to understand how he learnt, as he did not talk much . . . (Reflective notes, 24092014).

However, as well as feeling frustrated, I also feel a positive affection for him, as I like his frank and honest approach. As I observe his relationship with his girlfriend develop, I see him change and become happier.

In summary, Haitao's approach is characterised by his passion for IT and technology combined with the knowledge that he cannot pursue his dream fully. And at the same time, his reluctant acceptance that he has to study business to stay in Australia, to get a qualification and meet his father's expectations. His main purpose is to attain certification in achieving the Bachelor of Commerce. He puts things together strategically in ways that help him to achieve his purpose, such as using the Yicai website, talking to friends on the phone, checking car and technology sites on the internet, studying with his girlfriend, working in the library five days a week and procrastinating. Although these things are disparate and seemingly in tension and contradictory, they work well for him.

Ting

Brief introduction

Ting, a female aged 20, was enrolled in her second semester when she participated in this research. Ting is close to her parents (who are teachers), and they have a strong influence on her learning. She finished high school before she came to Australia and, enrolled in English for Tertiary Studies for 12 weeks. Ting was the only one of the five participants who received a scholarship when she applied for UOW as she had achieved a high distinction in high school. She was awarded a 25 per cent exemption

from the UOW tuition fees. Ting studied hard and spent most of her time studying. She achieved high distinctions, the highest possible mark, in most subjects. Her way of studying was characterised by her passion for learning and her individualised and reflective learning approach. Her study practices were oriented towards achieving academic success, like Chuchu, but unlike the other students in the study, she was not studying primarily in order to get a certificate.

Ting's story

Ting's story is characterised by her reliance on her parents' mentoring. Her parents' mentoring and counseling played an important role in her learning journey. From the data collected, I noticed that she was closely connected to her parents as she spoke about them constantly:

I call my dad [and Skyped with him] almost every week to update him about my life here. They know everything about me. They also know what I think and what actions I take in certain circumstances. I tell them everything about me except some things. I choose not to tell them of those . . . (Int, Ting, 03042015, p. 18).

Her relationship with her parents remains strong and demonstrates strong sense of filial piety and it is evident even though she is living and studying overseas. She even asks her father about how to conduct conversations with her peers and teachers in tutorials. This mentoring role is taken up by both her mother and father and provided emotional support for her in her decision-making. For example:

Before that conversation with my dad, I did not know what to say in the class, but after that [conversation]; I know how to talk and how to be involved in a group (Int, Ting, 03042015, p. 6).

She goes on to discuss how her mother teaches her to identify the links between concepts. She learns by listening to what her mother said and then putting it into practice:

My mum is a teacher. She has influenced me a lot in how to link things I have learned . . . finding the links between the new things with what I learned previously . . . if I have clearly understood the previous fundamental knowledge,

I will be able to understand the concepts I learn later on . . . I will know how to link the concepts of the whole book together, and know how to make the thick book thin [as I have set up the links in between] (Int, 28082014, Ting, p. 4).

Ting learns these academic practices from her parents and they are temporally orientated (Reich & Hager, 2014). She learned them in the past and they remain strong and she continues to use them in her new learning environment in Australia.

Study practices

Ting appears to adopt a strongly individualised and reflective approach to study. For example, in the first session, influenced by her previous learning practices, Ting prefers to work out the questions by herself, as she has not learnt how to talk and ask questions in class:

My habit is to work out the answers by myself, because I do not know how to ask the teacher a question. This is about where to start the questions. If I start from the part I do not understand, there is more likely be some other things I still don't understand, as the steps of the questions are not clear . . . I have to make them clear by summarising my questions first before asking the teacher; otherwise I am confused (Ting, Int, 27032014, p.4; 25092013, p. 3).

She tends to work out the steps first by herself before she approaches the teachers even though it appears that it is much easier to ask the teachers. Ting has a strong tension in that in the early stages of her study in semester one, she does not know how to approach the teacher to ask questions. As a Chinese student, she is used to learning and reflecting in silence and not questioning the teacher. She therefore relies on summarising the question, a practice with which she is familiar, so that she is clear and more confident to talk to the teacher.

In her first session, she does not think it is useful to talk or discuss questions with her peers:

I do not like to ask or talk when I have questions . . . I prefer to concentrate on the questions and wrestle with them . . . Sometimes I think I should discuss with others, that might be quicker, but I like to work things out by myself more. I

keep reading the questions, thinking and reading, and thinking without stop (Ting, Int, 27032014, p. 7).

Although she clearly has questions as to what might be helpful, she is not keen to learn a new practice of discussing with other students at this stage. There is another tension for her, on the one hand, she prefers to work by herself while on the other hand she reflects that, “it might be quicker”, she considers there might be benefit in the new practice. She explains:

I think discussion with classmates is a waste of time for me, because I can resolve the questions by myself most of time.... I do not think discussing with others is suitable for me. Because I found the discussion always went in the wrong direction, the focus of the questions changes and is not mine anymore (Ting, Int, 28082014, pp. 2, 4).

Her strongly individualised reflective approach to study means that she does not immediately see the value in discussing questions with her classmates. Ting struggles to move from working everything out by herself or with the help of her parents to learning practices that are related to her new context involving teachers and peers. Her long-standing practices of individualised learning have been built into her life from an early age. For example, in her practice of Guzheng¹⁷:

I have spent at least two hours per day practising Guzheng since I was four. It lasted for 11 years... The habit of being able to be highly concentrated for a long time is the gift I get from practicing Guzheng... I can maintain concentration for a long time, and I can sit for a long time without moving. Last week, I was doing one of the assignments. I sat there for five hours without moving, without drinking water or going to toilet. At noon, I started to work on my work, the sun was very bright, came into my eyes, when I realised the time later, it was already dark outside (Ting, Int, 17042017, pp. 11–12).

Her exercise practice is used to help her study. Her study practices are embodied (Reich and Hager, 2014) in that two hours practicing Guzheng everyday is useful for disciplining her body in ways that enables her to focus her thinking for long periods. She relies on her abilities to focus and reflect in most of her approaches to study.

¹⁷ Guzheng: is a Chinese traditional plucked musical string instrument for over 2500 years history.

Memorising practices

Another related individualistic study practice Ting uses is memorising. For Ting, memorising does not just mean remembering, but involves a complex set of related practices including organising, grouping, categorising, marking and numbering. Each of these practices includes bodily activities and material arrangements (Reich & Hager, 2014).

When I organise my notes, I like to put things in different groups first, then categorise them in different parts . . . I mark the lecture notes slides with numbers to group them (on the side of the slides) . . . [This] helps me think clearly and memorise the concepts (Ting, Int, 04092015, p. 1).

Ting's ability to concentrate is evident in the way she uses her body. I observed her "bending down with her head close to the desk" and watched her "circle [the concepts] again and again" (Ting, observation notes, 12082015). Although her study practices are strongly individualised and appear cognitive, her memorising practices require her to use her whole body. Ting goes on to further explain how associating concepts with colour and sound helps her to memorise:

Her lecture slides are very detailed. The different colors highlight the key points. Especially she also used sounds for some concepts.... I find the sound she used helped me to stress the memorisation of this concept (Ting, Int, 22052015, p.3)

The lecturer's use of sound and colour in her pedagogical practice supports Ting's memorising practices.

Selective negligence

In order to understand Ting and other students' study practices, it is necessary to understand the pressure students are under to organise their schedule. Students' study commitments create many tensions that need to be balanced, including attending lectures, tutorials and workshops, reading, and doing assessments, casual employment, shopping, domestic activities and social activities with friends. This means their lives are often very busy. Ting adopts a number of practices in order to manage her time effectively. She carefully considers the purpose of each time commitment and prioritises the most important. This process sometimes involves neglecting some commitments. In my data collection, I notice that Ting is very

selective in managing her time. For example, in the lectures she chooses to attend, the workshops and peer learning classes she participates in and in consulting teachers. Her choices are deliberate and involve what I term *selective negligence* (Snyder 1973).

I choose to go to some lectures for subjects I am good at I could understand these lectures. For those I cannot understand on the spot, I do not go to the lectures as it is waste of time. I have to spend another two hours studying to understand the lecture (Ting, Int, 16052015, p. 1).

Given Ting's passion and commitment to learning, it seems contradictory that she does not go to some lectures. However, her focus is on using her time wisely in order to maximise her learning. This orientation and focus shape her practices temporally (Reich & Hager, 2014); she does not always follow the university temporal structure (Orlikowski & Yates 2002) in attending all lectures. Similarly, but for different reasons, she attends some tutorials twice, even though she has to spend two hours on what is officially a one-hour tutorial. She chooses to attend these duplicate tutorials because she identifies the teacher as being able to help her in areas that she finds difficult to understand.

She is very clear in the way she explains the concepts, she also pronounces words very clearly, and I can understand what she says. She knows which concepts the students might find hard to understand (Ting, Int, 05062015, p.4; 22052015, p.5).

Ting also chooses to not to see the teachers in consultation time:

It is very troublesome to seek help from teacher . . . Because I need to arrange my time first, and send an email to the teacher. Sometimes I am not available in the consultation time. When the teacher has time, I don't as I have classes. So it is very hard to make it (Int, Ting, 28082014, p. 9).

It is evident that managing time is also one reason she prefers not to ask questions in her first session as managing her time to fit in teachers' consultation times is difficult.

She also applies selective negligence in choosing to use lecture resources rather than attend lectures. In order to manage her time most effectively she utilises the Echo360 voice recordings.

I can repeat the lecture as many times as I want. If I do not get which sentences she says, I can keep listening to Echo360 till I get it . . . There are a lot of important points in the lectures; I do not want to miss any single points. But I really cannot follow her speed. If a previous part escapes me, I try to understand what is said and then this affects my ability to follow her . . . I become irritated and inefficient, so I would rather go home and listen to the Echo recordings (Ting, Int, 29052014, p. 9).

When she finds it is hard to follow the lecturer, she uses the Echo360 recordings. In my observation, I notice that this particular lecture is very full and intense and that many students lost interest:

There is too much content in one lecture. I am overwhelmed by the overloaded information covered in one lecture . . . The last exercise at the end of lecture is the most comprehensive one as it is a summary of all previous concepts. But the students are exhausted at the end of a two-hour lecture, and do not show much interest or concentration (Field notes, 29052014, p.9).

The pressure on the lecturers comes from the institutional requirements as to how much content is to be covered in order to address the learning outcomes for the subject. Ting's response as a passionate student and committed learner shows that even for her there were too many points. She describes feeling mentally overloaded and frustrated:

[The lecturer] covers too many key points [in one lecture], for me, it is like holding sand in the hands—hard to grasp. The lecturer needs to give examples of each key concept and then focus on one point to give an exercise to stress the concepts (Int, Ting, 29052014, p. 9).

Institutional practices influences Ting's arrangement of her time and her practices. The use of voice recordings gives her the flexibility she needs to help her in her learning.

Engaging with teachers

As Ting has limited experience in communicating with Western teachers, she relies on mentoring from her parents and has very individualised study practices. She is slow to learn how to relate to teachers. When she encounters Sophie, an ethnic Korean lecturer, who is friendly, respectful and approachable she connects with her quickly:

She likes smiling; all her expression on the face looks as she is smiling. I like her a lot. In her first class, she asks us to write our expectations of her. She says she will try her best to be a good teacher, and her expectation of us is to respect others, and achieve a high mark for this subject in a friendly learning environment (Ting, Int, 05062014, p. 11).

Ting identifies Sophie's practices as helpful. Sophie is aware of the linguistic and conceptual challenges facing international students:

She knows which concepts the students find hard to understand. For those concepts students need to think about it, she pauses her lecture, and allows us to take notes or think . . . the pauses are appropriate (enough time). Sometimes, when it is clear and we are keen to know what is next, she speaks faster. She knows well what the students need (Ting, Int, 22052014, p.6).

I interviewed Sophie who told me that:

I use pauses and breaks in my lectures, as I am aware there are fast learners and slow learners. They process things differently; slow learners dwell in the previous questions, if they do not really understand . . . I try to leave some practical questions to do them on the spot to ensure they understand the concepts in class . . . I try to read them, and to feel the atmosphere, to find out whether they are happy or not (Sophie, Int, 13062016. p. 4).

Sophie identifies that students have different approaches and study practices.

Ting is very uncomfortable about meeting one on one with teachers in their offices:

I feel nervous when the teacher says "sorry?" when they do not understand my questions? And also because it is in their office, I feel it is like an interview, making me more nervous . . . I like to ask questions in the classroom after

tutorials, as the environment make me less nervous. Also because just after the tutorial, the ideas are fresh and I know clearly what I want to ask (Ting, Int, 20150305, p. 1).

For Ting asking questions in the classroom is a sociomaterial practice (Reich & Hager, 2014; Orlikowski, 2007) that she can participate in and one in which she is able to feel comfortable as the material arrangement is open and social and there are other students around. In contrast, the material arrangements in the teacher's office are restricted, and she cannot join this practice.

Emergent move from individual to shared practices

Over the course of this study, Ting's individualised ways of doing things change emergently (Reich & Hager, 2014) to her joining shared practices with others. In the first session, Ting struggles to move from her individualised reflective approach to study. In the third session, Ting slowly begins to incorporate shared practices such as asking teachers for help with her questions:

. . . think through the questions, I find the clear steps which I stuck with, and find out exactly which part I do not understand, then I know how to ask the teachers questions (Ting, Int, 25092014, p. 4).

Ting asks more questions compared with her first session:

This week I have asked questions for 20 minutes after the tutorial. When the tutor discusses one question, (it triggers me) to think of a new question. I was eager to ask her . . . When I could not express myself clearly in English, she knew what I was asking and explained the concept to me clearly. She asked me not to panic and to be confident . . . (Ting, Int, 29052015, p. 4).

From an attitude of “I do not know how to ask the teacher the question” in her first session, Ting becomes “eager to ask” by her third session. Ting says she has changed in class as well:

I can answer the questions or ask questions of teachers; I can have a normal communication on the spot in the class . . . If I have questions, I can interrupt the teacher to ask them immediately . . . in one tutorial, I do the group presentation each time by myself as I like to practice (Ting, Int, 18092014, p. 6)

Her practice develops over the course of the semester. She even discusses how she is now able to interrupt the teacher if she has a question. She also says she enjoys doing an individual presentation to the class:

[I know] how to organise my words...how to make it clear, and to express my thoughts clearly to the class. For example, what the procedures of calculation are, etc. I can explain why I have got this result [by following the procedures], and what is the meaning for that result specifically (Ting, Int, 18092014, p. 7).

She also mentions that her tutor's handling of the students' presentations is effective and helpful:

When I do a presentation, sometimes my answer was wrong. The tutor would correct it, and it could supplement the missing part of my knowledge. I liked to do presentations more as it was good for my learning (Ting, Int, 22052014, p. 8).

Ting's learning changes over the course of a few sessions as she picks up some new practices and adapts others and uses them to learn.

In summary, Ting's study is strongly influenced by her parents. In the first session, her study practices are more individualistic, such as "working out the questions by herself", and "concentrating for a long time". Over time, she starts to move to use shared learning practices, such as "asking questions of the teachers" and "discussing with her friends". Analysis of Ting's practices shows how she organises her study strategically, and how she changes her practices while running the course. She adapts to institutional, academic practices and arrangements and interacts with teachers, peers, family and friends. Ting puts things together, such as relational practices with her parents, individual studying practices, reflection, time and organising practices, selective negligence, engaging with teachers, and moving from individual to shared practices.

Lin

Brief introduction

Lin, a male student aged 22, was enrolled in his first semester when he participated in this research. He completed a Diploma of Business in China before he came to Australia. The diploma was delivered as part of a transnational program, which

included some lecturers from Australia. Lin's English is good and he is quite confident in communicating with his teachers and fellow students. He was also keen to be actively involved in university life. For example, he was the only student in this research that joins a university cultural group not related to his study. Lin's tertiary study in China influenced him in many ways and he was able to identify the differences between the two systems and managed to adapt well in the new learning space. From my observation and interviews with Lin, it was clear that he missed the deep connections and relationships that he had in China. He expressed a strong desire for connection with teachers and peers that influenced his responses to institutional practices. His practices showed the influence of the Chinese education system and he had a strategic approach to study. He was committed to achieving the certification of the degree.

Lin's story

Lin tries very hard to adapt to the new educational system as he has some experience in tertiary study in China. He also starts to adopt some new learning practices. Interestingly, Lin points out that the same content is taught in China and Australia using different pedagogies and that the Chinese approach is more complicated and tricky. In Lin's study journal for this research project, he writes:

Luckily I ask the teacher about the tutorial questions, otherwise I would have done the questions wrong by calculating some unrequired steps in the question. I realise that the teachers here use different way to test the students' knowledge in comparison with the teachers in China.... Teachers here do not set up traps in the questions (Lin, Study Journal, 02042014, p. 1).

He explains that his Chinese teachers expected him to work out the underlying questions in the exam paper even though they were not clearly requested. However, in Australia, the teachers do not expect students to provide the underlying steps of the questions in the exam:

In China, if we had a similar question, we were supposed to think about it in a complicated way, Effective Annual Rate (EAR) and Annual Percentage Rate (APR). Commonly, if the question gave me APR (different interest rates), I needed to work out EAR as well even though the question did not explicitly ask

me to calculate it. It was very common that some underlying questions were tested. The related knowledge could be tested. But in Australia, if the question does not ask me to work out some implicit steps, I do not have to. Therefore, I do not have to worry about trap setting up in the questions (Lin, Study Journal, 02042014, p. 1).

It is evident that different pedagogical practices have affected his study practice. He also reflects on the different homework arrangements and feedback practices. Whereas in Australia, tutor feedback on homework forms an important part of pedagogy, in China, it is not used:

The Lecturers did not check my homework in China at all. There was no participation marks thing at all. The participation was for my attendance in lecture. However, I spend double time to do my homework in here (Int, Lin, 14052014, p. 4).

Different pedagogical practices have changed his practices over time. He constantly adjusts his practices to fit in to the new learning environment.

Unlike other students in this study, Lin is able to ask teachers questions after class and he recognises the importance of participation. He speaks up in order to be noticed, whereas most Chinese students remain silent. He explains that by speaking up, teachers become aware of him or he becomes visible. Therefore, Lin adopts a new practice of asking his teachers questions to draw attention to himself. He recognises that in large classes with many international students who often remain silent he needs to differentiate himself. Perhaps on a deeper level, he feels existential angst and lost:

I also need to show I “exist” in here, I ask a lot of questions. I ask the Lecturer questions every time after the Lecture (Lin, Int, 14052014, p.5).

Even though he knows he needs to ask questions in class to show that he exists. Lin is strongly influenced by the Chinese way of asking questions after the class is finished. This is a common practice among many Chinese students (Wu, 2015).

However, most teachers in Australian universities expect their students to ask questions in class. Melody one of the tutors, expressed her frustration about teaching Chinese students:

The international students, especially Chinese students in my class are normally very quiet, they never ask questions. I think because of the language and also they do not understand what I said. Sometimes I do not know whether they got it or not, so I have to keep asking them whether they understand me and whether they have any questions to ask me or not (Melody, Int, 11042015, p. 1).

Because Chinese students “never ask questions” in class, the teachers do not know whether they understand or not. Teachers tend to think they are not learning as expected due to the lack of any explicit evidence of engagement, such as would be provided by asking questions. However, Lin says that:

I do not like to ask questions in class, first the time is normally very limited, and it is hard to interrupt during the class. Unless it is a very big question (Lin, Int, 14052014, p. 5).

In Lin’s view, asking questions during class interrupts the normal pace of class. There is a strong irony here in that he likes to ask questions to draw teachers' attention, but his practice of questioning can be perceived by the teachers and other students as changing the pace of class. This contradiction remains unresolved for Lin:

It is a different language, and the ways of thinking are different as well. If I say something, most of time they do not understand, I will have to interpret again. So there is no ending, the more I talk, the more I need to explain. So I find it is better not to talk more in the first place, it can also affect the whole class pace, as everyone has to stop to listen to you [you will not achieve what you wish to achieve] (Lin, Int, 26092013, p. 3).

This behaviour is not generally accepted in Chinese classes. There, teachers do not expect the students to ask questions in class, but prefer students to concentrate on listening, taking notes, and trying to understand what they teach (Wu, 2004; Yin et al., 2014). There seem to be a misunderstanding regarding the role of participating in discussion or asking questions in class between Chinese international students and academics in Australia.

Learning strategy: time and energy

When Lin studies he focuses on how to achieve the best outcome while expending limited effort and time on learning-related activities. Time seemed to be a constant issue for Lin in relation to his studies. He recalls the different temporal structures (Olikowski & Yates 2002) for assessment in China and this shapes his views of the current assessments,

There are a lot of assessments through the whole session. Students do not have time to rest. In contrast, in China, I did not have so many assessments, I only have two exams: midsession and final exam. It is very easy to lose focus (Lin, Int, 25092014, p. 9).

The curriculum in the Australian university does not allow him to have too much free time, as “there are a lot of assessments through the whole session” in contrast with Chinese curriculum, which only has two assessments. The institutional differences have shaped his time management and practices, as he has to maintain his focus on study during the entire session.

For Lin, it is very important to choose practices that are useful to his study and use his time and energy wisely. Another decision relating to managing his time is to stay focused on his studies, rather than taking any employment outside of university:

I do not do casual work here at all. If I fail one subject, I cannot earn that money even if I work very hard. So for me if I do not spend this additional money, it means I actually make money (Lin, Int, 14082014, p. 5).

Lin is clear about the relationship between the effort and time he puts into his studies and the results he is likely to achieve.

Similarly, when I asked him whether he would like to review his mid-session exam paper he replies:

No, I will not. I do not think there is any point doing it. It is a waste of time. The same questions are not tested again [in the final exam]. In the final exams, the concepts tested will be in the latter part of the textbook (Lin, Int, 28052014, p. 5).

Lin is clear about how to use his time and energy. If he believes that taking the next step will not make any difference, he will not get involved. Lin's practices are temporally (Reich & Hager, 2014) infused and this enables him to use them very strategically for example, in his approach to tutorial questions:

I do not spend too much time on tutorial questions, because assessment questions are harder than the tutorial questions. If I can work out the assessment questions, I know how to do all the tutorial questions. So if there is no mark for tutorial questions, I will not do them. Most of the students in my tutorial do not do the tutorial questions (Lin, Int, 28052014, p. 5).

In order to save time and energy, he does not do the tutorial questions if there are no marks allocated to them. This might surprise the lecturers and tutors as they normally expect students to attempt all the tutorial questions before they attend the tutorials.

Influenced by teachers' practices

Lin is strongly influenced by Confucius thinking and his previous experience in the Chinese education system. In Lin's perspective, skills and knowledge are not as important as how the teachers position themselves, especially in their professionalism and attitude toward teaching. To be a teacher, he believes, it is necessary to "be professional" and "keen to teach".

To be a teacher, act as a teacher. I care more about the teacher's attitude than their skilled knowledge in the specific areas. I would choose good attitude rather than skills. If the teacher is knowledgeable in his area, but not professional or not keen to teach, he is not a good teacher, because he does not know how to be a teacher. On the other hand, if the teacher is not knowledgeable enough, but he teaches us whatever he knows, he still knows more than us in this area anyway (Lin, Int, 14052014, p. 9).

He contrasts the professionalism of some teachers with others who lack this attribute. He explains that:

Replying to an email quickly shows the teacher respects the students at least, even though sometimes it might not help in answering the questions (Lin, Int, 14052014, p. 10).

When teachers reply to emails quickly, he assumes that this is an indicator of their attitude and professionalism. For Lin, the attitude of teachers is very important as he said:

When communicating with the teachers, the attitude of the teachers influences the students strongly. If the teacher is not patient, most of students will lose their patience and passion for study, especially in resolving the questions in study . . . [However] when the teacher is patient with me, I can be more patient in doing the questions, as patience is contingent (Lin, Int, 14052014, p. 11).

In his view, teacher's attitude toward engaging with students is powerful for student learning as “patience and passion” encourage students to be persistent in learning:

I think the meaning of education is to constitutently encourage the students. Only encouragement will motivate students to study consistently. If there is not enough encouragement, the students will not work very hard unless the students have high degree of interest in the subject (Lin, Int, 24102013, p. 11).

In my observations of her teaching, as a Korean woman, her appearance and demeanor are familiar to the Chinese students. It is worth noting that Lin is particularly taken with Sophie's approach to teaching and seems to be related to his need for belonging. She recognises these social needs of international students and positions herself and her pedagogical practices to support students. He reflects that the encouragement from the teachers is effective as it has a positive effect on students' motivation. He also believes that students' hard work is related to high interest for learning. In an interview, Lin's teacher Sophie says:

I am conscious of physical proximity, so I keep a close distance to my students by leaning toward them when we talk, and by looking at them in the eyes to show my interest in their questions. I like to communicate with them emotionally. It also helps me to put my efforts in teaching and motivated me.... Broken English is not a big problem for teaching at all. I had a lecturer before, his English was broken, but his heart was there with students, we could feel it. The emotional attachment is very important between teachers and students (Sophie, Int, 13062014).

Sophie positions her body to show her respect and care for her students by “[keeping] a close distance”, “leaning towards to them” and “looking at them in the eyes”. She also identified the importance of having an emotional connection with her students.

In designing the lecture slides, Sophie includes slides detailing activities for students’ participation. I observe the lecture and note that:

Sophie's voice is loud and clear, slides are colorful and easy to read. Some slides have sound reminders . . . Sophie instructions are clear and brief, students can follow them easily . . . She smiles a lot . . . Sophie keeps asking, “do you understand”? to ensure the students can follow her (Field notes, 01052015).

Sophie arranges her teaching materials carefully by using different colors to differentiate between the concepts and to attract students’ attention. She knows the pedagogical limitations of the large lecture format and tries to overcome the limitations by breaking the monotony by making things interesting. Sophie knows what she needs to teach and what practices are useful in teaching. She explains:

For my lecture notes, I try to use different colors, match the color to the concepts to help students to understand what I emphasise, and also make the students awake in the lecture, as I know they get bored and can be less motivated during the long lecture (Sophie, Int, 13062014, p. 2).

Lin understands and connects with Sophie as a teacher, as he identifies her use of practices that makes the lecture more interesting for him:

Lin is concentrating and listening to the Lecturer, his body language says that he is keen to learn as he leans forward and takes notes often, highlights the key words with color pens on his iPad slides. He takes some photos of slides if there is too much information in the slides (Field notes, 01052015).

Lin is keen to study in the lecture and appears engaged. His connection with his teacher is evident and Sophie’s arrangements and practices appear to be in line with Lin’s needs and his understanding of how a teacher should teach. He is positive about filling in the blanks of the lecture slides, seeing these as helpful for his learning as it can help him to understand the concepts:

When there are a lot of blanks in the slides, it allows me and pushes me to be more involved in learning this concept, as I need to understand it. If the full lecture notes are given to me, I think I can work out by myself later and do not have to listen the lecturer carefully (Lin, Int, 14052014, p. 11).

Friends and relationships with peers

In adapting to the new learning environment, Lin is disappointed that he has few friends and that the different institutional practices and arrangements make it difficult for him to establish and develop relationship and friendships with other students:

The SOLS online system allows everyone to choose and arrange the timetable to suit themselves. Consequently, everyone might be very different in the progress of the course. There are no steady friends for me in one class. Even for those who enrol in the same major to me, we might enrol in different subjects in the session as the progress of the course is different (Lin, Int, 25092014, p.11).

The institutional arrangements and practices set up differences between the Chinese and UOW relationship patterns for the students. The flexible online enrolment system shapes Lin's practices with his peers. He says that this results in him having "no steady friends":

I have to find new friends each session, as I have never met most of students in my class before. To connect with other Chinese students and Chinese communities is an easy option for me. I am participating in this research for this reason (Lin, Int, 19092014/06042014 p. 5).

Consequently, he has to "find new friends" and he identifies that connecting with Chinese communities as one option:

The relationships between students here are very loose, the students enrol in different subjects, I only know the face of the classmates, not the name or the person . . . in China, I do everything with my classmates together: enrolling in the same subjects, having the lectures at same time, finishing classes at the same time, staying in the same uni dormitory (Lin, Int, 19092014, pp. 3-4; 06042014, p. 3).

The new institutional structure and practices shape his social practices and he feels disorientated and lost. As one thing becomes another, his feelings of lostness push

him to adopt new emergent practices. For Lin, having close relationships with his peers seems to be important. The difference between institutions in Australia and China has changed the way Lin connects with his peers. He complains about the lack of close relationships between students in Australia, unlike in China, where students do everything together.

Lin manages to connect with other Chinese students by becoming active in Chinese student groups:

I ask questions of Chinese students, we share study materials more. I join some Chinese student groups, such as CCAD, and this Chinese students' learning research (Lin, Int, 14082014, p.3).

For Lin, joining in the Chinese student groups is an important way to connect with other Chinese students, as he can “ask questions” and “share study materials”, two important learning practices.

Lin's experiences show that institutional practices can produce a different learning environment and different experiences for students. This situation also possibly changes and shapes students learning practices:

I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to the new learning environment as no one knows me or cares about me much as they did before in China. I do not feel embarrassed if I make mistakes in answering the questions or if I cannot answer the teacher's questions in the class . . . they are just strangers around me (Lin, Int, 19092014, p. 5).

On the one hand, because of the loose peer relationship, Lin does not feel a strong sense of belonging to the new environment. On the other hand, it also changes his learning practices, as he does not feel embarrassed if he gives a wrong answer in front of “strangers”. In order to survive in the new learning environment, Lin also starts to change. I noted this in my observations:

Lin sits next to the local students, they seem to know each other well, and begin to talk very quickly. Lin is comfortable with his friend from his relaxed body language (Field notes, 20092013).

Lin is capable of setting up new relationships with local students to help him feel a sense of belonging in the new country. When the students have more connection with each other, they feel like they belong. Many researchers have made similar observations. For example, Keevers and Abuoduha (2012) suggest that a sense of belonging is realised through the daily practices of teaching and learning in higher education classrooms.

Lin is willing to connect with teachers and peers to have a close relationship with people. He learns to adopt some new practices and consistently compares the two educational systems and arrangements and teaching practices and approaches to help him adapt to the new learning environment. He clearly knows what he needs is to wisely use his time and energy to achieve the best outcome he would like. Lin puts things together, such as, connecting Chinese and Australian pedagogy, connecting with Sophie, making new friends, participating social programs, sharing accommodation, strategic time management and willingness to adapt to institutional practices.

Su:

Brief introduction

Su, a female student aged 23, was enrolled in her first semester when she participated in this research. She completed a transnational Diploma of International Business in China before she came to Australia that included some tuition from Australian lecturers. After a few months in Australia, she started her own business. Her ultimate goal was to be successful in business “I would like to have my own business before I enter my 30s, or make good money” (Su, Int, 24042014, p. 10). Before Su came to UOW, she was the chair of the student association at her university in China and had gained experience in running big student events and negotiating with different levels of university staff and other organisations. These experiences helped her to settle in to a new country, as she was confident in handling different situations in the new learning environment. Su was a strategic learner. I observed that she was a capable student on many levels and she seemed to be clear about what she wanted and how she could achieve it in her studies. During her initial time studying at UOW, her priorities were to get her degree, run her business and maintain her social network at

the same time. She managed her study and institutional practices very carefully. However, she said and I observed that by the end of the course her attitude to study had changed.

Su's story

Su's ways of doing things relate to her ability to make strong relational connections (Reich & Hager, 2014) between practices in different areas of her life. Her social practices shape her academic practices more noticeably than other participant students. Su's study journey is strongly influenced by a number of social and study practices that she developed in China. As the chair of the students association at her university in China, Su says:

I have learned a lot from my work. I have improved massively in my personal skills in handling difficult relationships and negotiation skills (Su, Int, 22052014, p. 16).

Her student leadership role in China provided an opportunity to gain practical experience that relates strongly to her business studies:

. . . as the Chair of the whole student association committee, I had meetings four times a week with different groups of people, such as teachers, student leaders of each departments, etcetera . . . What we did included marketing and promotion, budgets, and business plans and event organising etcetera (Su, Int, 22052014, pp. 14–17).

While she does not explicitly say so, it becomes clear through discussions, interviews and observations that she practices the skills and knowledge related to running a business, such as marketing and promotion, budgeting, business planning and event organization, at the same time as managing her studies at UOW. She has a strong capacity to integrate practical and theoretical ways of knowing.

Su did not choose to study in Australia herself, she explains that, “I did not want to come here to study, it was my dad who wanted me to come” (Su, Int, 29052014, p.9). Su's father also has a strong influence on her orientation towards her business career:

I used to listen to my Dad talking with his business friends when they were having Gong Fu tea¹⁸. I was very interested in what they said about how to run businesses (Int, Su, 24042014, p. 5).

His example helped to shape her ideas for her future career.

Running her business and her social network

Su's practices have a strong relational and temporal orientation (Reich & Hager, 2014), she repeatedly says that her priority for the future is to be a businesswoman and that her social networks are vital. She strategically manages her study and social practices at UOW to help her to achieve this goal. She is also keen to know how to apply what she learns in order to be effective in her business in the future:

I am only keen to learn the stuff, which is useful for me, and how the knowledge can help me to run the business now or for the future not just for a certificate (Su, Int, 20082015, p. 7).

She clearly connects those things she thinks work together for her future:

I think what I learn can influence my business and vice versa. I think many things are related to each other, they can generate a subtle implicit relation (Su, Int, 24042015, p. 7).

This future career orientation strongly positions her view of learning:

I think about what I can do with what I have learned in the university. I do not just learn for a certificate. I am linking what I have learned to my future job and career (Su, Int, 05092014, p. 1).

She is strongly committed to practices of social networking as part of her future business orientation but it also relates to and is tangled up with her social needs and practices (Reich & Hager, 2014). In the interviews, especially in her first session at UOW, she often describes the importance of networking and socialising and the value she places on her social network:

¹⁸ Gong Fu tea is not one kind of tea or the name of tea, but a skill of making tea. People call it Gong Fu tea for the reason of its exquisite process. The operational procedures require certain techniques, knowledge and skill of brewing and tasting tea. Gong Fu tea originated in the Song Dynasty. Nowadays, business people like to have Gong Fu Tea while they discuss business.

Socialising is far more important for me than my study, as I would like to be a businesswoman in the future. Therefore, social network is crucial for me. But connecting with people is more likely to happen when you play with people (Su, Int, 20082015, p. 10).

In the early days of this study, she is clear that it is not useful to be too focused on study only and that she is committed to pursuing her passion:

I am not like other international students who spend most of their time studying . . . They are motivated in study, not me. I have a strong desire for other things . . . study is only part of my life. I do not want to spend too much time on study (Su, Int, 11042014, p. 11).

At times, she considers studying as separate from her future career and her networking commitments. She manages her time carefully in order to achieve her other goals and even considers study to be a waste of her time. The need to keep a close contact with her business partners impacts on the time available for her study. She recognises that this affects her study:

I need to communicate with them a lot everyday through WeChat messages. Sometimes I do not have time to talk with them, as there are too many. It has affected my study, and I am worried about it as well (Su, Int, 09052014, p. 2).

At this stage, her social commitments seem more important to her than assessment commitments:

I know I should not have handed in exam paper early, as I should have redone a question. But my friend was waiting for me outside the exam room (Su, Int, 24042014, p. 5).

She goes on to discuss in detail her very organised social calendar:

I attend parties or have catch-ups three times a week in the evening. I have a best friend, Xiaqing, who is a master's student at UOW studying international politics. We knew each other from UOW College. We meet very often . . . For example, I met her from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. last Wednesday. This Monday, we had lunch together, then after class at 3:30 p.m., we met again in the coffee shop at uni. We normally chat and complain about uni work (Su, Int, 20032014 p. 2).

Su clearly prioritises her social network over her study as she socialises with friends or attends parties three times a week but “only focus[es] on . . . study one month before the exams anyway” (Su, Int, 22052014, p. 16). Su is very strategic in how she organises her time commitments and practices in ways that work both for her social networking, her social needs and her study commitment (Reich & Hager, 2014).

Managing her study practices

Su manages her study practices with her goal clearly in mind and then manages her study practices accordingly. She holds together tensions between studying just to get a pass grade, her social networking and business orientation and integrating these areas require her to use considerable organising and managing skills:

I think to maintain a balance is the best. For the marks, if students get C, they want to get D. If they get D, they would want to get HD . . . For me, if I don't fail in the subject that is enough. There is no need to spend too much energy on study. I have many other things to do (Su, Int, 11042015, p. 3).

She explains that because her teleo-affective goal (Schatzki, 2002) is to get a pass, her study practices can be less pressured and she can maintain a balance and use her energy wisely:

I only need to finish the assignments; I do not push myself to keep revising work again and again till perfect (Su, Int, 161014, p. 3).

Su again draws attention to her temporal practices (Reich & Hager, 2014) in that she is clear about how much time to allocate to study. Her way of managing her time shows that she does not follow the institutional temporal structure (Orlikowski and Yates, 2002) or academic expectations to work hard during for the whole session. Instead, she organises her temporal structure to have periods in which she can relax along with periods of intensive study:

I do not spend time in study during the session anyway. My study method is not through accumulation of the whole session. I play a lot during the session . . . Before exams, I work very hard, especially for final exams, I spend about one month studying intensively (Su, Int, 09052015, p. 5, 22052014, p. 16).

Here again, Su strategically identifies or prioritises how to allocate her time and energy:

I only prepare for mid-session exams one to two days before the exam. Even if I have one week, I still do not start till one or two days before. I don't care too much about the mid-session exam, as it is only worth 15 per cent. But the final exam is worth 60 per cent, much more important (Int, Su, 24042014, p. 1).

She carefully works out her time allocation related to the proportion of the assessments required. By doing this, she is able to maintain her life balance between socialising, running a business and university studies.

Su uses the same practices as in China in how to prepare for final exams,

I do a very thorough revision before the final exam. I get used to handling exams in China in this way. I did not put too much time or effort in mid session exams as the marks are very low compared to the final (Su, Int, 20082014, p. 5).

Therefore, part of Su's strategy in Australia is to continue to use the effective learning practices acquired in China.

She shows that she has her eyes on the future even liking to detect what will be tested in the exams. It is important for her to know exactly what she will need to do to pass the final exams:

I don't read the whole book in preparing for final exams. I only try to understand what are the important parts . . . I like to do the tutorial questions and all of the questions are worked out by doing this, [by doing this] I can understand the direction and outline of the this subject, and then notice more detailed concepts in it (Su, Int, 09052015, p. 5–6).

She spends a lot of time doing tutorial questions for example as she thinks they will be important in order to pass the exams:

I use the last month of the session to understand everything I have learned in the session. I use the tutorial questions, lecture notes and textbooks. If there are any questions, I do not ask anyone but work out the questions by myself (Su, Int, 09052015, p. 7).

She identifies key study resources, such as lecture notes and tutorial questions to help her to focus on the important information.

Su is very clear about how she studies, even though she leaves the work to the end of the semester. One practice Su adopts in order to manage what she needs to know for the exams is summarising:

I like summarising. If the concepts are everywhere, I do not remember them. If there are too many concepts and there are no key points, it can be confusing for me (Su, Int, 09052015, p. 4).

She organises the concepts in order to reduce confusion. Therefore, her memorisation is not just rote learning, as she first works to understand the concepts, and then memorises them:

I start with summarising the key categories. After I know how to group the concepts, then I notice the details and those exceptional concepts that cannot be put into any category. The very special cases, most of time, at the end of the session and before the exam, I am very clear about the details, basic knowledge and the special cases (Su, Int, 09052015, p. 17).

Su uses practices such as grouping the concepts and identifying the exceptional concepts or special cases. By summarising, she can distinguish the “basic knowledge” from the “special cases” in the subject. Her practice of summarising also reflects her learning economy and her focus on efficiency and speed.

Her method of summarising shows a high level of reflection as it involves deep understanding of how to use concepts effectively. Su impresses me as a very capable and skillful student although at first she chooses just to pass her subjects, it is clear that she can achieve much higher than this.

Useful teaching practices

In line with her very strategic approach, Su also finds it important to identify what teaching practices and arrangements will be useful. She works out which classes to attend and which teachers can help her to learn quickly and effectively. She finds the CCAD leader’s teaching practices to be helpful. He helps her to eliminate many of the

things that she thinks are not important and to focus specifically on the relationships between concepts and answering exam questions:

He uses the diagrams to show their relationship and how they affect each other, and then he explains and links the concepts together to make the relationship clear. He is very good at helping us to see the links between the concepts. He is very good at linking the concepts . . . there are a lot things, which I have not thought about, after he discusses them, they become clear to me. What he says is very useful for my exams (Su, Int, 20082015, p. 7).

She considers that the leader's summary covers all the useful points in the subject that will be tested in the final exams.

She likes and connects with the lecturer, Sophie (mentioned earlier) whom she finds to be very organised:

Her lecture slides are very detailed; we follow each step, and go through all the slides. Then we are able to do the homework by ourselves, and we do not need to read the books at all (Su, Int, 22052014, p. 2).

She considers this teacher's practices as useful because when she follows her detailed procedures, she does not have to read books and is able to do the homework. Interestingly, whereas other students find that Sophie helps them in their learning, Su describes the teacher as helping her to save time and energy.

She feels that some teachers do not meet her needs, as they do not help her to save time and energy. Therefore, she loses interest in attending their lectures:

In the previous weeks, the lecturer could not finish the lecture slides. This week she can finish [the lecture slides], but she pushes the time very hard, (Su, Int, 22052014, p. 2).

Su believes that if the lecturer cannot finish her slides, then she is not well organised in her teaching. As a result, she is putting pressure on students due to her poor time management in the lecture:

What she taught does not link to the essay and tutorial homework. Also, in that subject we do not have homework at all. However, in another subject, there are

blanks in the lecture notes we need to fill in the lecture. There is lots of knowledge to learn, and be tested in the quizzes (Su, Int, 20082015, p. 2).

Su also identifies as poor lecturers those whose notes fail to present clear links between the lecture and the assessment requirements. She prefers subject lecture notes where there is a close relationship between what is being taught and what will be assessed. Su's focus is on how the lecture notes can help her to do the quizzes and assessments efficiently.

She also prefers lecturers to use examples to demonstrate how to apply the concepts:

I think she needs to give us a comprehensive example after one part. That is to say, to combine all these small examples together to make a bit more complicate example for us. Then there is more information for us to apply the concepts [and to understand the concepts thoroughly] (Su, Int, 22052014, p. 7).

Su is clear about what she needs from the teachers to help her to learn. She considers it important for academics to clearly understand how students learn in order for them to better support students' learning.

Revaluating and changing over time

She realises towards the end of this project that her way of learning may not quite work if she does not change. In the third session interviews, her attitude to studying changes:

What changed this session is that I studied harder than last session. I read my textbook a lot; I never read the textbooks before. There are too many words and too much content in the textbooks (Su, Int, 05062014, p. 6).

It was noticeable to me over the three semesters that Su changed her view of what her study meant to her and this was a result of participating in new practices. It seems that her participation in this research helped her to reflect on her study and its purpose in her life. She seems to have better integrated and related her understanding of the value of academic study with her social practices and her future as a businesswoman. Whereas in the beginning of her studies, she considers that there is a tension and contradiction between her study practices and social practices, by the end of the project, she realises they are not contradictory and can be complementary. It is

interesting that after I completed data collection, I met Su in the library by chance. When we started to talk, she told me that she considers her participation in the research to be beneficial for her:

Because of participating in this research, I reflect on my study and life here in Australia more than before... and after I get to know you and the other students, I find I reflect on myself a lot when you interview me. I get clear about my aim and why I came to here to study, I enjoy my study more than before for sure, it is a surprise for me as well (Int, Su 05062014, p. 15).

I noted that:

I [was] very happy to meet Su in the library today. She was very warm and keen to express her thanks for participating this research. She said she missed the interviews with me and she did not realise how much fun she had in participating in this research and it was nice she was listened to all the time. She said she has changed a lot. It was nice to hear her say she has found herself now and she likes to study more than before (Reflective notes, 05062014).

She changed during her learning journey and later told me proudly that she had graduated with distinction!

Su is clear about her learning goals and her desire to be a businesswoman. This clarity about the future helps her to adapt to the new learning environment. She organises her time and study so as to achieve this goal. She is a capable and strategic learner who changes during the course of her studies and has been shaped by her experience in the new environment. Su puts things together, such as former organising practices in China, meeting with friends, networking with business colleagues, going to parties, sharing meals and drinking coffee, summarising, catagorising, maintaining a balanced life, cramming for exams.

Summary: students putting things together to learn

In this chapter, I discussed how the five students put things together as they “ran the course” through institutional arrangements with different material settings and how they used different practices to help them along the way. At the beginning of the chapter, I introduced a diagram (Figure 2) to help illustrate and map the curriculum.

The diagram set the idealised course from semester to semester showing the various contexts that were available to students. Learning could be considered to occur as students accumulate knowledge during their journey along the course. There was supposed to be a sequential and ordered structure to their learning. However, the stories of each student presented in this chapter demonstrated a very different view of how learning occurs. Students had their own unique ways of putting things together and share many commonalities during their learning journey.

The chapter made students' practices more evident and the six threads of practices, knowing in practice, sociomaterial, embodied, relational, temporal and emergent are each visible in different ways and different times in the students' journeys. The practices used by the students are often correlatively connected laterally or horizontally and not logically. Yinyang helps to illuminate the complex and even contradictory relationships within and between the practices that are not fixed, but continually moving and one thing or practice can change and become over time into another. For example, Haitao's aversion for studying business became pleasurable as he shared study practices with his girlfriend. Su, similarly changed as she joined new practices that encouraged her to reflect on her life and learning and see the possibilities to change contradictions to complementarities.

Students linked different practices together in quite complex ways to help them adapt to their new learning environment. It was sometimes impossible to make these complex relations distinct but this only reflects the actual complexity of student life. It could be a mystery to outsiders observing how students made links and connections between seemingly unconnected experiences and practices. However, for the students, it was clear what worked and what did not. I have shown how each student organised their learning practices in different ways based on their unique background, the affordances provided by different material settings (Schatzki 2002), their 'dispositions' and their personal preferences (Hager and Hodkinson, 2009). The students' actual learning was often elusive, and could sometimes only be recognised retrospectively or perhaps when they were engaged with an excellent teacher such as Sophie, the Korean teacher mentioned by the students.

Students all had very different characteristics and very different personal journeys (Gu 2009), but they were also entangled with changing practices and arrangements. For example, Ting was highly motivated to study alone and used reflective practices to constantly think about her own learning. Her continuing relationship with her parents also included their mentoring her in her studies. Ting's family relationship and practices were entangled with her study practices as was evident in phone calls to her parents that included mentoring on how to conduct herself in a group discussion in a tutorial. By contrast, Haitao, because of his unfilled passion for IT and technology, had a different orientation and preferred a different pace and approach to study. His strong social ties and networks served him well and his study practices became inseparable from his relationship with his girlfriend and their social and study practices as they lived, worked and studied together in various arrangements. Students' ways of putting things together was suggestive of what Hall and Ames (1985) described in Chapter three, *Han* or *correlative thinking*. Correlative language is characterised by process and vagueness and is contrasted with causal language that is characterised by logical order and clear patterns.

The social, family and educational practices the students had previously learned in China continued to have a significant influence (Gu 2009) on their practices in Australia, including on the practices that led to learning. For example, the influence of institutional and academic life in Chuchu's childhood orientated her toward future study at a university. Her ability to adapt and acquire new practices was inseparable from the practices she had already learned while growing up with her professor parents in a university in China. For Lin, the need to connect with his teachers stemmed from his understanding of what a good teacher should do and be. In China, he felt connected when a teacher acted as a teacher it enabled him to be a student. In Australia, this expectation and practice needed to be reshaped in light of different teaching practices. Su's father continued to shape how she conducted her life in Australia in very specific ways. Her desire to be a businesswoman was formed when she was in China and influenced by discussions and observations of her father's business practices.

In demonstrating the continuing influence of social, family and educational practices learned in China, I have shown that students' learning is not fully visible when using

a retrospective snapshot, but can only be made clear by examining the ongoing performance and becoming of practices. Location (*wei* 位) and time (*shi* 时) are important when students come to a foreign learning environment such as Australia, where they face many differences and contradictions. Students are positioned in time and space in between two different education systems. Some aspects are contradictory. The transmission model in China and the constructivist approach that is said to prevail in Australian higher education is one example as are the different practices students use in order to respond to different institutional and academic arrangements and practices in these two countries.

The analysis in this chapter demonstrated how students put things together in unique ways to help them adapt to their new learning environment. However, several common themes and main points have emerged that were similar for each of students. First, students' previous study, social, cultural and family influences were evident in their practices in the new context. Whilst Wu terms this student developing a "context-orientated learning attitude" that requires them to "select appropriate learning techniques" for different contexts, this analysis showed that more is involved than attitude as students learn and combine doings, sayings and relatings in distinctive ways—they put things together to learn. In the following chapter, I will explain and unpack these practices in more detail. Second, the new institutional arrangements and teaching practices have shaped the students' social and studying practices. As discussed in Chapter Three, social life consists of interrelated webs of changing practices, such as students' individual study practices, institutional and teaching practices, and social and cultural practices. As a result, it is difficult to distinguish individual practices. While the analysis in this chapter has attempted to identify some discrete practices, it is not possible to clearly separate them from one another.

Finally, students face a number of tensions and contradictions. There is a tension between the educational systems in China and Australia that is evident in the students' experiences and their need to move between the two. Tension also exists as to how and where learning happens. From the institutional and academic view, learning is thought to occur more often in the pedagogical activities in lectures, tutorial and workshops as well as in different assessments. Formal teaching activities therefore

emphasise the facilitation of teaching and learning in these contexts. However, student's put things together through the performance of a variety of practices and learning is more of a process of becoming that takes place in their lives in and out of the classroom. Finally, there is always a tension between the history and the present for each student as students constantly change to survive and maintain a sense of balance. In the following discussion chapter, I draw on the practice-based approach to show more clearly how student learning is a process of becoming and that it occurs through their participation in specific types of practices.

CHAPTER 5

CHINESE STUDENTS' LEARNING AS BECOMING

DISCUSSION

CHAPTER 5: CHINESE STUDENTS' LEARNING AS BECOMING

There is not always a clear endpoint to learning, though sometimes, of course, either the learner or others may be explicitly concerned with one . . . the process of learning as becoming was already well underway before the course started...This process of living also entails learning as becoming: in the family, the local community, in leisure. Even when a person sees their educational learning as separate from the other parts of their life, strong influences remain (Hager and Hodkinson 2009, p. 633).

Chapter four presented the data analysis zooming in on students' experiences and the ways students put things together as they undertook their studies. In this chapter, I aim to address the research questions listed as: how does a practice approach help in understanding Chinese business students' learning in undergraduate studies in an Australian university? How is Chinese students' learning shaped by institutional practices in an Australian university? In addressing the questions, I draw on a practice-based approach discussed in Chapter three to identify how students' learning can be usefully understood as they participate in practices and material arrangements. In viewing learning as becoming, this chapter aims to move beyond the idea of students' learning as a thing or product. In Chapter Two, I described learning as an ongoing, dynamic process of change involving the whole person and their experiences in their social and material context. The students live and learn in a tangled web of practices and their learning is "in a process of ongoing change . . . inherently part of and shaped by its context" (Hager and Hodkinson, 2009 p. 631). Learning is part of students' becoming and occurs through their everyday performance of practices that are themselves situated in time and space (Gherardi, 2009a; Hager & Hodkinson, 2009, 2011). Students have different reasons for and orientations toward studying and these influence how students put things together in their studies (Gu 2009). Generally speaking, two of the students I followed in this research were passionate about learning and regarded studying business as an end in itself. Their study practices reflected this passion and commitment. The other students had different passions and commitments. Their primary goal in studying business was to achieve certification and this led them to develop different study practices.

In order to analyse further the relationship of practices to learning, in this chapter I discuss what I term *study* and *sociocultural* practices and their arrangements. I focus on these practices and their relationship to one another. I examine closely how students' performance of practices changes over time and how learning might be occurring. There are challenges in trying to make these practices discrete and represent them fully as their individual performance and the reasons for their performance can mean that one practice changes into another. In Chapter Three, I introduced the concept of Yinyang to help explain the complex and at times contradictory relationships within and between practices and their arrangements. In discussing Yinyang in relation to practices, I proposed that it is inclusive of, holds together and exceeds Reich and Hager's (2014) six threads of practice. I described Yinyang's multiple features, such as, contradiction, interdependence, mutual inclusion, interaction, complementary, and change (Wang, 2012).

This chapter has four main sections. In the first section, I discuss two types of practices commonly used by students in their learning: I term these *study* and *sociocultural* practices respectively. I then examine study practices more closely using two examples: *memorising* and *translating* and show the messy relationship between them and the seeming contradictions that arise as students perform these practices. I then discuss sociocultural practices in detail, using three examples that I term, *socialising with peers*, *practices of Junzi* and *filial practices*. Finally, I turn to the example of CCAD with its hybrid pedagogy to illustrate a different way of bundling study, sociocultural and pedagogical practices. The second major section of the chapter extends the discussion of learning as becoming by examining how students adapt and adopt various practices. They are shown to discontinue, continue and acquire new practices. The third major section draws the chapter together and highlights how the practice-based approach developed in this chapter that includes the notion of Yinyang helps explain the complexities of students' performance in the process of learning as becoming.

Two practices that shape students' learning

The analysis in Chapter Four zoomed in on how students use many different practices and put things together in their learning. In this chapter, I will zoom out to discuss in

more detail the relationship between different practices and how they facilitate students' learning (Nicolini 2013). Schatzki (2006) says that practices are bundles of related activities and arrangements that are used in the performance of the social order. In this study, I found that institutional, pedagogical, social and cultural practices are bundled together. As discussed in Chapter One, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to articulate all the ways in which practices might be implicated in students' learning. Accordingly, in this chapter I focus on two categories of practices that make learning visible: *study practices* and *sociocultural practices*. In zooming out, I will focus on these clusters of practices, and how they change, move, and are entangled.

Study practices

Study practices have study as their specific end. Study practices of memorising and translating are two of the ways that learning becomes visible. Memorisation and language issues that relate to translation were frequently mentioned by the students in this study and have been identified in the literature as areas of central concern in studies of Chinese students' learning.

Memorising practices?

The subjects studied by the business students in this study include finance, accounting and economics. These subjects typically require students to remember and use concepts as well as numbers and formulae. Memorisation is associated with this type of studying. In the data analysis, it is evident that the students all used memorising but not always in the same way. They used different approaches in their study as they put things together in different ways.

In the review of the literature in Chapter Two, memorisation was discussed as a key area of focus for research seeking to understand aspects of how Chinese students learn (Ballard & Clanchy, 1984; Ballard & Clanchy, 1997; Murphy, 1987; Ryan, 2010b; Samuelowicz, 1987). It was shown to be a central component of the Chinese education system and widely used by students who come to the West (Jiang & Smith, 2009). As discussed in Chapter Two, the view that memorisation is rote learning has been refuted on a number of grounds. First, it has been shown that students use memorisation as a purposeful learning strategy (Jiang & Smith, 2009). Second,

memorisation and understanding have been shown not to be mutually exclusive categories (Mathias et al., 2013). Third, McMahon (2011) demonstrated that memorisation can lead to “deep learning”. Therefore, it is now widely accepted that rather than using an oversimplified view of memorisation as rote learning, Chinese learning styles are usefully viewed as more subtle and complex than they may first appear. While this research is very useful in correcting earlier misconceptions, none of these approaches has identified the underlying assumption of learning used in this view of memorisation, namely, the acquisition or transfer metaphor. Nor have they looked at memorisation as a series of related practices. In this section, I will present a close examination of students’ doings, sayings and relatings in particular arrangements as they memorise drawing on central concepts from practice theorists (Gherardi, 2009a; Reich & Hager, 2014; Schatzki, 2006; Nicolini 2013) and the notion of Yinyang (Wang 2012). However, it is worth noting that this approach of separating practices has some limitations, by breaking practices into component pieces, their relationality and entanglement may be overlooked.

In students’ use of memorising¹⁹ in this study, several features become clear. It is evident when they are memorising, they put together different types of activities and materials and use their bodies in different ways (Reich & Hager, 2014). According to Schatzki, small actions or activities are combined together routinely in practices. However, Nicolini (2013) says practices are “complex wholes composed of other ‘smaller’ elements... configurations of actions” (p. 10). A practice may involve some activities more than others depending on its purpose, the material setting in which it takes place and the history and capability of the individual performer. The relationships between practices form a changing web or bundle.

In the following section, I discuss the way in which the students in this study approached memorisation. Three component practices are shown to be involved in the more complex practice of memorising: repetitive writing, reflecting and summarising.

¹⁹ As shown in the literature, memorisation has been used to explain Chinese students’ learning. In this research, I use the term “memorising” as a verb to highlight the performance of memorising as a practice instead of its reification in the noun “memorisation”.

Repetitive writing

When memorising, many students used repetitive writing and thinking aloud at the same time. I frequently observed that the students relied on particular materials and arrangements when memorising. Some students wrote down key words repeatedly in order to remember them. For example, Chuchu showed me ten pages of hand written notes wherein definitions and key concepts were repeated over and over:

The writing was not clearly printed, was messy and difficult for me to understand, there were many loose sheets of paper and some key words were repeated to indicate their importance, it is clear she has spent a lot of time repetitively writing key concepts and definitions (Chuchu, reflective notes, 27052015).

On another occasion she used repetitive hand writing with a pen and paper while softly speaking phrases over and over to help her concentrate her thoughts while she memorised accounting concepts. Her actions and the affordance of materials such as pens, papers and desks were all used together with her thinking processes as she practised memorising. As Nicolini (2013) says, “objects, in fact, both make practices durable and connect practices with each other across space and time” (p. 4). Chuchu’s use of pens, papers and desks was inseparable from her performance of the practice. But it could also be said that the objects, pens, papers and desks have agency, that is, that they actively “participate in the accomplishment of the practice” (Nicolini, 2013, p. 4). The writing practice she learned as a child is inscribed in her body and associated with memorising. Her childhood orientation to perform well under the watchful eyes of her professor parents in the university environment may also have shaped her performance of these practices. Memorising is a sociomaterial practice (Orlikowski, 2007) that relies on relational connections between material entities and habitual knowing (Reich and Hager 2014). Chinese children are taught to use hand writing, speaking aloud and thinking at the same time. Chuchu uses all of these aspects to make the practice possible.

Chuchu wrote accounting concepts from her lecture notes on a piece of paper at least five times very quickly, as she did not try to make it tidy and clear. She was concentrating on the writing intensively from the way she held her pen and kept checking the lecture notes and paper she wrote on. From time to time, I heard her

murmuring the words she was writing to help her to memorise (Field notes, 05212014, p. 3).

For Chuchu, memorising involved the repetitive performance of a web of inter-related activities: reading-thinking-writing-repeating-remembering. Each of these activities is inseparable from and entangled with the others. For Chuchu, remembering relies on repeating, writing, thinking and reading, and so on. Their use is interdependent and complementary.

Reflecting

A second practice used by students in their memorising is reflecting and this also helps make learning visible in different ways and at different times. Reflecting may be viewed as a series of practices used by students as a way of structuring their thinking and writing (Sykes and Dean, 2012). Reflection²⁰ not only helps them clarify their understanding but also assists them to make judgments about what to do and when. During my fieldwork, I noticed that students used reflection in different ways including when memorising.

Chuchu told me during an interview that she reflects on what she needs to know and therefore uses different memorising practices in different situations. She uses several aspects of reflection depending on what she needs to do and what she is required to remember in different situations. Sometimes, she uses repetitive writing first to try to memorise the concepts, especially if she is working to a time limit such as when preparing for exams. At other times, she reflected on the concepts later in order to understand them:

Some concepts are hard to understand, so I do not bother to understand, but I will try to remember them. Sometimes because the time for [midsession] exam preparation is very limited, I will remember it first, then try to understand the meaning later (for the final exam) (Chuchu, Int, 10042014, p. 3).

Reflection enabled her to decide whether to memorise the concepts first, and then understand them for final exams later on.

²⁰ Reflection is part of Confucian pedagogy as discussed in Chapter Two and is important part of many Western pedagogies. For a detailed discussion, see the work of Ryan (2012) and Sykes and Dean (2012).

However, reflecting and memorising cannot be reduced to merely cognitive processes (Fenwick, 2012b; Sykes & Dean, 2012). For example, when reflecting as part of her memorising, Ting used bodily positioning, writing, highlighting, circling, reading and ordering. She used different colored pens to highlight the key words on the lecture notes. By reflecting on the lecture notes, she made sense of the lecturers' ordering of the concepts such that they became intelligible to her. I observed:

She concentrated very hard by bending down her head closely to the desk. Ting wrote down the key words from lecture notes and highlighted them with different colors, and she also circled them again and again to show her emphasis on the key words. She read the lecture slides and ordered them with 1, 2, 3... in her way after her reflection of the concepts (Ting, observation notes, 12082015).

I confirmed this after the observations with Ting,

I read the lecture slides but I also tried to find my way of understanding how they are related to each other, and then I reorder them and highlight with different colors in order to memorise them (Ting, Int, 12082015, p. 3).

The practices of reflecting and memorising used by the students were inseparable. Reflecting was used to identify what they needed to focus on and remember: one focus was on remembering or memorising facts, the other was on understanding concepts, then remembering or memorising them. Students reflect on whether their memorising is effective. They think about what work they need to do in order to organise what to learn. They may then decide how to organise their memorising practices. Similarly, it is in line with Confucius's ideas of using reflection when discussing how thinking and learning are complementary and work together. "Learning without thinking is a vain effort. Thinking without learning is a dangerous effort" (Analects, 2: 15, trans. 2000).

From this analysis, it is evident that, as others have already shown (Kember, 2000; Tan, 2011; Tavakol & Dennick, 2010), memorising and reflecting may be considered as complementary practices. Entwistle and Entwistle (2003) discuss the interplay of memorising and reflecting and emphasise that, because of the complexity of these two concepts, they are difficult to detach from one another.

However, in this study, my attention was drawn to the importance of students' reflective practices in deciding what and how to use different memorising practices.

Summarising

A third practice used by students to memorise was summarising. The relationship between summarising and memorising is complex and overlapping. Summarising was used by a number of students to reconceptualise the theories or concepts they had learned and reorganise and unpack them into key points to make them easier to remember. Su explained why she likes to use summarising:

I like summarising. If the concepts are cluttered, I will not remember them. If there are too many concepts and there are no key points, it can be confusing for me . . . I tried to work out my way of understanding the concepts, then work out responses to the tutorial questions, and then summarise the methods to work on certain type of questions by myself (Su, Int, 09052015, p. 4).

By summarising, first, she categorised the concepts into key points. Second, she reinterpreted the key concepts and summarised her methods in order to answer the questions. She was then able to remember and use the key concepts and methods to answer the questions. Su's summaries were not what are normally called summaries. Rather, they were more her way of grouping the concepts as she tried to distinguish the different methods of work. She uses summarising and reflecting together:

I will look for the key points in this chapter firstly, if the exam questions are calculation questions. I would summarise different types of calculation methods to identify which one is likely to be tested for 10 marks (Su, Int, 09052015, p. 4).

Summarising would easily change into reflecting as she considered the important points to include in her summaries.

In drawing this section on memorising together, a number of key points become clear. When memorising, students are located within material arrangements (Schatzki, 2002). For example, pens, paper, desks, computers and possibly other students and or staff all make possible the performance of memorising (Reich & Hager, 2014).

Memorising, as discussed in the data selections above, is learnt by students but influenced historically by former teachers, parents, other students and friends, in primary and high school and at university. Students' memorising encompasses different types of relations (Reich & Hager, 2014) including, the temporal influences of past practices learned in China on current performances, and the social and material arrangements. Each new repetition of the practice of memorising can bring new or emergent understandings of how to memorise. The ways in which students memorise are complex and constantly becoming (Hager & Hodgkinson, 2009, 2011; Reich & Hager, 2014).

In relation to students knowing how to improve their performance of memorising, Ting said that her performance of memorising improved as her teacher at school timed and tested her memorising. Her knowing and learning occurred in the fluent performance of the practice (Reich & Hager, 2014).

I am good at remembering stuff quickly...My teacher normally tests us randomly in reciting some articles from the textbook (Ting, Int, 28032014, p.5).

By repeating the same practices, competence is attained, as Ting says above. Students gradually learn and improve their memorisation skills by performing activities, such as repeating, writing and rehearsal. Students “do” memorisation, and knowing and learning are inseparable from the practice of these activities (Reich and Hager 2014).

In summary, memorising comprises repetitive writing, reflecting and summarising. However, the relationship is complex, and even contradictory. As I have shown, sometimes when students memorise, they are reflecting and not thinking of memorising. One practice changes into another. When summarising, students use reflecting and memorising. The practices are mutually inclusive, interdependent and complementary.

Translating: overcoming the "hurdle of language":

A second important study practice used by students is what I term *translating*. I use this term to denote a range of language practices that require students to find equivalent words, structures or meanings for the new English words and concepts used in their studies. As discussed in Chapter Two, Chinese students studying in the

West, like many international students, have to study in English, their second language. This often poses a huge challenge. Chinese students' English language competence raises complex problems such as difficulties understanding lectures in terms of vocabulary and speed, especially with those teachers who speak too fast or give too little input (Andrade, 2006; Ramsay, Barker & Jone, 1999). Their language competence may also be affected by second language anxiety within the classroom (Sawir, 2005; Woodrow, 2006). Problems relating to translating are often most visible for newly arrived students. At UOW, even though all the students have passed an IELTS exam, or passed the College language course, English for Academic Purposes²¹ (UOW, 2016b), prior to commencing their studies, this does not guarantee that they are fluent in spoken and written English. Chinese language, culture and pedagogy have shaped their thinking and their linguistic practices (Sawir, 2005). Students may still think in their mother language. Therefore translating becomes an essential study practice. For example, Chuchu said, "I think in Chinese, but I memorise the concepts in English" (Chuchu, Int, 04042014, p. 2).

Like memorising, translating has often been oversimplified. A practice-based perspective on translation highlights the inter-related activities, practices and arrangements that comprise it and recognises that these may change in each performance. In translating meanings and understandings, students use different practices as they relate the meaning of Chinese characters to the equivalent English words both in pronunciation and written forms. For example, Ting described her struggles to understand the concepts using English, but explains that she can understand and express concepts easily in Chinese. She clearly identified the problems she faces. She shows how to develop a clear understanding of the concepts and express them in Chinese but she has only a limited understanding of them in English.

If I use Chinese it is very smooth, I can express clearly what I want to say. But when everything changes to English, I do not know how to express it. It gets hard when I need to link the theory to the case. I do not know how (Ting, Int, 16102013 p. 4).

²¹ EAP: English for Academic Purposes, is designed for students who want to develop the foundations for English for studying in Tertiary programs. The program involves three modules of study at intermediate level: Academic Skills 1, 2, and 3.

Similarly, another student described how she struggled to use English to express deeper or nuanced meanings in discussions with local students. The two languages have a different syntax and a different way of structuring ideas. Students are constantly required to reorder their unconscious Chinese way of ordering and structuring of language into an English equivalent:

I can only understand the surface meaning of the words if I ask questions of local students. The way of communicating is different from the Chinese way . . . For example, the order might be different, the English order is 12345, Chinese order might be 15324. So it makes understanding harder as well (Su, Int, 20082014, p. 7).

Students identified different ways of overcoming what one student described as the “hurdle of language”. By using a Chinese version of a law textbook, Lin was able read the translated concepts into his own language,

It is very helpful as this book is written in Chinese, I can overcome the hurdle of language to understand the logic of commercial law. I do not think it is waste of time to read two books for this subject as it can clarify the concepts for me (Lin, Int, 14082014, p. 10).

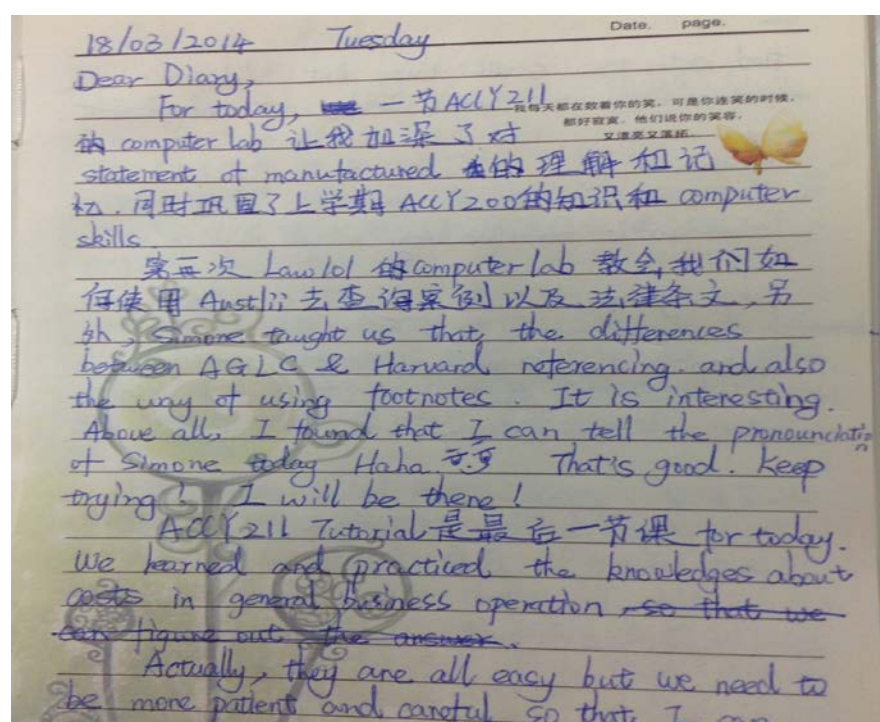
Similarly, Ting used two languages at the same time in her essay writing. First, her mum helped her to find Chinese articles (like a research assistant!) Ting read the articles in Chinese to try and got some understanding of difficult topics. Then, once she became familiar with the concepts in Chinese she was able to read and understand the concepts in the English textbook and lecture notes and she can then use the English words to write the essays.

I cannot read the Chinese articles when I write essays, but I found it was useful to read some Chinese articles to get some ideas first. Sometimes my mum helped to search some Chinese articles if I told her what topics I need. Then I will scan through the articles she has found for me. In the actual writing, I have to read English articles, and then I read textbook these resources help me to clear my thought. When I do not know how to write, I check lecture notes for ideas as well (Ting, Int, 16102013, p. 3).

She switched between these two languages in her writing. She said, “if I do not

know the English words, I use Chinese . . . and then I change to English again . . .” (Ting, Int, 2003/2014, p. 3). She explained to me that the ordering of the translating of first, understanding and then, writing, helped her overcome the language barriers. Interestingly, her love of reflecting on her study practice was again made clear in this excerpt (Figure 2) that shows her writing to herself in a humorous way encouraging her to keep studying.

Figure 5. Example from Ting's Study Journal



However, translation practices are inter-related and entangled and may even have contradictory results. While it may be useful for her to use translating as a study practice, it might also impede her understanding in English. The more she practises English, the more it can help her to become fluent in English. She may eventually move from translating to using English directly. Becoming fluent in English makes translating increasingly redundant. This has certainly been my experience after living in Australia and communicating in English for about 13 years. As the students become more skilled in moving in between these two languages they eventually are able to re-organise their concepts more fluently in English.

Some translating practices, such as the use of IT mediated translating tools, have more of a sociomaterial element. One student explained how she used translating in different settings and arrangements, including when she used certain software to translate English concepts to Chinese words. For example, she discussed the sequence of when and how to use computer translating software and when to use mobile phone software.

For some difficult concepts in the lecture notes, I do not understand the explanation in English. If I am at home, I use Google translation with my computer to search for the explanation in Chinese to understand the concepts first as it gives me detailed information. If I am in the lecture, I use my mobile translating software: You Dao as it is easier and quicker. Then I will use my own words in English to explain this concept rather using the lecturer's explanation on lecture notes, as it is easy to memorise. This can help me in the exams, as I need to answer the questions in English in the exams (Chuchu, Int, 2803201415, p. 3, 15032015, p. 1).

Chuchu explained her translating practices and their dependence on locations in particular arrangements. She uses Google translation or You Dao, translation software to give her equivalent words in Chinese to the ones she does not understand. Google and You Dao act as distributed parts of her translating practice. Students also told me how they often involve another step if they do not understand the accounting terms given by the software or Google in Chinese. They first search the definition of the accounting terms in Chinese and then use Google to understand the meaning in Chinese.

Material arrangements participate in and shape practices of translating. Students rely on different material arrangement depending on the purpose of the translating. In the above selections, the arrangements include materials, such as essays, lecture notes, Chinese textbooks and articles, pens, study journals, iPhones, computer software and dictionaries. These material objects make translation practices possible. The study practices of memorising and translating were discussed in the literature review as being contested areas of Chinese students' learning. Unpacking these practices in detail makes the practice of learning visible. Even though the learning is hard to pinpoint in the practices of memorising and translating, the students' comments and

my observations suggest some of the ways in which learning occurs through these study practices. When students perform their study practices, whether memorising or translating, they become able to write and explain concepts in English and answer questions. This helps them to prepare summaries of the materials covered in class, write essays and sit exams. At the same time, they become more skilled in these practices. The discussion of the data selections also shows the entanglement of translating and memorising both with each other and with their material context (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; Fenwick, 2010; Reich & Hager, 2014). Translating cannot be achieved without memorising and memorising cannot be achieved without translating. They are included in one another, and rely upon one another for their performance. At the same time, as is suggested in the case of Ting, the practices contain contradictions. Theories of Yinyang encapsulate the complex and dynamic relationships of contradiction, mutual inclusion, interdependence and how one becomes the other in Chinese students' study practices.

Sociocultural practices

A second category of student practice that is useful in highlighting learning, I term, *socio-cultural practices*. Many cross-cultural studies on international students have discussed the importance of the sociocultural or sociohistorical settings for international students' learning (Durkin, 2011b; Edwards et al., 2007; Gu et al., 2010; Ryan, 2011a; Tian & Lowe, 2013; Turner, 2013; Wu, 2015). What I term sociocultural practices are social and/or cultural practices that students may become involved with, usually with others, that carry social, cultural and historical norms and meanings within particular contexts.

I identified three socio-cultural practices used by students in this study. First, *filial practices*, are those practices that relate to students' relationship with their parents. These practices stem from the Confucian background that is embedded in students' attitudes and approaches to learning. Second, *socialising with other Chinese students* including structured and unstructured social practices. By *unstructured social practices*, I mean the practices that students use in their informal relationships with their peers. By *structured social practices*, I mean planned and organised social meetings, events and arrangements. Third, *teacher - student relationships*, by which I

mean students' formal and informal interactions with their teachers. In this section, I present some examples of these three types of sociocultural practices to illustrate their role in students' learning.

Influence of filial respect on students' practices

There is clear evidence in the data from each of the students of strong parental influence. Students' practices of respect to their parents are rooted in the concept of filial piety that shapes their attitude and approach. For example, parental responsibility for children's education is well known and includes funding their children's education. Their parents funded all the students in this research while they studied in Australia and each of them related the importance of their parents' support in continuing in their studies. It is evident from the data analysis that parents have a powerful influence on each of the students in different ways. Ting has a very close relationship with her parents and, as I have shown earlier, it takes multiple forms in practices in which her parents take up different but interdependent roles, such as, mentor, teacher, research assistant, counselor and parent.

Another aspect is evident in Chinese parents' educational expectations and control over decisions regarding their children's future. For example, Su did not make the decision to come to Australia by herself, she came because, "dad wanted to send me to study here". Nevertheless, these practices can be problematic as the parents committed relationship with their children, expressed through the payment of study fees for example, strengthens students' sense of obligation to their parents and can implicitly drive the students' whole decision making process while at university. Students often feel obligated to do well, pass exams and obtain their degree on time because of the cost of the studies to their parents. Therefore, some students make every attempt to finish their degree as quickly as possible so as to please their parents. This orientation to certification as the goal of their studies can strongly shape students' practices and can contradict institutional practices. As was discussed in Chapter Four, in numerous examples, students used practices such as selective negligence strategically. Haitao even copied for his tutorial work in order to complete it. He did not consider his own learning or the fact that his actions were at odds with the university's assessment policy of only submitting your own work for individual

assessments. Ironically, this could result in his having to repeat the subject. However, his priority was linked to parental obligations that were very powerful for him.

Socialising with Chinese peers

It is evident in the data that Chinese students share many commonalities as they join the new community. As well as language and cultural differences they face many difficulties and the need for collaboration draws them together formally and informally. Even though each of the students had clear strategic orientations about their individual approach to study and future goals, they shared collaboratively as peers in their social and study interactions. I discuss socialising with peers in the following two sub-sections: unstructured social practices and structured social practices.

Unstructured social practices

One example of unstructured social practices is those random or serendipitous meetings where learning is achieved through socialising and talking with friends. This learning may occur both at the level of understanding the content of a subject as well as how students effectively use formative practices. For example, learning may occur unexpectedly while socialising. On one occasion I noted in my reflective journal:

I was supposed to meet Ting in the library for an interview. On the way to the consultation room, we came across Chuchu who was studying in the library. They started to discuss an assessment due in two days. Chuchu had completed her assignments a week earlier as she usually did, but Ting had only just started it as she was busy with another assessment. Ting asked how Chuchu did her assignment, and what her argument was and how she used the resources the teacher suggested . . . after they talked, Ting said thanks to Chuchu and said the talk was very useful for her (Field notes, 23042014).

The students meet in the library by chance and did not plan to discuss learning, but when they did meet, they started to discuss how to write an assignment. In this event, Ting and Chuchu discussed the process and content of how to develop an argument. For Ting, learning occurred as Chuchu helped her better understand how to use “resources the teacher suggested”. For Chuchu, articulating the concepts and process reinforced her understanding. The whole incident was unplanned, and it seems that

learning occurred unexpectedly through two friends talking. This is an example of how learning can occur in the possibly frequent meetings between students that occur on campus or in a shopping center where, by talking with each other.

The emergence of learning in social events points to the importance of students developing peer relationships and friendships to support them in their learning (Montgomery & McDowell, 2009). Unstructured practices such as socialising with friends also support students emotionally and provide them with a sense of belonging. For students studying in a new environment, developing a sense of belonging can be crucial (Sawir et al., 2008). Although it is not necessarily directly linked to students' learning, it helps students to feel secure, heard, understood and cared for. This sense of belonging can create connections that nurture a propensity for learning (Keevers & Abuoduha, 2012).

Structured social practices

As the literature shows, students often feel anonymous in an unfamiliar crowd and experience the context as isolating and distancing, especially in large classes in foreign universities (Mann, 2001; Hockings, 2011; Keevers & Abuoduha, 2012). As discussed in Chapter Four, many students expressed their feelings of exclusion and isolation. Lin wanted to connect with his peers and teachers and to be recognised or made visible as a student. Chuchu explained to me how, by joining a social club and getting to know the members in the student association, she received help in answering questions. In talking about members of the social club (Group discussion, 09042014, pp. 4–5), Chuchu felt a sense of belonging through her social network. As Thomas (2002) and Zepke (2013) point out, when students feel a sense of belonging they feel recognised as members of a group.

Learning may occur when students have social interactions by joining a more structured social network. It may also occur through sharing accommodation, the second bundle of structured social practices for Chinese students I discuss here (Montgomery & McDowell, 2009). Sharing accommodation opens the opportunity for links to develop between students that support shared study practices and their inclusion in a community of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991). Living with other students in shared accommodation may not appear to have a direct relationship with

study. However, as in the example above, learning may occur as students talk and discuss things in the course of their daily lives making everyday life inseparable from study. Lin and Haitao mentioned the benefits of sharing accommodation and its influence on their study practices. Haitao said:

I have changed a lot because of my girlfriend. We live together, we study together all the time, she is very positive and keen to learn, sometimes I do not really want to study, but when I see her reading, I feel pressure and will study as well (Haitao, Int, 11042014, 30052014).

For Haitao and his girlfriend, their intimate relationship, study practices, domestic everyday practices, social and cultural practices are all entangled. One practice can quickly become another or may contain many others.

Lin also shared accommodation, but his relationship with his roommate was different. His roommate was able to help him both in his studies as he was in his second year and was willing to share knowledge about his practices, experience and study materials:

I share a unit with a friend is in second year, he helps me a lot in my study. Sometimes we have a chat, then we will discuss how to study some difficult subjects, he also loans me some study materials from his previous study . . . we also shop together and arrange study time together (Lin, Int, 17042014, p. 2)

Sharing accommodation sets up the possibility of learning from each other. Study life becomes entangled with daily life activities such as shopping, eating, playing sports, going out, washing clothes and watching movies. Learning may emerge unexpectedly through the process of non-linear dynamics nested systems and interaction among diverse phenomena (Fenwick, 2012b, p. 740).

Structured social networks can also provide new opportunities for students. Students discussed and I observed how by joining a social club, participating in CCAD and sharing accommodation, students became connected with other students through familiar socio-cultural practices (Montgomery & McDowell, 2009). By joining in with the community, opportunities open for them to talk with other students about their studies and their everyday experience at university. Through both structured and

unstructured social practices, the process of learning as becoming is evident as students' interact in different contexts and develop a sense of belonging that helps them to adapt to their new environment. Students talked about the many different ways that socialising helped them in their learning.

Junzi

Another important sociocultural practice that carries over from students' previous education in China is especially important I identified from the data are the practices that students use in relating to teachers. It became clear to me in this study that students had many different types of relationships with teachers, both formal and informal that were more or less useful for their learning. For example, lecturers and tutors relate to the student groups in class, students' consult with teachers in their offices, and many other informal meetings and interactions occur. However, I noticed in particular that for all the participant students the Confucian understanding of the relationship between teacher and student encapsulated in the aphorism, "be a teacher, and be a student", continued to be very important. The students automatically used respectful practices with their teachers even though sometimes they were hard to observe and subtle. Teachers do not need to work to gain the respect from the students as they are assumed as Junzi. As discussed in Chapter two, the notion of Junzi, involves students showing their respect for teachers and considering them as role models by identifying teachers as Junzi (a superior person).

For Haitao, even though he studied for certification and just get through, in his interviews and my observations, he maintained deep respect for all his teachers including me as his former teacher. In my reflective notes I noted,

Haitao struggled to answer my questions even though I used different ways to ask him about his study. He was still not sure how to articulate how he studied. He felt sorry for me and apologised to me that he could not help too much in answering those questions (Reflective notes, 25082014).

Haitao has a clear standard for his teachers' performance.

I think the tutor is more responsible to push the students to do more work before the tutorials. In doing the tutorial questions, the students will know where their

problems are... I don't like the tutor not collecting the tutorial questions (Haitao, Int, 10052014, p. 10).

Each of the students had clear expectations for how their teachers should conduct themselves as teachers. In their practices, they relate to teachers as Junzi, even though they may not behave that way. The students expressed their disappointment when "teachers were not teachers", that is when for example, Ting's tutor became sarcastic in his communication with her,

However, the other teacher was doing his own things still while he was talking to me. In addition, with the sarcastic tone he using, I do not want to ask him questions (Ting, Int, 09052014, p5).

Or when Su considered her lecturer was not properly prepared for her lecture.

In the previous weeks, the lecturer could not finish the lecture slides. This week she can finish [the lecture slides], but she pushes the time very hard ... I think she needs to give us a comprehensive example after one part (Su, Int, 22052014, p. 2).

The concept of Junzi stems from the Confucian tradition, which emphasises ethical relationships between teacher and students including the virtuous and moral parts of aspects of living, rather than only the cognitive abilities of a person (Tweed & Lehman, 2002). As well as teaching and discussing the contents of subjects, teachers are expected to demonstrate in their practices the character of a Junzi as a superior person. In students' view, teachers' practices of Junzi are not necessarily directly related to achieving formal learning outcomes, but they do support the students' attitude and disposition towards their learning. Students in the Chinese education system are deeply influenced in their schools by the Confucian notion of becoming a Junzi. For Chinese students, these practices are embedded in their approach to study and they expect teachers to be virtuous.

All of the students identified one Korean teacher, Sophie, as an excellent teacher and Lin identified her as a Junzi. In Lin's view, the practices of Junzi were evident in Sophie's prompt replies to his email, reflecting her moral character. According to Confucius, "a person of virtue [Junzi] studies the Way in order to love people"

(Analects 17: 4, trans. in Yao, 2000). In Lin's view, Sophie models how to be a more polished person. He believed that she demonstrated the principle that the purpose of teaching is to facilitate the passage of learners to becoming a Junzi (Wu, 2011). Whether his interpretation is correct or not, his comment highlights his different understanding of teacher student relationship. All of the students found Sophie's approach helpful. They each discussed how she not only helped them to understand the subject content and how to study, but that she also cared about each of them. Ting said:

When I ask the other tutor questions, she will bend closer to me or come close to me, and is very patient with students, and shows she would like to talk to me bodily by bending close to me. However, the other teacher was doing his own things still while he was talking to me. In addition, with the sarcastic tone he using, I do not want to ask him questions (Ting, Int, 09052014, p5).

Sophie demonstrates the virtues of Junzi, by coming closer to Ting, showing her interest in the conversation and her respect for her student. As Ting was learning how to ask teachers questions, and to talk in class, Sophie's approach was particularly helpful.

In summary, students' lives are entangled in different types of sociocultural practices (Reich & Hager, 2014; Schatzki, 2002). Sociocultural practices help to make learning visible in a number of ways. As students participate in structured and unstructured social practices, they are learning how to fit into different social contexts. Their relationships with teachers and friends are also helping them learn how to adapt to a practice of learning in Australian universities that may seem to contradict that learned in China from their parents and teachers. They are learning how to be Chinese business students studying and living in a different context and how to become a part of the Chinese student community at UOW. The sociocultural practices discussed in this section show how learning might occur unexpectedly when students socialise with friends. It might occur through sharing accommodation with peers or in different teacher student relationships. Filial practices also have an enormous and ongoing influence on students. These sociocultural practices and the study practices discussed above are interdependent.

CCAD: a changing bundle of practices

The pedagogical approach used in CCAD draws together and mixes students' study and sociocultural practices through the use of bilingual and culturally sensitive teaching methods. Institutionally, CCAD addresses the needs of faculties and schools to ensure students complete their degrees. The driver for this special tuition is the high failure rate among Chinese students in accounting and finance subjects. The CCAD leader is a PhD student of the university and he excelled in his undergraduate degree in particular in accounting and finance subjects and volunteered his expertise to other Chinese students. This practice was soon recognised and institutionalised by the faculty through the formation of CCAD.

The description of two CCAD classes arrangement illustrates the shock that I felt when I experienced this unusual pedagogical approach. The overcrowded room and the pedagogical approach was unlike anything I had previously experienced in the Business faculty at UOW:

I was shocked by the class setting and the active learning atmosphere, it was like a normal tutorial classroom, but full of students (about 80 students in one standard tutorial room with a capacity of 40). Students have moved extra desks and chairs from other classes. The desks are allocated next to each other, there is no gap in between, and only one little aisle was left to one side. Students kept coming in during class. Everyone is very keen to learn and the atmosphere is very intense. The leader used Chinese and slang and some key English words, and drew diagrams on the white board in both Chinese and English. The examples used were in the Chinese context, students laughed and giggled because of the humorous approach (Reflective notes, 09062014, pp. 1-5).

A second observation with a smaller group had a different arrangement but some similarities:

It was a standard lecture/tutorial room, students sat in the circular classroom, and he used predesigned slides. The way he conducted the class was not like a peer-learning format, as it is more likely a lecturing for me, as he used the slides to explain the key concepts from his slides. Students took notes or took photos of the slides. He asked some questions to encourage students to answer. Students were involved intensively as they were busy, taking notes, looking at Jason, or

talking with friends about what they were doing. They were very active participants, which is in contrast to what I observed in normal lectures and tutorials, they were not so active and did not show much interest in the teaching for me most of time. The atmosphere was also light, as from time to time, his humor triggered some laughter, in contrast, in the normal lectures or tutorials, they did not understand the jokes or humor the teachers talked and no one responded to the teachers as they did here with Jason (Reflective notes, CCAD observation, 15052014).

CCAD is institutionally identified as a form of peer-learning. However, the CCAD leader and his peers described their approach as peer-teaching. There seems to be an interesting contradiction here. In fact, from my observation and interviews, the way the sessions were conducted by the CCAD leader involved much more than peer-learning and peer-teaching. He employed a sort of hybrid pedagogy that included strong elements of the acquisition and transmission and constructivist approaches (Hager and Hodkinson, 2009). The acquisition and transmission approach could be seen in how students were explicitly taught how to answer exam questions and to pass exams. In this way, the leader acted as a mediator between the lecturers and the students as he worked out the ideal answers to the questions for the students. The constructivist approach was evident in the ways he asked the students questions that pushed them to relate the concepts to everyday accounting and finance practice using Chinese and Australian examples.

The leader, Jason combined aspects of tutoring, lecturing, and peer-learning. This seemingly contradictory combination included the way that he puts together many disparate sociocultural pedagogical and institutional practices, roles and personal characteristics. He had a number of roles including Deans scholar, PhD student and tutor. His Chinese background, use of Chinese slang, familiarity with institutional practices, and Australian culture, sense of humor, age (he is older than the students), classroom practices such as drawing diagrams in Chinese and English, use of illustrations from Chinese contexts, fluency in accountancy practice and theory and in both English and Chinese pedagogy all played a role in his ability as leader.

It is clear, from my observations and students' comments that the students liked him and his approach. His strong, embedded cultural understanding was evident in his

sense of humor and in the way he interacted with students. For example, he alluded to filial practices by teasing the students, suggesting ironically they spend most of time watching movies rather than studying and that if their parents knew this they would be in trouble. While Jason was not a lecturer, he was highly respected by students who called him *xueba* (学霸), or in English *academic hero*.

Jason's understanding of both pedagogies is illustrated in the way he asked questions. His approach was different from the way lecturers and tutors ask questions because he not only focused on explaining concepts but on triggering students to think about the reasons that the lecturer chose to use specific concepts. It also appeared to be dialogic in the Confucian sense of trying to engage students more deeply by asking specific types of questions. One student said:

[CCAD] helps me to know the internal relationship [between the concepts] to cope with the change in the exam questions. If I only memorise the concepts that is not helpful for the exams. But CCAD helps to set up the relationship of the concepts, even if the exam questions are changed, I still know how to relate the concepts and know how to do it... Jason often says “do you know why here? Do you know why the teacher talked about this concept? I will show you something to make it clear for you”. Then he will show the relationships in between step-by-step, then I will understand (Ting, Int, 28082014, pp. 4-5).

Jason directed the students to link the concepts together by showing the connection between different concepts and how they are used in different accounting subjects. These links help students to see the big picture and to identify areas that might appear in exams.

A key aspect of CCAD is that it is conducted mainly in Mandarin. This pedagogical technique helps students to overcome language and cultural barriers by supporting students to understand the subject content and practices both in Chinese and English. The students all told me that the use of bilingual teaching practices in CCAD was helpful. For example, one student said:

The key is the classes are conducted in Chinese, therefore there is no language barrier for me. The way of thinking is also the Chinese way. The CCAD leaders

explain the key concepts in very simple and plain Chinese (Lin, Int, 14062014, p. 3).

Similarly, in CCAD, the leader's use of Chinese language and Chinese examples opens the space for the creation of familiar sociocultural practices. The use of these practices creates a sense of community that provides the opportunity for students to connect with others and feel a sense of belonging to a community of practice that facilitates learning.

The hybrid pedagogy used in CCAD highlights important contradictions. On the one hand, CCAD helps students to deal with the challenges associated with learning and writing about complex English concepts. From the data presented above, it is clear that the study and social practices are used in supporting student learning. The data from the CCAD program demonstrates that attending CCAD often helps students to improve their exam performance (Cui et al. 2015). On the other hand, the focus on students' exam performance enables students to practise short-cuts that may be unhelpful in their longer term development of important study practices that also may support student learning. The implicit contradiction is also evident in that student learning may be traded off for exam performance. The Faculty's move to improve students' exam performance is motivated by their own strategic objective to ensure student retention by using CCAD to reduce failure rates.

In my experience of observing CCAD and discussing it with students and lecturers, I could see that students really found it useful in order to help them pass exams and to achieve their goals of qualification. At the same time, some academics told me they thought that it is unfair that most international students do not have similar opportunities, and that the CCAD approach potentially restricts students' abilities to develop their studying practices as in many instances it seems the answers are given to them and short-cuts are provided. As one Lecturer complained to me, students "potentially do not have to attend lectures or tutorials, read textbooks or lecture notes to search for their own answers or ways to study for exams as they rely on CCAD classes" (Reflective notes, 09102014). In my own observations I was shocked by the students' affective engagement, made clear in the intense expressions on their faces

and their high level of participation and engagement: “everyone is very keen to learn and the atmosphere is very intense” (Reflective notes, 09062014, p. 1).

CCAD highlights the complexity and contradictions that are best described in the multiple relationships of Yinyang concepts of contradiction, mutual inclusivity, complementarity, and interdependence (Wang 2012). First, contradiction is evident in how CCAD rubs up against institutional structures and pedagogies in that it is neither a lecture, tutorial or workshop, the typical delivery modes used in the faculty. CCAD pedagogy includes different types of delivery that are complementary and mutually dependent in conducting classes. The use of lecture style is tangled with aspects of tutorial, workshops and bilingual explanations. Second, contradiction is evident in that the Faculty endorses CCAD in order to resolve the high failure rate and retention issues. However, it does not officially include CCAD in the curriculum. Third, CCAD helps students pass the exams and achieve higher marks in accounting and finance subjects which are in line with the learning outcomes academics would like to achieve. However, it also arouses resistance from academics as it clashes with normative pedagogical practices. Fourth, CCAD practices are useful for students whether they are studying for certification or out of interest. Those students who study for certification as a means of meeting their parents’ expectations are assisted by CCAD whether or not it actually leads to learning or just enables them to answer exam questions. In endorsing this approach to learning (or passing exams), the Faculty seems to have equated learning with equipping students to pass exams, an approach which contradicts staff views, stated policy and normative practice. The Faculty in this way meets the institutional need for students to complete their degree to ensure the continuity of funding and maintaining UOW reputation as an effective provider of business education in an internationalised market. CCAD provides an opportunity to see how practices are relationally entangled and that students’ learn differently in this unique setting.

Adopting and adapting practices

As discussed in Chapter One, in this thesis I have focused on Chinese students’ learning in the academic context. I am not able identify or discuss learning as becoming in many of the other contexts in which students live their everyday lives.

However, as Hager and Hodkinson (2009) suggest it is not possible to separate learning and educational practices from the other parts of life:

This process of living also entails learning as becoming: in the family, the local community, in leisure. Even when a person sees their educational learning as separate from the other parts of their life, strong influences remain (Hager and Hodkinson, 2009, p.633).

In this next section, in order to show how student learning is part of their overall becoming, I further elaborate the ways in which students adopt and adapt practices in the learning context. By adopting, I mean the ways that student's build new knowing into their practice repertoire. This often occurs when they are required to use new ways of doing, saying and relating in different contexts. For example, students adopt a number of new practices in new learning contexts, such as asking questions and tutorial discussion. The adoption of new practices is evident in the transition that occurred to Ting over time. At first, when Ting talked about her new experience in tutorials, her initial excitement turned to disappointment and a feeling of being excluded from the social practices required as part of the pedagogy:

In my first class, I did not care. Actually, I thought it was awesome. Only one Chinese student, I could have opportunity to talk with local student to practice my English. After a while, I found it is not that awesome. We had five team members, four boys are local, I am the only girl, only I am Chinese. In the discussion, they talked very fast and used slang a lot. I was completely lost. They enjoyed a lot of discussion, but I did not as I did not understand what they were talking about. Sometimes, they talked about other stuff not relevant to the tutorial discussion. Unless they were answering the tutor's question . . . if they spoke too fast, I would not have a clue what they were talking about. I could only say one sentence or one line to express myself, but very little, very limited (Ting, Int, 2009/2013, p.1).

Ting learned to adopt new practices in the tutorials over time:

I can discuss with other students or answer questions to the teachers. I can have a normal communication on the spot in the class (Ting, Int, 1809/2014, p. 6).

She stressed that she was now able to talk to other students and interrupt the teacher in class if she had a question.

The ways in which students adopt and adapt their practices in order to fit in to the tutorials are complex as they are also linked with specific educational settings. As discussed in the literature, the spatiality of educational settings may silently privilege domestic students over international students due to the use of implicit local norms in classrooms (Fisher, 2004; McGregor, 2004; Orlikowski & Yates, 2002). These tacit norms make it harder for Chinese students to fit in, especially to adopt new practices and join in conversations with small groups in the tutorial. Wu's (2015) research confirms that joining the conversation in class is difficult for Chinese students in two ways. First is the emotional stresses related to revealing their own personal views or exploring those of other students. Second, as they are used to remaining silent in classroom contexts, joining a group publicly reinforces their differences with domestic students as they tend to speak less (Wu, 2015). Pedagogical practices such as speaking and joining in conversations, which are commonly used in Australian universities, are therefore complex and challenging for Chinese students.

By adapting, I mean the ways that students reconfigure, modify or discontinue their commonly used practices as they move from one context to another. When adapting practices, in the new context, students tend to repeat familiar, habitual study and social practices that they acquired in earlier settings. During the data analysis it became clear that at times all the students fell into their familiar or default study practices. For example, in Chapter Four, I illustrated the importance of Ting's default use of study practices she learned from her parents. Chuchu's fluency in handling institutional and social practices helped her to quickly fit into the new learning environment.

Furthermore, it became clear to me that students tend to adapt familiar or default practices and persist in their use when feeling overwhelmed in a new environment. For example, when Ting was faced with the challenge of answering assessment questions, she adapted her individualistic and isolating study practices. She used memorising and reflecting, withdrew from peers and teachers and uses the filial practice of relating and seeking guidance from her peers and parents.

Adapting can also be seen when some study and socio-cultural practices are discontinued. They might previously have been effective, but now, due to the use of different teaching practices and arrangements, students no longer find them useful. Spatial and temporal differences in their new context lead the students to reflect and reconsider how to put things together effectively. For example, students are often required to adapt their practices in Australia to prepare for assessments. In Chinese higher education, assessment of student learning is determined by examinations only. Therefore, examination preparation practices have a particular form. At UOW, student learning is usually assessed by ongoing assessments over the course of a semester. In the data analysis, it was evident that the necessity for students to write essays and participate in group presentations and projects for assessment required them to adapt their existing practices in line with the UOW system.

A more specific example discussed in Chapter Four was when one student adapted certain practices for answering the questions that was useful for final exams in China. He tended to continue these practices in the new learning environment. He explained that it was common for his Chinese teachers to expect him to work out the underlying questions in the exam paper even though those questions were not clearly requested. However, in the new context, he had to adapt by discontinuing these practices in line with the different requirements at UOW.

Adapting practices is usually complemented by the adoption of new practices. For example, a number of students adapted their practice of maintaining silence in the classroom and with teachers, and began to ask questions both during and after class. The implicit and very different practices in China and Australia mean that students needed to identify these differences quickly in order to adapt their study and social practices. Sometimes it is obvious that things have changed as the teacher or the subject outline makes it clear but at other times these differences are not immediately apparent until a certain situation arises, and new practices are required. Some practices become habitual and students need to unlearn them and learn new ones.

Adopting or adapting may occur in two different ways. Students themselves might choose to put together study and sociocultural practices within various arrangements. For example, when students reconfigure and redevelop or discard previous study and

socio-cultural practices learned in China. Students are also shaped and changed by the practices and their participation in them. For example, in Australia they are required to use new study and sociocultural practices with which they may not be comfortable.

In distinguishing adopting from adapting, it is important to recognise that they are seldom separate from one another. The notion of Yinyang is helpful in showing the complex relationships between them as interdependent, mutual inclusive and complementary. Adopting new practices will often lead students to adapt existing ones. Wu (2015) identifies this phenomenon of how students continue to adapt practices they have learned in China using the terms intercultural and developmental continuity as a result of the default use of practices learned in China. Students' adopting and adapting practices are influenced by many factors including their historical and cultural influences in China, and the learning contexts and arrangements in Australia. When adapting practices, students realise that familiar practices are no longer helpful, and they may therefore discard them. Students need to adopt and adapt to reconfigure their practices due to different institutional, social and cultural contexts.

Learning as becoming in the performance of practices

In this chapter, I addressed the research questions about the contribution a practice-based approach might make to Chinese business student learning and the influence of institutional practices on their learning. I will conclude by discussing several of the main points in relation to these questions. First, the practice-based approach helps in a number of ways. Second, learning is best understood in the case of Chinese students as a process of becoming and this is made clear in the ways students put things together. Third, practices and learning as becoming can be understood more clearly by linking the notion of Yinyang with a practice-based approach.

First, by adopting the practice-based approach outlined in Chapter Three, this research takes up Wu's (2015) point in seeking to go beyond earlier analyses to investigate more deeply the dynamics of Chinese students' learning. Many earlier studies use different theoretical frameworks to identify points of difference with Western students, such as students' characteristics, learning approaches, cultural influences

and language issues. In these studies, the above areas are largely identified and discussed separately. Whether discussing the Chinese learner, socio-cultural difference, intercultural competence or language-related problems, these studies seldom see the issues as integrated. They also tend to be static snapshots, rather than discussion of the dynamics of what students do. For example, memorising, is discussed extensively as a simple, linear practice with clear components, it has not been traced in detail, by zooming in on students' everyday doings, sayings and relatings in specific arrangements. When memorising is viewed as a practice, it appears very different as a web of embodied and inter-related activities. Similarly, what appears to be a stable, routine language-based practice, such as translating is shown to include multiple social, linguistic and material aspects. Each iteration of these practices generates slight differences and refinements over time (Orlikowski, 2002). Furthermore, different settings and pedagogies may produce different versions of memorising or translating.

By zooming out on the types and relationships between practices, it becomes clear that the practice relationships influencing student learning are also entangled, and change over time. As discussed in Chapter Three, practices are always relational in that they are always related to other practices. For example, in this study, practices are shown to be entangled in bundles. Teaching practices, institutional practices, peer practices, parents and friends' practices form bundles as students learn.

Second, practices are always temporal. Students' past learning experiences strongly influence their practices in the present, and their present practices support their future orientation towards learning. For example, students' memorising practices used in the different language and content in Australia, compared with what they have used memorising in their mother language.

A practice-based approach provides a different lens to view the tensions and contradictions mentioned in Chapter Two that are experienced by Chinese students in learning in an Australian context. Different practices rub up against each other. Practices students learned as they grew up in the Chinese context come into conflict with current institutional practices, pedagogies and settings. For example, lecturers in Australia universities use lecture notes to highlight and summarise the most important

aspects of the lecture content as part of their lecturing practice. The lecture notes are not designed to be used as a substitute for lecture attendance. Effective use of the lecture notes requires students to attend or listen to the recording of the lectures to fully understand them. However, for students who aim just to pass the subjects and do not go to lectures, lecture notes might be the main or only source of content for those students. Lecturers' practice of including lecture notes is changed and shaped by students as part of their study practice in which they substitute the lecture notes so they do not have to attend the lecture. Interestingly, although teachers and institutional leaders know that this is occurring, they continue to produce lecture notes and do not change their practice. Therefore the lecturers' practice is reconstructed and shaped to become useful within students' study practices. While it is clear that students' practices are shaped by institutional practices all the time, it can also be seen that institutional practices are shaped by students' practices.

This chapter demonstrates that learning is difficult to pinpoint. I have shown how study and sociocultural practices in particular open the possibilities for student learning as becoming. Learning as becoming proposes that learning is inseparable from the becoming of students themselves. As they learn, they become, as they become, they learn. Learning as becoming is a "holistic way of understanding learning as a process [considers]...learning as social and embodied (practical, physical and emotional, as well as cognitive). Thus, when a learner constructs or reconstructs knowledge or skills, they are also reconstructing themselves" (Hager & Hodkinson, 2009, p. 633).

In this ongoing process of becoming, students continue and discontinue familiar practices and redevelop and acquire new practices which support their learning differently (Reich & Hager, 2014). Becoming is demonstrated in the analysis in the continuity and discontinuity of student' learning practices, Learning is never complete. Learning is often a social process, it includes social membership or a group of settings. It "is viewed as a relational web, a process of ongoing change. It connects the learner to the surrounding world in an evolving way" (Hager & Hodkinson 2009, p.631).

This research attempted to extend Hager and Hodkinson's metaphor of learning as becoming by showing how students' learning is inseparable from their use of particular practices. While practices are often considered stable, in this research they have been shown to change as students put things together differently (Orlikowski, 2002). I have shown how the practice of memorising involves and includes other practices and how it can become a practice of reflection. One practice becomes another. Similarly, the study has shown that it is not possible to separate study practices from sociocultural practices and that they may become one another. As discussed above, students' learning may occur unexpectedly in their social interaction with peers, teachers and family members. Therefore, social practices can become study practices and study practices can become social practices. They become one another. Student learning is *becoming with* in that learning always involves relationships. Hager and Hodkinson (2009, 2011) discuss participation as the key dimension of learning. Chinese students' learning involves different relationship with others, such as family members, peers, teachers, institutional structures and practices and material arrangements.

The concept of Yinyang helps illuminate the inseparability and becoming of everything. Students' learning is not separable from their interaction and relationship with every aspect of student life. For example, in CCAD, students' learning includes CCAD leaders, peers, faculty structures, classrooms, tables, chairs, language, assessments, PowerPoint slides and connections to the Chinese culture, community and education system. Each of these is connected in CCAD. They are not in fixed relationships with one another, and they may all act to facilitate students' becoming.

This study shows how the relationship between students' learning and practices is entangled in complex and contradictory ways. Yinyang helps to deal with these complexities and contradictions not by removing them but by holding them together. A plurality of simultaneous relationships is implicated for Chinese student learning and what it is to be a Chinese student studying in the West. Things relate to multiple other things and to the same thing in multiple ways (Wang, 2012). For Chinese students, learning as becoming is inseparable from their participation in study and sociocultural practices over time. Everything is inseparably related to everything else in a multiplicity of relations (Wang, 2012, p. 7). This approach is different from

earlier research on Chinese students' learning that tends towards separating concepts and characteristics discretely in order to make them easier to comprehend and therefore manage. In this study, the concept of Yinyang holds the separate together in their complexities and contradictions. A propensity continues that contains possibility and impossibility - contradictions and tensions - Yin and Yang, in which Yin moves to Yang, and Yang moves to Yin.

CHAPTER 6

EMBRACING DIFFERENCES

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 6: EMBRACING DIFFERENCES

While Chinese students' learning has been an object of study for over 40 years, there are a number of problems with existing approaches to this phenomenon. In this thesis I have shown that Chinese students' learning is complex and that the over-simplification that characterises much of the literature on Chinese students' learning is unhelpful. As Mol and Law (2002) have observed, when examining complex phenomena, there is a "... propensity to simplify, homogenise, and classify [that is] both necessary and problematic" (p.1). This thesis has addressed some of the limitations of existing treatments of studies of Chinese students' learning, particularly those that adopt a simplistic understanding of learning based on the acquisition approach. I have attempted to move beyond these simplifications by examining closely how students' everyday practices relate to their learning. By drawing on a practice-based approach and the concept of Yinyang, I have shown how Chinese students' learning is tied up with their becoming and the becoming of other students and institutions (Hager and Hodkinson 2009, 2011). I present a summary of the research and its implications below and then outline the contributions this research has made to the field. I end with a discussion of some of the limitations of the present research and make some suggestions for future research.

Summary of research and implications

In this thesis, I placed Chinese students' learning in the context of the continuing global expansion of the higher education sector. In the Australian context, the number of Chinese students studying in Australian institutions, particularly those studying business, continues to grow (Marginson, 2004, 2012). However, international students in general and Chinese students in particular continue to face complex problems. They struggle with different education systems and unfamiliar learning environments, approaches, pedagogies, and assessment systems. Researchers have tried to address some of these concerns by moving beyond early works that stereotyped Chinese learners (Barron 2004; Biggs 2003; Volet, 1999; Heng 2016; Holmes, 2008, 2014; Holmes et al., 2016; Wu, 2015). These authors seem to suggest that the problems Chinese learners face are associated with irresolvable differences and inevitable tensions. Others use sociocultural and language-focused approaches. However, recent

research has called for more dynamic and specific investigations of how Chinese students learn (Wu, 2015). The practice-based theoretical frame and methodology adopted in this study, enabled a different way of investigating the phenomenon by focusing on what students actually do.

This research examined Chinese business students studying in an Australian university from a practice-based perspective. I asked how a practice-based approach might help in understanding Chinese business students' learning in undergraduate studies in an Australian university and how their learning is shaped by institutional practices in an Australian university.

I defined learning as a complex phenomenon that is inseparable from practice and demonstrated the utility of identifying learning as a process of becoming (Hager & Hodkinson, 2011). I then adopted Reich and Hager's six threads of practice, a framework that was developed for conducting research on professional learning. In order to deal more adequately with the continuing change, tensions and contradictions highlighted in the research questions, I extended Reich and Hager's framework to include the concept of Yinyang that ontologically holds contradictions and multiple relationships together. I used a practice-based methodology and a tool-kit approach in order to conduct a detailed examination of students' practices, including their doings, sayings, and relatings and the particular arrangements in which they occur.

I found that Chinese students' learning is characterised by complexity. Students need time and support to adjust to the new sociocultural contexts and study environment. They live with the ongoing influence of their parents and family commitments that create tensions that they need to balance with their studies. Institutional practices in both the Chinese and Australian education systems have an ongoing influence on their study and students find the institutional requirements to use and adapt to different learning approaches particularly challenging. Students are also often required to adapt to teachers' pedagogical practices and these may be contradictory. They often have different orientations, personal interest and goals. Finally, students encounter many unexpected institutional and social factors that affect how they learn in their new environment.

In Chapter Five, I described the tangled relationships that exist between these factors. I examined the main practices that shape Chinese students' learning and showed it to be inseparable from bundles of tangled practices. Learning is made visible in the ways students put things together in different ways in their study and sociocultural practices. Students arrive in Australia with a repertoire of existing practices that help them in their learning. They may continue some of these practices, discontinue others and add new practices to their repertoire. Many tensions and contradictions exist in the multiple relationships within and between these practices. One practice can become another, and one practice can contain multiple others.

I also found that Chinese students use a number of specific study, sociocultural and institutional practices that shape their learning. They use study and sociocultural practices differently depending on whether they are primarily concerned with certification or with pursuing a personal passion or goal. However, practices, whether study, sociocultural, or institutional, rub up against one another. Tensions and contradictions exist within and between the practices and institutional structures that students encounter everyday. The discussion of CCAD highlighted the many contradictions that students encounter as part of their journey at UOW. Students develop and use practices such as selective negligence, filial practices, memorising, reflecting, summarising, and translating in ways that make sense to them.

In relation to learning, the findings of this research support Hager and Hodkinson's (2009, 2011) characterisation of learning as a process of becoming. Learning and the learner are inseparable and entangled with a process of unending and inevitable change. Using the concept of Yinyang, this study has highlighted the complexity of the issues, contradictions and tensions involved in Chinese students' learning and the multiple relationships between different practices. The possibilities and impossibilities of Chinese students' learning are inseparable from particular practices, settings and arrangements. These tangled bundles of practices create forces: contradictions and tensions that are continually becoming one another as Yin moves to Yang, and Yang moves to Yin (Wang, 2012). Students' learning emerges and becomes.

As well as highlighting the complexity of the multiple relationships and factors that are involved in the practices that shape students' lives, this research has also shown that, as with the principle of Yinyang, relationships and practices are constantly changing. I have shown how students' study and sociocultural practices are entangled with their relationships with their peers, teachers and parents in different contexts and arrangements in different times and spaces. Nothing is clear cut and individual threads are always tangled with other threads. The study suggests that students put things together differently over time as their learning evolves, depending on each student's orientation and the emergence of the expected and unexpected. Their learning process involves the ongoing forming and un-forming of practices in multiple relationships. Yin and Yang constantly move from one to another, form new forces and generate new things as simultaneously, the old decays. Learning emerges from this messy process.

The contributions of this research

This thesis makes a number of important theoretical and methodological contributions to research on Chinese students studying in a Western context. The study introduced the use of a practice-based approach to investigate Chinese students' learning. This approach helped in identifying what students and teachers do and the complexity and contradictions of higher education in Australia. The study thereby contributes to existing studies of Chinese business students' learning. Building on earlier cultural, linguistic and developmental perspectives (Holmes 2004, 2005, 2008, Holmes & O'Neill, 2012; Holmes et al., 2016; Grimshaw 2007, 2010; Wu, 2015), this practice-based study supports a richer investigation into the dynamics and processes of development of Chinese students' learning (Wu, 2015). The research contributes theoretically by linking a practice-based approach with Yinyang in order to understand the changing relationships and the tensions and contradictions that are associated with Chinese students' learning in a Western institution. This study contributes to understanding learning by demonstrating that learning is difficult to identify and exceeds simplistic acquisition and transfer approaches. Learning for Chinese business students is inseparable from their becoming.

The study also makes a methodological contribution by adopting a practice-based approach. First, the practice-based methodology is useful for examining students' everyday learning in detail. Nicolini's (2013) idea of zooming in enabled a close and detailed analysis of the specific study, sociocultural and institutional practices in which students participate. In zooming out to focus on the relationships between practices, strong tensions and contradictions became visible. Second, the in-depth ethnographic study of five Chinese students was undertaken over three sessions. The analysis contributes to a detailed focus on the learning experience and practices of Chinese business students. Most previous studies of Chinese students' learning focused on one specific aspect of learning over a shorter period of time.

A third methodological contribution is made by the ethnographic, engaged and participative approach adopted in this research that support the learning as becoming of all the participants in the study. The longer term, close personal interactions between the students and myself created a sense of belonging for students as they felt heard and cared for. By participating in this research, we all went on a journey of learning as becoming with one another. The students were on a journey of research themselves, to understand what they learn, how they learn and when and why they learn. Su, the student who seemed most unlikely to say so, reflected very positively on her participation in this research saying, "I could not believe I can enjoy learning itself so much now. It is amazing for me! I used to think I have no interest in learning, but now I like learning and I know I am good at learning as well" (Su, informal conversation, 11/10/2015).

Personally, I found this learning journey to be deeply rewarding. I feel honored that each student shared and opened up their lives to me. I observed and talked to them and was with them when they were working hard. Although they sometimes felt frustrated, stressed, lost and overwhelmed, they never gave up. I was also with them when they were happy, excited, enthusiastic and having fun. Each one of them shared with me their own special dreams and life goals, and these were tied up with their parents and family's expectations and dreams for them. For the privilege of working with them, I thank them. *Their learning as becoming was part of my learning and becoming.*

Implications

This study has a number of implications. In relation to student learning, in the context of a globalised and commodified higher education system it is important to recognise that some students may not be strongly committed to learning as an end in itself but see it as a means of achieving certification. Many students believe that they need to complete their degree as quickly as possible as they feel obligated to meet their parents' expectations, visa requirements and minimise the financial cost associated with studying abroad. For these students, learning may be oriented toward practices that help them get through quickly. When students are orientated toward certification, they develop study and sociocultural practices aimed at meeting the minimum requirements of the institution. They may take short cuts and this seems reasonable and legitimate to them given their time and financial constraints. Their actions are consistent on their own terms and perhaps understandable given the need for these students to balance family obligation, visa requirements, the cost of the course, time constraints with their personal dreams and goals.

The practice of studying for certification and its associated contradictions and tensions has implications for institutions of higher education and for higher education funding policies. From an institutional perspective, financial pressures to secure funding are linked to recruiting and retaining a large, fee-paying cohort of Chinese business students. UOW's institutional practices legitimated the CCAD program to get students to pass their exams rather than fail and drop out which would impact on the university's income. From a policy perspective, the neoliberal educational policies that encourage such practices ought to be questioned.

A further implication for students and teachers relates to the findings that learning cannot be pinpointed in a static snapshot but is better understood as a constant process of becoming. Drawing attention to reflexive practices is encouraged in both students' learning and teachers' teaching. From the students' perspective, opportunities to reflect on their lives and learning help them to grow in their understanding of how they put things together when they learn and what practices are helpful and unhelpful for their becoming. For teachers, being reflexive about their own teaching practices

can help them to identify students' needs and understand and appreciate how students learn so as to assist them in their learning. Furthermore, the findings of this research suggest that Chinese students have problems if teachers and institutions only focus on learning outcomes. Reflection on students' learning and their study and sociocultural practices can help teachers to recognise that students have different journeys and use different practices in their learning. It is helpful for teachers to be critical of stereotype about the Chinese learner and that students use many different practices that are acquired in China and adapted to the new context.

Chinese students' learning is complex and institutions and teachers need to be able to deal with this complexity when supporting students by developing appropriate curricula and structures. First, teachers and institutions facing the challenge of students with limited English capabilities could provide structured language support services, including bilingual support. Using a scaffold approach, particularly at the beginning of the course, can help with the first-year transition (Kift, 2009). Forms of bilingual support may be useful at different stages such as the use of bilingual tuition at induction and bilingual lectures or tutorials in the first year core subjects. Second, students require clear formative instructions and support if they are to learn how to use the constructivist learning approaches that are often employed in tutorials, lectures, peer support classes and workshops. Third, the increasing digitalisation of the curriculum in higher education may further reduce the connection between students and teachers. This in turn may weaken students' sense of belonging to university communities. Fourth, when institutions assess learning in line with the AQF standard framework, they should be aware that learning is not equivalent to meeting learning outcomes. Meeting the assessment requirement is no guarantee that learning has occurred.

Some limitations and suggestions for future research

This research did have a number of limitations. First, the study only involved five students at one university, and it did not continue for the six semesters of their whole degree. The research was underpinned by a commitment to studying Chinese business students' learning in the everyday university context and listening and watching five students who were studying business at UOW. It therefore generated conclusions that

are contextually located at this particular university. Therefore, I do not claim that the depictions of the five Chinese business students' learning are necessarily generalisable to all Chinese students studying abroad. A second limitation relates to my own position as a researcher. As an insider, I was aware of my influence on students' learning because of the close connection I had with them. As an outsider, I was also aware that students might say what they thought I wanted to hear out of respect for my position as a teacher.

Further studies in this area could be undertaken in relation to what teachers do. This could include examining pedagogy, assessment and curriculum development. Institutional studies could also be undertaken that examine alternative institutional practices and structures for helping Chinese business students to learn more effectively.

Concluding comments

Chinese students' learning has been a significant issue in the Australian higher education sector for a long time and this is likely to continue in the future. Many questions remain. Chinese business students must be valued and their learning approaches understood in all their complexity. Academic frustration, student confusion and institutional challenges can be addressed by looking at how students learn, by identifying what they need, and by accepting and embracing their differences. This research contests a generalised view of Chinese learner and investigates the complexity of the students' study and socio-cultural practices. Students' practices are shaped by socio-cultural factors, historical contexts and power relations and their becoming is inseparable from their every day study experience at UOW.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: PhD ethic approval



In reply please quote: HE14/079

28 March 2014

Dr Christopher Sykes
School of Marketing and Management
Faculty of Business

University of Wollongong

Dear Dr Sykes

Thank you for your response dated 24 March 2014 to the HREC review of the application detailed below. I am pleased to advise that the application has been approved.

Ethics Number: Project Title:

HE14/079

An in-depth examination of Chinese students' continuing learning experience in an Australian Business Faculty

Researchers: Dr Christopher Sykes, Dr Lynne Keevers, Ms Jinqi Xu

Approval Date: 27 March 2014

Expiry Date: 26 March 2015

Documents Approved:*

1. Recruitment email
2. Appendix A: Student Information Sheet (*Version received 24/3/14*)
3. Appendix A: Non-Participant Information Sheet (*Version received 24/3/14*)
4. Appendix B: Subject Coordinator Information Sheet (*Version received 24/3/14*)
5. Appendix B: Tutor Information Sheet (*Version received 24/3/14*)
6. Appendix C: Student Consent Form (*Version received 24/3/14*)
7. Appendix C: Non-Participant Consent Form (*Version received 24/3/14*)
8. Appendix D: Subject Coordinator Consent Form (*Version received 24/3/14*)
9. Appendix D: Tutor Consent Form (*Version received 24/3/14*)

** Please note in the absence of version numbers on documents we have identified the date documents were received in the Ethics Unit on 24 March 2014 as a version.*

The University of Wollongong/Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District Social Sciences HREC is constituted and functions in accordance with the NHMRC *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*. The HREC has reviewed the research proposal for compliance with the *National Statement* and approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with this document.

A condition of approval by the HREC is the submission of a progress report annually and a final report on completion of your project. The progress report template is available at <http://www.uow.edu.au/research/rso/ethics/UOW009385.html>. This report must be completed, signed by the appropriate Head of School, and returned to the Research Services Office prior to the expiry date.

As evidence of continuing compliance, the Human Research Ethics Committee also requires that researchers immediately report:

- proposed changes to the protocol including changes to investigators involved
- serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants
- unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.

Please note that approvals are granted for a twelve month period. Further extension will be considered on receipt of a progress report prior to expiry date. If you have any queries regarding the HREC review process, please contact the Ethics Unit on phone 4221 3386 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au.

Yours sincerely

Professor Kathleen Clapham
Chair, Social Sciences
Human Research Ethics Committee

Ethics Unit, Research Services Office
University of Wollongong NSW 2522 Australia
Telephone (02) 4221 3386 Facsimile (02) 4221 4338
Email: rso-ethics@uow.edu.au Web: www.uow.edu.au



PARTICIPATION INFORMATION FOR STUDENT

An in-depth examination of Chinese Students' Continuing Learning Experience in an Australian Business Faculty

A growing concern for the higher education sector is the complaint that while great emphasis is placed on initially attracting international students, their specific social and academic needs may be largely ignored thereafter. Chinese students' learning approach labeled as surface or rote learning is argued as a common error of overgeneralization and stereotyping with regard from an entire nation. Few detailed ethnographic studies had been undertaken to examine Chinese Business students learning. The aim of this research is to improve the understanding of Chinese Business students learning practices in an undergraduate business degree. The project may develop suggestions for and embed teaching and learning strategies to be incorporated into the subject Tutor's Guides and disseminate the strategies both within the faculty and beyond.

RESEARCHERS CONDUCTING THE STUDY

Supervisors: Dr Christopher Sykes	Dr Lynne Keevers	Co-investigator: Ms Jinqi Xu
Faculty of Business	Faculty of Social Science	Faculty of Business
csykes@uow.edu.au	lkeevers@uow.edu.au	jinqi_xu@uow.edu.au

METHOD AND DEMANDS ON PARTICIPANTS

You are invited to participate in this project because of your experience learning activities as an undergraduate Chinese business student. During Autumn/Spring session 2014, you will be invited to participate in this project. The research project includes several aspects and you have choice about which aspects and how you wish to be involved. Your participation in data collection across three domains - learning engagement, assessment and feedback, could involve the following:

- Being observed in one of the tutorials by the Co-investigator (CI) in each session with approval from your subject coordinator and tutors, will take about 45-60 minutes.
- Participating in two group discussions with the other students involved in the research and the CI in one semester at the beginning (Week 4) and the end of the session (after exam result released). The group discussions will be held in a study room, be audio-taped and transcribed, it will take about 45-60 minutes.
- You could video specific learning practices, habits or routines that you consider useful in your studies, will take 10-20 minutes each time.

- Writing a brief study journal/blog of your learning processes throughout the semester, about 100-150 words each journal.
- Providing the researchers with access to your learning materials: notes, assessment, feedback from your tutors and lecturers and study journal.
- Participating in a fortnightly meeting with the CI to discuss your learning practices, will take 45-60 minutes. The meeting will be audio-taped and transcribed.

What sorts of questions will be asked:

- What and who influence you the most in your learning practices?
- Where do you like to study? And why?
- What sort of things can help you to study more effectively?

A consent form will be given to you prior to commencing the project and by signing this document you consent to the researchers using the data collected. Your confidentiality will be maintained and that no information about you will be used in any way that reveals your identity.

POSSIBLE RISKS, INCONVENIENCES AND DISCOMFORTS

Apart from the time involved in participating in the study we can foresee no risks for you. Your involvement in the study is voluntary and you may withdraw your participation from the study at any time without explanation. You can also withdraw any data that you have provided up to two months after the data collection has taken place. The data will be stored securely on the researcher's computer and in a locked secure location in the researcher's office. Refusal to participate in or withdrawal from the study will not affect your relationship with the University of Wollongong.

FUNDING AND BENEFITS OF THE RESEARCH

This study is part of a PhD research project being undertaken within the Faculty of Business. The research will provide you with better insight of your learning habits and routines and may improve your learning practices. The in-depth, study aims to contribute to the growing understanding of the learning practices of Chinese undergraduate business students. Findings from the study will be published in a thesis and/or conference papers and/or journal articles and/or book and/or book chapters and/or reports. Confidentiality is assured and you will not be identified in any part of the research.

ETHICS REVIEW AND COMPLAINTS

This study has been reviewed by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Social Science, Humanities and Behavioural Science) of the University of Wollongong. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the way this research has been conducted, you can contact the UOW Ethics Officer on (02) 42214338 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au.

Thank you for your interest in this project. If you have any questions, you can contact the research team as following.

Dr Christopher Sykes
Faculty of Business
csykes@uow.edu.au
Phone: 4221 4507

Dr Lynne Keevers
Faculty of Social Science
lkeevers@uow.edu.au
Phone: 4221 1563

Ms Jinqi Xu
Faculty of Business
jinqi_xu@uow.edu.au



An In-depth examination of Chinese Students' Continuing Learning Experience in an Australian Business Faculty

Types of Questions to be used for Student Interview Questions:

Group discussion:

1. Describe your learning experience overseas and UOW. What are the differences?
2. What similarities you can see between Chinese and English Assignment? How do you think your previous learning experience help you in your learning experience in Australia
3. In what ways do you feel connected with UOW?
4. How do you use the learning resources provided to you by the Faculty in your study?

Engagement:

5. Of the subjects in which you are enrolled, which subjects is easier for you learn? Why?
6. What and who influence you the most in your learning practices?
7. How do you find your family support or influence you in your study?
8. Where do you like to study? And why?
9. What sort of things can help you to study more effectively?
10. Why did you video this footage of your study? Why do you think it important for you?

Feedback:

11. Describe your experience in the Tutor oral and written feedback to you in all perspectives, in classroom, assessment, consultation.
12. In your opinion, which part of the feedback is useful in your assignment? In what ways it is useful?
13. Who else provide very useful feedback in your learning practice, why it is useful?

Assessment:

14. What is most effective way for you to prepare your assignment? Why?
1. How long do you need to finish one assignment? Why?
2. Who do you seek help for doing your assignment if you have questions?
3. How do you feel about contacting your subject coordinator and tutors regarding your assessment if you have questions?
4. Why did you video this footage of learning practice for assessment? What do you think important for you?



An In-depth examination of Chinese Students' Continuing Learning Experience in an Australian Business Faculty

Types of Questions to be used for Tutor Interview Questions:

Engagement:

1. Describe your teaching experience with Chinese business students at UOW.
2. What are some of the challenges you face when teaching Chinese business students?
3. What significant characteristics do you think contribute to Chinese business students' learning routine?
4. What suggestions do you have for Chinese business students to improve their learning practices?

Feedback:

1. As a tutor, could you please describe your experience in providing oral and written feedback to Chinese business students both, in classroom, assessment and consultation?
2. In your opinion, which part and what sort of the feedback is most important for Chinese Business students? In what ways it is useful?
3. What suggestions do you have for Chinese Business students when they receive feedback from tutors in order to help maximise their learning ? Do you think they understand the feedback completely?

Assessment:

5. What are most effective ways for you to help Chinese Business students in preparing their assignments or exams? Why?
6. What sort of questions do Chinese business students consult you in preparing their assignment or exams?
7. What suggestions do you give to Chinese business students in preparing assignment and exams?

School of Management and Marketing

MGMT110: Introduction to Management

Subject Outline

6 credit points

Subject Information

Spring, 2013

Wollongong
On Campus

Lecture Information:
Wednesdays, 14:30 - 16:30, 40.153

Pre-requisites: Nil

Co-requisites: Nil

Restrictions: None

Contact Hours: 2 hours lecture plus 1 hour tutorial

Online Subject Material: Nil

Teaching Staff

Teaching Role

Email Etiquette: Consultation with your subject coordinator and/or teachers via email

Your teachers receive many emails each day. In order to enable them to respond to your emails appropriately and in a timely fashion, students are asked to observe basic requirements of professional communication:

Consider what the communication is about

- Is your question addressed elsewhere (e.g. in this subject outline or, where applicable, on the subject's eLearning site)?
- Is it something that is better discussed in person or by telephone? This may be the case if your query requires a lengthy response or a dialogue in order to address. If so, see consultation times above and/or schedule an appointment.
- Are you addressing your request to the most appropriate person?

Specific email title/ header to enable easy identification of subject related/ student emails

- Identify the subject code of the subject you are enquiring about (as your teacher may be involved in more than one subject) in the email header. Add a brief, specific header after the subject code where appropriate

Professional courtesy

- Address your teacher appropriately by name (and formal title if you do not yet know them).
- Use full words (avoid 'text-speak' abbreviations), correct grammar and correct spelling.
- Be respectful and courteous.
- Allow 3 - 4 working days for a response before following up. If the matter is legitimately urgent, you may wish to try telephoning the staff member (and leaving a voicemail message if necessary) or contacting the relevant school.
- Please ensure that you include your full name and identify your seminar or tutorial group in your email so that your teachers know who they are communicating with and can follow-up personally where appropriate.

A guide to eLearning 'Netiquette' is available at <http://www.uow.edu.au/student/elearning/netiquette/index.html>. The basic principles of Netiquette also apply to email communication.

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Section A: General Information

Learning Outcomes and Graduate Qualities

Student Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this subject, students will be able to:

1. Describe and analyse the workplace environment and its major influences in the business world;
2. Explain various managerial roles and challenges in contemporary profit, not-for-profit and government organisations;
3. Describe and compare a range of major perspectives in management theory and practice;
4. Analyse management theory through reflection on simulations and case studies;
5. Explain the role management and other stakeholders have to play in developing competitive, productive, rewarding and socially responsible organisations;
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the use of specified Information and Communication Technologies.

Subject Description

Wherever organisations exist, a manager's role emerges. Organisations rely on managers and the management function for the efficient and effective running of their operations. This subject will introduce students to the various functions involved in managing, as well as the context of management: the organisation. Students will learn key management theories and concepts including organisational culture, social responsibility and ethics, managing groups, motivating employees, planning, managing human resources and employment relations, strategic management, decision-making, supply chain and operations management, leadership and foundations of management control. Students will learn how the different interests between organisational stakeholders affect various management processes, and the implications of managerial decisions on the internal and external environments.

Graduate Qualities

The Faculty has five Graduate Qualities which we aim to progressively develop in our students through learning and teaching.

Graduate Quality

the Graduate Qualities are linked at <http://www.uow.edu.au/commerce/GraduateQualities/UOW044760.html> see how

Readings, References and Materials

Major Text(s)

There are two main texts:

Clegg, S Kornberger, M & Pitsis, T 2011, *Managing and Organizations: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*, 3rd Edn, Sage, London.

(Price in Unicentre bookshop \$86.00)

Summers, J & Smith, B 2010, *Communications Skills Handbook*, 3rd Edn, John Wiley and Sons, Milton Queensland

(Price in Unicentre bookshop \$35.95)

Textbook details are available online from the University Bookshop at
<http://unicentre.uow.edu.au/unishop/UOW031119.html>

Textbook details are available online from the University Bookshop at
<http://unicentre.uow.edu.au/unishop/UOW031119.html>

Key References

A comprehensive reading list is available on the E-learning site for this subject

Lectures, Tutorials and Attendance Requirements

Lecture Times *

Lectures will be held on:

Day

or details.

Tutorial/Seminar/Workshop Times

Tutorial times and locations can be found at <http://www.uow.edu.au/student/timetables/index.html>. Please note that tutorial times on the timetable are provisional and may change. The Faculty of Business uses the SMP Online Tutorial System <http://www.uow.edu.au/student/tps/index.html>. The Faculty of Business ensures that students can complete the minimum requirements of the Bachelor of Commerce, that is, the core subjects and a major study, within the specified time. If you are undertaking more than one major, or a major and minor(s), timetable clashes may occur. If you find that two or more of your chosen subjects are scheduled for the same time you must gain approval from the Head of School before proceeding with your enrolment. Students must attend the tutorial to which they have been allocated.

Tutorial/Seminar/Workshop Program

Week

with) so may represent a group that you belong to or that you identify

s and courses. This information is also used to inform systemic comprehensive reviews of subjects and courses.

Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) Program

Whether you are a top performer or could use some improvement, you will benefit from the skills and understanding gained from attending PASS. PASS sessions are facilitated by senior students who have excelled in this subject. PASS has a strong record of helping students to succeed in the subject. In 2012, over 5900 participants attended PASS@UOW at least once and 97% of students surveyed agreed that participating in PASS improved their understanding of subject content (2127 respondents). To see the PASS timetable visit the website: <http://www.uow.edu.au/student/services/pass>

Section B: Assessment

Assessment Summary

Assessment Item

tutorial work. Marks will be awarded for in class multiple choice quizzes in tutorials based on lecture preparation for material and weekly readings.

Assessment 2: Authentic Tasks - Assessment 2

Graduate
Qualities
Assessed

important here.

s, and argue your opinion based on evidence, is

7. Provide a reference list of the information sources used in accordance the Summers and Smith (2010) Communication Handbook.

Examples of issues that you might explore include any of the areas covered in the weekly lectures: change that has occurred in organisations due to globalization, alternative approaches to management, change and innovation management, organisational culture etc.

Assessment 3: Essay - Assessment 3

Graduate
Qualities
Assessed

	etc.
--	------

Assessment 4: Final Exam - Assessment 4

**Graduate
Qualities
Assessed**

Detailed information	estions - 150 words each (10%).

Performance Level

You are expected to complete all assessment tasks for this subject. In addition, you must achieve a total mark of 50% or over and obtain a minimum of 45% in the final examination. Students who do not meet these minimum performance level requirements will be given a Fail grade or TF (Technical Fail) grade on their Academic Transcript, in accordance with the General Course Rules.

You should also note and follow the performance requirements stipulated in the assessment tasks.

Students should note that each credit point normally requires about 2 hours of study per week. Thus, a 6 credit point subject requires that students commit about 12 hours study a week, including attendance at lectures and tutorials.

Where a student gains a mark of 50 or greater and does not meet a specified level in the assessment task required to pass this subject a Technical Fail grade will be used. Where Technical Fail is given, the following applies:

- a. failure of the subject;
- b. TF (Technical Fail) without a mark will be granted;
- c. A TF will be presented on the student's Academic Transcript; and
- d. The allocated mark of 49 will be used as the WAM calculation for subjects at all levels.

In line with University grading regulations, the grades of performance in this subject are as follows:

Grades of performance for 100, 200, 300 and 400 level subjects

The approved grades of performance and associated ranges of marks for 100, 200, 300 and 400 level subjects are as follows:

Satisfactory completion:

High Distinction	85% to 100%
Distinction.....	75% to 84%
Credit	65% to 74%
Pass	50% to 64%
Pass Supplementary.....	50%

Supplementary assessment may be offered to students whose performance in this subject is close to that required to pass the subject, normally this would be 48%-49%. The precise form of supplementary assessment will be determined at the time the offer of a supplementary assessment is made.

Supplementary exams will be held during the supplementary exam periods. Details are available in the Exams Dates section of *Current Students > Exams and Results* (<http://www.uow.edu.au/student/exams/dates/index.html>).

Unsatisfactory completion:

Fail 0% to 49%

Types of Assessment and Collaboration

Collaboration between students during the preparation of subject assessment tasks or case studies is only permitted dependent upon the category of assessment task declared by the subject coordinator and as printed in the Subject Outline.

Type 1 - Take Home Exams: No collaboration of any kind is permitted between students or anyone else during formation and preparation of the contents of the student submission.

Type 2 - Group Work: Collaboration is permitted between students in the same group but not with students in other groups.

Type 3 - Individual Assessment: Collaboration is permitted between students only in the form of general discussion pertaining to relevant concepts or potential issues to be dealt with in completing the assessment. However, collaboration must not proceed to the point where it contributes directly to the final submission produced by the student. Joint planning of the actual contents of a student's submission is not permitted. Where the assessment requires formulation of a set of recommendations, a problem solution, or a specific course of action, collaboration is not permitted during their formulation. Needless to say, collaboration is not permitted during the actual preparation and writing of the student submission.

Type 4 - Open Assessment: Collaboration with other students is permitted, subject to the normal rules governing plagiarism. That is, direct use of ideas contributed by others must be acknowledged.

Submission, Retention and Collection of Written Assessment

Assessed work must be handed in by the date and time listed under each assessment task. All assessment tasks must represent the enrolled student's own ORIGINAL work and must not have been previously submitted for assessment in any formal course of study.

If a student does not attend a required in-session test/examination, and also fails to produce satisfactory medical or other reasons for this (See Section C: General Advice for Students), a deferred examination will NOT be offered, and the student may be deemed to have failed the subject, other marks notwithstanding.

Submitting Assessment Tasks

Students are required to submit original work which will provide a basis for the certification of competence in this subject. These assessments may include: examinations, tests, take-home examinations, quizzes, assignments, essays, laboratory reports, demonstrations, folio of creative works, performances, tutorial presentation and participation.

A Faculty of Business assignment cover sheet must be attached to each piece of written assessment task. This cover sheet can be obtained from the website: <http://www.uow.edu.au/commerce/cc/index.html>. Students should ensure they receive a receipt of submission and retain this for proof of submission.

Faxing, Posting and Emailing Assessment Work

Students may not e-mail, post or fax assessment tasks unless specifically requested by or with the prior approval of the subject coordinator.

Late Submission of Assessment Tasks

Assessed work handed in late will be penalised by the deduction of 20 percent of the maximum possible mark for that assessment per working day or part thereof. The operation of this rule will not result in a negative mark being carried forward.

This penalty for late submission may be waived upon presentation of a medical certificate of illness for a relevant period, or upon evidence of untoward or approved circumstances that fall under the Student Academic Consideration Policy (See Section C: General Advice for Students).

Collection

Assessment items will normally be returned to students within three (3) weeks of the due date. Assessment tasks which are relevant to the final examination for the subject will be marked and available for collection prior to the study week before the final examination.

Retention

The Faculty of Business will retain appropriate records in line with the State Records Act 1998 (NSW), other relevant legislation, standards and University of Wollongong policies.

Scaling

Marks awarded for any assessment task or part of any assessment task, including an examination may be subject to scaling at the end of the session. Marks will be scaled only when unpredicted circumstances occur and in order to ensure fairness of marking across groups of students. The method of scaling will depend on the type of scaling required by the circumstances. When scaling is deemed necessary, it will follow a detailed consideration by the Unit Assessment Committee and/or the Faculty Assessment Committee of the marks of the group of students concerned. Scaling will not affect any individual student's rank order within their cohort. For more information please refer to Assessment Guidelines - Scaling <http://www.uow.edu.au/about/policy/UOW058609.html> for details.

Plagiarism

Students are responsible for submitting original work for assessment, without plagiarising or cheating, abiding by the University's Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy as set out in the University Handbook, the University's online Policy Directory and in Faculty Handbooks and subject guides. Re-using any of your own work (either in part or in full) which you have submitted previously for assessment is not permitted without appropriate acknowledgement. **Plagiarism has led to the expulsion of students from the University.**

Students should visit the following University website and become familiar with the University's policy on Plagiarism <http://www.uow.edu.au/about/policy/UOW058648.html>

Faculty of Business Plagiarism Prevention Policy

The Faculty of Business has introduced an e-learning module which aims to orientate you with the knowledge and resources to;

- avoid problems related to plagiarism
- develop your capacity to integrate evidence into your arguments
- reference correctly.

The online module is openly available for use by students at **any stage** in their degree. You are **strongly encouraged** to use the module to help in assessing the academic integrity of your written work. The module can be accessed via <http://commfac.uow.edu.au/caio>

Referencing

Why do you need to reference?

At University it is necessary to acknowledge the sources of information and ideas that you have incorporated in your assessment tasks. Failure to do this thoroughly may result in accusations of plagiarism: this is the academic equivalent of stealing (because by not acknowledging someone else's work, you are presenting it as your own). Plagiarism is taken very seriously by the University and may result in expulsion from the University.

Referencing is not only about acknowledging other people's work; accurate referencing and lists of references are beneficial when researching a topic as they allow the reader to follow up information and read further in the area. In a sense, references provide readers with clues to help them explore different avenues of a topic. This aspect of referencing will become more valuable to you as you progress in your studies.

There is a correct procedure that must be followed when referencing and using footnotes. Not complying with these set techniques and format will most likely result in loss of marks. When writing an essay it is easiest to reference as you go, making sure you are writing down all relevant information. This will save hours trying to find the source again in the library.

The Harvard System of Referencing

The Faculty of Business uses the Harvard system of referencing. This system makes use of short references within the body of the text. It is supplemented by a detailed list of references at the end of the text, which provides all the information necessary to find the source material. In-text references include the author and year of publication, and where necessary the page number(s).

It is the responsibility of students to ensure that they are familiar with the Harvard system of referencing and that they use it accurately in all written work submitted.

Students should consult the following University Library website for a detailed explanation and examples of the Harvard system of referencing <http://www.library.uow.edu.au/resourcesbytopic/UOW026621.html>

A referencing and citing guide is also available via the University Library website:
<http://public01.library.uow.edu.au/refcite/style-guides/html/>

Citation of Internet Sources

It is necessary for students to reference all sources used in their written work, including file transfer protocol sites, worldwide web sites, telnet sites, synchronous communications (MOOs, MUDs, IRC, etc.) GOPHER sites, and email, Listserv and Newsgroup citations.

It is the responsibility of students to ensure that they are familiar with the accepted Faculty of Business practice for referencing electronic material and that they use it accurately in all written work submitted.

Students should consult the following University Library website for a detailed explanation and examples of how to reference electronic material <http://www.library.uow.edu.au/resourcesbytopic/UOW026629.html>

Section C: General Advice for Students

For general information on university policies and procedures relevant to students, and for details about the range of Student Services available, please see General Advice for Students, which can be accessed online at <http://www.uow.edu.au/commerce/UOW144987.html>. Hard copies of Section C: General Advice for Students can be obtained from Business Central.

Appendix F: Example of observation and reflective notes

1/5/14 1030-1200
Building 25-107

Sophie one subject lecture observation

- Ting checked with her friend of this week's tutorial while allee is talking
- About 80 students in 25-107 not many students enrolled?
- Sophie talked Assignment due next week

Ting - 15/20 Lin - 15/20 of mid session they have told me their marks last week

- It's a warm class, Sophie is clear in instruction. Smiling a lot. the lecture notes are very colourful. This is good, clear to read
- Ting highlights, writes notes on printed subject ~~lecture~~ lecture notes

Ting said the friend is ABC, she was eager to go to talk ^(is she sitting with him?) before the class.

Ting uses Red notes "Remember" on one slide. Wan checks new words in the dictionary of mobile.

- Sophie write on a project board. Both Lin and Ting didn't take any notes? Enough?
- Ting is smiling to her friend of sth?

Room: Curtains on, green dark curtains, good decoration of the room. Sound is clear. Slides are clear. I sat in the second row next to Ting. and I asked Lin to sit next to me, not sure where they normally

Appendix G: Example of typed brief notes in English

Chuchu Week 3, March 20 2014

1. Like using handwriting of homework. Can help to remember
2. Study home and library. More experience in arranging time.
3. Moved to another accommodation, did not like the desk before, not comfortable for study
4. know how to use the free bus services very well.
5. need nap everyday, need a lot of sleep, never stay up late.
6. Monday to Thursday, doing homework, Friday for review and understand the confusion of this week.
7. Brave and confident in her English, talk more in class, because every one has the accent.
8. MARK101, requires participation mark, can not participate much in the group as no one is international student.
9. Exemption 48 credit points from previous study
10. Parents are professors in uni, high expectation to her. Dad wanted her to study overseas as he did research in America before.
11. wanted to do master after the bachelor degree.
12. Not very keen to work part time, especially in the restaurant, no working experience, more likely to fail in the subject. no worthy.

Week 4 Autumn 2014

Lin Week 4 26 March 2014

1. study at home more, tutorial materials at home, easy to have access.
2. rest in the library on the lounge during the classes breaks
3. stay late night, wake up at 10am. prefer to study in the night.
4. things never finished,
5. Worried about FINxxx tutorial arrangement, tutor not talk, students presenting, worried the concepts are not clear from students' presentation. likes tutor talks more, as logic is clearer than students.
6. use IPAD for all the notes, no print slides. If many notes, will take photos. Using IPAD is easy to manage the notes.
7. FINxxx has a lot of blank for the notes, it is good, otherwise will get lazy and rely on the notes.
8. only enrolled in three subjects, was told by the course director of the wrong information.

Ting Week 4 27 March 2014

1. print lecture notes, highlight lecture notes, not using laptop for notes taking, tried last session, did not work as hands cannot follow the brain. Taking notes with hands is faster
2. stay up late, most time go to bed at 1130pm
3. using google search for the definition with key words to help to understand
4. has a habit to work out problem by herself, thinking of change to communicate

Appendix H: Example of colored coding in data analysis

Asking questions	network
selective negligence	intensive study
language using	different relationships between students
digital learning tools	teleffective
organising resources	memorise
hand writing to take notes	life style
reading aloud to help thinking	teachers practice - feedback
digital learning tools	teachers practice
working out the questions by myself	time arrangement
Planning study time	group work
link the subject contents by reflection	institution
Linking the concepts	preparing for exams
using image to memorise things	summarise
comparison with local students	feedback
high school learning influence	lecture design and lecturing
self reflection	belonging
understand the logic	
clear logic help to understanding	
teacher talking tones	
body language using	
parent influencing	
teacher's setting up logic in teaching	
logic, student's logic to think	
institutional difference	
ethics / confucius	
slides design	

Appendix I: Example of spreadsheet showing coding in data analysis

20140514	design lecture notes	" she has prepared a lot, the more details she need to teach, the more details she needs to prepared in teaching to make her slides are fantasitic, spectacular.	
20140514		"she has sounds in ther slides, very delicate design in slides."	
20140919	institutional difference	" If I sit at the front row in the lecture room in China, the teacher will hassle me when I play my phone. Also it is likely to be asked questions as well as I am at the front rows. The lecturer nomally will not bother to go to the back of the classroom to ask me qeustions if i sit at the back the lecturer room." " if the lecturer ask me questions, and I do not know, I would feel very emberrased in China, but not here." if I donot know the answer, the teacher here will say the answer by themsleves to help me out.	sitti sit the China
20140919	group collectivism	in china, the atamasphere is very different from here. All the students have classes together, the teacher will make sure you are listening in the lecturer as well. Having class is a collective activity, is a group consciousness. We do everything together.	
20140919	institutional difference	in here, you donot have to go to lectures if you do not want. There are different methods to learn. But in chinas, there is no choice, you have to to go to the lecture, as no other way to learn neither.	
20140919		in china, you have to listen the lecture, even sometimes you can not achieve it, you still have to to go the lecture.	
20140919/ 20140604	different relationships between students	+ The relationship among students here are very loose, the students enrolled in different subjects, you only know the face of the classmates, not the name or the person. in here, you only have the classes together max. But in China, we do everything together, enrolling in the same subjects, having the lecture same time, finishing class at the same time, staying in the same uni domentory. p3	
20140919		because the loose relationship here, the focus on each person is different. So I do not feel embaressed as they are all strangers around me.	
20140919		I do not care too much how they think of me and they donoot either. We are like stangers.	
20140919	teleoaffective	I put on much effort here than in China, as I spend money, time, and effort, and away from home. If I cannot pass the subjects, it is a big loss for me.	
		I will consider the cost I spend on study, is how much I am willing to spend in the terms of time and energy by using my way to study this subject in order to achieve	

Appendix J: Example of spreadsheet showing annotation

Date	Key words	Practices	Data
20140521/20140416	Organise lecture notes	organise lecture notes	"I only print a few pages of slides of forms as it is easy to fill the gaps on the forms"
20150430/20140520		using digital organising notes	"I tried to finish all the notes I need to take in the lecturer. So I do not need to fill the gaps or add more notes on the iPad version lecture notes. If I do not have enough time to fill the gap and take notes, I will take the pictures of slides."
20150430/20140521			How about use the slides for your revision for exams, do you need to add more notes on your iPad version
20140430		lecture notes	I printed lectures and handwriting sometime if there are form in the lecture notes. It is hard to use iPad to take notes
20150430/20140521	reflective ①	organising notes reflective ①	I took photos of the slides one by one, and try to put them together to make the form clear in logic.
20150430		organise lecture notes	"No, when I summarise more notes in the preparation of exams, I will remember them in my mind instead of writing it on the iPad."
20140416		organising notes not paper	"I will not write the notes on the book or paper, as they are dispersed, so it is easy to memorise them."
20140416			"I use iPad to take notes all the time. At the beginning I was not very familiar with this software to take notes, not sure how to use it"
			"I only printed lecture notes in the first two week, and then stopped, changed to use iPad to take notes."
		interested in digital organising notes	"I am interested in the digital products, and I will spend time to do the research."
	compared with China		"Also I only needed a book when I was in uni in China, did not need all those different things (lecture notes, or homework). In China, we only have lecture, do not have tutorials"
			"I take notes on my text book directly, so it might be my habit to put all the notes together"
	kidnapped by digital products		"I felt that I am kidnapped by digital products. As I can not live without them everyday. If I not check my emails or wechat, I would feel something wrong with me"
20140919/20140514	Differences between countries	two Different education system easy to learn in China	Learning accounting is different in China, the level of difficulty seems to be lower than the subjects here. And also it is conducted in Chinese, easy to understand."
20140514	time ①	time spending	"I spend double time to do my homework in here. I used to take it very easy in China, did not care too much"
20140514	ET ①	institutional difference	"The lecturers do not check your homework in China at all. There is no participation marks thing at all. The participation is only checking your attendance in lectures"
20140514	ET ②	institutional difference	"If you want to get high mark, you need to let the teacher remember you. ... To show you "exist" in the lecture is very important, as the class is very big. Not like in here, lectures are not compulsory, so the students attendance is different"
	ET ③	institutional difference	"I also need to show I "exist" in here, I asked a lot of questions. I asked the lecturer questions every time after the lecturer."
			"why you did not ask questions in class"
20140514	Two ②	when to asking questions	"I do not like to ask questions in class, first the time is very limited, it is hard to interrupt during the class. Unless it is a very big questions, I can not let it go"
20140514			"I would ask the tutor, why I need to do the questions in that way, why can not do in my way? Such kind of similar questions."
20140514			"why you asked the questions again, the solutions were given to you in the tutorials"
20140514	reflection ②	why asking questions	"I did have the solutions, and know what are the right answers. But if there is only one right answer, the wrong answers can be many and in strange ways."

Appendix K: Example of student study Journal in Chinese and English

30032014

今天上了 FIN222 的 lecture 和 tutorial, 还有 accy211 的 computer lab。总体感觉还好, 特别是 computer lab, 没有想象的复杂, 就是在电脑上做题而已, 另一种形式的 workshop 而已。题目还简单, 就是因为心急没看题目就做了所以到最后反而很慢完成, 值得吸取教训。倒是 FIN222 的 tutorial 让我很意外, 老师换了一种模式讲题, 把我们分成小组, 然后每个组各自讲解一道题目, 想法是不错但是我很想知道要是有一组碰上完全不会做的题目要怎么办? 希望我不会遇上。

说是这么说, 但是今天的题目我还是做错了, 是一道讲按揭还款的题目, 我不知道何时要用 EAR 何时要用 APR 导致最后算错。但是有错误就要解决, 庆幸的是下课后我问了老师之后终于搞懂了题目的意图, 就是当题目没有要求你求出 EAR 时就不要自作聪明。看来在澳洲的老师是绝对不会玩阴的啊, 挺好。

今天最烦的就是去找了 course advisor, 发现只修 3 个 subjects 不够的, 不能准时毕业; 而补救方法是下学期开始往死里念.....因为当我询问现在还能不能上一个选修课时我被告知太迟了没办法。看来我最多只能在 summer session 时候挣扎一下了。真是莫名其妙就被 advisor 给坑了。

总之, 今天虽然有点烦, 但是好事是我发现了自己的错误, 而且情况也没有糟糕到我不能接受, 期待明天的 law computer lab。

Appendix L: Translation process

The interviews were conducted in Chinese to allow the participants to freely express themselves without language barriers. The interviews were recorded and filed and transferred to my computer. I transcribed the data into Chinese first then translated into English. In order to make sure the translation was authentic, I sent three interviews and some data used in the data analysis chapter to a third person, who has a Master of Linguistics. The translation from the third person was very similar to mine. I have listed some examples from the data used in Chapter four. I coded HF as the third person's version of translation, JX as my version.

苏：...我不是靠累计学习的，我平时都是很爱玩的。如果是考试的时候我回去读书。特别是期末考试的时候...我是到了期末的时候回特别认真的复习，大约一个月之前。

... I do not accumulate [in my study] through the session, I like to "play" normally... If in the exam period, I study, especially in the final period. ...I review when I had a test. I usually review carefully when the final exams come, I review the contents [for final] for about one month (Su, Int, 09052015, p5; 22052014, p.16. HF).

...my study method is not through accumulation of the whole session. I "play" a lot during the session... Before exams, I study very hard, especially for final exams... I spend about one month to review intensively before final exams (Su, Int, 09052015, p5; 22052014, p.16. JX)

苏：我期末会花更多的时间复习，我会做一个详细的复习。我过去在中国就是这个样对付考试的...我期中考试基本不会认真学习，因为期中考试分数相对期末考试的分数很低。

I spend more time on revision before final exams. And I review thoroughly before the final exam... I get used to tackle exams in China in this way. I do not study hard in the mid session exams, because the marks are lower than the final marks (Su, Int, 20082014, p.5 HF).

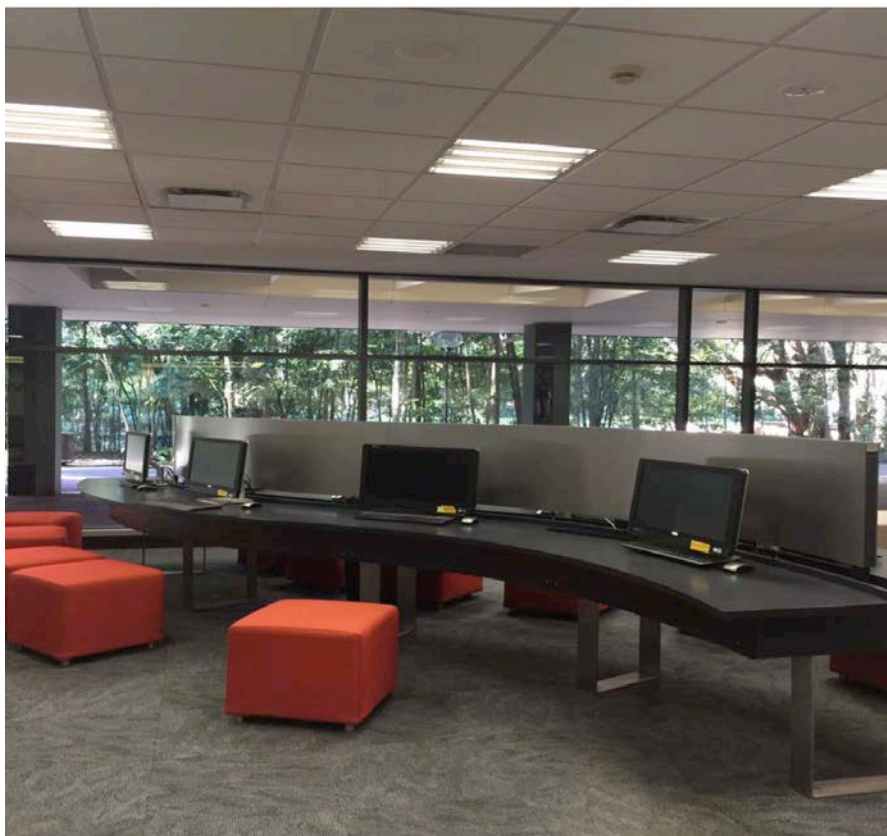
I do a very thorough revision and spend much more time before the final exams... I get used to handling exams in China in this way. I did not put too much time or effort in mid session exams as the marks are very low compared to the final marks (Su, Int, 20082014, p.5 JX).

Appendix M: Photos

Photograph 1: UOW library foyer



Photograph 2: UOW library ground floor



Photograph 3: UOW library desk on the ground floor



Photograph 4: UOW lecture room (front)



Photograph 5: UOW lecture room (back)



Photograph 6: UOW tutorial room (front)



Photograph 7: UOW tutorial room (back)

