FACULTY PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES WITH TAIWANESE GRADUATE STUDENTS AT A UNIVERSITY IN THE UNITED STATES: IMPLICATIONS FOR CROSS-CULTURAL TEACHING AND LEARNING

A dissertation submitted to the Kent State University College and Graduate School of Education, Health, and Human Services in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

Fangyi Lin

December, 2008
A dissertation written by
Fangyi Lin

B.A., Christ College, Taiwan, 1995
M.A., University of Findlay, 1999
Ph.D., Kent State University, 2008

Approved by

____________________________, Director, Doctoral Dissertation Committee
Kenneth Cushner

____________________________, Members, Doctoral Dissertation Committee
Joanne Arhar

____________________________,
Penny Griffith

Accepted by

____________________________, Interim Chair, Department of Teaching, Leadership
and Curriculum Studies
David Keller

____________________________, Dean, Graduate School of Education, Health,
and Human Services
Daniel F. Mahony
The number of international students attending American universities continues to increase, their presence offering both opportunities and challenges to faculty members. Teaching in mixed-culture classrooms presents challenges in revising the curriculum and adjusting teaching strategies as well as convincing local students of the benefits of interacting with students from different cultural backgrounds.

For this study, 15 faculty members whose teaching was particularly helpful to Taiwanese graduate students at a university in the Midwestern United States completed interviews describing their experiences with Taiwanese graduate students, their perceptions of them, and adjustments they made to their teaching strategies to accommodate their needs.

Following analysis of interview data using Strauss and Corbin’s three-stage method of coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), several general themes emerged. The participants described their experiences and the adjustments they made for Taiwanese graduate students, ranging from language and communication to cultural considerations.

Findings suggest that some instructional strategies can help Taiwanese graduate students in U. S. university classrooms overcome many of the difficulties they encounter.
The participants may not have examined culture on a deep level, but they were able to note its effects on their students and modify their teaching methods accordingly. Findings also show that participants’ cultural awareness is associated with their willingness to adjust their teaching and their perceptions of Taiwanese graduate students. Today’s teachers must be prepared to enter increasingly diverse classrooms. The challenge for teachers is to find ways to distribute knowledge and wisdom to their students with intercultural sensitivity and to improve the learning environment for all students.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I give thanks to God. Through Him all things are possible.

My deepest and sincerest gratitude goes to all who gave me support, guidance, and hopeful words of encouragement when I needed it the most. They are too numerous to name, but they are all very important.

Because of the caring support of my dissertation director, Dr. Kenneth Cushner, I was able to stay focused, engaged in the process, and complete the study.

To my committee members, thank you for sharing your wisdom and knowledge: Dr. Joanne Arhar, for her gentle nudges, confidence in my capabilities as a scholar and her words of wisdom; and Dr. Griffith, for great ideas and compassionate inspiration.

To my parents, thanks for all that you did through my educational journey.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ................................................................. | iv  |
| LIST OF TABLES ........................................................................... | x   |
| CHAPTER
<p>| I  INTRODUCTION ........................................................................ | 1   |
| Statement of the Problem ........................................................ | 4   |
| Theoretical Foundation .......................................................... | 5   |
| Purpose of the Study ............................................................. | 8   |
| Significance of the Study ........................................................ | 8   |
| Research Questions ..................................................................... | 9   |
| Methods .................................................................................... | 10  |
| Definitions ............................................................................... | 10  |
| Limitations ............................................................................... | 12  |
| II  REVIEW OF LITERATURE ........................................................ | 14  |
| Higher Education in the United States ....................................... | 14  |
| International Teachers and International Learning ....................... | 16  |
| Cultural Awareness ................................................................... | 18  |
| Intercultural Sensitivity and the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity ....................................................... | 20  |
| Ethnocentric Orientation ......................................................... | 22  |
| Denial ................................................................................. | 22  |
| Defense ................................................................................ | 23  |
| Minimization ......................................................................... | 23  |
| Ethnorelative Orientation ....................................................... | 24  |
| Acceptance .......................................................................... | 24  |
| Adaptation ............................................................................ | 25  |
| Integration .......................................................................... | 26  |
| Culturally Responsive Teaching ............................................... | 26  |
| Adjustment to a New Culture ..................................................... | 30  |
| Importance of Culture in Learning ........................................... | 32  |
| Six Lenses for Cross-Cultural Viewing ....................................... | 33  |
| Culture Learning Process ....................................................... | 45  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Styles</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Between Culture and Learning Styles</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptions of Learning</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Styles and Teaching Styles</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher and Student Perception of Role Expectation</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Communication and Interaction</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept of Face</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept of Silence</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher–Student Interaction</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique characteristics of the mixed-culture classroom</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Students’ Experience in the American Classroom</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language, Culture, and Communication</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Students’ Difficulties in the American Classroom</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language proficiency</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural awareness</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic stress</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### III METHODOLOGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overview of the Study</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Study</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenomenology</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale for Qualitative Methods</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Design</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context of the Study</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of the Researcher</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaining Access</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Selection</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods of Data Collection</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note-Taking</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Journal</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postanalysis</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependability</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Transferability .......................................................... 90
Confirmability .......................................................... 91
Limitations ............................................................... 91
Summary ................................................................. 92

IV RESULTS .................................................................................................................. 93
Participants .................................................................................................................. 93
Participant Diversity .......................................................... 93
Participant Demographic Information ................................................................. 95
Faculty Perceptions of Taiwanese Graduate Students ........................................ 100
Characteristics of Taiwanese Graduate Students .................................................. 102
Quiet Demeanor in Class .......................................................... 102
Reluctance to Ask Questions in Class ................................................................. 105
Politeness .......................................................................................... 106
Focus on Academic Achievement ................................................................. 107
Staying With Members of Their Own Ethnic Group ...................................... 109
Personality ................................................................................... 111
Difficulties of Taiwanese Graduate Students ..................................................... 112
Language .................................................................................. 113
Language structure .......................................................... 113
Necessity of language skills .......................................................... 114
Communication .......................................................................... 118
Communication apprehension .......................................................... 119
Accent .................................................................................. 120
Speed of exchange .................................................................. 121
Lack of practice ..................................................................... 121
Lack of confidence .......................................................... 123
Cultural Differences ...................................................................... 124
Different classroom culture .......................................................... 124
Different learning styles/teaching styles .............................................. 125
Different role expectations .......................................................... 127
Participants’ Adjustment During Teaching ......................................................... 129
Teaching Strategies Typically Used by Participants in the Classroom .... 130
Technology .................................................................................. 130
Availability outside the class .......................................................... 131
Scaffolding .................................................................................. 131
Increased application .................................................................. 132
# Teaching Strategies Used in Mixed-Culture Classrooms

(Taiwanese Students are Present) ............................................................... 133  
  - Modifying instruction ................................................................. 134  
  - Encourage participation ......................................................... 134  
  - Avoid or define slang and colloquialisms ............................... 135  
  - Have more small-group discussion ....................................... 136  
  - Encourage socialization and support network ...................... 136  

## Impact of Taiwanese Graduate Students on the Classroom ............................ 137  
  - Impact on Faculty .................................................................................................. 138  
    - Faculty Needs ....................................................................................................... 139  
      - Need more professional development training .................. 139  
      - Need to develop intercultural awareness .......................... 139  
    - Faculty Growth ................................................................................................. 140  
      - What they have gained ................................................................................. 140  
      - How they have grown ..................................................................................... 140  
  - Impact on American Students ................................................................. 140  
  - Differences Among Participants ......................................................... 142  
    - Faculty Cultural Awareness ............................................................................ 143  
    - Intercultural Sensitivity and Willingness to Adjust Teaching .................. 156  
  - What I Learned in This Study ............................................................................ 159  
  - Summary ........................................................................................................... 160  

## V DISCUSSION ........................................................................................................ 161  
  - Research Questions ............................................................................................ 161  
    - Question 1 ........................................................................................................ 161  
    - Question 2 ........................................................................................................ 165  
    - Question 3 ........................................................................................................ 166  
    - Question 4 ........................................................................................................ 168  
  - Congruence with the Literature .......................................................................... 169  
  - Culturally Responsive Teaching ......................................................................... 171  
  - Good Teaching ..................................................................................................... 172  
  - Teacher Preparation ............................................................................................ 173  
  - Student Preparation ............................................................................................ 175  
  - Limitations .......................................................................................................... 176  
  - Personal Reflection .............................................................................................. 177  
  - Further Research ................................................................................................. 179  
  - Implications ......................................................................................................... 181  
  - Conclusion ........................................................................................................... 183
APPENDIX....................................................................................................................... 185
A  INFORMED CONSENT FORM .................................................................................. 186
B  TAIWANESE GRADUATE STUDENT EMAIL REQUEST ................................. 189
C  FACULTY EMAIL REQUEST .................................................................................... 191
D  INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ......................................................................................... 193
REFERENCES ............................................................................................................... 196
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Informant Demographic Characteristics: Title, Gender, Years of Experience, College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Themes Emerging From the Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Characteristics of Taiwanese Graduate Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Difficulties of Taiwanese Graduate Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Communication Problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cultural Differences of Taiwanese Graduate Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Teaching Methods Typically Used by Participants in the Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Teaching Methods Used in Mixed-Culture Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Impact on Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Impact on American Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Participants and DMIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Intercultural Sensitivity vs. Teaching Adjustment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century has brought with it a growing sense of urgency to increase understanding of people from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. From interpersonal misunderstanding to intercultural conflicts, friction occurs within and between cultures. With rapid changes in the global economy, technology, transportation, and immigration policies, the world is shrinking. People find themselves in increased contact with people who are culturally different, working side by side with them.

Contemporary America is and will continue to be characterized by ethnic and linguistic diversity. Citizens experience this diversity every day in shopping malls, schools, and workplaces. According to the 2003 census, Hispanics now comprise 13.7% of the U. S. population, up from 10.3% a decade ago; and their numbers are projected to increase by almost 200% by 2050 to nearly a quarter of the total. Asians’ share of the population rose from 3.6% to 4.1% over the same period, and their numbers are also projected to increase by over 200%. Currently, racial and ethnic minority groups, when taken together, account for over half of the population in California, Hawaii, New Mexico, Texas, and approximately 40% of the population in Arizona, Georgia, Maryland, Mississippi, and New York. Clearly, the U. S. population is increasing in cultural diversity (Committee for Economic Development, 2006).
The impact of globalization, the changing role of the United States in international relations, the expansion of business and commerce, increasing mobility in the workplace, and the revolution in information technology have placed increased demands on higher education. In the last few years these demands have become even more critical, requiring those in higher education to respond in international ways (Johnson & Inoue, 2003). Dealing with these and future challenges will require an education system that from kindergarten through the postsecondary level prepares future citizens and employees to act and lead in a global context. American educational institutions from elementary schools to professional schools must be strengthened to prepare students for the 21st-century challenges to the society as well as its economy and national security (Committee for Economic Development, 2006).

According to a report by the Institute of International Education (2005), 565,039 foreign students enrolled on U.S. campuses, and approximately 4.4% came from Taiwan. The number of international students enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States increased by 3% to a total of a 582,984 during the 2006–2007 academic year, according to the Open Door report (2007). This is the first significant increase in total international student enrollment since 2001–2002.

The United States has the highest number of international students in the world. A number of factors have driven increasing numbers of students from all over the world to seek an education in the United States. The main reason among these may be that with more than 3,000 postsecondary institutions, the United States offers the most extensive
and diverse opportunities for higher education in the world. The US benefits in many ways from the enrollment of international students on U. S. campuses; according to the Institute of International Education (2007), during the 2006–2007 academic year international students contributed more than $14.5 billion to the U. S. economy through expenditures on tuition and living expenses. The 2007 Open Door report indicated that 61.5% of all international students received the majority of their funds from personal and family sources.

International students appear to have been the most studied group of sojourners because of their availability to researchers at institutions of higher learning (Cornes, 2004; Lane, 2002; Tompson & Tompson, 1996). The issue of culture and its effect on learning becomes not only an issue of importance to the foreign students but also an issue for host and local students. If international students have too much difficulty learning what they need in their chosen learning environment, they will seek alternatives, such as studying in another country; therefore, school personnel have strong incentives to ensure that the learning environments in which these students are placed offer them the greatest opportunity for learning.

Cultural issues constitute one variable in learner individuality. Every teacher knows that learners differ greatly from one another and that every class is unique. Teachers in multicultural classrooms face increasing challenges in order to provide an appropriate classroom environment and high standards of instruction that foster the academic achievement of all students. While the presence of students from other cultures
can be a challenge to both faculty and students, there are also benefits that accrue to the classroom population. Teaching in a mixed-culture classroom gives faculty the opportunity to revise their teaching strategies or the learning environment and to develop their professional skills as well as bring local students the benefits of interacting with students of different cultural backgrounds. Foreign students help their American counterparts broaden their worldview by adding cultural diversity and facilitating international understanding (Johnson & Inoue, 2003; Rai, 2002; Tompson & Tompson, 1996).

Statement of the Problem

As demographics in higher education shift from monocultural to multicultural representations, many educators agree that college and university classrooms should adopt new strategies in order to meet the needs of diverse students (Adams, 1992; Diaz, 1992; Gay, 1992; Pang, 2001); however, faculty in higher education have little formal pedagogical training in dealing with international students. University graduate programs often work on the assumption that expertise in one’s discipline is enough to meet the needs of students in one’s classroom (Kitano, 1997). Adams (1992) stated, “It seems urgent given our new emphasis on multiculturalism to create environments that acknowledge the cultural diversity that new students bring (p. 7). University faculty members have control in matters of teaching, evaluation, and curriculum; however, teachers must possess knowledge of how to accommodate cultural diversity in their classroom. Exploring educators’ teaching experiences and perceptions of their teaching
practice in diverse classrooms is, therefore, necessary.

Theoretical Foundation

Reaching a consensus on a definition of culture is difficult. Although no single definition of culture is universally accepted, most definitions center on the notion of shared beliefs, customs, and meanings that distinguish one group from another (Abdullah, 1996; Cornes, 2004; Hofstede, 1991; Lane, 2002; Samovar & Porter, 2003; Young, 1999). Culture is transmitted through symbols, artifacts, rituals, heroes, and values. Abdullah stated:

The culture of a society is the glue that holds its members together through a common language, dress, food, religion, beliefs, aspiration and challenges. It is a set of learned behavior patterns so deeply ingrained that we act them out in unconscious and involuntary ways. (p. 3)

Indeed, culture shapes the meaning people make of their lives and defines how they experience movement through the course of life. Culture influences what people know, how they come by their knowledge, what roles they play and how they should play them, what they value, and how they put their values into action.

Culture can have a major effect on all behaviors and on learning in particular, playing a significant role in the education process; it is important because it impacts the whole learning process by determining what is important and what is not as well as defining what does and what does not make sense (Duffy & Cunningham, 1996). Culture accounts for differences in learning styles and in the processes of learning (Hansen &
Brooks, 1994); furthermore, it also affects communication and learning (Chen & Starosta, 1998; Leigh, 1998; Liu, 2001), conceptions of learning (Richardson, 1994, 1995), teachers’ and students’ role expectations (McCargar, 1993), and perceptions (Zimmermann, 1995).

The word *culture* encapsulates various aspects. A number of cultural factors have direct implications for teaching and learning. Teachers need to be responsive to individual ethnic groups’ cultural values, practices, language, and learning preferences. Today’s teachers must also be more than merely aware or respectful of the idea that ethnic groups have distinct values or that they may display similar values in unique ways (Gay, 2002). Culturally responsive teaching holds that explicit knowledge about cultural diversity is necessary to meet the needs of all students today (Gay, 2002); it is defined as “using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively” (Gay, 2002, p. 106). To accommodate cultural diversity, teachers must convert the curriculum into “culturally responsive curriculum designs and instructional strategies” (Gay, 2002, p. 108).

Teaching in a culturally responsive manner involves many changes to the curriculum. When deciding what to teach, teachers must also get a sense of how their students feel in the cultural climate of the classroom. Gay (2002) asserted that teachers of ethnically diverse students must be “multiculturalized”; in other words instructional methods should support the learning techniques of diverse students (p. 112). The cultural characteristics of a particular classroom should provide the measure for deciding how
instructional techniques should be altered for ethnically diverse students.

Considerable research on international students examines cultural differences in approaches to teaching and learning as well as issues that might interfere with a positive student experience. The key issue raised in the literature is that international students are often less engaged in class participation (Chalmers & Volet, 1997; Choi, 1997; Hellsten & Prescott, 2004; Tompson & Tompson, 1996). Some have argued that this occurs because international students are passive learners or not intellectually or critically engaged in the course material (Chalmers & Volet), but researchers have suggested that their reticence may simply result from feelings of awkwardness, cultural expectations about the use of class time (Chalmers & Volet), and language difficulties (Hellsten & Prescott).

A research project by Tompson and Tompson (1996) examined the problems existing in the mixed-culture classroom. The results showed major behaviors that undermined the academic success of international students reported by faculty included the following: lack of class participation, sitting only with other international students, and breaching ethical standards of scholarship. The most significant difficulty reported by students was not language barriers but instead the difficulty of developing a social network. The fear of not “fitting in” became a major preoccupation for the students until they established a stable social network. The main problems perceived by both faculty and students were lack of participation, segregation, misunderstanding, and miscommunication. Research has also showed that at the university level faculty are
becoming increasingly aware of the challenges faced by all participants in cross-cultural classrooms; consequently, the challenges faculty members encounter in the mixed-culture classroom and how they adjust to the differences require investigation.

Purpose of the Study

The researcher is an international student from Taiwan. Coming from a different cultural background, she has encountered a variety of cross-cultural differences in academic and social contexts. From previous classroom studies conducted in conjunction with graduate students from around the United States and at the school where she is currently studying, the researcher has learned that Taiwanese graduate students have experienced a variety of cross-cultural difficulties in academic and social contexts.

In this study, the researcher examined teachers’ perceptions and experiences in interacting with a subset of international students—Taiwanese graduate students—with the hope that the findings of this study can bring a more fulfilling experience for educators in understanding what they might encounter while teaching in a mixed-culture classroom.

Significance of the Study

With differing educational, cultural, political, linguistic, and academic backgrounds, international students often find themselves in conflict with American academic practices in classrooms and social contexts (Bochner & Furnham, 2001; Heggins & Jackson, 2003; Swagler & Ellis, 2003; Ward, Yeh & Inose, 2003; Ying, 2003).
Researchers have devoted a great deal of effort to the study of adjustment problems and related issues of international students, including language barriers, academic difficulties, financial difficulties, racial discrimination, loss of social support, interpersonal problems, and homesickness (Church, 1982; Heggins & Jackson, 2000; Swagler & Ellis, 2003; Ward & Kennedy, 1993; Ying, 2003). Several gaps in the literature, however, remain in the area of teaching in diverse classrooms in higher education. Few studies relate to faculty perceptions, experiences, and adjustments in their teaching strategies in classrooms that include Taiwanese graduate students, justifying the need to investigate this topic.

Research Questions

The following questions were developed to help guide the researcher in her examination of this subject:

1. What differences do faculty perceive, if any, when teaching Taiwanese graduate students and U.S. students in the same class?

2. How does classroom interaction differ when Taiwanese graduate students are present?

3. What instructional changes, if any, do faculty make when they teach a class with Taiwanese graduate students?

4. Do faculty perceptions of Taiwanese graduate students change in the academic context? If so, in what way?
Methods

The qualitative research method applied in this study is “multimethod in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 34). The research took place in a natural setting, and a variety of materials were collected and studied. Purposeful sampling, described by Borg and Gall (1989), was used because the study focused on identifying varied instructional problems and solutions, addressing the specific needs of Taiwanese graduate students and faculty perceptions and experiences.

The subjects in this study were 15 faculty members at a large university in the Midwestern United States, selected based on purposeful sampling criteria (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The following data collection methods were applied during the study: faculty interviews, note-taking, and journal-keeping by the researcher.

Definitions

Culture

Culture is the glue that holds its members together through a common language, dress, food, religion, beliefs, aspirations, and challenges. It is a set of learned behavior patterns so deeply ingrained that we act them out in unconscious and involuntary ways (Abdullah, 1996, p. 3).
Communication

Communication is a dynamic process of interaction between people in which they assign meaning to one another’s verbal and nonverbal behavior (Kougl, 1997).

Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication is the communication between people who are members of different groups (Samovar & Porter, 2003).

Cultural Adjustment

Cultural adjustment or adaptation is the internal transformation of an individual challenged by a new cultural environment in the direction of increasing fitness and compatibility in the environment (Kim, 1988).

Cultural Awareness

Cultural awareness entails understanding, valuing, and respecting differences. These differences include but are not limited to race, age, religion, ability, gender, culture, and socioeconomic background. Awareness and acknowledgment of these differences help to reduce acts of discrimination, marginalization, disenfranchisement, and racism. Cultural awareness also involves the ability to address, interact with, and accept those who are different without passing judgment.
International Student

An international student is an individual who entered the United States on a student visa with the sole objective of attending school.

Learning Style

Learning style is the way each person begins to concentrate on process, internalize, and retain new and difficult academic information (Dunn, Dunn, & Price, 1981).

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Culturally responsive teaching involves the use of the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively (Gay, 2002, p. 106).

Limitations

The limitations of the study include the following:

1. This is an exploratory study to identify the instructional difficulties encountered by faculty members in an American university.

2. Faculty members who taught courses that included at least one Taiwanese graduate student were the target population for this study.

3. Data for this study were collected during a limited period of time.
4. The information collected in the study derived entirely from faculty; no classroom observations were involved because the study was concerned solely with faculty perspectives on their teaching experiences.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a theoretical base for the study by reviewing literature relating to the research questions presented in Chapter 1. This chapter is divided into four parts and concludes with a summary. The first part describes the current situation in higher education in the United States and the effects of culture on teaching and learning; the second and third sections address issues of learning styles and teacher–student interaction in the classroom. The fourth section describes international students’ experience in the American classroom. A final section summarizes the literature.

Higher Education in United States

The racial, ethnic, and cultural composition of the United States continues to shift from a White majority and to a multicultural society. This demographic shift in population has accompanied a similar shift in the composition of college and university classrooms. The students in higher education classrooms have formed an increasingly diverse constituency. Those at institutions of higher learning have also witnessed regular increases in other underrepresented groups, such as women, gay and lesbian students, people with disabilities, students of nontraditional age, and international students (Kitano, 1997).
As diversity on college and university campuses has increased, administrators at institutions of higher education have identified ways in which they might transform in order to meet the needs of diverse populations. Issues that must be faced on diverse campuses and how campus diversity may benefit all students have been major concerns. According to Seehan and Person (1995), a national opinion poll showed that over 90% of those surveyed believe that diversity is important and higher education has an important role in fostering it; in addition, over 67% of those surveyed agreed that preparing people to function in a more diverse society is an important purpose of higher education. Sixty-nine percent agreed that both diversity on campus and courses and campus activities that emphasize diversity and diverse perspectives have more positive effects on college campuses than negative ones. In response, administrators of higher education have explored how they might best educate and facilitate the emergence of the rapidly diversifying society.

More recently, university personnel have paid attention to internationalization on their own campuses and have acknowledged the vital role played by faculty members in the internationalization of the curriculum (Bond, Qian, & Huang, 2003; Ellingboe, 1998), a process that aims ultimately to provide students with an international education. The necessity to make university courses more internationally relevant has arisen not only from the increasing number of international students in American classrooms but also from the recognition that teachers have the responsibility to prepare all students for life in the world. Although preparing teachers to be culturally sensitive to the needs of students
in ethnically diverse classrooms has been the focus of some consideration, the equally important need to prepare all students for life in plural societies has attracted less attention (Craft, 1996).

**International Teachers and International Learning**

International education occurs in a range of settings, and international classrooms are as varied as those who teach and learn in them. International classrooms include those in which (a) students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds come together in a predominantly English-speaking environment and are taught in English (e.g., in the UK, Australia, Europe, Canada, and the US) and (b) classes in which students form a common linguistic and cultural background come together in their “home country” to be taught by a teacher from a different cultural and linguistic background, often in English (Leask, 2001, 2007). Interaction between (a) students and students and (b) students and teachers in these settings is the key to internationalization; however, interaction in such settings is intense and requires significant effort. The international classroom requires teachers to be skilled managers of a complex teaching and learning environment. They must possess not only the abilities associated with “good teaching” but also be efficient intercultural learners who use cultural diversity in the classroom as a learning resource in their teaching. They must be able to adapt their teaching to a culturally diverse teaching and learning environment instead of expecting learners to adapt to a monocultural, inflexible environment. This requires that they engage with and learn from people of
other cultures and become interculturally competent so that they can take on the role of intercultural educator.

Teachers must therefore be highly self-reflective and willing to examine critically the interactions and communications they have with students from different cultural backgrounds. In this way, they will be able to develop their understanding of how the languages and cultures of their students influence their thoughts, values, actions, and feelings as well as their understanding of the ways in which their own language and culture influence their actions, reactions, values, and beliefs. Teachers must be able to engage students with course content. This means that teachers must be able to locate and incorporate a range of culturally appropriate materials into their teaching. It also helps greatly if students can see themselves in the curriculum. In a diverse classroom this entails, for example, including a diverse range of examples and case studies to which students can relate. This involves the teachers understanding the way in which what they are teaching is culturally constructed and framed.

Cultural diversity can be a valuable resource in a diverse classroom, but teachers need to be skilled in using this resource effectively because it will be of little use unless the teacher requires that students engage in intercultural interactions with other students. The ability to manage multicultural group work—to stimulate and encourage students from diverse cultural backgrounds to work together productively and learn from one another—is a skill that is highly valued in the international classroom. In addition, designing tasks that can be more effectively completed in mixed-culture groups, such as
analyzing intercultural issues related to the course content and objectives, is an important part of the work of the international teacher (Leask, 2007).

Cultural Awareness

Being culturally aware is imperative in beginning the process of acknowledging and recognizing the differences of others. Education serves a very diverse population, so teachers should recognize the cultural differences in their classrooms and learn to create classrooms that are inviting (Leask, 2007).

To gain a better understanding of students, teachers should first have a clear awareness of self and be able to recognize and acknowledge their own biases, attitudes, and values. The results of a study of the effects of cultural awareness on learning environments, teacher student interaction, and student outcomes revealed that when classroom structures and teacher interaction reflect equity, competition, and congruence, students exhibit positive attitudes (Fisher & Waldrip, 1999). When teachers exhibit a friendly, helping disposition in culturally diverse classrooms, students acquire more positive attitudes and feel safe; a sense of community among learners is created in the classroom. By contrast, when teachers exhibit authoritative behaviors, students form negative attitudes in the classroom, may be uninterested or unmotivated to learn, and exhibit confrontational behaviors.

For teachers to be consciously aware of how their own biases, attitudes, and values bring meaning and shape to their perspectives and interactions with students in culturally diverse classrooms, they may need to develop skills to become ethnically and
culturally sensitive. Cultural knowledge of self and others can be obtained through college curricula, self-therapy, and introspective reflection. Openness to the truths of discriminatory and oppressive practices and disclosure of personal biases, prejudices, and fears are key components for constructing meaning of self (Gay & Howard, 2000). Teachers should realize that their own cultural backgrounds influence what happens in the classroom, more specifically culturally diverse classrooms, which are not new to the 21st century but bring more complex issues of diversity in communities and in classrooms. Becoming aware of self and others is just one aspect of building the bridge in classrooms that are inviting. In addition, promoting cultural awareness in classroom opens doors for teachers to know and understand their students better; provide for a safe, respectful learning environment; and facilitate the opportunity to learn about cultural differences and similarities.

Intercultural competence, which Chen and Starosta (1998) defined as “the ability to acknowledge, respect, tolerate, and integrate cultural differences that qualifies one for enlightened global citizenship” (p. 344), includes three components: (a) intercultural awareness, that is, understanding cultural facets in the communication process; (b) intercultural adroitness, which refers to effective behaviors and skills in intercultural interactions; and (c) intercultural sensitivity, or emotional readiness in intercultural interactions combined with understanding, respect, and tolerance. These three qualities overlap, mutually affecting one another.
Bhawuk and Brislin (1992), however, equated *intercultural sensitivity* with *intercultural competence*. They offered the following to explain intercultural sensitivity:

To be effective in another culture, people must be interested in other cultures, be sensitive enough to notice cultural differences, and then also be willing to modify their behavior as an indication of respect for the people of other cultures. (p. 416)

They have thus implied that intercultural sensitivity is the core quality in intercultural competence while other characteristics are peripheral indicators. Similarly, Bennett claimed that development of attitude, knowledge, and skills will naturally happen in accordance with the development of intercultural sensitivity (2004).

*Intercultural Sensitivity and the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity*

The purpose of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity is to explain an individual’s intercultural sensitivity levels associated with his or her worldview structure regarding cultural differences. A teacher’s worldview may be understood by applying the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), which was created by Dr. Milton Bennett (1986, 1993) as a framework to explain the reactions of people to cultural difference. In some predictable ways, they learned to become more competent intercultural communicators. Using concepts from cognitive psychology and constructivism, he organized these observations into six stages of increasing sensitivity to cultural difference.
The assumption underlying this model is that as one’s experience with cultural difference becomes more complex and sophisticated, one’s competence in intercultural relations increases. Although each stage may be identified by specific behaviors and attitudes, the DMIS should not be viewed as a developmental framework of changes in attitude and behavior. Each stage is characterized by a worldview distinct from the others with a set of features, including attitudes and behaviors, consistent with a specific worldview, which may be compared to a lens used for looking at the world. How one perceives and interprets events determines the response.

The six stages of the DMIS are represented on an ordinal scale in which each stage is characterized by increasing sensitivity to cultural difference. The first three DMIS stages are ethnocentric (i.e., one’s own culture is experienced as central to the understanding of others). The second three stages are ethnorelative (i.e., one’s own culture is experienced within the context of others’ cultures). Intercultural sensitivity is conceptualized as a continuum, ranging from an ethnocentric perspective to a more ethnorelative worldview. Although the model implies a developmental progression in an individual’s awareness and understanding of cultural difference, one should “not assume that the progress through the stages is one-way or permanent. . . . Each stage is meant to characterize a treatment of cultural difference that is fairly consistent for a particular individual at a particular point of development.” (Bennett, 1993, p. 27).
Ethnocentric Orientation

An ethnocentric orientation involves the interpretation of events and behaviors from one’s own cultural viewpoint. Those in the ethnocentric stages, based on a predominantly monocultural perspective, exhibit behaviors that avoid cultural difference by denying the existence of differences, by using defenses against difference, or by minimizing the importance of difference (Bennett, 1993).

Denial. The first stage of ethnocentrism—denial—reflects the belief that no real differences exist among people from different cultures. Individuals in the stage of denial experience their own culture as the only real one. Consideration of other cultures does not occur because proximity to difference is avoided physically or psychologically. An individual can maintain a sense of denial in two ways: isolation or separation. Either physical or social isolation from people who are different can permit the reinforcement of a selective perception in which an individual sees only those events he or she wants to see and does not see what the individual is not accustomed to observing. Another form of denial—separation—is more typical. These individuals “[intentionally erect] physical or social barriers to create distance from cultural difference” (Bennett, 1986). Individuals who have distanced themselves from cultural differences among groups have acknowledged the existence of differences; however, they are likely to view differences with a degree of suspicion. An individual working on issues in the stage of denial is most comfortable with the familiar; he or she may seek out others who are culturally similar and is unmotivated to encounter cultural differences (Bennett, 1993). The developmental
task for a denial profile is to acknowledge cultural differences that have not been observed previously (Hammer & Bennett, 1998).

*Defense.* In the defense stage the individual’s own culture is experienced as the one true culture, and cultural differences are not merely viewed with suspicion—they are considered a threat to one’s identity and self-esteem. An individual may defend against differences in three ways: denigration, superiority, and reversal. Denigration is a reaction by which the individual responds to differences with a negative judgment, for example, a values-based judgment in which an action is termed negative solely to devalue the inherent difference. In contrast, superiority conveys a positive evaluation of one’s culture without overtly denigrating another cultural group. Reversal, although uncommon, is a method used to devalue one’s own culture as a way to demonstrate superiority of another culture (Bennett, 1993). The developmental task for a defense profile is to increase tolerance of differences and to become cognizant of the similarities among people of various cultures (Hammer & Bennett, 1998).

*Minimization.* The third ethnocentric stage—minimization—is characterized by attempts to overgeneralize similarities between oneself and individual from other cultures. Differences are diminished and considered inconsequential. The two forms of minimization are physical universalism and transcendent universalism. Physical universalism is a view in which all cultural differences are regarded as mere biological deviations. Transcendent universalists view all individuals as the product of one
transcendent and universal entity. In the minimization worldview the importance of differences that exist among individuals of various cultures is decreased. For individuals dealing with cultural difference from a minimization perspective, differences are not viewed as threatening. These individuals believe that universal values apply to all people; however, these values may be projected from one’s own culture (Bennett, 1993). The developmental task for a minimization profile is to continue learning about one’s own culture and to avoid projecting that culture onto the experience of others (Hammer & Bennett, 1998).

**Ethnorelative Orientation**

An ethnorelative perspective is based on “the assumption that cultures can be understood only as relative to one another and that particular behavior can be understood only within a cultural context” (Bennett, 1993, p. 46). The ethnorelative stages are viewed as a way to seek out cultural difference by understanding the importance of difference, by altering one’s own perspective to take into account the perspective of others, or by integrating the importance of differences into one’s own identity.

**Acceptance.** The first of the ethnorelative stages—acceptance—exemplifies a fundamental difference from previous stages: the acknowledgment that differences exist, are important, and should be respected. The two forms of acceptance are (a) respect for behavioral difference, including an acceptance of verbal and nonverbal behaviors; and (b) respect for value difference, including an acceptance of various
worldviews that underlie most variations in behavior. Acceptance is founded upon a fundamental difference in worldviews; in other words, the individual understands that to respect differences found in another culture requires an ability to access a different worldview (Bennett, 1993). The developmental task for an acceptance profile is to look at “the world through the lens of a different worldview while maintaining [one’s] own commitments to values” (Hammer & Bennett, 1998, p. 39).

*Adaptation*. The second ethnorelative stage—adaptation—is based on a proactive effort to use one’s knowledge about cultural differences to improve relationships with people who are culturally different. To accomplish this task, the individual does not merely adopt a different set of cultural beliefs and behaviors to the exclusion of one’s own beliefs, values, and behaviors. Instead, this task involves the integration of other cultural beliefs and behaviors into one’s own perspective. Typically, adaptation is based on a form of empathy in which one is able to experience events differently from the experiences of one’s own culture. Adaptation may also involve an internationalization of two cultural frameworks, termed *pluralism*. In pluralism, the individual experiences events in a new way, based on the integration of two cultural patterns. In addition, the individual may use skills or behaviors from either cultural framework that will be most beneficial to the current situation. Empathy differs from pluralism in that empathy involves a moment in which the individual considers an alternate cultural pattern, whereas pluralism involves a more complete and permanent worldview (Bennett, 1993). The developmental task of a cognitive adaptation profile, the equivalent to the DMIS
stage of adaptation, is “to link . . . cognitive ability to other aspects of [one’s] behaviors, with the goal of generating ‘natural’ behaviors in more than one cultural context” (Hammer & Bennett, 1998, p. 43).

**Integration.** The third ethnorelative stage—integration—is the weaving of “disparate aspects of one’s identity into a new whole while remaining culturally marginal” (Bennett, 1986). Individuals in this stage have the ability to communicate effectively with people from many cultural groups. The developmental task of the behavioral adaptation profile corresponds to the DMIS stage of integration—to manage any identity issues effectively that may result from altering behavior to correspond to various cultures (Hammer & Bennett, 1998).

**Culturally Responsive Teaching**

Research on the impact of culture has become an essential aspect of “good teaching.” Educators like Geneva Gay, Donna Dyle, Joyce King, Sonia Nieto, Gloria Ladson-Billings, and Valerie Ooka Pang have created a knowledge base of information that is extremely helpful to teachers of African American, Asian Pacific American, Latino, and Native American students. They believe educators can and must be culturally responsive and relevant teachers. The term *culturally responsive teaching* refers to educators whose manner and ways of teaching are meaningful to the students they teach. Teachers who understand various components of hidden and explicit culture are most likely to make connections with students. They often use all of these components
naturally as part of the cultural wisdom they have acquired and developed in their teaching (Pang, 2001).

Every faculty member who stands before a class has the responsibility to incorporate both content and methods that meet the needs of multicultural students and that prepare all students to enter a multicultural, globalized society when they complete their education. Villegas and Lucas (2002) encouraged teacher educators to examine their programs critically and systematically interweave six characteristics (described below) throughout the coursework, learning experiences, and fieldwork of prospective teachers better to prepare culturally competent teachers to work successfully in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms:

1. Sociocultural consciousness entails understanding that one’s way of thinking, behaving, and being is influenced by race, ethnicity, social class, and language; therefore, teachers must critically examine their own sociocultural identities and the inequalities between schools and society that support institutionalized discrimination to maintain a privileged society based on social class and skin color. Teachers must identify and confront any negative attitudes they might have toward cultural groups.

2. An affirming attitude toward students from culturally diverse backgrounds, significantly impacts students’ learning, belief in self, and overall academic performance. By respecting cultural differences and adding education related to the culture of the students, programs become inclusive.
3. Commitment and skills to act as an agent of change enables the teacher to confront barriers and obstacles to change and develop skills for collaboration and dealing with chaos. As an agent of change, teachers assist schools in becoming more equitable over time.

4. Constructivist views of learning convey the notion that all students are capable of learning, and teachers must provide scaffolds between what students know through their experiences and what they need to learn. Constructivist teaching promotes critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and the recognition of multiple perspectives.

5. Learning about students, their past experiences, home, community, and culture helps build relationship and increases teachers’ use of these experiences in the context of teaching and learning.

6. Culturally responsive teaching strategies support the constructivist view of knowledge, teaching, and learning. As teachers assist students to construct knowledge, build on their personal and cultural strengths, and examine the curriculum from multiple perspectives, an inclusive classroom environment is created.

Culturally responsive teaching is noted for having the potential to resolve the achievement gap, by engaging learners in the process, developing critical thinkers, promoting social justice, and fostering cultural awareness. For this reason, Gay and Kirkland (2003) argued that teachers should have a high sense of awareness about their
own cultural being and other racial and ethnic groups as well as an awareness of how this affects teaching and learning behaviors. In addition, Irvine (2003) argued that teaching, learning, and culture are closely related because students’ culture influences their learning and how teachers teach.

Taylor and Wilson’s (1996) work, *Teaching in Culturally Diverse Context: Findings From a Reflective Teaching Education Program*, details a 2-year qualitative study examining the practices of White student teachers and 1st-year teachers in urban/inner city environments. Student teachers indicated that the most serious issue they had to confront was students’ home lives. For some, the problems occurred between the pedagogy they learned to use at the university versus that used by their cooperating teachers. First-year teachers applied techniques learned in their programs, also experienced problems dealing with students’ home lives, and in addition faced with problems relating to colleagues. By the 2nd year, 75% of the teachers left the urban environment because of a lack of institutional and administrative support. In addition, both groups proved unable to utilize the backgrounds of students to enhance their teaching.

Does a teacher need to be interculturally sensitive to be able to help students? Can a teacher who ignores cultural differences understand student needs? Powell (1996) examined the practice of a male and a female teacher over 4 years (from preservice to 2nd year), illustrating how their worldviews affected their pedagogy. In comparing two teachers entering the profession as a second career, Powell (1996) found that worldview
affected teachers’ beliefs about content, learners, and influences on the curriculum. He also noted the importance of distinguishing the subjects’ biographical differences. One teacher was found to be more culturally relevant because of her ability to “understand the world as her students mentally constructed and understood it” (p. 381). The second teacher, on the other hand, focused on the importance of content. Although he acknowledged students’ cultural differences, he viewed students collectively as needing to learn the content in a uniform manner regardless of how the content connected to personal background.

Researchers have suggested that when teachers have had the benefit of multicultural teacher education preparation, they are less likely to embrace cultural deficit views (Irvine, 2003); moreover, teachers who have learned culturally responsively pedagogy are more confident and believe they are effective in their instruction of diverse students (Pang & Sablan, 1998). Despite the growing ethnic and linguistic diversity in our classrooms today, our schools need teachers who know who they are teaching, what to teach, and methodologies to teach them (Kea & Utley, 1998). In other words, we need teachers who can use quality research-based pedagogy, that is, pedagogy responsive to the learning, emotional, and social needs of ethnically and linguistically diverse students in schools.

*Adjustment to a New Culture*

Adjustment to a new culture is considered an important psychological process because of its effects on the performance and functioning of the individual (Stoynoff,
International students in the United States may face various cross-cultural adjustment problems, such as adapting to new roles, academic difficulties, language difficulties, financial problems, homesickness, and a lack of study skills (Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen & Van Horn, 2002; Heggins & Jackson, 2003; Wan, 2001; Ying, 2003).

International students need to learn to be familiar with many things in a short period of time while they are under considerable stress. Once international students learn and adapt to the requirements and role of the new culture, their experience is likely to be successful. If not, it may affect their psychological and physical health, which may present serious obstacles to their achievement. The faster international students adapt to the new culture, the better they will do academically.

Furnham (1987) called people who temporarily stay in foreign places for academic or business reasons sojourners. They experience “culture shock” when their cultural beliefs clash with those of the host culture. Unable to understand and predict the norms of the host culture, sojourners tend to develop an unusual and unfamiliar pattern of behaviors. The characteristics associated with culture shock vary from individual to individual. For the person who constantly encounters other cultures, the anxiety period might be mild and brief; however, for many people, culture shock can be characterized by depression, insomnia, serious physical reaction to the new culture, and even total withdrawal (Church, 1982).

Some writers in intercultural communication have indicated many of the barriers
to effective and positive communication between members of different cultures, both verbal language and nonverbal (Samovar & Porter, 2004; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002; Zimmermann, 1995). Stereotypes, judgmental perceptions, cultural ignorance, different definitions and norms for friendships, fear of rejection from conationals, high level of anxiety, and threat to self-esteem frequently associated with intercultural encounters also inhibit positive social interaction with host nationals (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Shigaki & Smith, 1997).

**Importance of Culture in Learning**

Abdullah defined culture as “the glue that holds its members together through a common language, dress, food, religion, belief, aspiration and challenges. It is a set of learned behavior patterns so deeply ingrained that we act them out in unconscious and involuntary way” (1996, p. 3). Culture influences what people know, how they came by that knowledge, what roles they play and how they play them, what they value, and how they put their values in action. Culture can have a major effect on all behaviors and on learning in particular. Culture plays a significant role in the education process, and is important because it impacts the learning process by determining what is important and what is not as well as defining what does and what does not make sense (Duffy & Cunningham, 1996).

The process of learning about other cultures is a complex one that brings with it periods of adjustment and a personal evaluation of the perceptions and categories that one
uses to view the world. It is almost like a pair of glasses through which one sees the world.

_Six Lenses for Cross-Cultural Viewing_

One way of looking at cultural difference is through the “lenses” of culture. People in every culture have a unique way of seeing life and relationships. When we understand our own cultural lenses and the lenses of others, we are more likely to decrease misunderstandings (Cornes, 2004; Hofstede, 1986; Lane, 2002; Reynolds & Valentine, 2004).

The first lens through which to enhance cultural understanding is context, comprising high context and low context. Edward T. Hall (1976) in _Beyond Culture_ identified context as an important aspect of cultural understanding because people in different cultures relate to the context of life in a variety of ways. People in low-context cultures place minimal importance on the context, but those in high-context cultures attach a high degree of importance to context (Cheng, 2003; Liu, 2001; Reynolds & Valentine, 2004).

Cultures differ on a continuum that ranges from high to low context (Hall, 1976). People in high-context cultures prefer to use high-context messages in which most of the meanings is either implied by the physical setting or presumed in the coded, explicit transmitted part of the message. Those in low-context cultures prefer to use low-context messages, in which the majority of the information is vested in the explicit code (Cheng, 2003; Liu, 2001). The culture of the United States is a low-context culture; and most
Asian cultures, such as Japanese, Chinese, Taiwanese, and Korean are by contrast high-context cultures.

One of the major differences in terms of communication between low-context and high-context cultures lies in verbal expression. People from low-context cultures tend to use a direct verbal expression style (Cheng, 2003; Cornes, 2004; Lane, 2002; Reynolds & Valentine, 2004). The direct verbal expression style consists of four features: (a) The situational context is not emphasized; (b) important information is usually carried in explicit verbal messages; (c) self-expression, verbal fluency, and eloquent speech are valued; and (d) people tend to express their opinions directly and to persuade others to accept their viewpoints. The indirect verbal style also consists of four features: (a) Explicit verbal messages are not emphasized; (b) important information is usually carried in contextual cues (e.g., place, time, situation, and relationship); (c) harmony is highly valued with a tendency toward using ambiguous language and keeping silent in interaction; and (d) people tend to talk around the point and to avoid saying “no” directly to others (Cheng; Hall, 1976; Lane; Reynolds & Valentine).

According to Hall, the difference between high-context and low-context can be explained by the purposes of communication. In high-context cultures, such as China, Taiwan, and Japan, the purpose of communication is to promote and sustain harmony among the interactions; in low-context cultures, such as England, United States, and Germany, its purpose is to convey precise meanings (Cheng, 2003; Hall, 1976).
Cheng (2003) has summarized other differences that distinguish between low-context and high-context cultures. People in low-context cultures (a) overtly display meanings through direct communication form; (b) value individualism; (c) tend to develop transitory personal relationship; (d) emphasize linear logic; (e) value direct verbal interaction and are less able to read nonverbal ideas; (f) tend to use “logic” to present ideas; (g) tend to emphasize highly structured messages, give details, and place great emphasis on words and technical signs. In contrast people in high-context cultures (a) implicitly embed meanings at different levels of the sociocultural context; (b) value group sense; (c) tend to take time to cultivate and establish permanent personal relationships; (d) emphasize spiral logic; (e) value indirect verbal interaction and are more able to read nonverbal expression; (f) tend to use more “feeling” in expression; (g) tend to give simple, ambiguous, noncontextual messages. These differences affect international students’ adjustment and learning while studying in the USA and determine the form and style of their communication, interpersonal behavior and interaction, and ways of learning. These cultural variations impact their approaches to writing assignments, the rules of classroom interaction, the style of learning and taking tests, the content of essays and papers, and expected role of the teacher and of the student. In other words, these differences affect instructors’ teaching in the classroom, determining the way they teach, communicate with international students, give and explain assignments as well as their expectations for assignments, classroom participation, and the roles of teacher and student.
The second lens involves the value of activity (Cheng, 2003; Hofstede, 1986; Lane, 2002; Reynolds & Valentine, 2004; Samovar & Porter, 2003). Hofstede (1986) used the term masculine in a landmark study of cultural differences to describe this lens. Masculinity and femininity refer to the extent to which stereotypically masculine and feminine traits prevail in the culture. In masculine cultures members are expected to be dominant in the society and to show qualities of ambition, achievement, strength, and competitiveness; thus the communication styles are more aggressive. Members of feminine cultures tend to emphasize the quality of affection, compassion, emotion, nurturing, and sensitivity (Cheng, 2003; Hofstede, 1986; Lane, 2002; Reynolds & Valentine, 2004; Samovar & Porter, 2003). Using doing and being instead of Hofstede’s labels of masculine and feminine may be more accurate (Lane, 2002) because these emphasize the value instead of associating a cultural feature with a gender.

People in a being-oriented culture prefer spontaneous expression of the human personality. Adler and Jelinek (2000) asserted, “People in being-orientated cultures accept people, events, and ideas as flowing spontaneously” (p. 130). Those who live in doing-oriented cultures prefer activity in which accomplishments are measurable by standards external to the individual. The key to this orientation is trying to visualize a value system that emphasizes activity and action. It is the doing orientation that best characterizes the dominant American culture. Kim (2001) offered an excellent synopsis of Americans’ attitude toward doing and activity in the following:

Americans are action-oriented; they are go-getters. They get going, get things
done, and get ahead. In America, people gather for action—to play basketball, to dance, to go to a concert. When groups gather, they play games or watch videos. Many Americans do not have the patience to sit down and talk. . . . Life is in constant motion. (p. 15)

The doing orientation of a culture impinges on many other beliefs and values. One’s definition of activity affects one’s perception of work, efficiency, change, time, and progress. Americans have long admired and rewarded people who can make rapid decisions and “speak up” quickly, and they even become impatient with people who are too reflective. Writing about American education, Pang (2001), noted,

The child who speaks when the teacher requests a response is rewarded. The one who ponders is often considered withdrawn, problematic. The educational system appears to favor students who have the immediate answer, not those who take time to consider other questions. (p. 15)

This attitude toward activity contrasts with that fostered by the Taoist tradition: The individual is not the active agent; he or she is to remain calm, and truth eventually will make itself apparent. Imagine members of these two cultures sitting down together at the same classroom. In a possible scenario, the American professor throws out some questions and expects students to discuss and share their opinions. The students from doing cultures just speak up quickly; the students from being cultures remain silent but think of the questions and related issues in his or her mind. How will the American professor interpret the classroom discussion? What perception does the professor have of
students from the being culture? The American professor might interpret the students from the being culture as having weaker language proficiency or that they are shy, passive learners; however, the truth is that students come from different cultural backgrounds and need time to adjust to the American classroom culture. As teachers, it is important that we understand or appreciate the influence of culture on students’ attitudes, values, and behaviors.

The third lens regards the way a cultural group defines and perceives authority (Cheng, 2003; Cornes, 2004; Hofstede, 1986; Lane, 2002). The authority lens involves uncertainty avoidance (Cheng; Hofstede, 1986; Lane; Reynolds & Valentine, 2004; Samovar & Porter, 2003), which measures the extent to which a culture can accept ambiguous situations and tolerate uncertainty about the future (Cheng; Hofstede, 1986; Lane). Members of high uncertainty-avoidance cultures always try to reduce the level of ambiguity and uncertainty in social and organizational life, pursuing job and life security, avoiding risk-taking, resisting change, fearing failure, and seeking behavioral rules that can be followed in interactions. As a result, in high uncertainty-avoidance cultures people tend to use fewer oral cues and are better able to predict the behavior of others. Members of low uncertainty-avoidance cultures better tend to tolerate the deviant behaviors and unusual stress connected with uncertainty and ambiguity (Cheng). As a result, they take initiative, show greater flexibility and feel more relaxed in interactions. Hofstede (1986) summarized the view of people in high uncertainty-avoidance cultures as believing “what
is different is dangerous” (p. 119) and the people in low uncertainty-avoidance cultures as believing “what is different is curious” (p. 119).

International students come from different cultural backgrounds; students who come from strong uncertainty-avoidance cultures find themselves at a loss when professors assign them to do a group project on a topic of their own choice with anyone in the class. Many of these students are accustomed to structured environments, where both topic and partners are assigned to them by their professors. Another problem many students from high uncertainty-avoidance cultures face at American universities is the heavy emphasis placed on class discussion. Because class discussions is spontaneous, involving a great amount of risk and a possible loss of face, many of these students hesitate to participate even when their language skills are excellent.

Another factor in the authority lens is power distance (Hofstede, 1989; Lane, 2002; Reynolds & Valentine, 2004). The dimension of power distance deals with the extent to which people in a particular culture adapt to inequalities of power distribution in relationships and organizations (Hofstede, 1989; Reynolds & Valentine). High power-distance cultures tend to orient toward authoritarianism, which dictates a hierarchical or vertical structure of social relationships. In these cultures people are assumed to be unequal and complementary in social interactions. The differences of age, gender, generation, and status are usually maximized. Thus, people in high power-distance cultures develop relationships with others based on various levels of hierarchy. Low-power distance cultures are more horizontal in terms of social relationships (Hofstede,
People in these cultures tend to minimize differences of age, sex, status, and roles. Instead, individual differences are applauded. Thus, they tend to be less formal and more direct in social interaction. The consequences of the degree of power distance that members of a culture prefer are evident in family customs, relationships between students and teachers, organizational practices, and in other areas of social life. Children raised in high power-distance cultures are expected to obey their parents without challenging or questioning them, but children raised in low power-distance cultures put less value on obedience and are taught to seek reasons or justifications for their parents’ actions (Lustig & Koester, 2003).

Even the language of high power-distance cultures is more sensitive to hierarchical distinctions. Chinese and Taiwanese languages, for instance, have separate terms for older brother, younger brother, older sister, younger sister, and so on. Students in high power-distance cultures are expected to comply with the wishes and requests of their teachers, and conformity is favored. As a consequence the curriculum in high power-distance cultures is likely to involve a great deal of rote learning, and students are discouraged from asking questions because questions might pose a threat to the teacher’s authority. In low power-distance cultures, students regard their independence as very important, and they are less likely to conform to the expectations of teachers or other authorities. The educational system itself reinforces the low power-distance values by teaching students to ask questions, to solve problem creatively and uniquely, and to challenge the evidence leading to conclusions (Lustig & Koester, 2003).
Understanding one’s own culture and those of others is helpful only if we apply what we learn to our relationships. The relationship lens gives focus to that dimension of culture. The relationship can also be referred to as the identity dimension, in which because beliefs not only form the basis for relationships with others but also the basis for how we view ourselves (Hofstede, 1989; Lane, 2002; Reynolds & Valentine, 2004; Samovar & Porter, 2003). On the individualism–collectivism continuum one can identify how an individual relates to the larger social groups of which she or he is a part. People must live and interact together for the culture to survive. In doing so, they must develop a way to relate that strikes a balance, showing concern for themselves and concern for others. Culture differs in the extent to which individual autonomy is regarded favorably or unfavorably. Thus, cultures vary in tendency to encourage people to be unique and independent or conforming and interdependent (Chen, 1996; Cheng, 2003).

In individualist cultures, decisions are based on what is good for the individual, not for the group, because the person is the primary source of motivation. Similarly, a judgment about what is right or wrong can be made only from the point of view of each individual. In collectivist cultures, decisions that juxtapose the benefits to the individual and the benefits to the group to which a person belongs are the most important social processes (Chen, 1996).

In turn, the group is expected to look out for and take care of its individual members. People who live in collectivist cultures believe in obligations to the group, dependence of the individual on organizations and institutions, a “we” consciousness, and
an emphasis on belonging (Chen, 1996). Those who live in collectivistic cultures tend to be group-oriented; and they typically impose a very large psychological distance between those who are members of their group (the ingroup) and those who are not (the outgroup).

Face-saving is another behavior that is fostered in collectivist society, less valued in individualist societies (Brislin & Yoshida, 1994). The Chinese concept of “face” (mianzi in Mandarin) was derived from Confucian philosophy. Face, in the Chinese context, means projected social image and social self-respect. Asian and Western cultures differ in terms of the notion of “self” and how it is conceived. In communication the Western “self” is highly individualistic, self-motivated, open to ongoing negotiation, and independent (Scollen & Scollen, 1995). The Asian “self” is a more collectivistic one, which is connected to membership in basic groups, such as the family, the social circle, and the workplace. The Asian “self” is part of a larger social group and is more conscious of the consequence of their actions on the addressee in communication (Scollen & Scollen). Group harmony and thus in-group interdependence is achieved through the maintenance of everyone’s face in the society and efforts to avoid causing anyone to “lose face.” Chinese respect for the relationship is achieved through group harmony, avoidance of the loss of face of others and oneself in the group, and a modest presentation of oneself. In a group, for instance, one does not say what one actually thinks so that others will not be hurt. In conversation, Asians usually place greater emphasis on the harmony of the interactions; therefore, the theme of “facework”
permeates many Asian cultures and profoundly influences how Asians interact with others.

The last lens through which cultural difference may be viewed is time (Hofstede, 1989; Lane, 2002). Through theoretical reasoning and statistical analyses, Hofstede identified five dimensions along which dominant patterns of a culture can be ordered: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, and long-term versus short-term orientation to time (Chen & Starosta, 1998; Hofstede, 1989; Lustig & Koester, 2003; Ting-Toomey, 1999). Over the years, Hofstede’s work has been criticized. One major issue was the Western bias Hofstede used to collect his data. As a means of overcoming the problem, Hofstede offered a new orientation—long-term versus short-term orientation. This new survey, involving 23 countries, implemented a form called the Chinese Value Survey (CVS), an instrument developed by Michael Harris Bond in Hong Kong from values suggested by Chinese scholars (Chen & Starosta, 1998). This orientation is also known as Confucian dynamism, referring to the teaching of Confucius. Hofstede (2001) noted:

Long-term orientation stands for the fostering virtues oriented towards future rewards, in particular perseverance and thrift. Its opposite pole, short-term orientation, stands for the fostering of virtues related to the past and present, in particular, respect for tradition, preservation of “face” and fulfilling social obligations. (p. 359)
In practical terms, it refers to long-term verses short-term orientation of life and is composed of the following values. On the long-term orientation pole we have the following: persistence (perseverance), ordering relationship by status, thrift, sense of shame. On the opposite short-term orientation pole we have the following: personal steadiness and stability, protecting face, respect for tradition and reciprocation of greetings, and favors and gifts, values taken directly from the teachings of Confucius. The values on the first pole are oriented towards the future and are more dynamic, but the values on the second poles are oriented towards the past and present and are more static. Cultures that promote a long-term orientation toward life admire persistence, thrift, humility, and status differences within interpersonal relationship. Linguistic and social distinctions between elder and younger siblings are common, deferred gratification of needs is widely accepted, and family life is guided by shared tasks (Lustig & Koester, 2003; Ting-Toomey, 1999).

The time dimension describes cultural patterns consistent with the teaching of Confucius, a Chinese philosopher of practical ethics who lived from 551 to 479 BCE. His practical code of conduct emphasized hierarchical societal structure and appropriate family role performance (Hofstede & Bond, 1998). Confucianism remains the fundamental philosophy underlying Chinese values, attitudes, and behaviors. The following two principles guide Confucian philosophy: (a) Superiors in the workplace must act with virtue, and those in inferior positions must obey their superior; (b) one should act toward one’s parents and elders reciprocally in one’s obligations and
respectfully in role differentiation (Hofstede & Bond). The Confucian dimension is reflective of collectivism and greater power distance (Chen, 1996; Cheng, 2003).

Members of a culture generally have a preferred set of responses to the world. Imagine for each experience a range of possible responses from which people in a particular culture select their preferred response. Understandably, cultural patterns do not operate in isolation but as a unique whole; however, individual members of a culture may vary greatly from the pattern that is typical of that culture. Studying these cultural lenses will help us learn about other cultural patterns, reflect our own cultural patterns, and also improve the knowledge component of our intercultural competence.

**Culture Learning Process**

When culture learning takes place, whether on the intranational or international level, people do not typically receive formal education with lessons on how to act appropriately as members of particular cultural groups (Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 2009). Learning about another culture occurs when people observe others, interact, and are reinforced for acting in the ways deemed “appropriate” by that particular group. Learning about another’s culture is difficult because most people actually know little about themselves as cultural beings; they are not aware of the ways in which they were socialized and conditioned or of their ethnocentricity and inherent assumptions (Cornes, 2004). Most individuals do not remember the process they went through in learning the language; the ability to speak is taken for granted because people can make sounds and
put them together to make words without really giving much thought to what they are doing.

Cultural knowledge is similar to language, then, in that it is often taken for granted. It is not until individuals interact with others who have different cultural knowledge that they may begin to realize that their way of doing things is not the only way. When these interactions occur, problems may arise if individuals are unfamiliar with the difference. Discussing a situation is difficult when neither party possesses shared perspectives or vocabularies with which to mediate. Feelings of frustration and negative judgments about each other may evolve. Interactions may not be fruitful if this occurs. Developing the skills and knowledge necessary to avoid negative judgments is thus vital to avoid strained outcomes in interactions with others who have different cultural knowledge (Cushner et al., 2009).

All cultures specify different guidelines for the same type of behavior. For example, it is acceptable in some situations in the US for people to carry food to meetings and eat while business is going on. It is terribly impolite for a Mutoro from Western Uganda to behave in this way. People learn through socialization that certain attire is appropriate for some occasions and not others. While a U. S. professor, business leader, or politician can wear shorts to the office on a hot day, this behavior is associated with lack of dignity in many other societies, namely the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. Whereas the U. S. people value informality, this same trait may be associated with insecurity, poor education, low self-esteem, and lack of money in some countries; in
these countries, being “dressed up” is the right thing to do, especially for an authority figure demanding respect (Kabagarama, 1993).

From birth to death, people are constantly faced with cultural messages, which may make them feel good or bad about themselves. Good feelings usually arise when the cultural expectations blend well with demands of the environment. For example, in Japanese culture it is polite not to look elders or people of authority in the eye. This is in contradiction with most western cultures where eye contact is a sign of good manners and honesty. The process of learning cultural expectations is a gradual one. Through socialization, which begins at birth and ends at death, people learn cultural scripts from societies of which they are a part. During this process people learn what they must know in order to survive and function through interactions with others within their society.

Learning Styles

Students differ in the way they approach learning. Some work well in groups; others prefer to work alone. Some need absolute quiet in order to concentrate; others do well with noise and movement. Some need a great deal of structure and support; others are more independent and self-motivated. Some students grasp oral instructions quickly; others need to see the instructions in writing. Individuals have unique patterns for learning and mastering difficult new information. According to Dunn and Dunn (1992) and Dunn, Dunn, and Price (1981), learning style is the way each person begins to concentrate on process, internalize, and retain new and difficult academic information. It is also defined as the manner in which the learning of students of all ages is affected by
sociological inclinations. The concept of learning style is not a new focus in education, and the research related to learning styles has flourished in the past two decades (Ramburth & McCormick, 2001). The work on learning styles has century-old roots in Hippocrates’ discussion of temperament (Guild, 1994), and a plethora of models, such as cognitive styles mapping, learning styles assessments, conceptual level theory, and brain behavior analysis, have evolved (Wheeler, 1988).

Historically, psychologists have been interested in differences between individuals and have described patterns in people’s personalities. Becoming familiar with differences in style provides in-depth communication and understanding of the interests and needs of a diverse school population. The acceptance of diversity of style creates an atmosphere that encourages a student to reach his or her full potential (Guild & Garger, 1985).

The term psychological type, popularized by Carl Jung’s work, is descriptive of what is called learning style or cognitive style (Guild & Garger, 1985). As Jung developed a psychological topology, he characterized the major styles that were used to understand occurrences in life (Barger & Hoover, 1984). He described differences among people in terms of either introversion or extroversion. Introverts and extroverts express the functions of thinking, intuition, sensation, and feeling in different ways (Guild & Garger). Each of these descriptors demonstrates one’s preferred learning or cognitive style (Bargar & Hoover).
Kolb’s model of experiential learning explores learning style and describes learning as a four-step process. Learners initially have a concrete experience that yields reflective observations, which allow abstract conceptualizations, in turn yielding generalization or principles. Using these generalizations, a learner can become engaged in active experimentation resulting in a high-order concrete experience. Through Kolb’s inventory of learning styles, four types of learners emerge: divergers, assimilators, convergers, and accommodators. Divergers grasp a learning experience by concrete methods and transform it through reflective observation. Assimilators grasp experience through abstract conceptualization and transform it through reflective observation. Convergers gain experience by abstract conceptualization and transform it through active experimentation. Accommodators acquire learning experience by concrete methods and transform it through active experimentation (Claxton & Murrell, 1987).

Focusing on Kolb’s work and incorporating right- and left-brain hemispheric functioning, Bernice McCarthy’s 4MAT System entails four learning styles (Wheeler, 1988). The system’s four quadrants represent the variety of ways a student can approach a learning situation, process information, and transform learned information. In the 4MAT System students fall on a continuum from Active Experimentation to Reflective Observation. Type One learners are primarily brainstormers with the need to become personally involved in class. They perceive information in a concrete manner and reflectively process it. A favored question for this learner is Why? Type Two learners are analytical, receive information abstractly, and process reflectively. Typically, they are
interested in the question What? as well as in details and facts that lead to greater conceptual understanding. Type Three learners process information actively after they perceive it in an abstract way. A primary question for this type of learner is How? They are “doers” who are interested in procedures. A strong preference is demonstrated to trying things out for themselves, which leads to conceptual understanding. Finally, Type Four learners are considered risk-takers; they perceive information concretely and actively process it. An essential question that they prefer to address is What if? They are interested in self-discovery and have a desire to learn by trial and error. A teacher is successful with this learner by providing an environment that encourages teaching self and others through self-discovery (Wheeler).

Howard Gardner asserted that human beings view the word in seven ways, which he referred to as seven human intelligences. He declared that students possess different kinds of minds, and therefore they learn, remember, perform, and understand in different ways (Gardner, 1983), adding that individuals can view the world through language, music, thinking, spatial representations, logical–mathematical analyses, bodily movement, and understanding others or oneself. (Gardner, 1991; 1999). Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences (MI) has an underlying structure different from many of the current learning-style theories. According to Armstrong (1994), the MI theory is a cognitive model that seeks to describe how individuals use their intelligence to solve problems. Gardner’s technique is directed at how the human mind performs on the
contents of the world; by contrast, the other learning style models are mainly process-oriented.

**Relationship Between Culture and Learning Style**

How does culture influence the way individuals learn to know and understand the world? How does it influence the way they think and perceive or remember and solve problems? Learning styles are a component of cultural behavioral styles, habits, values, predisposition, and preferences.

Systems of education can also reflect cultural differences (Liu, 2001). Whereas in many industrial societies, the role of education is played almost entirely by schools and other formal institutions of higher learning, this is not necessarily true in other parts of the world. The role of educating children to become responsible adults in some societies is played primarily by parents and to a lesser degree by schools. In such societies children belong to the community, and it is the responsibility of all older people among them to teach the proper ways of behaving. Usually the older people, who are considered to be wiser than younger ones because of their experience from many years of living, are selected to be primary educators in society. In such cases, growing old is something to look forward to because with it comes power and prestige. Besides education, culture also influences the way people think, thus influencing cross-cultural encounters.

Cultural differences can be reflected in the different learning styles that people from various cultural backgrounds exhibit. Learning styles have been identified as an important variable in the school success (or failure) of ethnic minorities in the United
States. Bennett (1986) observed that U. S. schools tend toward monoethnicity, partly explaining the high school dropout rates among Hispanics, Native Americans, and African Americans. Native American students, for example, tend to approach tasks visually, prefer careful observation before performance, learning from their natural setting experientially. This is rooted in their culture, which teaches basic skills, such as hunting, tanning, and beadwork in a three-step sequence in context (Bennett, 1986). As the adult teaches the young learner such tasks, the use of speech is minimal. When children from such an environment go to school and find themselves in a situation where emphasis is placed on verbal performance, cultural shock occurs. If educators do not pay attention to these particular students’ special needs, the results can be devastating. One common reaction is for such students to resort to silence, which might be interpreted as intellectual inferiority. The concept of learning styles offers a value-neutral approach for understanding individual differences among ethnically diverse students. Many learning styles are polar opposites, representing a continuum from one extreme of a trait to another. Usually, no value judgment is made about where one falls on the continuum (Bennett, 1986). The assumption is that everyone can learn if teachers respond appropriately to individual learning needs.

Students in any classroom may differ greatly in their ability to rely on themselves, to take on new assignments, to make choices and to organize themselves and their materials. Some need frequent reassurance from the teacher and continually ask if what they are doing is right and what they should do next. Students also differ in their need for
an explanation of the instructions before beginning a test or assignment. Teachers who
give instructions to a group of 30 to 40 students cannot expect all of them to understand
the first or second time. A teacher might feel irritated at students who never seem to
listen or pay attention. In many cases, perhaps the students are not paying attention, but
students can differ in their need for directions from the teacher. Students at all age levels
differ from one another in their ability to carry out independent projects and activities.
Some can handle long-term assignments, but others can work independently only for
short periods of time.

Conceptions of Learning

Students’ conceptions of learning may also differ and may contribute to varying
success in the classroom. When differences are noted, they have often been categorized
into particular student stereotypes. This is especially true for students from Asian
countries with the development of an “Asian” student stereotype, which does not
distinguish among various groups of Asian students. The stereotypical view presents
Asian students as highly dependent on rote learning, concerned with reproducing what is
learned with little insight or understanding of the material. These stereotypes
miscategorize the learning and demonstrate a misunderstanding of how cultural norms
can shape the activities of the learning process, without necessarily changing the level of
information processing (McCargar, 1993).
Learning Styles and Teaching Styles

Teachers tend to teach the way they learn best unless they make a conscious effort to do otherwise. They can, therefore, discover a great deal about their teaching style by analyzing their own learning style. Indeed, this is important because just as students may be negatively affected by learning-style mismatches, teachers are often negatively affected by teaching-style mismatches. Teachers who consistently mismatch student learning styles and their own teaching styles report a feeling of awkwardness, lack of efficiency and authenticity, and pain (McCargar, 1993). In one recent review of learning-style research, Dunn and Dunn (1992) reported that when students are taught in terms of their individual learning styles, their academic achievement increases significantly; and their attitudes toward school improve significantly. Furthermore, students have significantly more positive attitudes toward a subject when their learning styles are similar to their teachers’ teaching styles.

Teacher and Student Perception of Role Expectations

Numerous researchers have focused their attention on teacher expectation as an important variable in the teaching learning process. Abundant evidence has indicated that teachers form expectations for student performance and tend to treat students differently depending on these expectations; furthermore, teacher expectations for student performance and presumably the behavioral manifestations of those expectations have also been shown to relate to measures of student academic achievement (McCargar, 1993; Tompson & Tompson, 1996). Problems may also occur in the classroom when the
expectations for teachers’ and students’ roles do not agree. McCargar conducted a study of postsecondary teachers and students in an English as a Second Language program. A new measurement instrument, the Survey of Educational Expectation (SEE) was developed. The surveys were administrated to 41 American ESL teachers and 162 ESL students from eight cultural groups. ANOVA tests were conducted on the data and revealed that 18 of 19 role expectation sets contained significant difference. Because the statistical procedure used was conservative, the author suggested that the difference may be even greater than this procedure showed. The areas that showed the greatest differences in expectation were the role of teacher, the teacher–student or student–student relationship, teacher response to student error, student attitude toward error, and teacher knowledge of subject. Example of the areas of greatest disagreement include such statements as language teachers should (a) correct every student error, (b) criticize students who make errors, (c) encourage students to disagree with them, (d) ask questions requiring a mechanical response, (e) admit not knowing the answer to a question, and (f) work with small groups of students during class. Although this study was conducted in an ESL context, the results suggest care needs to be taken in articulating teacher expectations of both teacher and student roles if classes with both American and international students are to be successful.

Classroom Communication and Interaction

Scholars have generally come to the consensus that intercultural interactions are more challenging and complex than intracultural ones (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984).
Without the common background of a shared culture, individuals tend to have a higher degree of uncertainty when initiating conversations with individuals from different cultures. Cheng (2003) examined the differences between initial interactions involving two Americans and interactions involving an American student with an international student. The results showed that American students had a greater degree of difficulty in finding common ground with international students than with other Americans. The participants reported having trouble finding conversation topics with their international partners because they were unfamiliar with the other culture. This absence of mutual knowledge created feelings of frustration and confusion in the American students.

The classroom environment provides a lens to observe and investigate intercultural communication. The assumptions, values, rules and customs, and practices and procedures that students from different backgrounds bring with them to the classroom setting strongly affect classroom communication. Learning environments are culturally diverse, and they alter the communication patterns of people within them. In American classrooms students from diverse backgrounds may appear to approach teamwork and problem-solving differently, or they may appear to have different time and spatial orientations, or they may hold different attitudes toward oral classroom participation. Some students may feel more comfortable being with classmates from similar cultural backgrounds because they can experience greater predictability of interaction and emotional security. Others may find it more stimulating to exchange ideas with those from different cultural backgrounds. The diverse nature of American
classrooms offers many opportunities for exploring and understanding cultural differences and complexities.

Liu (2001) proposed four classroom participation patterns in his study: total integration, conditional participation, marginal interaction, and silent observation. These patterns reflect a decreased level of involvement in classroom communication from total integration to silent observation. Total integration means that Asian students are active participants in American classrooms. They follow the flow of the class, knowing exactly when to speak up and what to say. Asian students with this pattern understand what constitutes normal classroom behavior in this culture, what is considered an appropriate role in class discussion, and what a student should do to contribute to the success of a class. Total integration can be considered as a high level of acculturation in classroom setting.

Conditional participation means that Asian students’ classroom participation is constrained by a number of factors, such as sociocultural, affective, linguistic, or environmental. They might be highly motivated, but their actual participation and interaction with classmates and the teacher are limited. Their own social identities and their perceptions of what is appropriate in the classroom in their home cultures often inhibit them.

Marginal interaction refers to students who are very attentive listeners but seldom speak up in class. Their peripheral participation is compensated for by listening, note-taking, and group discussion after class. These students are less adventurous and usually
rely on their own familiar classroom communication strategies used in their home countries to fit into the target classroom culture. When they occasionally speak up in classes, they are generally confident because their comments are usually the result of careful thinking and internal rehearsal.

Silent observation, considered the prototypical Asian classroom communication pattern, is characterized by students’ withdrawal from oral classroom participation and their seemingly unconditional acceptance of what is discussed in class. These students use various compensation strategies (e.g., tape-recording, note-taking, or small-group discussion) to help digest and confirm what has been communicated in class. The factors underlying their silence in class are extremely complicated and often cause misinterpretation and misunderstanding; however, we should keep in mind that individual participation patterns are not always static. The result of their changing perceptions of classroom communication and interaction occur because of such factors as increased or decreased self-confidence and positive or negative feedback.

Familiarity with some of the unique characteristics of Asian cultures is helpful in studying intercultural communication in the classroom setting. In most Asian societies students often view teachers as having a parental role, and they expect teachers to tell them what to do and to impart “truth.” They do not expect to speak in class, and they memorize what they are taught. These students are often frustrated when applying their memorization skills to the extensive materials presented in American classroom and are therefore reluctant to engage in class discussion (Sheehan & Person, 1995). In some
Asian societies, the teacher is viewed as someone who hands down sacred truth, and students would seldom disagree with such a revered figure. The task of the student is to absorb knowledge, and self-disclosure is not central to the development of intimacy between the teacher and the students.

In terms of group work, Hyde (1993) conducted action research on pair work, looking for different modes of classroom interaction (e.g., group work, individual work, whole-class work) in a mixed-nationality ESL (English as Second Language) classroom. Findings show that students who complained of domineering partners were generally Japanese. Hyde speculated that Japanese students may well hold different cultural and behavioral expectations in relation to turn-taking and conversation management that were not met in these interactions. Misunderstandings between Japanese and Americans speakers are also influenced by different ways of structuring information. The American value of directness is contrasted with the Japanese value of maintaining harmony. Japanese use a variety of conversation tactics to avoid direct disagreement (Liu, 2001).

*Concept of Face*

In essence the concept of face places great significance on social relationship and communication in Asian cultures. Group harmony and thus in-group interdependence, is achieved through the maintenance of everyone’s face in the society and trying hard not to cause anyone to “lose face.” Chinese social relationships are achieved through group harmony, avoidance of the loss of face of others and oneself in the group, and a modest presentation of oneself. In a group, for instance, one does not say what one actually
thinks so that others will not be hurt. In conversation, Asians usually place greater
emphasis on the harmony of the interactions; therefore, the theme of “facework”
permeates many Asian cultures and profoundly influences how Asians interact with
others.

Face (mianzi in Mandarin) in the Chinese context entails projected social images
and social self-respect. The Asian “self” is a more collectivistic one, which is connected
to membership in basic groups such as the family, the social circle, and the workplace.
The Asian “self” is part of a large social group and is more conscious of the consequence
of their actions on the addressee (Scollen & Scollen, 1995). Chinese respect for the
relationship is achieved through group harmony and avoidance of the loss of face of
others and oneself in the group. Influenced by Confucianism, Asian students are taught to
respect people in a group instead of satisfying their individual desire for freedom. The
appropriateness of actions or words in a given group or community should be considered
before they are taken or spoken. Consequently, many Asian students do not participate
actively in class most of the time because they think they might reduce their classmates’
opportunities to speak up, and this would cause their classmates to lose face (mianzi in
Mandarin); they are unable to participate in class discussion because of the others’ active
participation, translated as “dominance.” In choosing not to dominate the class
discussion, many Asian students do not speak actively, tending instead to quiet in class to
be polite. By not disrupting the teacher, not taking too much class time, and considering
other classmates’ time and opportunities to speak up first, these Asian students give face
to others in class as a sign of politeness. They believe that their silence in class helps them to maintain their own face as they hope to be viewed as being agreeable and polite.

**Concept of Silence**

Of crucial importance in Asian culture, silence can have different meanings, depending on social contexts. We silence others “to gain attention, to maintain control, to protect, to teach, to attempt to eliminate distractions, to induce reverence for authority or tradition, and to point to something greater than ourselves or group” (Ishii & Bruneau, 1991, p. 315); instead of seeing silence as indicating a problem to be avoided or even as a weapon of resistance. Silence as a sign of respect for the wisdom or expertise of others is valued and rewarded in Asian cultures. In addition, many international students come from academic environments in their own countries that discourage active participation and speaking for any reason in class. Those students, generally Asian students, find adaptation to the Americans classroom especially difficult and hence experience great stress when forced to give presentations, participate in group activities, or simply ask questions. Western tradition by contrast often holds negative attitudes toward silence, especially in social and public relations. According to Wayne (1974), the U. S. interpretations of silence are (a) sorrow, (b) critique, (c) obligation, (d) regret, and (e) embarrassment. It should be pointed out that the intercultural implications of silent behaviors are diverse because the value and use of silence as communication varies a great deal across cultures. Ting-Toomey (1999) stated, “It is through the mirror of other that we learn to know ourselves, and it is through facing our own discomfort and anxiety
that we learn to stretch and grow” (p. 8). For successful intercultural communication to happen, everyone in the classroom must become responsible for creating an environment in which the constant adjustment of communication patterns is a norm.

Teacher–Student Interaction

In an ethnographic study of teacher–student interaction in a language classroom, Enright (1994) found that the two teachers he studied differed in their attitudes toward classroom interaction. One teacher preferred that his students not speak unless they were spoken to, but the other teacher allowed his students to say whatever they wanted in class. As the result, student interaction patterns varied significantly. Studies on classroom interactions in the non-ESL classroom have been instructive. For instance, quite a few studies of gender influence on student–faculty interaction have taken place in the college classroom (Cornelius, Gary & Constantinople, 1990). The findings indicated that it was not the gender of the student, the gender of the instructor or their interaction, but instead the curriculum (e.g., science or language arts), class size, and time that had a significant effect on patterns of student classroom interaction.

Active oral classroom participation is highly encouraged in U. S. universities, but the fact that many Asian students tend to be quiet in the class causes many professors to wonder what is going on in their minds. Often misunderstandings occur between professors and Asian students because of their different interpretation of silence in class. Classroom participation offers a lens through which we can understand the process of adaptive cultural transformation. For many reasons classroom participation warrants
investigation. Asian students must go through the cross-cultural adaptation process, and the rate and level of adaptation will vary from person to person. The successful completion of such a cultural adaptation process requires and increases psychological health and intercultural identity (Liu, 2001). Although no causal relationship between these attributes and students’ active classroom participation may exist, the lack of the latter will negatively affect cultural adaptation outcomes. Increased classroom participation helps Asian students to communicate their ideas better and to more efficiently engage in spontaneous social transaction as well as enhance their confidence (Liu).

**Unique Characteristics of the Mixed-Culture Classroom**

Many different problems exist within the mixed-culture classroom. A study by Tompson and Tompson (1996) revealed five major behaviors that undermined the academic success of international students. An email survey was distributed to business school faculty at two Southeastern United States universities. Faculty participants were asked to identify international student behaviors detrimental to student success and then to rate those behaviors on a 5-point Likert scale. Faculty were also asked to describe any proactive strategies they employed to combat these behaviors. In addition, an email survey was sent to international students in a business school, who were asked to identify the most difficult aspects of attending a university outside the home country. Focus groups were then conducted with the students to enable the researchers to investigate more deeply the answers received. The top five self-undermining behaviors reported by
faculty were (a) not participating in class, (b) not seeking clarification on assignments, (c) sitting only with other international students, (d) studying only with international students, and (e) breaching ethical standards of scholarship. Surprisingly, the number one difficulty reported by students was not language barrier but instead the difficulty of developing a social network. Loneliness and fear of not “fitting in” became a major preoccupation for the students until a stable social network was achieved.

International Students’ Experience in the American Classroom

The definition of an international student is one who enters the United States (or anywhere else) on a student visa with the sole objective of attending school and remains there only for the duration of a course of study (Rai, 2002). In most countries, international students have a special legal status; and they are not citizens and do not have the same rights as citizens. In many countries, including the United States, employment restrictions or bans are placed on international students. Under U. S. immigration law “foreign” students are determined to be here for the primary purpose of obtaining an education. The student visa that permits them to enter the United States is awarded explicitly for the purpose of academic study. They must always maintain full-time status, and employment, when allowable, is usually limited to part-time work. Although these regulations may be reasonable at first glance, international students pay a nonresident rate of tuition that can be twice as high as the cost to residents. Also, they do not have the same flexibility as host country students to drop in and out of school, reduce their course load, or work to help support themselves. This can cause great stress among
those who find themselves having difficulties with their studies or are experiencing serious financial problems (Rai, 2002). In this study, the researcher focused only on the subset group Taiwanese graduate students, the graduate students who came from Taiwan and stay in the USA for the duration of a course of study.

*Language, Culture, and Communication*

A language is part of culture and a culture is part of language; the two are intricately interwoven such that one cannot separate one without losing the significance of the other (Kramsch, 1998). Language cannot be used without carrying meanings and referring beyond itself, and learning a language is an intricate process involving not only learning the alphabet, the meaning and arrangement of words, the rules of grammar, and understanding of literature but also learning the new languages of the body, behavior, and cultural customs (Kramsch). Language is a product of the thought and behavior of a society. An individual language speaker’s effectiveness in a foreign language is directly related to his understanding of the culture of that language (Kramsch). The learning of a second language (L2) requires cultural as well as linguistic competence because all languages live within cultural contexts. Thus, L2 learners must acquire not only the lexicon and syntax of the language, but also the ability required to use these elements in culturally appropriate ways during L2 communication (Kramsch).

While studying in the US, international students encounter language shock and culture shock when attempting to communicate in a second language. International students need to take the words in context because words have situated meaning. In
natural conversations, sentences are sometimes incomplete or ambiguous. Language provides a variety of labels to refer to an object or an action, and the meaning of the term might shift with the time or situation (Gee, 1986). To some international students with limited linguistic and intercultural communicative competence, misunderstandings and frustrations will occur while they interact with others. The results might cause them to avoid interacting with Americans or interacting with Americans more to solve the questions.

*International Students’ Difficulties in American Classrooms*

International students are culturally different from host nationals, bringing with them their cultural orientations: their individual values, beliefs, patterns of behaviors, and ways of learning and thinking. Some of these contrast sharply with those of the host culture and can cause serious communication and interaction problems between internationals and their hosts. Many features of the new cultures are also subtle and difficult to recognize, often leaving international students in a state of ambiguity and uncertainty. Studies on cultural adjustment of foreign students have been an important development in recent years. According to some research and the researcher’s previous studies, four main difficulties for international students identified by these studies are language proficiency, cultural awareness, academic stress, social support (Chen, 1996; Parker 1999; Swagler & Ellis, 2003).
Language Proficiency

Language proficiency was identified as a major source of stress and frustration or challenge to international students (Chen, 1996; Heggins & Jackson, 2003; Yeh & Inose, 2003). Limited linguistic knowledge causes great anxiety for students, and international students will remain silent, avoiding active participation in classroom discussion. Also international students have difficulty understanding the complexity of the readings and producing writing that meets the high expectations of the professors. Chen (1996) stated that international students found that it is difficult to keep pace with their classmates in classroom discussion. International students’ accent or use of different expressions can interfere with communication while he or she talks with Americans. They also need to be familiar with idioms and college slang as well as be proficient in academic English. Such language problems blocked the understanding of communication with Americans academically and socially (Chen, 1996; Heggins & Jackson; Ying, 2003). Once international students begin their academic study in U. S. universities, they become involved in an ongoing process of communication in terms of negotiation and evaluation.

Canale (1983) posited four major components in the communication process: grammatical competence (knowledge of vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, and syntax); social linguistic competence (rules of governing the use of forms and meanings in different contexts); discourse competence (the knowledge required to combine forms and meanings to achieve unified spoken and written discourse); and strategic competence (knowledge of verbal and nonverbal communication strategies). To be successful in U. S.
higher education, international students need all these competencies, which can be very challenging to acquire.

Xu (1991) conducted a survey of 450 international students in three large universities on the U. S. East Coast. Instead of relying on standardized tests like TOEFL, this survey measured international students’ self-perception of the level of academic difficulty they encountered in performing their required academic tasks. The results indicated that students who believed that their English was adequate (based on their self-estimates of their English competence in dealing with the required academic tasks) encountered fewer academic difficulties than those who believed it inadequate. One of the implications of the study is that international students’ academic coping skills can be conceptualized as the combination of their ability to use English and their ability to handle their academic tasks. In other words, English proficiency is necessary but not sufficient for academic success.

The lack of communicative competence, which is not fully reflected in TOEFL or other standardized tests, often causes international students academic stress once they are in the United States. Wan, Chapman, and Biggs (1992) conducted a survey of 689 international graduate students enrolled in three major upstate New York universities. A cognitive framework in which academic stress was understood as the consequence of students’ perceiving themselves as having better English language skills revealed students as less likely to view academic situations as stressful and more likely to believe they were able to cope with the stress they experienced. The students who perceived themselves as
having weak language skills found those same situations more stressful and believed they were unable to cope with the stress they experienced. The contributions of perceived English language skills in reducing stress outranked all other variables combined. Results of this study suggested that academic adjustment for international graduate students is closely related to their perceived language skills, especially in terms of note-taking, conversing with faculty, and participating in class discussions.

Cultural Awareness

When international students come to the American colleges and universities, they report many cultural differences in classrooms and daily life in the United States (Chen, 1996; Liu, 2001; Parker, 1999). Cultural differences may also play an important role in the international student’s ability or inability to form social relationships. For example, the concept of friendship is often viewed differently in diverse cultures. Such cultural awareness resulted in different degrees of dilemma and frustration in adjusting the American culture. Students from different cultures learn in different ways, and they differ in cognitive styles and communicative styles. Understanding Taiwanese students’ cultural backgrounds and learning experiences and styles will contribute to their success of learning (Chen, 1996; Swagler & Ellis, 2003).

According to Parker (1999), international students indicated that different cultural values, attitudes and beliefs affected their academic and daily life. Language barriers and lack of cultural knowledge made it hard for international students to develop intimate relationships with American students. When they made friends with American students,
international students could have only superficial relationship with them. Cross-cultural difference in social interaction may also prevent international students from forming close relationships with American students. Having international students on campus could be a culture shock for American faculty and students as well, and researchers have shown that international students can be a very good source for promoting cultural awareness on American campuses (Lacina, 2002; Selvadurai, 1998).

**Academic Stress**

International students come to American universities mainly for professional growth (Chen, 1996; Parker, 1999; Wan, 2001). Based on his study of a Taiwanese cohort education program, Parker stated that Taiwanese students were more task-oriented, had difficulty in writing academic and scholarly articles, and needed further assistance in developing academic writing skills. When American instructors required more classroom discussions, students had difficulty in adjusting to the way they taught, especially when they expected students to develop independent critical thinking skills. International students usually experienced psychological stress, compounded by an unfamiliar culture where they could comprehend the language only to a limited extent.

**Social Support**

Most international students face social problems related to social integration, daily life tasks, homesickness, and role conflicts, often feeling overwhelmed by cultural differences, and frequently express concerns about competitiveness, individualism, and
assertiveness in American culture (Liu, 2001). The strain of adjusting to American culture can have a negative effect on their self-confidence and self-esteem. When they first come to the United States, international students often feel the absence of their own traditional sources of social support and the familiar means by which such support is expressed (Pederson, 1991). Social support is, therefore, important not only for self-esteem and self-confidence but also for helping reduce stress in social adjustment. Not many studies have investigated the relationship between international students’ cross-cultural adjustment and social support (Chapdeline & Alexitch, 2004; Yeh & Inose 2003; Ying & Liese, 1994). Some studies, however, have implied the importance of social support among sojourners (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Yeh & Inose). A loss of social support influences the psychological well-being of international students, who tend to feel a deep sense of loss when leaving their families and friends behind. They find establishing comparable support systems in the US challenging, and they may feel dissatisfied with their new social relationships; however, contact, friendship, and support provided specifically by host nationals may be more important in the long run for facilitating better adjustment and reducing strain (Hechanova-Alampay et al.; Yeh & Inose).

Some studies also reveal a gender difference in terms of social support. In many cultures, women provide their partners with significantly more social support than men, resulting in higher levels of marital stress, role conflict, and depression in women (Mallinckridt & Leong, 1992). It is also interesting to note that married male students
were reported to suffer less stress than married women, probably because female students experienced significantly greater role conflicts stemming from their responsibilities as wives and mothers in addition to their obligations as students. For women, a flexible curriculum, departmental support services, financial aid, and good relations with other students helped reduced stress and anxiety (Mallinckridt & Leong).

To investigate international students’ perceptions of their own adaptation to a new academic and social milieu and to analyze their interactions in the host culture, Heikinheimo and Shute (1986) conducted a study using both structured and unstructured interviews and participant observation at a Canadian university. Results covered four aspects: language skills, academic concerns, family support and expectations, and cultural difference. As far as language skills were concerned, to adapt successfully to North American culture, the students have to master both conversational and formal English, the former for everyday and social communication and the latter for academic work. In terms of academic concerns, the students experienced heavy academic pressure. Family support and expectations seemed to be an important factor in students’ attempts to perform well. As for cultural differences, most students interviewed believed that the differences between their own culture and the target culture often presented barriers to interacting with native speakers of English. Unfortunately, some international students believed they were discriminated against, leading to feelings of insecurity and a sensation of being unwelcome. In sum, almost all international students have experienced potential inhibitors and stimulators of interaction within the host society. Obviously, language
barriers may cause international students to avoid mixing with local people, but at the same time, they might stimulate interaction. A heavy academic load, conversely, might reduce the time available for international students to interact and make friends with native speakers in the target culture.

A survey was conducted among 440 international graduate students at a large Eastern university to identify the types of social support most helpful to international graduate students (Mallinckridt & Leong, 1992). Meaningful relationships with faculty, faculty interest in students’ professional development, and the quality of instruction have a strong protective effect against the development of stress and depression in international students. This finding is in agreement with several earlier studies that revealed that the quality of faculty relationships may be especially important for international students, given their preference for formal sources of help (Leong & Sedlacek, 1986) and the difficulties they face in establishing social relationships with their American counterparts (Furnham & Bochner, 1986).

Summary

A semiotic relationship exists among communication, culture, teaching, and learning (Gay, 2003) because what we talk about, how we talk about it, what we see or attend to or ignore, how we think, and what we think about are influenced by our culture and help to shape, define, and perpetuate it. Bruner (1996) stated, “Learning and thinking are always situated in a cultural setting and always dependent upon the utilization of cultural resources” (p. 4). Culture provides the tools to pursue the search for meaning and
to convey our understanding to others. Consequently, communication cannot exist without culture, culture cannot be known without communication, and teaching and learning cannot occur without communication or culture.

All instruction is created within a particular culture and is influenced by that the beliefs of the people in that culture. With the increase in both international students and American students from international backgrounds, different approaches are required in university teaching to offer all students the opportunity to excel.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Overview of the Study

The number of international students attending American universities has continued to increase, and the presence of these students has offered both opportunities and challenges to faculty. Teaching in a mixed culture classroom has afforded faculty the opportunity to revise teaching strategies and to develop professional skills as well as offer local students the benefits of enhanced curriculum, fresh questions, and new approaches. The purpose of this study was to explore the cross-cultural challenges, experiences, and adjustments of university faculty while teaching in a mixed-culture classroom in which Taiwanese graduate students were enrolled.

Qualitative Study

*Phenomenology*

The word phenomenology comes from the Greek phainomenon, which means the appearance of things or phenomena (Spinelli, 1989). The aim of phenomenology is the description of phenomena, not explanation. Phenomena include anything that appears or presents itself, individual emotions, thoughts, and physical objects. Phenomenology
means describing things as one experiences them, and this means a turning away from science and scientific knowledge and returning to the “things themselves” (Husserl, 1970, p. 252).

A qualitative design rooted in phenomenology was used as a framework to explore the cross-cultural challenges, experiences and adjustments of professors who taught in a mixed-culture classroom in which Taiwanese graduate students were enrolled. “Phenomenological study describes the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or the phenomenon” (Creswell, 2003, p. 51). Researchers in the phenomenological mode attempt to understand the meaning of events and interactions of ordinary people in particular situations. Phenomenologists do not assume they know what things mean to the people whom they study but instead attempt to gain entry into the world of their subjects in order to understand how and what they construct around events in their daily life (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998; Bogdan & Biklen 1998; Creswell 1997).

**Rationale for Qualitative Method**

The purpose of qualitative research is to develop an understanding of individuals and events in their natural state, taking into account the relevant context. This is in contrast to the purpose of quantitative research, where the goal is to make objective description of certain limited phenomena and determine the controlling effects of particular interventions. It is not a question of one method being better than the other, but
instead that the different underlying assumptions of each paradigm make each suited for investigating very different types of questions.

The purpose of this study was to explore university faculty members’ experiences and adjustments while teaching Taiwanese graduate students in mixed-culture classrooms and faculty members’ interactions with them. A qualitative approach was, therefore, chosen.

Research Questions

Several questions were developed to guide the researcher in her examination of this area. These questions are:

1. What differences do faculty who teach Taiwanese graduate students and U. S. students in the same class perceive, if any?

2. How does classroom interaction differ when Taiwanese graduate students are present?

3. What instructional changes do faculty make when they teach a class with Taiwanese graduate students, if any?

4. Do faculty perceptions of Taiwanese graduate students change in the academic context? If they do, in what way?
Study Design

Context of the Study

Data collection for this study took place on the campus of a large research university in the Midwestern United States during the fall semester of 2006 and the spring semester of 2007. During the 2006 school year, the university had a population of 838 international students from 10 countries with approximately 5.9% from Taiwan. According to the data from the campus office of International Students and Scholar Service, Taiwanese students majored in education, computer science, business administration, art, music, nursing, and English. This suggested that there was a likelihood of finding participants within these departments who had the necessary experience of teaching Taiwanese graduate students to fit the parameters of this study.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in a qualitative study is critical in that the researcher herself or himself is the research instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher is the primary tool in qualitative research and must establish rapport and trust with each participant if the research is to be successful. The results of the present study were shared with the participants in summary format. More detailed information was made available if requested.
Gaining Access

Gaining access to the setting and to individual participants is a critical issue in qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Because this study was conducted within a university setting, the researcher has a level of access based on her membership in the academic community and her position as the vice-president of the Taiwanese Student Association on campus. In addition, the researcher had the assistance of personnel in several university offices, including the International Student and Scholar Service and the Faculty Professional Development Center.

Confidentiality and protection of the participants are also major concerns in qualitative research (Seidman, 1998). A description of this research was submitted to the participants. All results were presented in a generic form, so no identification of individual participants is possible in the final report.

In addition, an important element of the process is informed consent, which means that participants were fully aware of the purpose and ultimate use of the study and their voluntary role in it. Participants had control over their participation and were free to withdraw at any time without penalty. An informed consent form, written and signed, was obtained from each participant at the start of the interview process. A copy of the approved form is located in Appendix A.

Participant Selection

In qualitative studies there are no hard and fast rules about sample selection or size (Patton, 2001). The guiding principles depend on the types of questions asked and
the particular population studied. The situation of the sample was determined according to the needs of the study; participants were representatives of the same experience or knowledge; they were not selected because of their demographic characteristics. A good informant is one who has the knowledge and experience the researcher requires, has the ability to reflect, has the time to be interviewed, and is willing to participate in the study (Patton, 1990); therefore, participants were selected who had taught or were currently teaching a course with a minimum of one Taiwanese student and who were willing to take part in a one-hour interview, allow the interview to be recorded, and permit classroom observation to take place, if necessary.

At the beginning of fall semester 2006, an email solicitation was sent to the members of the Taiwanese Student Association, requesting their help in the project (Appendix B). Contact was initiated with the 25 faculty members they recommended. An email was sent and followed up by a phone call or another email (See Appendix C). Often two or three emails or phone calls were necessary in order to establish contact. Some people were never successfully contacted. Several faculty expressed interest but were unable to schedule interviews because of scheduling conflicts or personal illness. Ultimately, 15 faculty members agreed to participate in the study. Data was therefore gathered from 15 faculty members from the list of recommendations. Participants were selected from different content areas in different colleges in order to give more breadth to the sample. The final breakdown of the participants included eight full professors, four associate professors, and three assistant professors. Of these nine were female, and six
were male. One came from the College of Communication Studies; five, from the College of Education, Health, and Human Services; three, from the College of Nursing; three, from the College of Business Administration; and three, from the College of Arts and Sciences.

Method of Data Collection

*Interviews*

The main method of data collection, the interview method is one of the most frequently used methods in qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Interviews may range from structured, in which each participant is asked the same questions, and there is no room for adaptation to a completely open-ended, informal approach, in which the questions change depending on the particular participant. The current study adopted a semi-structured format. The data collection took place in a single face-to-face interview with each participant at his or her office, and each interview lasted from 45–60 minutes. A set of guiding questions was developed as the interview protocol (See Appendix D).

*Note-Taking*

Although the digital recording yielded an accurate account of what was said, it was important for the researcher to take notes as well, not only to provide a set of backup data but also to serve as an additional data source because participants communicated
additional information, for example, by body language not captured by the digital voice recorder.

Reflective Journal

A third data source was a reflective journal maintained by the researcher. The journal was valuable in tracing the development of the study and the researcher’s ideas. In addition, the researcher’s biases could be identified; self-awareness of these biases is an important part of ensuring that the meaning drawn from analysis of data is not unduly influenced or skewed (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The journal was used as a reference point throughout the data collection and coding process, allowing the researcher to keep track of emerging themes and ideas, which were then fed back to informants as part of the member check process.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted along the lines of the three-step process suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994). The process consists of data reduction, data display, conclusion-drawing, and verification. Data was coded according to the procedures set by Strauss and Corbin (1990). The three layers of coding or analyzing data are open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

Open coding occurred at the beginning of a study. The primary goals of open coding are to conceptualize and categorize data, achieved through two basic analytic procedures: making comparisons and asking questions of the data. Open coding begins
the process of labeling many individual phenomena. In time, a number of individually labeled concepts are clustered around a related theme. The individual concepts are gathered together to form more powerful and abstract categories. Open coding is achieved by examining the transcripts by line, by sentence, or by paragraph, and sometimes by scanning the entire document.

The second stage of data analysis is axial coding. Strauss and Corbin (1998) described axial coding “as the process of relating categories to their subcategories, . . . linking a category at the level of properties and dimension” (p. 123). A coding paradigm involving conditions, actions, interactions, and consequences actualizes the process. The focus of axial coding is to create a model that details the specific conditions that give rise to the occurrence of a phenomenon. Conditions can exist as causal, intervening, contextual, or all of these. Causal conditions include the factors that lead to the occurrence of the phenomenon, the subject under study, or the central idea. Intervening conditions comprise a broad host of factors that can bear down upon the phenomenon and consist of those conditions that “mitigate or otherwise impact causal conditions on phenomena” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 131). Contextual conditions are the “specific set of conditions (patterns of conditions) that intersect dimensionally at this time and place to create a set of circumstances or problems to which persons respond through actions/interactions” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 132). Actions and interactions are processes that are facilitated and constrained under given conditions. Finally, consequences are the outcomes of the phenomena as they are engaged through action and
interaction. In axial coding, four analytical processes occur: (a) continually relating subcategories to a category, (b) comparing categories with the collect data, (c) expanding the density of the categories by detailing their properties and dimensions, and (d) exploring variations in the phenomena.

The final stage of data analysis is selective coding, which builds upon the foundation of the previous open and axial coding efforts. Selective coding is “the process of selecting the central or core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 116). Strauss and Corbin (1990) stated that this central or core category should have the analytic power to “pull the other categories together to form an explanatory whole” and “should be able to account for considerable variation with categories” (p. 146). During this level of coding, theoretical saturation should be reached. This means that no new properties, dimensions, or relationships emerged during analysis.

The actual data analysis began shortly after the interviews were conducted and transcribed and continued during the data collection process. All transcripts were read over more than once, the researcher going through the coding process three or four times, gaining new insights and increasing skills. To address issues of bias, a fellow doctoral student coded the data individually. The results of her coding were compared and discussed.
Postanalysis

The postanalysis was not in the original study. While the researcher wrote the findings, the relationship between participants’ cultural awareness and their adjustments in teaching drew her attention, and other questions emerged: Does participants’ cultural awareness affect their willingness to adjust in teaching? How do I know their level of cultural awareness? How can I determine whether a positive correlation exists between the participants’ cultural awareness and their willingness to adjust in teaching? How do they think about students’ culture? How do they think about cultural differences? The interviews with participants focused on their experiences and adjustments in a mixed-culture classroom, so the interview questions were not designed to investigate their cultural awareness at a deeper level. Because it was too late to administer the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) to the participants at this stage of my study, I culled participants’ statements that reflected their behaviors and attitudes toward the students’ culture and the participants’ own culture and used the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) to identify participants’ cultural awareness.

The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), designed by Milton Bennett and Mitchell Hammer (1998, 2001), is the empirical theory-referenced psychometric instrument of the DMIS. Although IDI constructs are fundamentally the same as the dimensions of the DMIS, the IDI is refined and reorganized with five scales and ten clusters to measure one’s worldview structure.
Established in chapter 2, the DMIS “describes a learner’s subjective experience of cultural difference . . . this experience is termed ‘intercultural sensitivity’ . . . . This development model posits a continuum of increasing sophistication in dealing with cultural difference” (Bennett, 1993, p. 22). Each orientation of the DMIS is indicative of a particular worldview structure with certain kinds of attitudes and behavior vis-à-vis cultural difference. The DMIS describes the alternative ways in which a person perceives and makes sense of cultural difference. Bennett referred to this subjective experience of difference as intercultural sensitivity, a developmental phenomenon that can be described in terms of six intercultural worldviews. Three of these worldview orientations are ethnocentric (denial, defense, and minimization), where one’s own culture is central to reality and serves as the lens or frame through which one perceives and interprets other cultures. Here, cultures are understood and evaluated on the basis of the monocultural perspective. The three ethnorelative worldviews (acceptance, adaptation, and integration) represent an important paradigm shift to the view that cultures can be best understood in their own context and are thus relative to one another. They cannot be either interpreted or judged in any meaningful way from a solely monocultural perspective.

The DMIS provides a framework for understanding individual development and awareness along a continuum from a highly ethnocentric to highly ethnorelative and has six stages (denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration) that are used to describe the increasingly complex cognitive structures used to view the world. As
one’s experience with cultural differences becomes more sophisticated, one’s competence in intercultural relationship is strengthened.

Based on participants’ statements that included evidence of cultural awareness and adjustments in teaching, the researcher placed the participants into three groups:

Group 1: No evidence that faculty member considered the role of culture in her or his understanding of students’ behavior or adapted teaching

Group 2: Participants were able or more flexible about using different instructional strategies (i.e., more small group activities) and rearranging assignments accordingly. Faculty in this group were aware of students’ culture and adapted their teaching. For example, instructor recognized that students might feel more comfortable in speaking up in small group discussion and therefore used more small group discussion in class to encourage participation and facilitate the learning.

Group 3: Faculty members in this group recognized students’ cultural background and the cultural differences they brought to class. Instructors make use of students’ background and cultural differences to adjust their teaching and curriculum content. For example, the instructor might ask the students to share the teacher education and national education policy of Taiwan in class and let the class compare and contrast with education in the US.

The details about the relationship between participants’ cultural awareness and their adjustments to classroom procedure are discussed in chapters 4 and 5.
Trustworthiness

“Being trustworthy as a qualitative researcher means at the least that the processes of the research are carried out fairly, that the products represent as closely as possible the experiences of the people who are studied” (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner & Steinmetz, 1991, p. 93). Making an effort to represent the experiences of the people studied is an attempt to match research findings with the reality of the experience. Trustworthiness has been further partitioned into credibility, which corresponds roughly with the positive concept of internal validity; dependability, which relates more to reliability; transferability, which is a form of external validity; and confirmability, which relates to possible personal assumptions, values, and identified biases (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Holstein & Gubrium, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility

Several questions can be asked to evaluate the credibility: Do the findings of the study make sense? Are the findings credible to the participants in the study and to outside readers? Several techniques are suggested by Lincoln and Guba for establishing credibility including triangulation, peer debriefing, and member check (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Triangulation is the combination of two or more data sources, investigators, methodological approaches, theoretical perspectives (Denzin, 1970; Kimchi, Polivka, & Stevenson, 1991), or analytical perspectives (Kimchi et al.) within the same study to establish credibility. These combinations result in data triangulation, investigator
triangulation, methodological triangulation, theoretical triangulation (Patton, 2001).

Denzin (1970) extended the idea of triangulation beyond its conventional association with research methods, distinguishing four forms of triangulation:

1. Data triangulation entails gathering data through several sampling strategies so that slices of data are gathered at different times and social situations as well as on a variety of people. Italics not necessary, deleted.

2. Investigator triangulation involves the use of more than one researcher in the field to gather and interpret data.

3. Theoretical triangulation applies more than one theoretical position in interpreting data.

4. Methodological triangulation involves the use of more than one method for gathering data.

When more than one type of triangulation is used, for example, two or more data sources along with two or more investigators, the resulting complex triangulation is referred to as multiple triangulation (Polit & Hungler, 1995).

Although reliance on any one source may lead to a distorted interpretation of the object of the study, multiple sources reduce the risks by offering different perspectives. Peer debriefing provides the researcher with a sounding board for her or his ideas and interpretations. It also allows for the identification of the researcher’s biases and the discovery of their potential effect on the interpretation of the data. The technique of member checks consists of presenting research findings to the participants and seeking
confirmation from them that the interpretations are valid. Further reflection may offer the opportunity for further development and refinement.

During the study, three of these techniques—data triangulation, member check and peer debriefing—were used. The collection of data from the experiences of different faculty members, their areas of expertise, and their differing perspectives satisfied the need for triangulation, and multiple informants confirmed the general themes emerging from the study. Member checks were also used repeatedly, either in interview or follow-up phone calls or email interviews. Finally, peer debriefings took place throughout the duration of the study with two other doctoral students.

**Dependability**

The issue of dependability can also be called as auditability. One way of documenting dependability is to have an audit trail, which consists of careful documentation of every aspect of the research project from its inception to its completion. This document should be detailed enough to allow a reconstruction of the process by which the researcher reached her or his conclusion.

**Transferability**

Transferability in qualitative research is not based simply on extrapolating results from a representative sample to the general population. It is the responsibility of the researcher to demonstrate particular transferability and provide an adequate description of the situation so that others may make judgments on the transferability of the findings.
based on how close their situation is to the one reported (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

*Confirmability*

Confirmability concerns the researcher’s neutrality and biases. In the interview process the researcher is necessarily part of the process and has a direct effect upon the responses of the participants.

**Limitations**

The study is limited in particular areas. One limitation is the sample size and time used to gather data. From fall 2006 to spring 2007, data was collected from faculty members who taught Taiwanese students during that period of time. Only 15 participants agreed to be interviewed, and the interview lasted 45 to 60 minutes. If the researcher had been able to conduct more than one interview with each participant and conduct classroom observations, the data would have provided additional evidence and deeper insights.

Another limitation involves the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). The researcher found it impossible to administer the IDI while writing the results of the research during the final stage of the study; therefore, she chose to do a postanalysis to investigate the relationship between participants’ intercultural sensitivity and their willingness to adjust classroom procedure. If more participants had been involved and the researcher had administered the IDI at the beginning of the study as a pretest and once again as a posttest, the data would have revealed additional evidence regarding the
faculty members’ cultural awareness and the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and adjustment in teaching.

Summary

This study was designed to examine faculty perception of, willingness to adjust for, and experience with Taiwanese graduate students enrolled at a university. Through interviews, I gathered data and examined faculty members’ viewpoints, their attitudes toward students and their culture, and their flexibility in teaching. I discovered their perceptions of Taiwanese graduate students, their experience in teaching Taiwanese graduate students, and their willingness to adjust their teaching.

This chapter described the process used to identify the data sources, gather the data, process it, and identify the themes. It also provided the criteria used for establishing the framework of the study. The next chapter covers findings as they relate to the research questions.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Everyone is a member of a particular cultural group. One’s culture shapes one’s perceptions and actions (Hofstede, 1980). For this reason, discovering the background of the participants in the study, including their educational experience and their exposure to other cultures either through travel or through experiences here in the US, was important. The participants freely provided information and gave detailed descriptions of their background and teaching experience.

Each participant is identified throughout this study by a number, which was assigned to a participant when he or she agreed to be part of the study. The number does not necessarily reflect the order in which the interviews actually took place.

Participants

Participant Diversity

The group of participants interviewed represented a wide range of experience and academic subjects. Faculty members were drawn from five colleges of the university: Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, Education, Nursing, and Communication Information. The sample included eight full professors as well as four associate and three
assistant professors. College teaching experience ranged from 5 years at the low end of the scale to over 35 years at the upper end. Participants came from all over the United States, and most had teaching experience in other universities before taking up appointments at the university in this study. Participants’ demographic characteristics, such as title, gender, years of teaching and college, are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Informant Demographic Characteristics: Title, Gender, Years of Experience, College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Professor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Professor</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Professor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Associate Professor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Associate Professor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Arts and Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Assistant Professor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Assistant Professor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Arts and Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Associate Professor</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Professor</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Professor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Arts and Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Professor</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Associate Professor</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Professor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Assistant Professor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Professor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants’ Demographic Information

Participant 1

Participant 1, a female professor in the College of Nursing, has taught at the college level for 15 years. Before coming to this university, she taught nursing courses at a nearby university. She has had some international students in her class every semester, and she has encountered some challenges and frustration while teaching in a mixed-culture classroom; however, overall, she likes having international students in class. She had some Asian students in class before, and in fact, she was not sure about the difference between Chinese students and Taiwanese students.

Participant 2

Participant 2, a male and a professor in the College of Nursing, has been a college professor for 38 years. He grew up in a multicultural environment, has lived in many different countries around the world, and can speak three languages. In addition, his parents served as host family for international students; therefore, he had numerous opportunities to meet people from different countries. Because of his prior experiences, he knew that American culture is different from Asian culture; and he understood that Taiwanese graduate students encounter some challenges and frustration while they study in the US.
Participant 3

Participant 3 was a female and a professor in the College of Education, Health, and Human Services. Before she came to this university, she had taught for 15 years at another university that enrolled a large Asian population. At the university in this study she was primarily engaged in research. Compared to other participants, she had little opportunity to interact with students; however, she taught a Taiwanese graduate student and had two colleagues from Taiwan.

Participant 4

Participant 4 was a female and an associate professor in the College of Communication and Information. Her first interaction with Taiwanese students occurred during her 6 years at this university. She did not experience much interaction with international students. This participant explained that most of the students at her department were domestic students; therefore, she had little interaction with international students.

Participant 5

Participant 5, a female and an associate professor in the College of Arts and Sciences, earned her Ph.D. in a Southeastern U. S. university in French and Second-Language Acquisition and worked at a large university in the South. In addition, she studied abroad and taught in France for several years. Because of her cross-cultural
experiences, she knew the frustrations and adjustments Taiwan graduate students encounter while they study in the USA.

Participant 6

Participant 6 was a female and an assistant professor in the College of Education, Health, and Human Services. During 13 years at another university and before teaching at the university in this study, she had taught and directed some programs, which included international students. Prior to that, she directed a program that involved multicultural groups in the American South. She traveled to other countries several times a year to attend conferences or teach at workshops or seminars.

Participant 7

Participant 7, a female assistant professor in the College of Arts and Sciences, studied in Greece and Germany during her school years and also taught in Germany. Before teaching at this university, she taught at a large university, where she directed and designed an ESL/EFL curriculum. At that university, she interacted with numerous Asian students. She served as the director of the program and also the advisor for the Taiwanese graduate student cohort group.

Participant 8

Participant 8, a male and an associate professor in the College of Business Administration, taught at this university for 16 years. He led doctoral student seminars in
the MBA program, which typically enrolls many Chinese students. He was unaware of the difference between Chinese students and Taiwanese students.

**Participant 9**

Participant 9, a male professor in the College of Business Administration, taught at another university for 20 years and spent one year in Hong Kong as a visiting scholar. He taught at this university for 10 years and was aware of Asian students’ adjustment issues and frustrations.

**Participant 10**

Participant 10, a female and a professor in the College of Arts and Sciences, taught at this university for 18 years. Since arriving at this university, she has engaged in considerable interaction with Asian students, especially Taiwanese students. Her area of expertise was intercultural communication and second-language acquisition.

**Participant 11**

Participant 11 was a male professor in the College of Education, Health, and Human Services; he had grown up in an urban neighborhood and taught at different public schools and colleges. He taught at various universities for 19 years, and the year of this study was his 6th year at this university. He experienced some interaction with Asian students and noticed some differences between Chinese students and Taiwanese students.
Participant 12

Participant 12 was a male associate professor in the College of Education, Health, and Human Services. He had taught at the K–12 level for 8 years before coming to this university. During his public school career, he barely knew any international students; however, he was involved in many intercultural activities or communities at the university in order to learn more about international students’ cultures and backgrounds. He traveled to many different countries every year for conferences or workshops.

Participant 13

Participant 13, a female professor in the College of Nursing and the director of the graduate program, had taught at this university for more than 20 years. Earlier in her career she had a couple of years of college teaching experience at a large university in Ohio and also worked with some international students.

Participant 14

Participant 14 was a female assistant professor in the College of Education, Health, and Human Services. She taught for one year at the college level before she came to this university, and the year of this study was her 4\(^{th}\) year at this university. She found teaching at this university challenging, especially teaching in a mixed-culture classroom. She had experienced little interaction with international students and had some difficulty adjusting her teaching methods or rearranging the content when many international students were enrolled in her class.
Participant 15

Participant 15, a female professor in the College of Business Administration, had been an engineer before pursuing her Ph.D. in marketing. She taught at this university for 13 years and experienced much interaction with Asian students.

The overall purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of faculty perception, adjustment, and experience in a mixed-culture classroom. Results of the analysis of the data from 15 interviews served as the data source for the study and are presented in three major themes in this chapter. The first section includes a taxonomy of themes, categories, and subcategories. This taxonomy shown in Table 2 serves as an outline for presentation of information in this chapter.

The researcher identified three major themes in the interview data. Results related to the theme of teachers’ perceptions of Taiwanese graduate students are presented first, followed by teachers’ adjustment in teaching, and finally impact on the classroom. Analysis for each theme continues with further subheadings for the categories and subcategories within each theme.

Faculty Perceptions of Taiwanese Graduate Students

Before considering faculty perceptions of the difficulties Taiwanese graduate students face in the classroom, it is necessary to understand how instructors view this population. The following are some general comments about Taiwanese graduate students: who they are, how they behave, and the impact they have upon the American university classroom from the perspectives of the participants. The analysis of this
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Perception of Taiwanese Graduate Students</td>
<td>1. Characteristics of Taiwanese Graduate Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Difficulties of Taiwanese Graduate students’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant’s adjustment during teaching</td>
<td>1. Teaching strategies used in regular class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Teaching strategies used in mixed cultured classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on class</td>
<td>1. Impact on faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Impact on students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
section comprises two categories: (a) characteristics of Taiwanese graduate students and (b) difficulties of Taiwanese graduate students encounter.

**Characteristics of Taiwanese Graduate Students**

*Quiet Demeanor in Class*

Eleven participants mentioned that quiet demeanor and little or no participation are noticeable behaviors among the Taiwanese graduate students. One participant stated: “Some of them do not talk actively and just listen to what their peers said.”

Another said, “I have no idea if they really understand what we were discussing or if they understand the readings.”

A third one said, “I noticed that these Taiwanese students try their best to finish the readings and come to class to sit in and listen; however, I would like to hear about their ideas on their minds.”

Two participants mentioned that some students participated more over the course of the semester. One stated, “At the beginning, they do not participate in class; however, after a couple of weeks they started to share their opinions during discussion.” The participants explained that students participated more as they became familiar with the classroom discussion and grew comfortable sharing. Also, students gained a basic idea about how discussions work and how to behave in class. In addition these participants noticed that students who had come to America earlier than others tend to participate
more often. They believed that the length of stay in the USA also affects participation; in other words, the longer they have been here, the more willing they are to participate.

Taiwanese graduate students are noticeably quiet in class, but no single reason explains their behavior. They were educated in teacher-centered classrooms: Taiwanese educators taught them to respect teachers, not to challenge them. Consequently, Taiwanese students participate infrequently or not at all in class. Furthermore, English is not the students’ first language, and they lacked opportunities to speak it regularly while they were in Taiwan. Once in America, they must express their thoughts and viewpoints in another language. More time is needed to formulate thoughts in English, and often by the time students are ready to speak up, the topic has shifted to another. In addition, face is an important concept in Asian culture. Making mistakes is tantamount to losing face. Their unfamiliarity with the language causes mistakes; consequently, avoiding participation is a safe way to prevent making mistakes and save face. Participants believed students’ language ability and personality explain quiet classroom behavior; however, the reason Taiwanese students participate less in class and remain quiet is complicated by more than their English ability or confidence or personality. The cultural background is also a factor; however, only one third of participants explained their perceptions of Taiwanese students’ quiet demeanor in a cultural context. (Table 3)
Table 3

*Characteristics of Taiwanese Graduate Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Sample Quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Quiet demeanor in class            | 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15 | “Some of them do not talk in class actively and just listen to what their peers said.”  
“P started out more quiet in the class.”                                |
| Asking no questions in class       | 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15    | “They do not ask questions in class. They ask questions after class.”.  
“She would ask me questions after class.”                                    |
| Politeness                         | 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9            | “They are more polite than other American students.”  
“She is polite and…”                                                             |
| Focus on academic achievement      | 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14 | “They focus on their study more than socialize with others.”  
“M told me that she spent her time in readings instead of hanging out…”          |
| Staying in the same ethnic group   | 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14          | “They tend to sit together.”.  
“It is natural to wit and work with someone from your culture, but I think…”   |
| Personality                        | 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13   | “I think personality might be one reason…”; “I think it is more personality than their language ability.” |
Reluctance to Ask Questions in Class

Quiet demeanor in class is related to Taiwanese graduate students’ reluctance to ask questions in class. Three participants stated that most Taiwanese students they had are quiet and do not ask questions in class, but they tend to ask questions after class. One participant stated, “I think they do not ask questions in class because they do not feel comfortable to ask questions in class.” Another participant thought Taiwanese students might think other classmates may not have the same questions as they do, so they tend to ask questions after class.

The participants from the College of Nursing stated that the Taiwanese students they had in class are exceptional; one participant said, “They ask questions. They won’t let it go until they got it.”

According to the participants, Taiwanese students favor asking questions after class. Two explanations provide insight. First, quiet in class, students are afraid to make a mistake and lose face; so they do not speak up in class. Therefore, they seldom ask questions in class; in other words, they do not talk unless they have to. Another explanation is that Taiwanese students often think they will occupy other students’ time if they ask questions, and the teacher will need to spend extra time in answering his or her questions. If teachers spend time answering question, their instruction will be interrupted, so Taiwanese students wait until class is over to ask questions. Taiwanese students often think their questions result from their weak language ability; therefore, they ask questions after class.
Politeness

All participants stated that Taiwanese graduate students are more polite than their American peers. Participants mentioned that Taiwanese students often asked for permission before they speak up by saying, for example, “Can I share something?”

A participant stated, “They are more polite when they participate than American students in class; even though they do not agree with American counterparts’ points, they say so in a more polite way, and they seem to have more respect for professors.”

In Asian culture, teachers are highly respected, and students do not challenge teachers in class. A participant said, “I expect my students to be more critical of the readings or even my opinion. The Taiwanese graduate students I have might not agree with my points, but they do not say that in class. My American students just say whatever they want to say, and sometimes they might go too far.”

When interpreting Taiwanese students’ behavior in American classroom, one must recognize its deep roots in Chinese traditional values about education since the time of Confucius, when students showed great respect for the knowledgeable teacher. Reticence was indication of respect for the teacher. For students to listen to and obey the teacher was not only acceptable but also desirable; therefore, contemporary Taiwanese students show their respect for teachers by avoiding questions, quiet demeanor, and politeness.

However, respecting knowledge and a knowledgeable teacher does not mean students should not ask questions. In fact, in Confucius’ well known saying: “Shi bu bi
Confucius also said: “San ren xing, bi you wo shi” or “Among any three persons, there must be one who can be my teacher.” Obviously, Confucius did not believe that the pupil should accept whatever the teacher imparts. In fact, one popular motto for Chinese and Taiwanese students is “Qin xue hao wen,” meaning “A good student should study hard and always be ready to ask questions.” Confucius said one should be not ashamed to ask and he also said one should think while learning: “Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without thinking is perilous.” He emphasized the importance of learning.

Taiwanese students have come from a cultural background quite different from American culture. While studying in the USA and trying to adjust to the language and culture shock, Taiwanese students’ quiet demeanor, reluctance to ask questions in class, and politeness in American classroom cannot be explained by a single factor; in fact, these qualities are associated with many factors.

**Focus on Academic Achievement**

Twelve participants were pleased with the achievement of their Taiwanese graduate students. Participants generally expressed a favorable impression of students’ writing and their performance in class. However, two participants from the College of Arts and Sciences stated that the Taiwanese graduate students they had in class at the time of this writing did not perform as well as the Taiwanese graduate students they
taught before. They claimed that these students were weaker because they were younger, and most of them were unsure of their choice of majors. These students had come to the USA to please their parents or to gain experience studying abroad. The students they had before were goal-driven, and they studied hard to reach the goal, returning to Taiwan for their teaching career. The participants showed their concerns about students’ achievement and performance in the USA and students’ future careers as well because some of them were not ready to teach or meet the requirements. All stated, however, that these students improved throughout the semester.

The participants in the College of Education, Health, and Human Services mentioned that their students had teaching experience before they came to the USA, so the students knew what they wanted and were dedicated to accomplishing their goals. Participants stated that they were impressed with the Taiwanese graduate students’ achievements and thought that they were clearly devoted to their study, hard-working, and thoughtful.

The participants from the College of Nursing stated that the Taiwanese graduate students they taught were talented, hard-working, and devoted. To them, the students did as well as their American peers. One participant stated, “I cannot remember any of my Taiwanese students who struggled for lack of effort. They work hard doing their stuff. And they are dedicated to their tasks and overcome any difficulties.” This participant further stated, “Because of their hard work and dedication, I feel that I need to do more and do my best to help them and enrich myself to help them to become a skilled
teacher/professor in this field.” The participants from the College of Nursing stated that the students they had focused not only on their academic work, but they also spent time interacting with American classmates.

Taiwanese students typically come to the USA for further study because they believe a U. S. education can provide them more advanced professional knowledge. In order to study in the USA, students need to pass the TOEFL language exam to prove their language proficiency in order to gain their admission letter, also called I-20, from the school and provide a financial statement to obtain the F-1 student visa. While studying in the USA, Taiwanese students are not allowed to work off campus because of the F-1 student status. They can work only on campus or apply for scholarships from their department. Taiwanese students pay more tuition than local students, and for this reason they spend more time studying, trying to finish the courses and earn the degree quickly. Consequently, they do not socialize with other American students. In addition, graduate classes also require much reading, and students have to spend additional time comprehending the content and the concepts. Of course, students’ weak language ability might be a reason that they avoid interacting with American students; also Taiwanese students might not be familiar with American culture and have no idea how to socialize with Americans.

Staying With Members of Their Own Ethnic Group

The participants from the TESOL program in the College of Arts and Sciences mentioned that the Taiwanese graduate students tend to sit together or work together in a
group. This might be a benefit at the beginning; however, it might be a drawback for students because it discourages students from interacting with classmates other than Taiwanese students. This participant stated that the students who came from cohort groups tend to sit together and work on projects together. She believed that doing so had a benefit but perhaps impeded interaction with other students from different cultures. The participants from the College of Arts and Sciences, therefore, often used some warm-up activities to group students from several different countries and requested students not to work on the project with classmates from the same country. One participant stated, “I force them to learn how to interact with people who are different from them.”

A participant from the College of Education, Health, and Human Services also mentioned this issue during the interview. From his perspective, however, staying with the same group or not was not important. How to let students have more interaction with others to engage more in class was much more important.

Taiwanese students have come from a collectivist culture; therefore, they might tend to sit together. Because students’ language proficiency varies, some might be unable to understand the lecture or discussion and thus might feel more comfortable sitting together in order to help one another in class. However, sitting together affects their interaction with other American students and decreases the opportunity to practice English.
Personality

Two thirds of the participants perceived Taiwanese graduate students as quiet, shy, hard working, devoted, lacking in confidence, and introverted. The participants from the College of Nursing taught students whose personalities differed from this profile; they stated that their students were much more talented than other students and participated actively in class. The participants stated that these students were extroverted, so they adjusted to the classroom culture easily.

The participants from the College of Arts and Sciences stated that the students they taught were not active in class. They could not pinpoint the reason, but they speculated that it stemmed from language proficiency or personality or culture. One participant believed the reason was a combination of these factors.

The participants at the College of Business described their students as quiet, not active, not very outgoing in class or during other out-of-class activities but hard working. Their students did well in class but seemed to concentrate on study and avoided interaction with other students.

The participants from the College of Education, Health, and Human Services stated that most of their Taiwanese graduate students were introverted; however, one participant described her Taiwanese graduate student as extroverted, positive, active, and relaxed. This participant recognized that this student differed from the students she had in class and believed the reason might be the student’s personality and language. Based on
this participant’s opinion, one may conclude that personality helps students adjust to a new culture faster and better.

Personality must also be viewed in terms of the cultural context. Although some studies have shown that students’ personalities affect their willingness to participate in class, no single factor explains why Taiwanese students exhibit the characteristics noted in this section. The students’ personalities, language ability, and cultural background complicate the issue.

Difficulties of Taiwanese Graduate Students

This section presents particular difficulties that participants believed Taiwanese graduate students experienced. At least two thirds of the participants cited (a) language–linguistic, (b) communication, and (c) cultural differences. Table 4 shows the categories and subheadings in the language–linguistic area.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Sample Quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15</td>
<td>“Their weaker English ability caused less participation.” “She has a lot of language barriers.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subheading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language structure</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12</td>
<td>“Chinese is totally different from English. That is why some students make mistakes in structure.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language skills</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15</td>
<td>“Their English are better than previous students.” “If you have weaker language skills, you will…”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Language

Language structure. The difference between Chinese and English language structures raised a concern among the participants. In Chinese the placement of the subject and verbs and the order of words in a sentence vary greatly. The participants from the College of Arts and Sciences emphasized their concern, believing the difference between these two languages causes students’ problems in syntax and semantics. Another participant from the College of Nursing stated, “Chinese is totally different from English. You have the characters and the words, and we have an alphabet. So I think that is why some students make many mistakes in language structure and the order of words.” This participant also stated that Chinese does not have verb tense (past, present, future), explaining Taiwanese graduate students’ problems in tense on their spoken or written English.

Different language structures in Chinese and English also explain why students have syntactic and semantic problems in written and spoken English. Chinese does not have different tense verbs, but English does. Chinese has only present tense and incorporates phrases to indicate time, for example, yesterday, now, or next week. English has many different tenses: past, present, future, past perfect, present perfect, future perfect, complicating students’ efforts to produce correct English in written or spoken form. In addition, students have few opportunities to familiarize themselves with English structure in Taiwan. When they came to the USA, they faced difficulty producing correct English, using Chinese thinking and English structure.
Necessity of language skills. The necessity of good English language skills is an obvious issue when discussing topics in the classroom. Several participants stated that the pace of class discussion often flows very fast, and unless the students have good language ability, they may not comprehend what their peers talk about and are consequently unable to jump in and share their thoughts or opinions. A participant from the College of Business mentioned that some of the students are new to the field, and they might be unable to understand all the terminology related to this particular field. Students, therefore, might be unable to comprehend the content of the discussion and participate less because of limited vocabulary or lack of familiarity with terminology.

Seven participants claimed that some students possess only a limited vocabulary, and this may be a problem in class or in academic writing. One participant from the College of Business Administration stated:

I’m sure it was difficult for her because of the language difficulties, but I think that any foreign student who doesn’t speak English as a first language would have those problems, just becoming familiar. In the classroom we use terminology that we don’t use in everyday speech, so I think that it’s an extra barrier for the foreign students because they have to learn more words.

Ten participants mentioned that students’ language proficiency, cultural background, and personality are the variables that affect students’ participation. According to their personal interaction with Taiwanese students, the students who participate more in class often are more extroverted compared to other Taiwanese
students. Students’ language proficiency might play a role in participation, but it is not necessarily true that the better language skills the students have, the more they participate in the classroom. From their points of view, identifying which single factor causes reluctance to participate is difficult. One participant mentioned that she had a Taiwanese student in class who liked to participate in class even though sometimes the participant was unsure about the point the student made. This participant observed that this particular student has weak English oral skills, but she tried to participate at least once during every class.

Another participant stated that she taught a Taiwanese student with a good English proficiency according to the interaction she had with her; however, she spoke up infrequently in class. The participant attributed her reticence to her personality or lack of confidence in her English. In fact, seven participants mentioned that the students they taught in class had good language skills, but they were self-conscious and less confident when they spoke up.

Five participants stated that the reason the Taiwanese graduate students did not participate much in class was their lack of language proficiency or lack of confidence. They believed that the better language skills students had, the more confidence they had. Nine participants believed that the educational system and culture in Taiwan also affected students’ participation in class.

Two thirds of participants were aware of that Taiwanese students come from a different culture background, and the Taiwanese students need time to adjust to the
differences. Participants noticed that Taiwanese students come from a teacher-centered classroom; therefore, they respected teachers and seldom spoke up or challenged them. Two thirds of participants believed that many factors affected students’ participation in class, such as the cultural difference, language proficiency, and confidence in English; however, a participant raised the point that students’ personalities and classroom atmosphere also affected students’ willingness to participate in class. She stated, “I try to make it more comfortable for them, so they are more willing to participate, to create more an encouraging atmosphere than a judgmental atmosphere.” Two thirds of participants stated that as teachers they should be more cultural sensitive and be more aware of cultural differences; they understood that students have different needs and have difficulties when they come to the USA. Eleven participants claimed that because of a lack of cultural awareness, sometimes they found it a challenge to know how to interact with students from different cultures.

Poor English skills are not only a hindrance for the students in class but also a factor when they try to communicate in academic writing. Participants claimed that sometimes they had a hard time understanding students’ written thoughts. They stated that students have problems in grammar, syntax, word choice, and expression of their thoughts or ideas in sentences. One participant explained, “Some students use long sentences to express their ideas, but in fact they can just use some simple sentences to make their statements. And sometimes they use wrong words to state what they mean.”
All participants expected students to produce scholarly work. Eleven participants stated that Taiwanese students have some minor writing problems. Seven participants did not penalize students’ weak grammar but instead emphasized content and critical thinking; however, two participants deducted points for grammatical errors, believing that these students will be teachers in the future and motivating them to use points to force students to be more careful about their writing and become more scholarly. Another participant stated that sooner or later students would write dissertations and grading students’ grammatical errors would ultimately help them.

Reading comprehension is another issue participants mentioned. Seven participants noticed that Taiwanese students experienced problems in reading that affect their academic performance to some degree. One participant explained, “Our course requires a lot of readings, and I noticed that some students have weak reading comprehension.”

Good reading comprehension is necessary in American classrooms. With a heavy reading load, Taiwanese graduate students need to spend much more time in understanding the readings compared to their American classmates. Taiwanese graduate students tend to spend a lot of time using the dictionary to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words, but identifying meaning does not guarantee understanding of the material.

Strong English ability helps students adjust to a new culture faster. Acquiring good English skills before arriving in the USA is desirable.
In our daily lives, we use all kinds of additional cues when speaking to help convey our message, so that even if a student has limited language skills, he or she may be able to grasp the meaning; however, if students have difficulties in communication and comprehension, it will make the situation more complicated. Table 5 summarizes problems in communication based on participants’ experience and interaction with Taiwanese graduate students.

### Table 5

**Communication Problems**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Sample Quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15</td>
<td>“It is hard for them to verbalize thoughts in English and ..” “The discussion flew too fast when she was ready to share, the topic changed..”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subheading</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Communication apprehension</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12</td>
<td>“They are hesitant to speak up.” “She is more conscious.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accent</td>
<td>1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 15</td>
<td>“She is a little more quiet, I think, a more hesitant because of obviously an accent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed of exchange</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15</td>
<td>“The discussion flew fast.” “The discussion is fast pace.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of practice</td>
<td>8, 9, 10, 11, 15</td>
<td>“They need more practice”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of confidence</td>
<td>3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 9, 12, 13</td>
<td>“She is bright, but not confident”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although reticence in the classroom may be partially attributed to language issues, culture also plays a major role. A participant stated, “I know it is not easy to verbalize their thoughts in English, but I hope they can participate more in class.”
Another participant said, “They came to class and listened to what their peers said, but they do not participate. I do not know what they do not know.”

Ten participants mentioned that most Taiwanese students are hesitant to speak up for some reason. Five participants tended to call their names to ask their opinions, and two participants felt that if they want to share, they will share. Participants understood that it takes time, courage, and confidence to speak up; they noticed that the situation changed over time during the semester, so they did not often call on students directly. They just tried to use different approaches or activities to allow students additional opportunities to speak before large groups or small groups.

Whether spoken English or written English, students require time to formulate thoughts. When writing, students can use the dictionary to determine word meanings and produce English; however, in spoken communication, they will experience more difficulty comprehending meanings and conveying meanings with limited vocabulary and limited opportunities to communicate.

Communication apprehension. Ten participants mentioned that some Taiwanese graduate students were apprehensive to communicate. They did not speculate on the primary cause; however, they all noticed that some Taiwanese graduate students were apprehensive to speak up. Participants believed that confidence in English and students’ language proficiency are the main factors affecting their willingness to speak up and communicate. One participant believed students’ personalities might play the role. She explained her personal interaction with a Taiwanese student: A particular student may not
have had good English ability, but he contributed a lot in class. And the participant noticed that he was more active in interacting with others.

Many factors can account for communication apprehension in Taiwanese graduate students. Personality, confidence in English, and culture are possible explanations. *Communication apprehension* is defined as an “individual level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons” (McCroskey, 1977). Students feel anxious in speaking the second or foreign language for many different reasons, varying with the individual. Primarily, as teachers noticed the difficulties that Taiwanese graduate students encountered, they must ask themselves what they can do to help. As one third of participants mentioned, students are more hesitant to speak up, or apprehensive to speak up in class. One participant explained that they need more time, prompting, and encouragement; therefore, she often asks students opinion-based questions, so they will not need to worry about right or wrong answers.

*Accent.* Everyone has an accent. Seven participants mentioned that their students’ pronunciation of English is one of the problems in understanding. A participant stated that sometimes he had a hard time understanding a student’s English, so he often asked the student more questions or rephrased what the student said to make sure he did not misinterpret and misunderstand. Another participant mentioned that she also rephrased the student’s points to help American students understand. She noticed that some American students lost patience figuring out what a foreign student said if the student had
an accent. In order to prevent the situation, she often rephrased or repeated what the Taiwanese graduate students had said and also asked some questions to the class to engage them in discussion.

*Speed of exchange.* Ten participants noted that the speed at which conversation flows in a classroom can be a barrier to Taiwanese graduate students. Although the students might be proficient in English, they may not be able to respond in a timely manner in the same way that native speakers can. The participant from the College of Communication Studies shared her experience: “M did finish all the required readings, but she was quiet in discussion. I think the reason is the discussion flew too fast. When she had an idea to share about that issue, the topic had changed.”

The fast pace of classroom discussion is a barrier to Taiwanese graduate students. Unless students have good English ability and comprehension, it is difficult to keep up with the fast pace of class discussion. Inability to participate and understand the discussion could frustrate Taiwanese students. Having a good English ability is necessary for students, so teachers must ask themselves what they can do to help students engage in participation.

*Lack of practice.* All participants evaluated students’ progress and performance through oral presentations and essays. Previous educational experience with little or no emphasis on the spoken work might also result in students who are poor speakers or who have few presentation skills. Several participants stated that Taiwanese graduate students
had little opportunity to practice English in Taiwan. When the students came to the USA, they had to use English every day to be able to survive, and for some people doing so is difficult and requires time for students to use English freely to state their opinions or express their thoughts. Participants stated that they respected students’ motivation and dedication to study in an unfamiliar country. Students worked very hard to accomplish their goal.

However, five participants felt that some students lacked sufficient skills to do a presentation. A participant shared her experience:

In my class, students need to do many presentations to show their lesson plans and study. Some students just read over the PowerPoint slides without any further explanations. I was looking for more oral explanations and personal insight, but they just read the slides.

In Asian classrooms, students have few opportunities to practice spoken English. Rote memorization is emphasized, so Taiwanese students might not have good spoken English skills; furthermore, making mistakes and losing face present a challenge for students to speak up without thinking too much. The Chinese say, “Think three times before you say”; however, by the time the student has thought three times, the topic has changed. People also say, “Practice makes perfect.” In a way, this saying is true, but the more you speak, the more mistakes you might make; yet at the same time, awareness of avoiding future mistakes will increase. Teachers recognized that students lack practice and need to discover ways to encourage and provide more practice.
Lack of confidence. Two thirds of participants stated that the Taiwanese graduate students they taught in class lacked confidence in communication. For these participants, the students were eager to learn, well-prepared and talented; however, they were hesitant to speak. The participants believed student’s reluctance was caused by lack of confidence, not lack of language ability. One participant mentioned stated, “There was a little more a pause, more thinking. I don’t know if that was because of personality or language ability.” From this participant’s point of view, Taiwanese graduate students needed additional time to share their thoughts in class, perhaps because they had to think about what they were going to say, put the thought into English, verbalize the thought in English, become comfortable with the American classroom, and overcome a lack of confidence.

Taiwanese graduate students studying in America had few opportunities to practice their English at home; therefore, they are lack confident in their English skills. Because English is very different from Chinese, students require more time to formulate thoughts. In addition, in order to save face, students must make sure what they are planning to say is correct; therefore, they require more time and pause more frequently than the native speaker. Furthermore, the discussion topics in class are not related to students’ cultural background, necessitating additional time to think deeper, formulate thoughts, and overcome the fear of making mistakes.

In fact, all the difficulties that Taiwanese students encountered could happen in a monocultural classroom as well. Teachers must recognize differences among students
and understand their needs, at the same time providing assistance to help them succeed in
the academic areas, no matter where the students come from.

*Cultural Differences*

Cultural differences impact classroom interactions among teachers and students in
the mixed-culture classroom. The following table shows the cultural differences of
Taiwanese graduate students based on participants’ statements.

*Different classroom culture.* Students in any classroom may differ greatly in their
ability to rely on themselves, to take on new assignments, to make choices. Some need
frequent reassurance from teachers and continually ask if what they are doing is right and
what they should do next. Five participants stated that the Asian classroom is different
from the American classroom. Participants expected students to challenge and ask
questions; however, students tended not to challenge teachers, asking their questions after
class. In addition, participants also stated that students needed guidance and reassurance
in projects. According to the literature review, Asian classrooms differ from American
classroom. Taiwanese students come from a high uncertainty-avoidance (UA) culture,
and the U. S is defined as a low uncertainty-avoidance (UA) culture. UA is a dimension
of culture (Hofstede, 1998, 2001). UA measures tolerance toward uncertainty and
ambiguity; high scores indicate an aversion to these factors and a preference for strong
social convention, formalized behavior, and rules to make it clear how they should
behave. At school, Taiwanese students are most comfortable in structured environments,
Table 6

*Cultural Differences of Taiwanese Graduate Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Sample Quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14</td>
<td>“Taiwanese students come from a different culture..” “The cultures are different..”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subheading</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different classroom culture</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14</td>
<td>“American classroom is more student-centered..” “Where the student from is a more teacher-centered classroom..”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different learning styles</td>
<td>2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14</td>
<td>“Different students have different learning styles…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different role expectation</td>
<td>1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 14</td>
<td>“I think students have different expectations toward teachers..”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

where teachers are supposed to have the right answers. Simply getting the right answer is most important even if the students do not understand why the answer is right. The American classroom is less structured, and American students are comfortable with open-ended learning situations and enjoy classroom discussion.

*Different learning styles/teaching styles.* Participants mentioned different learning styles among students in any classroom, and two of them observed that Taiwanese students tend to be passive and need concrete guidance. These participants stated that Taiwanese graduate students often talked to them after class about assignments and required more guidance on projects.

Culture also affects students’ reactions to teaching styles, especially if they differ from what the students have known throughout their lives at home. Familiarity with one
type of teaching style can be a hindrance to the student when confronted with a different one. Three participants shared their experiences. One participant stated, “The Taiwanese student I have in class is quieter than other students in that class, and she seldom speaks up in class.”

Another participant stated,

It is a big difference for Asian students in the American classroom. We expect students to share what they have in mind. However, a lot of time, the pace of the discussion jumps too fast. It became more difficult for them to absorb and comprehend in a short time and share their thoughts.

Another participant stated, “Most Taiwanese graduate students might be used to a teacher-centered classroom by listening to the lecture; however, I seldom have a long lecture. In fact, most of the time, I let students lead the discussions.”

Four participants from the College of Education, Health, and Human Services stated that Taiwanese students have different learning styles, and they are used to certain teaching styles because of their background. They believed that as teachers they need to be more aware of students’ individual differences and be more flexible about their teaching styles. These participants expressed willingness to adjust and accommodate students’ needs, to assist them to learn better and succeed in this journey, but they definitely need more knowledge about how to do so. One participant stated:

I haven’t done much with thinking about or wondering about accommodating students. I recognize that as an issue that I need to address, but I don’t know how.
. . . I would be open to that and talk to someone who knows a lot about this and give me advice on how to do it.

*Different role expectations.* What teachers’ expect of students varies from culture to culture. In the American academic classroom, professors often expect students to share their opinions and reflections regarding the readings or discussions; however, this expectation seldom exists in teacher-centered classrooms in Asia. For professors in American classrooms, students are supposed to contribute their thoughts by participating in class discussion or small-group discussion. For the Taiwanese graduate students, being a student means doing their best to finish the readings, come to class, and listen to what their peers shared.

Although participants noticed students’ problems with language and cultural difficulties in class, four of them indicated that Taiwanese graduate students should be more active in class. These participants, who viewed Taiwanese students as passive learners who do not seek opportunities to participate, may have fallen victim to stereotypes. Concerning classroom behaviors, one commonly finds in literature reviews that Asian students are “passive learners and recipients of knowledge.” Asian students are expected to show “total obedience or submission to their teachers, . . . to be passive receivers of knowledge. . . . They are not active in participating in class, and therefore offer little input to the class” (Liu, 2001, p. 216). As noted above, Taiwanese students come from a different culture, so the unique classroom behavior cannot be explained by a single factor—passivity. The participants from the College of Nursing observed that the
students asked questions and participated in class. Eight participants expected students to share their thoughts in class, so they sometimes called on them by name or asked them questions. A participant stated, “The department wants to provide any assistance helping students succeed in this journey; however, if they do not come to us, we do not know what we can do.” This participant explained that the students did not take initiative; therefore, even though the instructors wanted to help, they did not know how to help and what to do.

University-level courses are usually less involved with acquiring information and more involved with applying information. Courses require advanced analytical skills and application of knowledge in problem-solving. The emphasis of American university courses on analysis and critical thinking skills presents a significant challenge for Taiwanese graduate students, who come from a different learning environment, where rote memorization is emphasized. Students are seldom exposed to critical thinking skills in Taiwan.

People in different cultures have different expectations of teachers as well as students. In some cultures teachers are the authority figures, and students have to absorb knowledge without challenging or asking questions. By contrast in other cultures, teachers are facilitators, and students learn in a more informal learning environment, gaining wisdom through active learning experiences. One participant from the College of Education, Health, and Human Services shared her thoughts: “I have to balance the discussion with lecture because of international students. Discussion-based isn’t always
as useful, especially, if English is not the first language of my students. . . .” She further stated, “I know I am responsible and need to have authority in class in some ways, but I try to step back from that role”

In Taiwan, teachers are treated with respect. Strict order is an essential element in the classroom. Teachers are expected to initiate all communication, and students speak up only when invited.

The most important task of teachers is to educate students, which requires students to understand what teachers want to communicate and the meanings they want to convey. In the mixed-culture classroom, teachers and students are from different cultures. Thus, thinking and actively cooperating is likely to include some level of understanding of the other party. Cultural awareness is key factor to communicate effectively. Awareness of the differences in cultural contexts enables teachers to increase the effectiveness of their teaching, and students will be able to learn better.

Participants’ Adjustments During Their Teaching

Participants also shared the adjustments they made in teaching and the effective teaching strategies they implemented to help students. The following section is divided into two parts: One presents the methods participants typically used in class; the second, particular methods devised for use in a mixed-culture classroom. The following table (Table 7) shows the teaching methods that participants usually use in class.
Table 7.

Teaching Methods Typically Used by Participants in the Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Sample Quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>5, 15</td>
<td>“Students have to post their thoughts or questions on WebCT…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability outside the class</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14</td>
<td>“I spend extra time to help students understand the concepts ……”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scaffolding</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14</td>
<td>“I adjust different methods to help students understand and learn…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased application</td>
<td>1, 2, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15</td>
<td>“I ask them to pick up a current company and do a marketing project…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage inquiry</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15</td>
<td>“I encourage them to think and evaluate…”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teaching Strategies Typically Used by Participants in the Classroom

Technology

A participant stated that some students in her class might not feel comfortable sharing or asking questions in class, so she used technology as a tool to encourage students to share their opinions regarding class readings and asking questions. At the beginning of the semester, she posed questions. After couple weeks, she asked students to ask questions and discuss anything related to language and culture. She required students to post at least twice on the website every week. She stated, “I think that the students recognize the value of technology and the use of technology in class, and in fact, this works well; students had a lot of discussion on many topics.” The participant further explained that the reason she used technology, specifically the message board in class. The participant understood that students might fear making mistakes in class and feel
embarrassed by their accent: By using the message board, students can share their
thoughts freely and without worrying about making mistakes or losing face.

**Availability Outside the Class**

Taiwanese graduate students are less likely to ask questions during class time, so
flexibility in setting time for students to come to the office is beneficial. Ten participants
stated that most students came to their office during office hours to ask questions or talk
about their problems. Taiwanese graduate students may be unwilling to interrupt the class
in order to ask questions; therefore, participants should check up on students and
encourage them to come for help after class. A participant mentioned that he often talked
to the Taiwanese graduate students after class to determine whether they had any
questions and problems.

Participants noticed that students did not ask questions in class and might need
more assistance; one third of the participants provided some extra office hours for
students to ask questions.

**Scaffolding**

Scaffolding is a very useful enabling strategy to bridge students’ current
academic performance with their potential; it refers to temporary curricular support for
students as they learn to do something new and complex. One participant from the
College of Arts and Sciences used technology as scaffolding to motivate students to
participate more on the Web CT message board. She shared her experience:
I noticed that the students tend to share more on Web CT. I guess it might be because they do not need to worry about the mistake. They also use Web CT to share their thoughts on some topics we discussed in class, or we did not discuss in class.

From this participant’s viewpoint, technology is a way of scaffolding to motivate students. She explained that through the Web CT, students post their questions, answered questions among the group, and also shared valuable information or suggestions. She also found that students asked questions on WebCT, and many students posted rich opinions and discussion, so it became a teaching material in class for discussion.

**Increased Application**

Participants increased application so that students could apply their learning, giving them ways to apply their knowledge. The participants from the College of Arts and Sciences required students to design many different lesson plans and to teach in class for demonstration. Participants believed this activity helped students understand what EFL/ESL teaching is and how to adjust and what to adjust in class. The participants from the College of Arts and Science taught TESOL courses, such as Language and Culture, Second Language Teaching, and Second Language Curriculum Design and Testing. These courses are mainly designed for students who are interested in teaching English in the ESL or EFL context. Through a demonstration a lesson plan, the students and teacher provide feedback and discussion, preparing students to teach in the ESL or EFL environment in the future.
A participant from the College of Business shared a class project that students had to do in marketing class: “I asked students to do a project to sell a product. They have to pick a company in the market and design an advertisement, submit a proposal, and also do a presentation.” This participant also mentioned that one of the Taiwanese students did a fine job for this project and even got a job offer.

*Teaching Strategies Used in Mixed-Culture Classroom (Taiwanese Students Are Present)*

Participants provided substantial information on methods that they usually used when teaching in an ordinary classroom and in a mixed-culture classroom, in which Taiwanese students were present. The following table shows the strategies that participants use in mixed-culture classroom to accommodate students.

Table 8

*Teaching Strategies Used in Mixed-Culture Classroom*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subheading</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modify instruction</td>
<td>2, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage participation</td>
<td>5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid or define slang</td>
<td>2, 3, 6, 11, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage socialization</td>
<td>2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Modifying Instruction

Ten participants modified instruction to help students learn better. Three participants, however, did not think that it is right to modify the instruction for the students. These participants thought that doing so is unfair to other students. One participant stated, “I chose this textbook because it covered all the information students have to understand, and I do not see there is any need to change the instruction. If I do not cover the book contents, students will feel that they waste money buying the book.” Another participant said, “It is not fair for American students that I change the curriculum to assist the Taiwanese students.”

One third of the participants do not adjust their teaching in class because they believe that students should adjust to the American classroom because they decided to come to the USA for further study. One third of the participants adjusted their teaching by using more small-group discussions or adjusted assignments. These participants noticed that Taiwanese students participate more frequently in small-group discussions. One third of the participants tried to bring students’ culture into their curriculum to motivate students to engage or feel comfortable, and also to help American students broaden their worldviews.

Encourage Participation

Participants understood the challenge that Taiwanese graduate students faced in verbalizing thoughts in English; therefore, they always reassured students that their language limitations need not be a barrier to their participation. Participants also
encouraged students to take time to communicate what they wished, thus allowing them to offer meaningful contributions to the class. A participant from the College of Arts and Sciences mentioned that she often called on students by name to ask them to share once most other students had already shared. No matter what the students shared, she gave comments without criticizing the ideas. She further explained that what she looked for from the student was the opinion, not the answer to the question. Another participant from the College of Education, Health, and Human Services shared that her student tended to look at her during discussion, looking for positive feedback; therefore, she often nodded her head and provided some hints if students struggled with words to describe or explain.

Avoid or Define Slang and Colloquialisms

Five participants stated that the use of slang or colloquialisms causes students’ confusion. One participant stated that he tried to avoid nonstandard expressions during the lecture, but sometimes students used slang or idioms in discussion; so he usually explained their meanings. Another participant stated: “I sometimes asked me questions after class about the words that we used in class. After that, I started to pay more attention about whether slang or colloquialisms were used in class. If so, I gave the explanation.”
Have More Small Group Discussion

Participants understood that students are hesitant to participate in class because of language and cultural differences. One participant stated, “I have to divide students into small groups. Sometimes, students feel nervous about talking in front of a big group. I noticed that students talk more in small groups.” Therefore, they tried to use many different approaches in class. Five participants stated that small-group discussions seemed to work well for Taiwanese graduate students. They noticed that students participate less in whole-class discussions, but the students participate more in small groups. These participants indicated that students feel more comfortable sharing in small groups and that most classmates are supportive in explaining and providing assistance if Taiwanese students needed it. Participants noticed that students feel more comfortable sharing in small groups, so they used more small-group discussions in class.

Encourage Socialization and Support Network

Very often Taiwanese students are isolated. They might be separated from their families, and they might not be involved in any social activities outside the classroom. It is understandable that they tend to seek support from members of their own group, who share the same culture and have a better understanding of their world. Two thirds of the participants stated that Taiwanese graduate students do a fine job in their academic area; however, they also think interacting with others outside the classroom is a means to improve their English and adjust the new culture faster.
Five participants raised their concerns about university resources for international students and department assistance for Taiwanese graduate students. Four participants believed that university and departments offer insufficient assistance, but students need to take the initiative and be more proactive.

Nine participants encouraged students to socialize more with Americans. This benefits both groups, not only helping with language and cultural skills but also offering different perspectives to the American students and opening their eyes to alternate viewpoints.

Participants mentioned that some students’ tendency to stick together to support and help one another, which might be an obstacle to the Taiwanese students’ interaction with American students. Two participants shared their experience studying abroad in Germany and France: They believed that socializing with native speakers helps to improve language and also gain more cultural knowledge.

Most universities have resources to help students with their academic performance, including English-language classes for nonnative English speakers. One participant cited the Conversation Partner Program, a good resource for students to interact with Americans, to understand American culture, and to improve their English.

Based on the interview data, the participants fell into three groups according to their willingness to adjust their teaching: those who (a) never adjust because students must learn to survive in American classrooms, (b) partially adjust methods and activities,
and (c) accommodate, empathizing and finding ways to convey information and make use of students’ culture in the curriculum.

Impact of Taiwanese Graduate Students on the Classroom

The participants came from different backgrounds and disciplines and presented different cross-cultural experiences. They were able to offer insights into teaching Taiwanese graduate students from different perspectives and noted the impact the students exerted on the classroom. The following table (Table 9) shows the impact that students had on the faculty.

Table 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact on Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Impact on Faculty | 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14 | “These students helped me more aware of …”  
|                   |             | “I have learned a lot from these students…” |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Sample Quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty’s need</td>
<td>1, 4, 6, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15</td>
<td>“I need to be more aware of students’ cultures and know how to …”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty’s growth</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14</td>
<td>“It motivates me to be more dedicated to make sure students get the assistance.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Impact on Faculty

Two thirds of the participants stated that the Taiwanese students’ motivation to succeed and dedication to study were exceptional: They worked hard, so the participants sought ways to help students succeed on their journey. One third of the participants also
mentioned that because of these students, they developed a deeper cultural awareness and greater sensitivity to student differences. Participants also shared what they need and what they expect the department or school to provide in this matter.

**Faculty Needs**

*Need more professional development training.* One issue mentioned by six participants during the interviews was their lack of formal training in education. “We have the professional knowledge in our field, but we do not really know how to teach. [We] especially [lack] the knowledge of teaching the students who come from different cultures.” Two participants believed that teaching is not simply something anyone can do or that any content expert can do well. They thought that faculty could benefit from some formal training or some standards of competency before they actually get up in front of class. One participant stated, “You have to learn how to interact with students, how to get the message across, and it is not easy to do.” Furthermore, two junior participants shared their experience with Taiwanese graduate students, stating that if they had had more professional development teacher training or knowledge, they would be better able to teach. Two thirds of the participants recognized and appreciated students’ different cultural backgrounds and the impact they exerted on the class. They hoped to have more knowledge or training about incorporating students’ culture into the curriculum.

*Need to develop intercultural awareness.* Two thirds of the participants stated that they had little opportunity to interact with students from different cultures. Some of the
participants were unaware of student differences. The participant from the College of Communication Studies mentioned that the Taiwanese student in her class was the first Taiwanese student she has taught. She did not know how to interact with her and how to provide help in an appropriate way. She noticed that the student was much quieter than other students, but she was not sure about the reason. The participant wanted to assist this particular student without making her feel uncomfortable; she received some useful suggestions from a colleague who is from Taiwan. Participants stated that they need more ideas and knowledge about developing intercultural awareness and how to improve their teaching.

Faculty Growth

*What they have gained.* One third of the participants stated what they have gained through interaction with Taiwanese graduate students. Although it was a challenging experience, they all had positive responses. One stated, “My experience with Taiwanese students has been positive. . . . They are so dedicated to holding up their half that I feel my responsibility to hold up my half. . . .” Another participant said, “These students really broaden my worldviews, and I have had learned how to do things differently to accommodate. . . .” A third participant realized what he lacked and what he had to do to improve as a teacher as a result of his experiences.

*How they have grown.* Participants freely discussed how much they have grown as a result of teaching Taiwanese graduate students, and the statements were positive.
The most frequent statements from the participants dealt with their own motivation to see the world differently. They noticed how their perspectives changed; they became sensitive to the difficulties students encountered and what they could do in the future to help them. They most appreciated what the students brought to the classroom and the impact they had upon it. The following table (Table 10) provides participants’ thoughts on the impact Taiwanese students had on the class.

**Impact on American Students**

All participants were pleased to have Taiwanese students in their classes and identified the advantages that Taiwan graduate students brought.

Table 10.

**Impact on American Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Sample Quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact of American students</td>
<td>1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12</td>
<td>“They broaden American student world view...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subheading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity of thoughts</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14</td>
<td>“I think it would be a good idea for the other students to be exposed to the kind of diversity that the students bring to class...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrich students’ view</td>
<td>2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 12, 14</td>
<td>“It really helped the other students to broaden ...”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Twelve participants cited the most positive aspect of having Taiwanese graduate students in the classroom was the diversity of thought they presented. Ten participants stated that students provided a challenge to faculty, stimulated awareness, and exposed
American students to thinking beyond their immediate surroundings; their presence also broadened their perspectives and promoted multicultural understanding.

Twelve participants claimed that the Taiwanese graduate students had impact on the class. A participant mentioned that he loved to have Taiwanese students in his class because they brought up a lot of insights in class, which were good for American students as well. He further stated that the insights helped the American students to be more aware of cultural differences and be less ethnocentric. Another participant stated: “These Taiwanese graduate students often have valuable experiences and insights that their American classmates might lack. This can serve as a valuable resource for the American students.”

With Taiwanese graduate students in class, varied experiences provided a different lens through which the world is viewed. Interchanges among students led students to think more about their beliefs and opinions. Some Taiwanese graduate students already earned degrees in their own country and also worked before coming to the USA, bringing with them valuable experience, such as teaching experience. These varied backgrounds and experiences help American students to adopt different perspectives.

Differences Among Participants

The purpose of the study was to examine participants’ experiences while teaching in a mixed-culture classroom and adjustments they made to accommodate Taiwanese graduates students enrolled in their classes. During the interview and data analysis
process, some additional issues warranting discussion emerged. While writing the
findings, the relationship between participants’ cultural awareness and their classroom
adjustments in teaching drew the researcher’s attention; therefore, the researcher did a
postanalysis to investigate the relationship between participants’ cultural awareness and
their adjustments in teaching.

Faculty Cultural Awareness

Based on the participants’ statements, participants’ cultural awareness was
discussed and identified in terms of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity
(DMIS) at one of the six stages (denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation,
and integration) or in transition to one stage to another stage. As mentioned in chapters 2
and 3, making school more responsive to and effective for diverse students requires
professional development that begins with an understanding of instructors’ own
perceptions of cultural differences, in other words, their intercultural sensitivity, defined
by Milton Bennett as “the construction of reality as increasingly capable of
accommodating cultural difference that constitutes development” (Bennett, 1993, p. 30).
The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), a psychometrically sound instrument
based on Milton Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS),
measures six stages of cognitive development that make up the major phases of
development of intercultural sensitivity—ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism. The DMIS
represents the development of intercultural sensitivity along a continuum from a limited
understanding on the one end to a sophisticated understanding on the other.
In the first half of that continuum, the ethnocentric phase, the assumption is that one’s own culture is experienced as central to reality, and difference is perceived as threatening. People realize the existence of other worldviews as they progress through the stages of ethnocentrism (denial, defense, minimization) even though they still perceive this reality from the perspective of their own cultures. People in the denial stage do not want to know about other cultures. They disallow the existence or validity of other cultures “by maintaining psychological and/or physical isolation from the differences” (Intercultural Communication Institute, 2006). In the defense stage, they denigrate other cultures or emphasize the superiority of their own culture. People in the minimization stage stress similarities between their culture and others so much that “difference are almost ignored or trivialized in favor of universal characteristics” (Intercultural Communication Institute).

In the ethnorelative half of the DMIS continuum, the assumption is that one’s own culture is experienced “in the context of others culture” (Intercultural Communication Institute, 2006). Difference in this stage is no longer perceived as threatening; difference is seen as “neither good nor bad, it is just different” (Bennett, 1993, p. 46). People with ethnorelative orientation accept differences in cultures and acknowledge that each culture has a valid and viable construction of the world. People in the acceptance stage recognize that their own culture is “just one of a number of equally complex worldviews,” and they are respectful of other cultures (Intercultural Communication Institute). For the first time, “cultural difference is both acknowledged and respected” (Bennett, 1993, p. 47). People
in the adaptation stage are able to “internalize two or more fairly complete cultural frames of references” (Bennett, 1993, p. 55), and value other cultures as highly as their own. People in the integration stage live in the margins between cultures, able to move in, out, and between cultures freely, respectfully, and effectively.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, it was too late to administer the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) to investigate participants’ intercultural sensitivity. The IDI was developed by Mitch Hammer and Milton Bennett in 1998 to measure the stage of development of intercultural sensitivity as outlined in Bennett’s theoretical model, the Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. In order to examine the relationship between participants’ cultural awareness and willingness to adjust teaching, faculty members suggested the researcher to use the interview data to place their intercultural sensitivity by using DMIS. Based on participants’ statements in the interviews, the researcher pulled out the statements that reflected participants’ views of students’ culture and his or her own culture and placed each participant in one of the six stages based on the researcher’s own judgment. The following table (Table 11) indicates the participants’ stage of intercultural sensitivity according to this researcher’s analysis.

Because it was too late to administer the IDI, the DMIS served as a model of intercultural sensitivity, the researcher used participants’ statements reflecting their attitudes toward students’ culture or his or her own culture and placed them in one of the DMIS stages or in transition from one stage to another stage. The researcher’s reasons for
Table 11

*Participants and DMIS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>DMIS Stage (Denial, Defense, Minimization, Acceptance, Adaptation, and Integration)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Denial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Denial/Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Minimization/Acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Minimization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Denial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Denial/Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Denial/Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Minimization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Defense</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
placing each participant in a particular stage of intercultural sensitivity or in transition appear below.

*Participant 1.* This participant’s intercultural sensitivity appears to be in Stage 1—Denial. She stated,

I don’t think I’ve ever have had to adjust; everyone needs to contribute. . . with everyone participating; I think there is a chance, but if we spent too much time discussing the international concept, then I will need to rearrange the content . . . .

The local students do not practice in Taiwan. I don’t think how nursing might be different. . . . I haven’t noticed that they have a different need; it might have been easier for us to communicate once she lost her hesitancy.

This participant is disinterested in cultural difference and does not see cultural differences. She does not recognize students’ differing needs and assumes that if the student lost her hesitancy, the communication would be easier. Her definition of class participation is that students talk and contribute, and she does not think she needs to change her teaching.

*Participant 2.* This participant’s intercultural sensitivity appears to be in Stage 4—Acceptance. He stated:

There is the language difficulty because you speak Taiwanese and Chinese, and they are very different from English or Spanish. . . . A lot of statements where because we know the culture and the language, we know what we’re saying. But
people from different countries, they do not know. To them, it doesn’t make sense. How to get two people on the same page, and the colloquialisms make it tougher to do that. . . . I have to use language that my Taiwanese students understand to explain. . . . My Taiwanese students are so dedicated to holding up their half that I felt my responsibility to hold up my half. The students broadened American students’ points of view. . . .

This participant recognized and appreciated the cultural differences. He took into consideration students’ difficulties in a complex cultural context and was also willing to provide alternative solutions to help students succeed.

*Participant 3.* This participant’s intercultural sensitivity appears to be in transition from Stage 1 to Stage 2: Denial/Defense. She stated:

Students’ language ability and personality are the reasons, . . . but I think it is more their personality than their language ability. . . . I think to get through this kind of language and culture difficulty makes you a different person. . . . I think just to have the courage to come here and have the persistence to learn a language skill and to put up with the culture [is impressive].

This participant assumed the factors affecting students’ participation are language and personality. She recognized cultural differences to a degree, but could not see the issue in a cultural context. In addition she thought that if students “put up with” the culture, students would be fine. Her statements indicated that she thinks her culture is superior; she lacks the appreciation of cultural difference.
Participant 4. The participant’s intercultural sensitivity appears to be in Stage 2: Defense. She stated:

I think maybe a bit of language barriers or she is just a quieter person. Perhaps it was just her personality. They may be less eager in participating in discussion because of the language barrier and also culturally. I think sometimes Asian women are a little bit shier, but that is not always true either.

This participant recognized cultural differences. She recognized that low participation is not associated only with language or personality. She was aware of the cultural factor; however, she held the stereotype of Asian women as shy.

Participant 5. This participant’s intercultural sensitivity appears to be in transition from Stage 3 to Stage 4: Minimization/Acceptance. She stated:

There are several differences. I’ve had to learn how to do things differently to accommodate. They need some prompting and some encouragement. There are many differences: different ways of teaching and learning. Where you are from is more teacher-centered, lots of testing. Initially, I have not changed anything, but I’ve been asking myself that questions. Do I need to change things?

This participant recognized cultural differences between her culture and students’ culture at a deeper level (i.e., different ways of teaching and learning, different expectations). She noticed the differences in languages as well as teaching/learning styles and also realized that students have different needs. She was willing to accommodate.
Participant 6. This participant’s intercultural sensitivity appears to be in Stage 3: Minimization. She stated,

I noticed a few differences. It really helped the other students to broaden. . . . It helped to show some diversity. . . . I think, more hesitant because of obvious accent, a little bit self-conscious. . . . A little bit more thoughtful, like thinking about what she was going to say. . . . I don’t know if that was because of just being called on or having to put it into English translation. . . . They need to think. They want to think about it more than saying something.

This participant recognized cultural difference and was able to explain some issues from different perspectives. She was also able to put language and personality in a cultural context to explain the hesitancy and level of participation. She showed her appreciation of the different cultural perspectives that student brought to class.

Participant 7. This participant’s intercultural sensitivity appears to be in Stage 2: Defense. She stated,

I think most of the initial adjustment to our expectations [was] about how they need to behave in class. They are hesitant because of their language skills; it takes them longer to formulate their ideas. In general, they are more silent. . . . It depends on their level of language. I think it is much more language because I think if you have the language skills, that will enable you to make connections.
This participant recognized some cultural differences and explained students’ participation from more than one perspective; however, she believed that if students’ language skill is improved, their participation will increase. In addition, she also assumed that if students have good language skills, interaction with others will increase. Furthermore, she believes that students were hesitant because their English is not good enough to formulate thoughts.

Participant 8. This participant’s intercultural sensitivity appears to be in Stage 1: Denial. He stated:

There is more lack of self-confidence than ability. They need more practice. I don’t think they practice enough. Student is a little more hesitant in terms of speaking up. They were all a lot more focused on study. It matters more what your background is in terms of education rather than which country you are from.

This participant did not see cultural differences and did not recognize students’ differences and needs. According to him the factor affecting students’ participation is lack of confidence and weak skills in spoken English. He believed once students practice more, their language skills would improve. He realized that students focused on study, and he assumed students’ cultural background was meaningless.

Participant 9. This participant’s intercultural sensitivity appears to be in transition from Stage 1 to Stage 2: Denial/Defense. She stated:

Perhaps some self-consciousness due to their speaking language or maybe they don’t feel comfortable. I would think it was more because of confidence about the
language. They should probably produce some and more in terms of comments or questions. It was a matter of confidence with the language more than with understanding. Students are a little more shy. Even if their language is regular, they may be too shy to raise a question to the question or point out a problem that they see. It is as if they have some kind of fear—That looks to me like it’s a worry about being disrespectful to the teacher.

This participant saw a little cultural difference and recognized that students’ infrequent participation was not solely associated with confidence and language. She could explain the participation in class from different perspectives: She believed that student experienced fear or anxiety or wanted to show respect.

Participant 10. This participant’s intercultural sensitivity appears to be in transition from Stage 1 to Stage 2: Denial/Defense. She stated:

There is a language problem to understand the lectures. The one who has better English skill usually is more willing to participate; I think Asian students do not like to ask questions in class, so that’s a cultural thing. Maybe they don’t want to challenge the teacher or something; I don’t change too much the classroom thing because this is an American classroom, so they are here to learn how to work in American classroom. We always learn that they won’t participate.

This participant held the stereotype that Asian students do not ask questions and won’t participate. She assumed that language is the factor in students’ lack of
participation. She also claimed that students are here to learn how to work in American classrooms; therefore, neither change nor adjustment is necessary.

Participant 11. This participant’s intercultural sensitivity appears to be in Stage 4: Acceptance. He stated:

I think it would be a good idea for the other students to be exposed to this kind of diversity. . . . Many of them are used to an education that is more talking to them, and they don’t necessarily come from backgrounds where they are expected to talk more in class and give their own opinions. . . . It was new for them in terms of the expectation to participate. . . . All students have that difficulty. You just have the added difficulty in the fact you are being asked to say or write something in a language that is not your first language. . . . Do we provide enough resources? That is a significant cultural difference. . . . for those who come from cultures where that is seen as a loss of face. You should be able to do it completely on your own and not to ask for help. . . . The program needs to adapt to all the differences among the students’ cultures and otherwise. We need to be sure that our program is sensitive to those issues.

This participant recognized and appreciated cultural differences. He was able to interpret and explain a phenomenon—classroom participation—within a cultural context and at a deeper level. In addition, he discussed issues from different perspective and was willing to provide any help possible to assist students.
Participant 12. This participant’s intercultural sensitivity appears to be in Stage 4: Acceptance. He stated:

It is difficult to participate. . . . Just being there is good. . . . I am trying to figure out what they are understanding from this end of it because of some of the language and the cultural context of the examples being used. . . . The major difference is perhaps the ability to look at some of the national issues because Taiwanese students were there. I try to participate with some international activities here to sensitize my understanding of some of the particular cultural aspects. . . . How comfortable do they feel in the course in order to speak up?

This participant recognized and appreciated cultural differences. He noticed language differences. He tried to bring students’ culture into his teaching and curriculum; furthermore, he was aware of cultural differences and looked for ways to improve his cultural awareness.

Participant 13. This participant’s intercultural sensitivity appears to be in Stage 2: Defense. She stated,

I would definitely have to make adjustments. . . . Language is absolutely the most important thing for those who want to come here to study. . . . It helps students to be able to keep up with understanding what’s happening in class; students have cultural shock and faculty also have cultural shock.

This participant noticed cultural differences; however, in her understanding, language was the most important survival factor in the American classroom.
Participant 14. This participant’s intercultural sensitivity appears to be in Stage 3: Minimization. She stated:

Students feel hesitant to participate in whole-class discussion, either feeling hesitant or unsure because of language difficulties, just feeling a little tentative because . . . English is still difficult, still a challenge. . . . There is also the issue of culture and cultural differences. I try to step back from the authority in class discussion in some ways. . . . I honestly haven’t done much thinking about or considering accommodating students. I recognize that as an issue I need to address, but I haven’t done it yet. . . . I recognize that as a problem, but I struggle a lot with teaching. It is like adding another level to something I know I need to do to address the needs of all the students, but I haven’t.

This participant recognized and appreciated cultural difference. She was able to interpret students’ participation in a complicated cultural context. She was willing to accommodate but had not yet taken the opportunity to do so.

Participant 15. This participant’s intercultural sensitivity appears to be in Stage 2: Defense. She stated:

They bring some really interesting background in the class. I try to be patient and get them to say it again until everyone understands. . . . I am sure it was difficult for her because of the language difficulties. But I think that any foreign student who doesn’t speak English as a first language would have those sort of problems
just becoming familiar. . . . The most important thing in my class is to cover the topics and make sure you address all the topics. . . . I don’t think how I could really change what I am doing in class.

This participant recognized the diversity that students brought to class, and she tried to help students in class; however, her technique was to ask students to repeat again until everyone understood. She assumed that students’ difficulties would vanish when students became familiar with the classroom. In other words, she was unable to interpret classroom participation and students’ language difficulty in a cultural context.

*Intercultural Sensitivity and Willingness to Adjust Teaching*

The relationship between a participant’s intercultural sensitivity and her or his willingness to adjust their teaching was a particular interest. Based on the DMIS and the interview data, the researcher placed participants’ intercultural sensitivity in one stage or in the transition from one stage to another stage of the DMIS (denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration) and placed their willingness to adjust their teaching into three groups: no evidence to show adjustment, partially adjust by changing methods or activities based on own judgment, and change based on students’ cultural background and needs. Based on the statements of 15 participants, the following table provides an idea of their cultural awareness and willingness to adjust their teaching.

The following table shows each participant’s intercultural sensitivity and her or his willingness to adjust teaching. There are six stages in DMIS: Denial, Defense,
Minimization, Acceptance, Adaptation, Integration. I divided teachers’ willingness to adjust their teaching into three groups based on their statements from the interview;

- Group 1: No adjustment or change;
- Group 2: Change methods and activity based on their own judgment;
- Group 3: Change based on students’ cultural background and needs

Table 12 shows that participants’ willingness to adjust is associated with their intercultural sensitivity. In other words, the participant who was more aware of cultural differences between his or her culture and the students’ culture was more willing to adjust his or her teaching in class to meet students’ needs and help students succeed.

The researcher ran a statistical analysis to investigate the correlation between participants’ intercultural sensitivity and willingness to adjust teaching. The correlation coefficient is 0.57 and marked correlations are significant at \( p < .05000 \). This shows a positive correlation between participants’ intercultural sensitivity and their willingness to adjust. In other words, if the participant’s intercultural sensitivity falls in a later stage (i.e., minimization, acceptance), the participant is more willing to adjust by connecting students’ cultural difference or background in curriculum content.

Through the interview and data analysis, participants’ cultural awareness influenced their adjustments in teaching and their willingness to adjust for students. Two thirds of the participants recognized that Taiwanese students come from a different culture. These participants realized cross-cultural differences, and their cultural awareness motivated them to change and to be more willing to change. Four participants
Table 12

*Intercultural Sensitivity vs. Teaching Adjustment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>DMIS stage</th>
<th>Teaching Adjustment Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Denial</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Denial/Defense</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Defense</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Minimization/Acceptance</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Minimization</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Defense</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Denial</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Denial</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Denial/Defense</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Minimization/Acceptance</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Defense</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Minimization</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Defense</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
expressed the need to be more aware of the differences as well as the need for more skills and knowledge of teaching and interacting with international students.

What I Learned in This Study

I began this study with the desire to discover faculty members’ perceptions, experience, and willingness to adjust when teaching in a mixed-culture classroom that included Taiwanese graduate students. I wanted to address these issues because classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse and also because of my major in curriculum and instruction. Several pieces of information emerged from faculty interviews. First, they acknowledged the importance of diversity in their teaching and the impact Taiwanese graduate students had on the classroom. Second, faculty explored and used a variety of strategies in order to work effectively with diverse students in their classes.

Teaching in a mixed-culture classroom, however, involves more than a change in the classroom. It also involves a change in teaching practice. In other words, teachers must recognize that students have different cultural norms and different expectations of education, avoid stereotypes, and maintain the ability and skills to engage with and value students’ differences in their teaching and curriculum.

During the interviews and subsequent analysis, I noticed that faculty members who had more interaction with Taiwan graduate students and who had previously taught in K–12 were more willing to change their teaching methods and strategies and develop course content accordingly. They sought to expand their repertoire of teaching skills in
many different ways, such as discussion with colleagues and students, and researched more effective ways to teach students. Faculty who had little or no K–12 teaching experience had professional knowledge in their field, but their teaching was teacher-focused. They followed the content of the textbook and strove to cover all content.

While I was doing the post analysis on faculty cultural awareness and adjustment in teaching, I realized a positive relationship between them. When a participant’s intercultural sensitivity was in a later stage, (i.e., minimization, acceptance), she or he was more willing to adjust teaching to accommodate students. Participants who recognized more cultural differences were more open-minded and more flexible in their adjustments and could explain students’ difficulties in a complex cultural context. In addition, those who could explain and were aware of cultural differences appreciated different cultures at a deeper level and accepted cultural differences.

Summary

The participants were able to identify a wide range of difficulties that students encountered, give possible explanations, and state their perceptions and adjustments. Participants noticed cultural effects at work in their classrooms, and they were able to use a series of adjustments and strategies designed to reduce those effects and create better learning environments for their students. Furthermore, I have also investigated participants’ cultural awareness and their willingness to adjust in teaching and provided explanations.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

This chapter offers the answers to the questions that guided the study, a discussion of some issues raised by the research, some comments on findings of interest, limitations of this study, researcher’s personal reflection, and finally some suggestions for future research in this area.

Research Questions

Four questions were created to give framework to this study and guide the process of data collection and analysis. These questions follow.

Question 1

1. What differences do faculty perceive when teaching Taiwanese graduate students and U. S. students in the same class, if any?

Faculty members from the participant pool for this study were aware, at least to some extent, of students’ cultural backgrounds and difficulties. Participants had developed awareness based on their classroom as well as their cross-cultural experiences. Those who have more experience with Taiwanese students seemed to be more aware of the differences and problems that Taiwanese graduate students encountered and were
able to interpret the difficulties in a complex cultural context. Participants stated that it is more challenging to teach in a mixed-culture classroom. They explained that Taiwanese students have more difficulties in classroom participation, reading comprehension, and writing than American students. Participants mentioned that through their teaching experiences, they realized that Taiwanese students need more prompting, encouragement, and time for classroom participation. Participants noted differences.

First, students need more guidance in assignment: Because teaching is teacher-centered in Taiwan, teachers usually give students instructions about the assignment (i.e., topics, page limitation). In the US, teachers give students freedom to explore different areas, figure out something he or she is really interested in, and conduct a deep study. In other words, teachers want students to select a topic in which they are interested instead of a topic assigned by the teacher.

Second, students need more encouragement and time in participation; as mentioned in the findings, Taiwanese graduate students come from a teacher-centered classroom, from a country in which English is not the first language, and from a culture in which the concept of face is valued. In a teacher-centered classroom, teachers do the talking and students mainly listen. When students came to the US to study, they encounter a different classroom culture, a student-centered classroom in which students contribute thoughts and participate in the discussion and the teacher serves as a facilitator. This difference will definitely necessitate some time to overcome and adjust. Secondly, English is not widely spoken; it is a foreign language in Taiwan. Even though
nowadays in Taiwan students have to learn English beginning in elementary school, the environment for practicing English is limited. Students do not have many opportunities to practice English in Taiwan. Once they come to the US, they have to use English wherever they go to survive. In the classroom, the discussion pace usually flows very quickly; by the time the students are ready to say what they want to say, the topic has changed. Furthermore, it takes some time for students to formulate their thoughts in English and to share them in class. Some students might feel anxious sharing their thoughts because of their accents or because of their uncertainty. Students need more time to think, formulate thoughts, and share in class. In Taiwan, the concept of face is valued. Making mistakes means losing face, and losing face means dishonoring the family. If students are not sure about the answers to the questions, they will remain silent instead of saying something and then realizing that what they have said is not the answer. If teachers can give students positive feedback and encouragement, students will be willing to share and participate.

Third, students learn better and engage more in small-group discussion. Taiwanese students come from teacher-centered classrooms, and they are unaccustomed to American classroom culture. While in America, they need to share and participate in class. It takes time for them to understand what the discussion is all about, and they also need to adjust to a classroom culture in which class participation is highly valued. Because of students’ English ability, some Taiwanese students feel more comfortable
sharing in small groups, where they feel less anxious and more comfortable sharing or asking questions.

Fourth, difficulties of Taiwanese graduate students cannot be explained by one single factor. As shown in chapter 4, Taiwanese students have both unique characteristics and difficulties in the American classroom. We cannot explain the difficulties by a single factor. In fact, they can be explained only in a complicated cultural context. As mentioned above, the difficulties students encounter involve cultural difference and language. No single factor explains why students participate less or need encouragement.

In sum, participants noticed differences when Taiwanese graduate students are present in a class. The differences include the following: (a) students need more guidance in assignment; (b) students need more encouragement and time for participation; (c) students learn better and engage more in small-group discussion; and (d) their difficulties cannot be explained by one single factor.

Participants understand that teaching in a mixed-culture classroom is more challenging than in a homogeneous classroom; however, the majority of the participants were able to understand the differences and were also willing to adjust their teaching methods to some degree to assist Taiwanese graduate students.

One participant said, “What matters to me is how to let students feel comfortable and relaxed to participate in class, how to get the information across to them, and how to help them succeed in the program.”
Question 2

How does classroom interaction differ when Taiwanese graduate students are present?

Although all the participants regarded having Taiwanese graduate students in class as a positive experience, they faced some challenges in classroom interaction when the Taiwanese graduate students were present. The presence of different cultures and values opened students’ eyes to different perspectives, but the Taiwanese graduate students sometimes made the teacher’s job more challenging. Frustrations accompany motivating students to participate in class, ask questions, socialize with other students, and speak out in discussion. Participants stated that Taiwanese students participated to a greater degree in small-group discussion; therefore, the participants often allowed more time for small-group discussion in class. As mentioned above in Question 1, students feel more comfortable participating in small groups, and small-group discussion is also a good opportunity for cooperative learning.

Participants mentioned that some Taiwanese students tended to sit and interact only with other Taiwanese students, so the participants had to use some activities to force students to work with others. Two reasons explain why Taiwanese students sit with other Taiwanese students. First, Taiwanese students come from a collectivist culture; most students feel that if they come from the same country, they have to sit together as a group. Second, some students might not have a good comprehension in listening; therefore, if they cannot understand what the teacher said or what other students said,
they can ask the Taiwanese students sitting next to them for help. Because of these two reasons, students do not have much opportunity to interact with other students from different countries. Therefore, teachers will need to use some activities to promote or create more interaction among the students. Overall, participants recognized the benefits of having Taiwanese students in class. They further stated that Taiwanese students exerted impact upon the class, helping domestic students to see the world from a different perspective.

**Question 3**

What instructional changes, if any, do faculty make when they teach a class with Taiwanese graduate students?

The majority of participants noticed the Taiwanese graduate students had difficulties and problems in classroom discussion, reading comprehension, and writing; therefore, they used many different approaches helpful in assisting Taiwanese students, such as more small-group discussion and more presentations or hands-on activities. They knew what approaches would help students learn faster, and they tried to use a variety of different ways to assist and encourage students.

As mentioned in chapter 4, participants used five instructional strategies when Taiwanese students are enrolled in their classes. First, they modify instruction: which could involve changing classroom activities, modifying reading assignment, providing more guidance for assignment, or spending more time in explaining some important concepts.
Second, they encourage participation: The majority of participants realized that students might not participate as much as they expect for various reasons. Participants explain the reasons in a complicated cultural context instead of assuming that language is the reason for lack of participation. Participants understand that students need more time and encouragement for participation; therefore, they give students more time to think and usually ask American students to share first. In addition, they also encourage students to share their thought or experience. Participants value students’ diverse points of view and appreciate the varied perspectives that students bring to class.

Third, participants avoid or define slang or colloquialism: the majority of participants realize that students have some difficulties in understanding the slang or colloquialism used in class. Participants usually use the appropriate English that Taiwanese students can understand.

Fourth, participants assign small-group discussion: As mentioned in questions 1 and 2, the majority of participants understand the difficulties that students encounter and realize that students feel more comfortable to speak up in small-group discussion, so participants have more small-group discussions in class.

Fifth, they encourage socialization: the majority of the participants realize students come from an EFL country, so they encourage students to interact with classmates more through small-group discussion, group projects, or study groups. Furthermore, participants also suggest that students become involved in the Conversation Partner Program to have more interaction with Americans for improving their English
and understanding American culture. In sum, participants are able to use different teaching methods to adjust and accommodate students.

**Question 4**

Do faculty perceptions of Taiwanese graduate students change in the academic context? If so, in what way?

The majority of participants changed their perceptions of Taiwanese students in the academic context after teaching them. Participants thought the reason Taiwanese graduate students seldom participated in class was their language proficiency. Based on experiences and interactions with Taiwanese graduate students, the participants stated that language proficiency is not the only factor; they noticed that many factors are involved. Participants explained that students’ confidence in English, language proficiency, personalities, and the topics discussed in class as well as the class atmosphere also affect students’ participation.

A minority of participants were surprised that the Taiwanese students they had in class were excellent in class participation and writing. According to them, the students did not have any difficulties in class; they even thought these students did better than other American students. A minority of participants recognized that students’ willingness to participate increased throughout the semester; however, they all believed that the students they had at the time of this writing were weaker than the students they had in previous years. These participants are concerned about whether these students will be capable of teaching English in Taiwan after they graduate from the program; however, a
minority of participants stated that students improve considerably along the way, and they were amazed about their growth. One participant stated that she learned that Taiwanese students do not participate in class; however, in fact, she realized that students participate in different ways and at a different pace. In her view that is a change and a surprise. The other participant stated that what matters is to know that the real meaning of education and to help students learn and succeed in the future. As teachers, we ask ourselves how we can help diverse students learn and become professional after they graduate.

The majority of participants perceived Taiwanese students as reluctant participants in discussion, lacking confidence, hard working, and shy; and a minority of participants perceived Taiwanese students as passive learners. Through interaction with students in a semester or more than one semester, these participants were able to understand that their perceptions might not be true and believed that these perceptions need to be explained in a complicated cultural context. Over all, the participants have positive perceptions toward Taiwanese students and admire their dedication to study in an unfamiliar environment and students’ dedication becomes a motive for them to try their best to assist students.

Congruence with the Literature

The current study revealed evidence of a variety of cultural effects on teaching and learning, in particular, the major problems identified by Tompson and Tompson (1996), not participating in class, and sitting only with other members of their group.
Participants mentioned their concerns about two issues: participation in class and interaction with others. Active participation is highly encouraged in U. S. universities, but the quiet demeanor of many students causes professors to wonder what is going on in their minds. Often misunderstandings occur between professors and students because of the different interpretation of silence in class and also different expectations from students and teachers. Although the problems participants identified were congruent with the literature, the participants were able to explain them from different perspectives.

The current study is also congruent with the study Liu (2001) conducted regarding students’ classroom participation in American classroom. Individual participation patterns are not always static. Classroom communication and interaction vary according to such factors as increased or decreased self-confidence, feedback, and classroom climate. Through interviews with the participants, the researcher discovered that Taiwanese students’ participation patterns are similarly changeable. The patterns changed with time, classroom climate, and the topics discussed in class. The participants were able to explain students’ class participation from different angles and tried to use different strategies to encourage them to participate and share.

The findings about the unique characteristics of Taiwanese students and the difficulties also are congruent with the studies of Chapdeline and Alexitch (2004), Chen (1996), Furnham (1987), and Heggies and Jackson (2003). Taiwanese students encounter difficulties when studying in an unfamiliar American setting because of cultural backgrounds and learning and teaching styles, confirming the findings of various studies.
A number of researches showed a strong and positive association between teachers’ cultural awareness and culturally responsive teaching (Johnson & Inoue, 2003; Gay, 1993; 2002; 2003; Schuerolz-Lehr, 2007). The findings of the study are also congruent with the literature in this respect. The findings showed that participants’ intercultural sensitivity has a positive correlation with their willingness to adjust; thus, when the participant is more sensitive to students’ different cultural background, her or his cultural awareness increases, and they are more willing to adjust or accommodate students’ need. They are more willing to put themselves in the students’ shoes and try to meet students’ needs. Teachers with high cultural awareness are more likely to implement student-centered teaching. Finally, as one’s experience with cultural difference becomes more complex and sophisticated, one’s competence in intercultural relations increases.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

In the literature review in Chapter 2, some concepts about the culture-learning process, learning styles, relationship between culture and learning, and international students’ difficulties in American classroom were discussed. Notably, culture plays an important role in students’ learning, suggesting that at least in the U. S. university classroom, what we think of as sound principles of instructional design and good instructional strategies will support the learning of students from a variety of cultural
backgrounds. In these cases, the cultural component should be regarded. Although participants recognized students’ cultural backgrounds, they believed that they were ill-equipped to deal with a multicultural environment. They are willing and open to diversity, but they struggle with strategies to incorporate in their teaching. In fact, perceptions and attitudes of teachers toward students can greatly impact the students’ level of achievement. Curriculum content and materials as well as instructional approaches and educational setting are all important variables. The teacher’s education and preparedness for a diverse classroom environment are also significant. In the study, participants mentioned the need to have the knowledge and skills to teach in an intercultural setting, a mixed-cultural classroom. This type of expertise involves more than simply using different strategies in class; intercultural sensitivity should be brought into teaching and learning by considering the learners’ cultural backgrounds and making content and process decisions accordingly. Doing so may be more obvious in intercultural communication, area studies, second language, international relations, or culture courses than in other areas, such as business. Instructors in every discipline can introduce cultural elements into the curriculum, and students can acquire understandings that are directly or indirectly related to intercultural aspects. For example, they can search for the cultural context and some particular concepts, theories, or methods and then develop critical and comparative learning skills, such as critically analyzing phenomena from multiple perspectives and comparing ideas across cultures in a culturally relevant manner.
Good Teaching

One of the main ideas to come out of the study is the nature of good teaching. Good teaching is not about always having a fixed agenda and being rigid, but instead being flexible, experimenting, and having the confidence to react and adjust to changing circumstances. Notably, during the interviews the majority of participants said they use different approaches to help Taiwanese graduate students to learn; however, a minority of participants insisted that they cannot simply change for these students. They thought students need to grow accustomed to Western teaching style. They followed the textbook content, tried to cover all information in the books during the semester, and did not rearrange the curriculum to meet students’ need. These participants’ intercultural sensitivity appears to be ethnocentrically oriented, and they placed in either the denial or defense stage. In the denial stage, people do not want to know about other cultures; in the defense stage, people denigrate other cultures or emphasize the superiority of their own culture. At these stages people cannot recognize cultural differences and appear to explain some situations simplistically, instead of seeing the situation in a complicated cultural context.

The majority of participants admire the Taiwanese graduate students for coming a long way to study in a foreign country. Participants stated that their dedication motivated them to work harder as professors to help students succeed in the program. These participants’ intercultural sensitivity appears to be in minimization or acceptance. People in the minimization stage stress similarities between their cultures and others and
appreciate and recognize cultural difference. People in the acceptance stage recognize that their own culture is just one of a number of equally complex worldviews, and they respect other cultures. The majority of participants understand teaching not only motivates students to learn but also teaches them how to learn in a manner that is relevant, meaningful, and memorable; therefore, they try to use many different instructional strategies in class and also bring students’ cultural differences and background into the curriculum content.

Good teachers not only convey a body of knowledge to their students, but they are also aware of how to convey the knowledge by connecting their own experience with their students’ experience with the world. The majority of participants stated that good instructors should seek to help international students, and these Taiwanese graduate students make it more obvious that all students are not the same. They also stated that how to convey the information to students and how to help them be professional in their field and career matter.

Teacher Preparation

The impression the researcher gathered from the participants is that excellent teaching appears not to be simple. We can never turn every teacher into an excellent teacher; however, we can help all teachers improve their teaching. Many of the participants commented on their lack of formal training in education. Universities appear to be the places where the least teacher training takes place. We require a minimum level of educational theory and practice from every person who aspires to teach any young
person from PreK through high school. Practicing teachers must also continually add to their skills throughout their teaching careers if they are to retain their teaching certificates; however, this is not the case in institutions of higher learning. Why do we assume that because someone is an expert in a particular area of knowledge, he or she is a good person to teach that subject? They may know more about their area than anyone else in the world, but they may also be unable to connect with their students and to communicate that knowledge in any way that is meaningful to the students. The only participants with educational experience are those who had been schoolteachers, and they also appear to the ones who are more willing to adjust their teaching; furthermore, their intercultural sensitivity is in a later stage. A minority of the participants did not even have teaching experience as graduate students before being put in front of a class of undergraduates as university professors.

Student Preparation

The comments from participants suggest that some Taiwanese students are unable to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered because of language difficulty. Although these students have passed the TOEFL, it is an insufficient indicator of whether they can perform in classrooms that require a high level of conceptual language. Again students who are able to perform on a written test may not have the oral skills necessary for success in a particular area. A minority of participants commented on students taking language courses at the same time as content courses. Again this may be an issue that individual departments should take up. If students require additional English
classes to bring their skills to the appropriate level, it makes little sense to allow them to take content classes until the English language skills have improved. Overall, the majority of participants recommend that students socialize with other students as much as they can to improve English and understand more of American culture. From the students’ perspective, however, finishing the courses and earning the degree is more important than socializing with others.

Limitations

The study is limited in particular areas. One limitation is the sample size and time used to gather data. From fall 2006 to spring 2007, data was collected from faculty members who taught Taiwanese students during that period of time. Only 15 participants agreed to be interviewed, and the interview lasted 45 to 60 minutes. If the researcher had been able to conduct more than one interview with each participant and conduct classroom observations, the data would have provided additional evidence and deeper insights.

Another limitation involves the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). The researcher found it impossible to administer the IDI while writing the results of the research during the final stage of the study; therefore, she chose to do a postanalysis to investigate the relationship between participants’ intercultural sensitivity and their willingness to adjust classroom procedure. If more participants had been involved and the researcher had administered the IDI at the beginning of the study as a pretest and once again as a posttest, the data would have revealed additional evidence regarding the
faculty members’ cultural awareness and the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and adjustment in teaching.

Personal Reflection

At the completion point of this study, it is useful to reflect upon the process and to suggest ways in which the research process could be improved. The interviews engendered an amount of data; however, if the researcher can conduct more interviews or do classroom observations, more data will emerge. Also, bringing participants together in focus groups after their interviews would yield additional data. Participants often needed time to think about the interview questions, so an additional focus group session might release more data. Furthermore, in order to investigate participants’ cultural awareness at a deeper level, the researcher might administer the IDI at the beginning of a semester as a pretest and again at the end of semester as a posttest and use mixed methods for this study.

Coming from a teacher-centered classroom, I found studying in a student-centered classroom difficult. Different cultural backgrounds, teaching styles, and customs caused some culture shock, language shock, and learning shock in my journey. At the outset, I just wanted to concentrate on my studies and get my degree as soon as possible, but as time passed, I realized that I have a great opportunity that not everyone has—being able to study in a foreign country. I had the opportunity to learn many new and unfamiliar things, so I told myself to be open-minded, take the initiative, and remain positive and optimistic toward whatever I encountered. Sometimes I was frustrated with endless
readings and impending deadlines for papers I had trouble starting and confused by class discussion. I am really grateful for being a graduate assistant for 4 years, during which time I interacted with American and international students and faculty. I also have an American buddy with whom I usually meet once a week to share personal and intercultural topics. All these special experiences made my doctoral study more enjoyable and unforgettable. Because of my years of living and studying in the USA, the support system I have, and my desire or motivation to succeed, I have survived. Being an international student is not easy when the host culture is so different from one’s own.

Doubtless, teaching in a mixed-culture classroom is a difficult task as well. Studying curriculum and instruction and being interested in intercultural communication and education helped me realize that the term “curriculum” is very broad and complicated. As teachers we need to integrate multiple teaching methods in the lesson-planning process, such as lectures, small- and large-group discussions, worksheets, and multimedia, in order to reach a maximum number of students with diverse learning styles and backgrounds; furthermore, student-focused methods are essential. A more interactive learning strategy can foster a more interactive classroom environment and provide students the tools that they can use to arrive at the answers on their own instead of simply giving them the answers. Furthermore, integrating students’ interests and backgrounds in content is important. To recall the courses I have taken, only one third of the courses were designed to accommodate international or intercultural perspectives. Most courses I took focused on American educational systems, policies, and curriculum studies. The
courses offered are mainly for American students. To ignore the rapidly changing
color of the student population in higher education classrooms is nearly impossible.
Pedagogical practices of the faculty reflect ongoing thinking about how to adapt to
multiple and changing needs. Incorporating and combining elements such as lectures,
group discussions, interactive activities, and technologies help to prevent students’
boredom and disengagement. Varying the learning format in this way also allows faculty
more mobility in the classroom, allowing them greater access to knowledge about how
students responded to and processed course materials. Doing so also provides faculty
members with a guide to expand their options when planning and designing their courses.
In addition, faculty members’ chosen academic disciplines may have affected their ability
to incorporate elements of transformed teaching. Although the participants’ academic
disciplines could not be discussed in the study because of the requirement to preserve
participant confidentiality, faculty interviews indicated the potential effects that academic
discipline could have on pedagogy.

Further Research

This study investigated faculty perceptions, experience, and adjustments in
mixed-culture classrooms. A good extension of the study would be to perform similar
research with Taiwanese graduate students, asking for the problems they have
encountered, and the classes where they thought the particular learning environment
enabled them to overcome these problems. Student interviews could be used to confirm
the problems faculty perceived and to gain a better understanding of exactly how these
problems affect the learning environment from the students’ perspective. In addition, another extension would be to interview American students who are involved in classes with Taiwanese graduate students to take advantage of their perspectives, which would be slightly different from both faculty and students. Further research may focus on classroom observation as a tool to understanding the impact of pedagogical practices on students as well as understanding the connections between faculty perceptions and actual practices. Classroom observation could also serve to enhance understanding of diverse students’ perceptions of faculty practice and their effectiveness, engendering a deeper examination of effective pedagogical practices of diverse student populations.

Another issue is that of faculty preparation for teaching. To what extent are faculty members aware of their teaching strengths or weaknesses? Do instructors who have reached the pinnacle of their particular content area properly understand the components of good teaching? Do institutions value good teaching? How do the institutions support and promote excellence in teaching? Are mentoring programs for graduate students in the area of teaching sufficient and effective? What is the minimum level of knowledge and experience they require before they begin their teaching career? What sort of preparation do faculty need before teaching international students? Would some sort of preparation course aimed at helping them to some of the problems faced by international students be sufficient? Would this make them more generally aware of individual difference within their student populations?
Another issue that needs some exploration is the extent to which faculty members need to be culturally adaptive. Often the needs of instructors to have students adapt to U.S. culture are at odds with those of students to have faculty members adapt to their needs. Should faculty members insist on Taiwanese students adapting completely to the U.S. model of education because they have chosen to study here? Should Taiwanese graduate students insist that faculty members develop a greater measure of cultural awareness and adaptation because they are paying higher tuition than U.S. students to take classes?

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the relationship between instructors’ professional and personal background and the extent to which they incorporate an approach to teach for intercultural awareness and intercultural sensitivity into the curriculum. The IDI and the DMIS have been used with great success for the last 15 years to develop curriculum for intercultural education and for developing intercultural sensitivity. A study to examine faculty members’ cultural competence, personal background, professional knowledge, and classroom practice and explore different aspects of faculty experiences, background, discipline, and how such variables affect intercultural sensitivity, cultural competence, and class practice among study will provide rich data and more insights for the university, school, and faculty.

Implications

Schools should make arrangements to meet the educational needs of international students and teachers. Ten participants claimed that the courses the departments offer are designed primarily for domestic students. One of the more apparent influences of
globalization in universities has been the focus on internationalizing the curriculum. How we interpret this idea depends on our discipline area, the extent to which the content can be internationalized, and the process of teaching and learning. We all need to consider the attributes of all graduate students.

Exploring internationalization of the curriculum in terms of teaching and learning is challenging. First, academics should be concerned with developing intercultural perspectives and encouraging effective communication with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Second, academics should be aware of students’ different experiences and expectations. Finally, academics should be concerned with developing students’ skills to be able to work anywhere in the world. Extending beyond the mere addition of international examples, internationalization must permeate the very nature of the discipline so that students gain a global understanding and perspective of the discipline. Both curriculum content and design should foster both international and local perspectives of the discipline. It is not just a matter of adjusting or adding to curriculum content to ensure that it suits international students but instead assuring that home students also gain global and international understanding.

In developing a concept for internationalization of the curriculum, it is important to acknowledge that the curriculum never stands still. As the curriculum continues to develop international dimensions, a need arises for new thinking and new methods, for changes and innovation.
International students choose to study at American universities because of their reputation and quality of teaching. They enjoy being in a learning environment where they are challenged and exposed to new ways of learning. They bring benefits to domestic students as they engage with culturally and linguistically diverse students who offer multicultural perspectives on local and global issues. The challenges and benefits for academics lie in optimizing opportunities in planning and delivering curriculum to enhance international students learning and create inclusive supportive learning environments for all students; therefore, we must concern ourselves with the applicability of curriculum content to students’ home countries, acknowledge the necessity of adjusting the content for cross-national and comparative analysis, and make materials relevant to other countries.

At the same time, while faculty members struggle with strategies to incorporate diversity into their teaching and try to develop their intercultural sensitivity, university, college, and department personnel must determine what they can do to support and provide assistance and training.

Conclusion

The findings of the study suggest some instructional strategies that participants believe are effective in a mixed-culture classroom. They also suggest that knowledge of effective teaching is important in mixed-culture classrooms. Furthermore, this study underscores the association between instructors’ intercultural sensitivity and their willingness to teaching.
Confucius believed that a good teacher should first and foremost be passionately and conscientiously committed to his or her work. Knowledge must be broad in scope and fully mastered if the pupil is to benefit from exposure to it. He believed that in order to elicit good results, the teacher must love pupils, know them well, understand their psychological particularities, give thought to ways and means of facilitating their access to knowledge and, to the end, develop an effective methodology. The hallmark of a teacher’s virtue, according to Confucius was tirelessness in (a) commitment through lessons to pupils’ development, (b) concern with the differences among pupils in intelligence, aptitude, character, aspiration, interest and taste, (c) reflecting an attentive attitude that led to putting forward a number of pedagogical principles, (d) adapting teaching to the aptitudes of the pupil, and (e) clarifying and encouraging pupils’ questions.

Contemporary nations are multicultural, multiracial, and multiethnic; and we all know that children today and in the future will need quality education to prepare them for multicultural industry. We cannot merely prepare them academically. As teachers, we must ensure that students are engaged and empowered. By becoming intercultural educators, teachers can eliminate cultural bias about the differences students bring to the classroom.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of project: Faculty Perceptions and Experience With Taiwanese Graduate
Students at a University in the United States:
Implications for cross cultural teaching and learning

Person in charge: Fangyi Lin, 3 Terrace Dr., Kent, OH,
(H)330-346-4731
(W)330-672-2707
410 White Hall, Kent State University,
flin@kent.edu

1. Explanation of the study:
   A. The research in which you will participate is part of an exploratory study
      intended to discover faculty perceptions and experiences while teaching in
      classrooms with both U. S. and Taiwanese graduate students.
   B. If you agree to take part in this research, you will be asked to take part in an
      interview, and some follow-up phone and email interviews. Your response,
      together with those of other interviewed faculty, will be analyzed to reveal
      patterns and to develop a general picture of adjustments and experiences.
   C. Your participation in this research will take no more than one and a half hours
      for the interview.

2. This section describes your rights as a research participant:
   A. The purpose of the study and your role in it are explained in 1A and 1B above.
      You may ask any questions about the research process and procedures. Please
direct further questions to Fangyi Lin at the above address.
   B. Your participation in the research is anonymous. Actual participant names and
      identifying particulars will not be revealed to anyone other than the dissertation
      committee. In the event of publication of this research, no personal identifying
      information will be disclosed.

187
C. Your participation is voluntary. You are free to stop participating in the research at any time or to decline to answer any specific questions.
D. If you desire a more detailed explanation of the study after participating, contact the person in charge. A summary of the research findings will be made available to you at the end of the project.

3. By signing this document, you indicate your informed consent to participate. If you do not wish to participate, do not sign this document.

I have read and understand the above, and I agree to participate in this study.

Name: (Printed) _________________________________________
Signature: ______________________________________________
Date: __________________________________________________

Thank you for participating in this research.
APPENDIX B

TAIWANESE GRADUATE STUDENT EMAIL REQUEST
Dear

My name is Fangyi (Angela) Lin, and I serve as the vice president of the Taiwanese Student Association. I am currently working on my dissertation.

Part of my project is to identify teachers at Kent State University who do a great job of helping Taiwanese students in their class. International students often find classes at Kent State University difficult because of differences in learning styles, communication styles, culture, and so on. Some teachers at Kent State University work hard to overcome these differences and do a great job of minimizing the negative effects of these differences.

I would be grateful if you would email me any recommendations you have for faculty members who were or are very helpful to you in class you have taken in KSU. Please note that all the recommendations will be treated in confidence. No one other than this researcher will know who suggests particular faculty members.

Thank you very much for your help.
APPENDIX C

FACULTY EMAIL REQUEST
Dear

You have been highly recommended to me by some of your students as an excellent subject for my study.

I am currently involved in data collection for my dissertation in Teaching, Leadership, and Curriculum Studies. I am interested in the topic of teaching in university classrooms that include Taiwanese students along with US students. The primary method of data collection consists of interviews with faculty members who have a reputation for excellence in the teaching of international students.

I would be very grateful if you would consent to be part of this study. Your involvement would consist of a one-hour interview. I will be happy to schedule it at your convenience.

No preparation is necessary on your part, but I will gladly provide the guiding questions in advance, if you prefer.

I hope you will be able to participate. Many thanks for your time.

Fangyi (Angela) Lin

flin@kent.edu
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Setting the Stage
1. How many Taiwanese graduate students do you have in your classroom?
2. What differences do you discover in yourself when you have Taiwanese graduate students and other students in your classroom?
3. What needs do Taiwanese graduate students have that differ from those of your American students?
4. What has surprised you most about teaching Taiwanese students?
5. What have you learned about yourself? About Taiwanese graduate students? About American students?

Identifying Problems
1. Do you notice your Taiwanese students having particular problems in your class?
2. What kinds of problems do they have?
3. Do your Taiwanese students participate the same way as American students?
4. How does their participation differ?
5. Are there other differences you notice?
6. Do you do anything special to help them?

7. Have you changed or added anything to your teaching style or methods because of the Taiwanese students enrolled in your class?

8. Did you see any difference in your classroom when you did this?

9. Why did you decide to do this? Where did the idea come from?

10. Have you discussed any of these issues with your colleagues?

11. Have you read anything on Taiwanese students?
REFERENCES
REFERENCES


In J. A. Mestenhauser & B. J. Ellingboe (Eds.), Reforming the higher education curriculum: Internationalizing the campus (pp. 198–228). Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press.


York: Oxford University Press.


Chicago: Northwestern University Press.

pedagogical, cultural, social, and psychological perspectives. System, 213, 343–
348.

Institute of International Education (2005). Open door report on international education

Institute of International Education (2007). Open door report on international education

York: Teachers College Press

and the United States. In L. A. Samovar and R. E. Porter (Eds.), Intercultural


Miles, M. B., & Huberman, M. (1994). Qualitative data analysis: An expanded


Spencer-Rodgers, J., & McGovern, T. (2002). Attitudes toward the culturally different: The role of intercultural communication barriers, affective responses, consensual


