CULTURE, CULTURAL DISCONTINUITY AND THE NEED FOR CHANGE:
UNDERSTANDING CANADIAN AND CHINESE CONCEPTIONS OF
TEACHING AND LEARNING

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

The College of Graduate Studies

(Education)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
(Okanagan)

January 2012

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to examine sources of potential cultural discontinuity between Chinese students and Canadian teachers at an International school in China. Cultural discontinuity is a school-based process whereby culturally-based learning preferences and practices of students are discontinued at school (Ogbu, 1995). Since curriculum and classroom practices at International Schools are rooted in mainstream Western cultural values and worldviews, this dominant ideology may result in the discontinuance of cultural, value-based learning behaviours by Chinese students. This thesis delineates some of the issues that illustrate the incongruence between primary culture (home-based values) and secondary culture (school-based cultural values) and the implications for teaching and learning in British Columbian Offshore Schools. Conceptions of teaching and learning, the value and use of questioning, the issues of silence and plagiarism, and the role of the teacher and students are examined.

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Acknowledgments

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the wisdom, guidance, and support of my wonderful mentor, Dr. Karen Ragoonaden, who made this thesis an enjoyable part of one of the happiest times of my life. Thank you for giving me this wonderful gift.

I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Wendy Klassen and Dr. Blane Després, for the countless hours they both spent annotating this text with insightful suggestions and helpful comments. Thank you both for your time, expertise, and encouragement.

Finally, I would like to thank my Chinese students for inspiring me to become a better teacher by taking this degree and undertaking this thesis. Their patience, understanding, and acceptance of me and my teaching demonstrated a wisdom beyond their years and a kindness that I will never forget.

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To my family - for your unending love, support, encouragement, and celebrations. I love you with all of my heart.

1 Introduction

1.1 Context

Competence in English is a necessary ability for those who wish to participate fully in the globalized world of the twenty-first century. According to David Crystal (2003), the English language has achieved international domination with approximately one quarter of the world's population (1.5 billion people) already fluent or competent in English. Furthermore, English is growing faster than any other language in the world, with English as second language speakers now outnumbering those for whom English is a mother tongue (Crystal, 2003). English is also the most widely studied language with approximately 300 million people studying English in China alone (Yunbao & Huaying, 2008). Considering this widespread usage in China and elsewhere, it follows naturally, then, that English has quickly become the language of business, diplomacy, technology, popular culture, science and academic conferences. It is within this internationalized context that this narrative study, combined with academic references, will research cultural discontinuities between Western teachers teaching English and Chinese students in a British Columbian Offshore School. A secondary focus will explore best teaching practices which emphasize unity within this diversity.

1.2 The Demand for English in China

Chinese students and their families are aware that competence in the English language is necessary for active participation in today's global community. Proficiency in English, however, is not enough to offer students the competitive edge they need to secure a desirable position in China's highly competitive workforce. For many Chinese students, knowledge and experience of Western culture, as well as English language proficiency, are now required to communicate effectively and become successful in China and abroad (Curtis & Lu, 2004). To this end, Chinese

students are looking beyond the Chinese educational system, specifically to North American Offshore Schools located within China, to better meet their needs. These schools are privately owned and, unlike most international schools that are made up primarily of expatriates, they are comprised mostly of Chinese students (Bilodeau, 2010).

The Chairman of Maple Leaf Educational Systems is aware of this demand and has been offering students an English-based international education in China for the last sixteen years. During this time he has opened 22 different schools throughout China that enroll over 8 200 students (Maple Leaf Educational Systems, 2010). Six of these schools are British Columbia (BC) certified Offshore Schools that offer students a Kindergarten to Grade 12 education. Maple Leaf's secondary school students (grades 10-12) are taught the complete BC curriculum in English by BC certified teachers with Chinese History, Mandarin, Geography, and Political Science courses taught in Mandarin by Chinese teachers. In this way, students earn both British Columbia and Chinese high school graduation diplomas and gain maximum exposure to the English language and Western culture so that they are better prepared for future studies in colleges and universities abroad.

1.3 Cultural Discontinuities

My experiences as a teacher who taught with Maple Leaf Educational Systems for four years have provided the basis for the narrative portion of this study. I had the opportunity to work closely with Chinese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in a variety of contexts. I taught English 10, 11, 12, and was the English Department Head and leader of the Learning Support Team. It was in these positions that I came to recognize, and grow increasingly concerned about, certain trends among the students that I worked with. I found that the majority of the Chinese EFL students in my class struggled, not only with content and the required level

of English proficiency that is expected of them, but also with my expectations for the teaching and learning process.

The most noticeable issue for me was getting the students to actively participate in class discussions and activities. I sang songs, did dances, begged, and even threatened to take away participation marks just to get students involved. It was equally difficult to get students to ask and answer questions. Very few students volunteered their opinion or answered my questions (even when any answer would have been correct) and almost no student would ask for clarification either during or after class time. This lack of communication was challenging as activities and discussions often fell flat and it was difficult to assess the students' learning and comprehension informally through the use of questioning.

Strategies and activities that are commonly used in Canadian classrooms also seemed to cause angst for many of the Chinese EFL students in my class. The students were very reluctant to participate in critical thinking activities, and seemed uncomfortable whenever I brought in an issue for the class to discuss. Instead of the lively class discussion that I had hoped for, I was met with awkward silence and averted eyes. Similarly, peer and self-evaluations also seemed to make the students uneasy. The majority of the students seemed unnecessarily harsh when evaluating themselves, and excessively kind when evaluating or discussing their peers' work or contributions to the group.

Plagiarism was yet another issue that was very difficult to address. Few students cited their sources, and many students copied passages from their textbooks verbatim. Similarly, despite frequent discussions, warnings, and failing grades, weaker students often copied their homework directly from the stronger students, and cheating on tests and exams was commonplace.

Finally, there were many small-scale points of discontinuity between the Chinese EFL students and myself. I remember being surprised when one of my more vocal students politely told me that I did not follow the textbook very closely and that I should be giving more homework. Furthermore, he noted, I did not teach enough grammar rules and, although it was interesting, often discussed things that were unrelated to the class.

I became quickly aware that, despite my best intentions, I was unwittingly causing various levels of discomfort for my students, which in turn was limiting their learning. The downcast eyes, hesitance to get involved in my "fun" activities and lessons, and a noticeable preference for, what I considered to be boring, seat-work suggested that the Chinese EFL students and I had very different preferences and expectations for the teaching and learning process.

I also noticed that as the year progressed, and my grade 10 students' English skills improved, my person and teaching seemed to cause less angst and discomfort. There was also a noticeable difference in comfort levels among the grade 11 students, and an even more pronounced difference with the grade 12 students. These grade 11 and 12 students participated much more freely in class discussions and activities, were more apt to ask questions during the learning process, and possessed a confidence that the grade 10 students lacked. From these observations it seemed to me that a growth in English proficiency, and an understanding of my teaching style and pedagogy enabled the Chinese EFL students in my class to adapt to my expectations and become increasingly comfortable and able to learn and participate in my class.

While I was relieved to see this positive change, I was not content to accept the fact that I was the cause of any angst or discomfort for the Chinese EFL students in my classes. Since there

had been no school-wide training or discussion surrounding teaching Chinese EFL learners, I began to look for some answers myself.

1.4   A School-Wide Problem

When discussing these issues with my colleagues I found that they were also experiencing similar issues within their classrooms. A lack of active student participation in class activities, a hesitance to ask questions inside or outside of class time unless specifically requested to do so, minimal response to critical thinking activities, a reluctance to participate in peer evaluations, and a tendency toward plagiarism were some of the many issues that were common throughout the department. It was apparent that these issues were not unique to me, and that the Chinese EFL students and their Canadian teachers were experiencing cultural discontinuities that were, perhaps, negatively influencing the learning and participation of the students and causing them varying degrees of discomfort.

Looking back, it is obvious that the Canadian teachers presumptuously mistook the invitation from the Chinese government to become "foreign experts" (as our work visas labeled us) to include not only our knowledge of English and Western culture, but also our pedagogical expertise. In essence, we imported our Canadian beliefs and values about teaching and learning directly into China without any thought, training, or research into how it might affect our students.

1.5   Importing Western Pedagogy to the Detriment of Chinese Learners

The issues surrounding the importation of Western pedagogy to a non-Western culture are not ones that were unique to my colleagues and me. Shi (2009), in examining Chinese EFL students' perceptions of their Western writing instructors, describes many of the very same issues that we experienced at our school, and argues that it suggests "unsuccessful attempts at

forcing an unfamiliar Anglo-centric pedagogical culture onto local language practices" (p. 48). Shi notes that rather than incorporating local approaches to teaching and learning, many Western language teachers adopt the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) model as the best means with which to teach and learn English. This model "advocates student-centredness and experience-based practice focusing on the interdependence between form and meaning; students as contributors of knowledge; lighthearted communicative activities, and the priority of self-expression" (p. 49).

While advocates of CLT (including the Chinese government) believe that this method of teaching and learning English will "help students develop an adequate level of communicative competence in English for modernization and international exchange" (Shi, 2009, p. 49), it stands in direct opposition with the teaching practices that are most often employed in China. In contrast to the Anglo-centric (or CLT) teaching method, Shi (2009) reports, many Chinese students are used to traditional methodologies, which prioritize "teacher dominance and rote learning with a focus on structural patterns" (p. 49). Furthermore, due to their previous educational experiences, Chinese students resisted CLT, and complained that their Western teachers lacked "systematic organization and [had] inadequate delivery of discrete and countable pieces of knowledge using standard textbooks" (p. 49).

These complaints as outlined by Shi (2009), are reminiscent of my experience of teaching in China. While my colleagues and I did not consciously use the CLT model, it does embody the pedagogy most frequently employed by Canadian teachers. Furthermore, many of the issues that we noticed arose from the differences between our preferences for teaching and learning and those of the Chinese EFL students in our classes may be attributed to the drastically different beliefs and practices between the Chinese and Canadian educational systems.

1.6   Research Questions

Considering the methodological differences relating to teaching, learning, and culture described

above, two research questions have been developed:

1.   What are the cultural miscommunications and misunderstandings that occur between

Chinese students and Western teachers?

2.   What strategies and teaching methodologies can be used with Chinese students by Western

educators to avoid this cultural discontinuity and promote student learning?

1.7   Overview of Research in the Field of Chinese and Canadian Cultures of Learning

The sheer amount of research that has been done on the influences, values, and beliefs of

Chinese EFL learners, and the potential sources of cultural discontinuity with their Western

teachers, is vast. Nield's (2004) discussion of the influence of culture on Chinese students'

preferences for teaching, learning, and assessment, Grimshaw's (2007) ethnographic research of

misperceptions of Chinese learners and their educational culture, Hu's (2002) examination of the

Chinese culture of learning with respect to the Communicative Language Teaching approach of

teaching and learning English, Liu's (2002) findings surrounding Chinese students' silence,

Kennedy's (2002) argument against the belief that Chinese students are passive learners who rely

on memorization and rote learning, and Wong's (2004) exploration of Asian students' learning

styles and how they adapt to Western teaching methodologies are some of the many studies that

inform this thesis. For the purposes of this thesis, however, many useful and informative

perspectives and studies have been briefly summarized with only the main ideas discussed in

detail.

To firmly situate the thesis within this body of research, I start by focusing my research

around the Confucian and Socratic philosophies that have had shaped Chinese and Canadian

educational thought and practice, and which influence the expectations for the teaching and learning process. I have then added the more contemporary interpretations of Chinese learners, taking into account: language proficiency, perceptions of interpersonal interactions, the classroom climate, students' familiarity with their peers, personal motivation, and their experiences in sharing indigenous knowledge.

I acknowledge that it is risky to generalize about all Chinese EFL learners and Canadian teachers teaching in China. That being said, however, the following chapters present research that offers a thorough overview of issues that Canadian teachers should be aware of when reflecting on their pedagogical practices and preferences for teaching and learning within the Chinese environment. It is my hope that this thesis will offer a solid starting point for informing future practice and thought. Teachers may then integrate this information with specific knowledge of their students so that unexamined cultural differences will no longer stand in the way of their students' learning.

2   Review of Related Literature

2.1   Culture and Cultural Discontinuity

According to Fleris and Elliott (1992), culture is a "shared system of meaning and symbols that account for patterned behaviour between individuals and among groups" (as cited in Egbo, 2009, p. 2). Culture, they explain further, includes a vast range of beliefs and values that "define and generate behaviour, contribute to the security, identity, and survival of community members, and impart meaning and continuity during periods of social change" (p. 2).

To elaborate further, Ogbu (1995) asserts that "culture is a framework in which members of a population see the world around them, interpret events in that world, behave according to acceptable standards, and react to their perceived reality" (p. 192). This framework is comprised of five components:

(a) customary ways of behaving- of making a living, eating, expressing affection, getting married, raising children, responding to illness and to death, getting ahead in society, and dealing with the supernatural; (b) codes or assumptions, expectations, and emotions underlying those customary behaviors; (c) artifacts- things that members of the population make or have made that have meaning for them; (d) institutions- economic, political, religious, and *social- the imperatives of culture* that form a recognizable pattern requiring know-how, skills, and customary behaviors in a fairly predictable manner; and

(e) social structure- the patterned ways that people relate to one another. (p. 192)

Each person, Ogbu continues, has a "cultural frame of reference that dictates their attitudes, beliefs, preferences, and practices" (p. 195). When people from different cultures come into contact these frames of reference may be similar, differing in places, oppositional, or they may

be a blend of these three. It is when they are dissimilar that "cultural discontinuity", or a lack of cohesion between cultures, takes place (Ogbu, 1995).

Clearly, culture permeates all aspects of a person's experience of the world and cannot be neglected when considering Chinese and Canadian beliefs, and preferences for the teaching and learning process. As Jin and Cortazzi (1998) explain, cultures of learning "are at the interface between culture, socialization, and education" (p. 749) and can be further defined as

socially transmitted expectations, beliefs, and values about what good learning is. The concept draws attention to the usually taken-for-granted cultural ideas about the roles and relations of teachers and learners, about appropriate teaching and learning styles and methods, about the use of textbooks and materials, and about what constitutes good work in classrooms. (p. 749)

Therefore, an understanding of both the Chinese and Canadian cultures of learning is of utmost importance as they dictate the expectations of both the teacher and students. Unexamined cultures of learning, Ogbu (1990) notes, may lead to cultural discontinuities and hinder the learning and emotional well-being of students.

One, very obvious, situation in which cultural discontinuity occurs is when non-Western students attend Western-type schools. Ogbu (1990) reports that these students may experience conflicts with "language and communication, cognition, cognitive styles, social interaction, values, or teaching and learning techniques" (p. 143), and sees these as a direct result of cultural discontinuities. The three different types of cultural discontinuities associated with schooling, according to Ogbu (1982), are:

(1) universal discontinuities experienced by all children; (2) primary discontinuities experienced as a transitional phenomenon by immigrants and non-Western peoples being

introduced to Western-type schooling; and (3) secondary discontinuities, which are more or less enduring among castelike [*sic*] or subordinate minorities within Western nations. (pp. 290-291)

In keeping with the exploration relating to cultural miscommunications and misunderstandings between Chinese students and Western teachers, further attention will be given to primary cultural discontinuities as they are most relevant to the Chinese learner studying in a British Columbian Offshore School. This type of discontinuity, Ogbu (1982) notes, results from "cultural developments before members of a given population come in contact with . . . white middle-class culture . . . or Western-type schools" (p. 293), and it often has to do with unfamiliar curricular content and concepts, as well as the manner in which the material is taught.

Ogbu (1982) believes, however, that primary cultural discontinuity can be impermanent as the students can, and often want to learn to adapt to the new culture. Furthermore, minority students often attend school believing that there will be future social and economic benefits if they are able to learn the new, dominant, culture. In this way, students expect "they will be taught and will learn new values, new rules of behavior for achievement, and new cognitive skills and strategies" (p. 298), and do not resist adapting to the new culture as long as "acquiring the new culture and language of the school is not perceived as threatening to individual or group identities or security" (p. 298).

2.2 The Hidden Curriculum

The desire to overcome the primary cultural discontinuities that many minority group students face is a potentially frustrating and damaging experience if not supported by the teacher and wider school community. While minority group students must adjust to inherent differences formally stated in the dominant culture's curriculum, they must also adapt to the hidden

curriculum of the school (Egbo, 2009). Egbo (2009) notes that "a substantive amount of what students learn is not openly stated . . . [as] the behaviours, attitudes, and knowledge the school unintentionally teaches through its content selection, routines, and social relationships . . . provide additional space for spreading dominant ideologies" (p. 9). Therefore, the knowledge and "curricular activities often benefit those students who most closely align with Eurocentric norms, thus creating a cultural mismatch for culturally diverse students" (Cholewa & West-Olatunji, 2008, p. 55). If not properly addressed, this discontinuity of both the formal and hidden curriculum "can have deleterious effects on psychological and emotional well-being of children . . .[causing] symptoms of depression, low levels of mastery, and low levels of life satisfaction" (Cholewa & West-Olatunji, 2008, p. 56).

Unfortunately, well-intentioned teachers may unknowingly add to the cultural discontinuity their students experience, as they are incognizant of the ethnocentrism of the curriculum and their teaching practices. When educators are unaware of students' culturally influenced expectations for teaching and learning, Lovelace and Wheeler (2006) explain, "miscommunications may arise that can lead to misperceptions and misunderstanding about interactional patterns, intelligence, and academic potential" (p. 304). Quite obviously, adding to the primary cultural discontinuities that minority students experience when attending Western-type schools is of great concern. A larger, and much more damaging problem, though, is when teachers of minority students "invalidate, penalize, or directly punish students" (Lovelace & Wheeler, 2006, p. 304) who do not naturally conform to their expectations for the teaching and learning process.

Further issues arise when Western educators are indeed aware of the differences in beliefs between what constitutes "good" teaching and learning practices, but feel that their

educational approach is preferable to that of their students. This assumption that "one culture of learning is superior to another" (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996, p. 174, as cited in Shi, 2009, p. 60) can have a serious negative impact on the learning and the emotional well-being of the students.

Clearly, ethnocentric teaching practices, whether they are intentional or not, are detrimental to minority students. To avoid this, Shi (2009) calls for Western teachers teaching abroad to "validate other, local forms of knowledge about language and teaching" (p. 59), with which the students are familiar. This can be done by obtaining a thorough understanding of the educational practices and beliefs held by the students so that Western teachers may "reexamine and reorientate their teaching practices from diverse perspectives" (p. 60), and begin to adopt "more inclusive and egalitarian" (Canagarajah, p. xxix, as cited in Shi, p. 49) practices that represent local interests, traditions, and ways of teaching and learning.

2.3 Culturally Responsive Teachers

Shi (2009) is not alone in the belief that educators teaching abroad must become more inclusive in their teaching practices. Lovelace and Wheeler (2006) take Shi's argument one step further, and posit that all teachers "have a responsibility to create learning environments that establish continuity between home and school" (p. 306) by becoming a mediator who is culturally responsive to the needs, preferences, and learning styles of their students.

How do teachers become culturally responsive? According to Villegas and Lucas (2002), there are six characteristics that culturally responsive teachers possess. These six characteristics, as cited in Ragoonaden (2010), are summarized as follows. First of all, culturally responsive teachers must have a sociocultural consciousness, so that they are able to recognize "that there are multiple ways of perceiving reality and that these ways are influenced by one's location in the social order" (p. 20), as well as by one's upbringing and worldview. Secondly, culturally

responsive teachers understand "how learners construct knowledge," and are "capable of promoting learners' knowledge construction" (p. 20). Next, culturally responsive teachers view students of culturally diverse backgrounds as a resource for, rather than a hindrance to learning. Culturally responsive teachers also learn about their students' lives and use this knowledge to adopt culturally responsive teaching practices in order to "design instruction that builds on what [students] already know while stretching them beyond the familiar" (p. 20). Finally, culturally responsive teachers also believe that they are "both responsible for and capable of bringing about educational change that will make schools more responsive to all students" (p. 20).

2.4 Culturally Responsive Instruction

It follows naturally that culturally responsive teachers would adopt a culturally responsive approach to instruction. Quite simply, this is teaching that allows for the appropriate convergence, or separation, of home and school" (Lovelace & Wheeler, 2006, p. 306). Ogbu (1998), elaborates on this definition and adds that this is instruction that:

> acknowledges and accommodates students' culture, language, and learning styles in the curriculum and classroom. It is a response designed to close the gap between the students' cultural patterns and the school's institutional requirements and prevent the type of miscommunication that is caused by the conflict between teachers' and students' culturally determined interactional styles. Culturally responsive instruction will also show the students that the teacher recognizes and honors their cultural and personal experiences and will help make school a less alien place. (p. 180)

However, teaching in a culturally responsive manner is impossible without first gaining an in-depth understanding of both the teacher's and students' cultures. By examining the Chinese and Canadian cultures of learning, a better understanding of the assumptions made about

teaching and learning can be developed. In light of this, the following section will outline the collectivist-individualist framework for understanding culture's influence on educational traditions in both China and Canada. Culturally determined preferences, expectations, beliefs, and values surrounding teaching and learning will be discussed in detail in subsequent sections of this chapter.

2.5 The Collectivist-Individualist Framework

Ho, Holmes, and Cooper (2004) put forth the collectivist-individualist framework as a useful means of highlighting the "broad differences and influences on 'Eastern' and 'Western' educational practices" (p. 4). What is important to note, however, is that this framework must be considered with caution, as it is not intended as a means of stereotyping people or cultural behaviour. Instead, it should be used as a starting point "to help explain the deep value orientations underlying the beliefs and behaviours of different cultures, and to identify many similarities between people in intercultural contexts" (p. 4). Furthermore, research that seeks to understand Chinese EFL students in terms of individual and contextual factors (rather than cultural factors) will also be presented and discussed in detail so that a more complete picture of Chinese learners can be had. It is with this in mind, then, that this framework will be discussed.

The collectivist-individualist framework is an effective lens with which to view the differences between Chinese and Canadian cultures. According to Ho et al. (2004), "[t]he continuum of collectivism-individualism represents the degree to which a culture places emphasis on fostering interdependent relations, social responsibility, and the well-being of the group versus fostering independence and individual fulfillment" (p. ix). They further outline the fundamental differences between members of each group:

In collectivist cultures, people promote respect for authority and group consensus. In individualist cultures, the emphasis is on self-expression and individual thinking. When individualists are dissatisfied with the group they leave it; collectivists tend to stay. While collectivist cultures emphasize developing and sustaining stable, hierarchical roles, individualist cultures are associated with equalitarian relationships and flexibility in roles. In collectivist cultures, the boundaries of property ownership are more permeable. In individualist cultures, personal items are private property and are not to be shared. (p. 5)

Designating Chinese people as belonging to a collectivist culture, and Canadians belonging to a European, New Zealand, or Australian background as being members of an individualist culture, Ho et al. do warn against the dangers of oversimplifying the differences between members of individualist and collectivist cultures. In each culture, they note, there are people who are "*allocentric* and behave in more collectivist ways, such as paying more attention to the ingroup [*sic*], and people who are *idiocentric* and behave in more individualist ways, for instance by paying more attention to their own needs" (p. 5).

Further differences between those coming from individualist and collectivist orientations are also apparent in differing notions surrounding the nature and purpose of the teaching and learning process (Ho et al., 2004). According to Ho et al. (2004), to those coming from a collectivist perspective, education is often seen as a "way of gaining prestige in one's social environment and of joining a higher status group" (p. 6). Students coming from this orientation also come to school with the expectation that they will be taught "'how to do' and tend to perceive that there is only one right perspective to a given problem" (p. 6). Classroom interactions are generally teacher-controlled, with students speaking only when called upon by the teacher. Furthermore, students coming from collectivist cultures seek to maintain group

Table 2.1   Aspects of teaching and learning in collectivist and individualist cultures

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	Collectivist Societies	**Individualist Societies**
Education	1. Education is a way of gaining prestige in one's social environment and of joining a higher status group.	1. Education is a way of improving one's economic worth and self-respect based on ability and competence.
Learning Attitudes	1. Students expect to learn "how to do". 2. Positive association in society with whatever is rooted in tradition.	1. Students expect to learn "how to learn". 2. Positive association in society with whatever is "new".
Social Interactions	1. Individual students will only speak up in class when called upon personally by the teacher. 2. Individual students will only speak up in small groups.	1. Individual students will only speak up in class in response to a general invitation by the teacher 2. Individual students will speak up in a large group.
Harmony & Conflict	1. Formal harmony in learning situations should be maintained at all times. 2. Neither the teacher nor any student should ever be made to lose face.	1. Confrontation in learning situations can be salutary; conflicts can be brought into the open. 2. Face-consciousness is weak.

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Source: Ho, Holmes, & Cooper (2004, p. 6)

consensus and harmony by avoiding confrontation. They do so, for instance, by not expressing

ideas and opinions contrary to those presented by the teacher or their peers. To those coming

from an individualist perspective, Ho et al. continue, the purpose of education is to gain

knowledge and skills, so as to achieve future economic benefits. Furthermore, "learning in

individualist cultures is about how students experience and organize the subject matter of a

learning task. It is about 'how' they learn, rather than 'how much' they remember" (p. 6).

Finally, students from individualist cultures generally feel free to express their opinions, and

value providing correct information and stating personal opinions more highly than maintaining

social harmony and ensuring that no one is embarrassed.

Now that the collectivist-individualist framework for understanding both Chinese and

Canadian cultures of learning has been discussed, it is important to examine the philosophical

underpinnings that influence the beliefs and values of each group. In this way, we can arrive at a

better understanding of the assumptions about teaching and learning that may lead to

miscommunication and discontinuity between the two cultures of learning. Therefore, a brief

explanation of the teachings and philosophies of Confucius and Socrates is necessary, as their

teachings continue to pervade educational thought and practice in both China and Canada,

respectively, today.

2.6 The Influence of Confucius on Chinese Conceptions of Teaching and Learning

Researchers have often cited Confucius (551 - 479 B.C.) as playing a pivotal role in

shaping the thought and practices surrounding Chinese education, both in the past and today

(Tweed, 2000). Jin and Cortazzi (1998) note that "[w]hile Confucian practices per se may be

considered outdated or feudal in modern China, there is little doubt about the influence of

Confucian attitudes" (p. 757) in current educational thought and practice. While Confucius'

influence may not appear to be overt, one Chinese teacher asserts that, ''[a]ll Chinese education

is actually based on Confucian teachings even though teachers or students may not be fully

aware of it" (as cited in Jin & Cortazzi, p. 757). In light of this, the following section will discuss

Confucian beliefs about the nature, purpose, and goals of education, as well as outline specific

Confucian influences on current educational thought and practice in China.

Confucius was a "thinker, political figure, educator, and founder of the *Ru* School of Chinese thought" (Riegel, 2008, para. 1), whose "primary concern was a good society based on good government and harmonious human relations" (Stone, 2008, p. 204). According to Hammond and Gao (2002), Confucius believed that

> education for education's sake was not the motivation behind instruction. His aim was to provide, through education, the means for a student to become a Jun Zi— a superior person, a cultured man or a Confucian gentleman capable of sustaining dynamic dialogues between heaven and earth and among his fellow men. Such men were to take their place as government officials and, through living ethical principles bring order and peace to the communities they served. (p. 230)

Learning, in the Confucian tradition, required the acquisition of essential knowledge through effortful, pragmatic, respectful, and collectivist learning (Tweed, 2000). These precepts became the cornerstones of what is now referred to as a classical Confucian education.

Tweed (2000), in his work on the Confucian and Socratic approaches to education, gives a detailed account of Confucian conceptions of teaching, learning, and the nature and purpose of education. Unless otherwise stated, Tweed's work will be drawn on for the following two sections.

For Confucius, teaching was viewed as a demanding task that required teachers to be conscientious, hard working, and upstanding citizens at all times. Teachers also had the formidable undertaking of educating students not only intellectually, but also morally. Developing virtue in students was of utmost importance to Confucius and this was his first goal of education and educators. He believed that teachers must demonstrate high moral standards, so that they may cultivate virtuous students who will achieve success and, ultimately, social

harmony. Beyond being role models of virtue, teachers were also required to be the conduits of truth. Rather than finding truth within the self, Confucius saw truth as something that was "learned from the collective, and in particular learned from individuals whom the collective recognized as exemplars" (p. 11). Therefore, teachers were viewed as masters to whom students must show respect and be submissive.

Learning was an equally demanding undertaking for Confucius. Rather than understanding learning as a belief in a student's innate ability, he saw it as being synonymous with hard work, "practice and single-minded effort" (Tweed, 2000, p. 9). Although Confucius believed that "human beings were born with a good nature invested from Heaven, Confucius taught that this good nature needed to be cultivated and developed through active learning and critical thinking" (Hammond & Gao, 2002, p. 230). However, "the tendency to innovate or criticize without extensive preparatory knowledge was a fault according to Confucius" (Tweed, 2000, p. 11).

As Tweed (2000) reports, adequate preparation for innovation, questioning, and critical thinking, then, came from truth and knowledge being passed through master teachers to their students. In this way, the learning process was not viewed as individualistic or unique to each student, as students were expected to listen respectfully and learn the essentials obediently from their teachers. However, learning did not end here. Students were then to use this knowledge not to merely "parrot the words of authorities, but to truly understand and be reformed by the knowledge contained in those words" (p. 10), so that they may be able to make positive changes in the world around them.

As was previously discussed, the primary purpose guiding Confucian education was behavioral reform, which would lead to social harmony. The secondary goal of education, then,

was individual success in a career. Confucius argued that if students "corrected themselves and avoided error they would be assured of procuring and adequately performing in a government career" (p. 10).

2.7 The Socratic Influence on Canadian Conceptions of Teaching and Learning

Like Confucius' influence in the East, the Greek philosopher, Socrates (469-399 B.C.), has been integral in shaping the philosophy and conceptions of teaching and learning in the West (Tweed, 2000). Cahn (1999) explains that although none of Socrates' writings survive today, through Plato's account of Socrates' dialogues we know that Socrates professed to be ignorant of all philosophical matters and did not view himself as a teacher. Instead, Socrates believed that his wisdom, when compared to the pretenses of others, lay only in knowing the extent of his ignorance.

In Socrates' view, learned people (such as teachers) often fooled others into believing they were knowledgeable, although they were actually incorrect in their assumptions and must be challenged (Cahn, 1999). Exposing others' ignorance and helping them to recognize the limits of their knowledge and reasoning became Socrates' mission, and he "relentlessly grilled his fellow Athenian citizens, using rigorous argumentation to demonstrate that uncritically accepted opinions about philosophically important matters could lead to logical catastrophe" (Cahn, 1999, p. 1). This technique later became known as the "Socratic method."

Rather than teaching through the transmission of a set body of knowledge, Socrates attempted to "identify the untapped knowledge that lies deep within everyone" (Overholser, 1992, p. 14) by "using a question-and-interaction sequence designed to draw information out of students, rather than pouring it into them" (Moore, 2008, p. 200). Overholser (1992) notes that in asking a series of probing questions, "Socrates demonstrated the student's inadequate reasoning

and illustrated logical flaws in order to foster more rational and logical thought. The dialogue continued as Socrates led students from inadequate, unsupported ideas to reasoned concepts" (p. 14). In posing carefully crafted questions designed to create cognitive dissonance within the learner, Socrates was able to teach students to critically evaluate their beliefs so true understanding could take place. Furthermore, students are active participants in their own learning, with the teacher merely serving as the catalyst who promotes "the actualization of the student's intellectual potential" (p. 14).

The Socratic method described above has been hailed by Moore and Rudd (2002) as "the oldest, and still the most powerful teaching tool used to help students think critically, analytically, and independently" (p. 24), and it can be used across the curricula to develop content information and to check for understanding. However, the Socratic method is not limited to this role. Frequently employed as a group problem solving activity to promote rational thinking, it has been used by Overholser (1992) to "help students learn to persist when confronted with difficult problems" (p. 15), and to develop the reasoning skills necessary for discussing important issues. The Socratic method is also effective in developing critical thinking skills, as it helps students "shift their perspective and view the problem more objectively" (p. 17). Kearney and Beazley (1991) also report having success using the Socratic method to help students improve their written expression. They found that integrating the Socratic method with the writing process allows teachers to critique the writing and ideas in a manner that ensures that "they do not merely dictate a 'correct' revision to a passive student" (p. 908). Instead, when teachers respond to drafts of student writing with Socratic questions, "students realize for themselves the problems that the reader has in understanding the meaning of the writing. This

realization makes it more likely that students will take responsibility for their own revisions and learn from them" (p. 900).

The Socratic method, then, can be used in many different ways across the disciplines to help build the confidence needed to think critically, look for answers based on facts, and use sound reasoning to solve problems. However, even when the Socratic method is not used the basic principles ensconced with in it lay the foundation for Western conceptions of teaching and learning (Tweed, 2000). For example, the very structure of Socratic inquiry (premise, dialogue, analysis, and conclusion) form the basis of how many teachers with a Westernized approach to teaching and learning design their unit and lesson plans. Furthermore, the belief that learning occurs best when teachers provide the opportunity for students to become actively engaged and personally motivated to find answers and solutions themselves is yet another Western educational concept that can be directly attributed to Socrates (Tweed, 2000).

2.8 Socrates and Confucius Compared

The contrasts between the philosophies of Confucius and Socrates are evident. Unlike the Confucian view that students must avoid error by listening and learning obediently from their teachers, the Socratic approach to learning relies on cognitive dissonance created through exposing errors in logic and reasoning. Furthermore, the Socratic approach to education "values the *process* of generating knowledge over knowledge accepted from others, even authoritative sources" (Greenholtz, 2003, pp. 122-23). Socrates' ideas about teaching and knowledge demonstrate a further contrast with those of Confucius. In Socrates' view, learning was entirely individualistic as truth cannot be "prescribed by authority figures and was not socially negotiated, but was found within the self" (Tweed, 2000, p. 7). Furthermore, unlike Confucius' belief that learning led to behavioral reform, social harmony, and a career in the government,

Socrates saw knowledge (true belief with sound reasons) as the end result of learning (Tweed, 2000).

Confucius and Socrates have many differing views concerning the roles of the teacher and student, the nature and purpose of education, as well as how best to teach and learn. What is similar about the both, however, is that their educational values and practices "have significantly influenced Western and Eastern educational traditions" (Ho et al., 2004, p. 7) currently employed in Canada and China. Therefore, a brief discussion of the education in China and Canada since the time of Confucius and Socrates will focus on key elements of both traditions at work in present-day Chinese and Canadian educational systems.

2.9 The Evolution of Chinese and Canadian Education

The dialectic-dialogic construct is a framework that Hammond and Gao (2002) suggest is useful for understanding the evolution of Chinese and Canadian cultures of learning. "Dialectic learning, also known as traditional learning, is a fragmented, linear, competition-oriented, authority-centered method used in most Western and Eastern educational venues" (p. 228). This type of education typically "involves a teacher-centered approach, where the teacher transmits the knowledge to students, which the students must memorize and recount in assessments" (Ho et al., 2004, pp. 6-7) and examinations. The purpose of this type of learning, then, is training and preparation for the workforce. A useful analogy that comes from China likens dialectic learning to feeding ducks. "Information is given to the most competitive hungry students who, climbing over their peers, attack the information, digest it and move on" (Hammond & Gao, p. 228).

Dialogic learning, on the other hand, "is holistic, interactive, cooperative and diversified, emphasizing critical thinking, real time evaluation, hands-on experience, and overall educational quality" (Hammond & Gao, 2002, p. 229). This type of learning is commonly "student-centered,

discussion-based and interactive" (Ho et al., p. 7), with learners taking an active role in co-constructing their knowledge through "student-student and teacher-student communication" (Holmes, 2004, p. 296). Dialogic learning also emphasizes the hands-on experience and skills necessary for critical thinking and problem solving, so that students are prepared for a lifetime of learning and critical reflection (Holmes, 2004).

Table 2.2   Salient features of dialectic and dialogic education

	Dialectic	**Dialogic**
Teacher	Teacher Holds power Knows all Controls space	Shares power Shares experience Creates space
Student	Listens Follows instructions Just a student	Contributes Makes proposals A scholar
Learning focus	Fixed Fragmented Transmitted	Emergent Connected to the whole Created
Educational systems	Protect the status quo Encourage competition	Create the future Encourage collaboration

Source: Ho, Holmes, and Cooper (2004, p. 7)

While current Canadian and Chinese educational systems are primarily dialectic in nature, in the past this was not always the case. According to Hammond and Gao (2002), Socratic and Confucian educational practices, which continue to have a significant impact on Canadian and Chinese cultures of learning, were dialogic. For example, Confucius' educational practice was

"highly interactive" (p. 230) and, although Confucius valued respectful acquisition of essential knowledge first, the "openness with which he interacted with his students was clearly dialogic" (p. 230). Finally, the primary goal of Confucian education, which was "the revitalization of their entire society" (p. 230), is also a salient feature of dialogic education. Socratic education, too, was dialogic in nature. Socrates' highly interactive, student-centered style of learning "where questions were posed to students to stimulate active thinking" (Ho et al., 2004, p. 7) and the critical examination of beliefs are clearly dialogic as well.

Both traditions of dialogic education slowly evolved over time, however, as "power and authority became vested hierarchically" (Ho et al., 2004, p. 7). Hammond and Gao (2002) explain that in the West,

> [b]eginning with Cicero in 81 B.C. and throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance periods, communication practices and education became increasingly dialectical. Authority became centered in the church, the king or the academy and "grass roots," or holistic knowledge was valued less. (p. 231)

Influential philosophers such as Bacon, Locke, Hume, and Descartes added to this stratification and "all privileged the scholar as the central authority for knowledge" (Hammond & Gao, p. 231). Thus, a less dialogic and more dialectic education became the norm in Western countries.

Chinese education also experienced a movement away from the dialogic practices of Confucius toward a dialectic approach to teaching and learning. Hammond and Gao (2002) explain that

> [i]n China, since Qin Shi Huang united the country in the third century B.C., the masters' word controlled the country. Since then, challenging the word of the emperor meant death (Yang, 2000). While modern China has tried many times to become more democratic, the

current Chinese educational system and management mechanism is a continuation of the

model of the age of emperors. The reform in education has been left far behind the reform

in economy; education is still at the stage of chuandao (knowledge carry on), shouye

(teaching for profession) and jieshuo (answering questions), meaning that it is still at the

stage of accumulation, preservation, and transmission of knowledge. (pp. 231-232)

While the current Chinese culture of learning remains primarily dialectic in nature, Hammond

and Gao continue, "there is movement in some parts of Western education to make learning a

more dialogic process" (p. 232). While the Western culture of learning has not fully re-embraced

the dialogic approach for teaching and learning, there is a "renewed interest in dialogic teaching"

(p. 233) apparent in pedagogy that can be considered characteristic of many Canadian teachers.

This includes, but is not limited to, the notion that teachers and students must engage in

meaningful dialogue and work together to discuss viewpoints and to seek information so that

knowledge, whenever possible, can be co-constructed. Furthermore, the view that the purpose of

education should be to create global citizens who think critically and are committed to lifelong

learning is yet another sentiment shared by those from a dialogic approach to teaching and

learning (Hammond & Gao, 2002).

2.10 Factors to Consider when Examining Cultural Discontinuity

There are many factors that must be considered when examining Chinese and Canadian

cultures of learning. The collectivist-individualist framework highlighted the importance of

understanding the broad differences in how the two cultures view the importance of fostering

group relationships and social responsibility (Ho et al., 2004). The dialectic-dialogic construct

illuminated the differing notions of how best to teach and to learn, and the nature and purpose of

education (Hammond & Gao, 2002). Finally, the continued influence of the thought and practice

of Socrates and Confucius on Canadian and Chinese educational practices both in the past and the present was discussed. While there are similarities, there are also many striking differences between the Chinese and Canadian cultures of learning that pose many potential sources of cultural discontinuity between Chinese EFL students and their Canadian teachers. The next portion of this literature review, then, will examine research that highlights specific issues that arise as Chinese students attempt to negotiate their collectivist, dialectic and Confucian views of learning within the more individualist, sometimes dialogic and Socratic approach to teaching of their Canadian teachers.

2.11 Passive Versus Active Learning

The first issue that must be examined is the frequent observation that Chinese EFL students seem to be passive learners. Rather than actively participating in class discussions and activities, my colleagues and I noticed that many of the students in our class were reluctant to become involved in what we considered to be, fun and engaging learning activities. What confused us more was the visible relief on many of the students' faces when we assigned quiet seatwork or gave a lecture-style lesson.

The observation that Chinese students are passive learners clearly came from our subscription to the participatory and active process of learning that is inherent in the Socratic approach to education. Furthermore, these notions of what "good teaching" looks like stand in opposition to the students' Confucian belief that they are to learn diligently from a master teacher. As Hu (2002) describes, Chinese teaching is commonly:

> characterized by the transmission of knowledge principally through an imitative and repetitive process. Teaching methods are largely expository and the teaching process is teacher-dominated. The teacher selects points of knowledge from authoritative sources

(usually textbooks and classics), interprets, analyses and elaborates on these points for the

students, helps them to connect the new points of knowledge with old knowledge, and

delivers a carefully sequenced and optimally mediated dose of knowledge for the students

to memorize, repeat, and understand. (p. 98)

In this way, the emphasis is not on learning as an individual, exploratory process to find truth

within, but on how "extant authoritative knowledge can be transmitted and internalized in a most

effective and efficient way" (Hu, 2002, p. 99).

Unlike the transmission (or dialectic) model of learning that Hu (2002) notes is

characteristic of Chinese teaching, many Canadian teachers value teaching methodologies that

require students to work both individually and collaboratively to construct meaning through

active, often spontaneous and creative activities and discussions. This is also put forth by the

British Columbian Ministry of Education's Integrated Resource Package for English Language

Arts 10 teachers as the preferred teaching methodology. In the "Considerations for Program

Delivery" section, it encourages teachers to

introduce students to approaches, skills, and strategies [and] as students become more

proficient in using their new strategies through guided practice and interaction with one

another, the teacher [should] gradually release responsibility for the use of strategies to

students in order to encourage independence. (p. 22)

Furthermore, the active construction of meaning both individually and with the support from

peers is mandated by the BC Ministry of Education's English 10 curriculum. The first prescribed

learning outcome states that it is expected that students will "*interact and collaborate in pairs*

and groups to support and extend the learning of self and others, explore experiences, ideas, and

information, [and] *gain insight into others' perspectives*" (p. 54).

Beliefs surrounding how students learn best are yet another point of cultural discontinuity between the Chinese and Canadian cultures of learning. While many Canadian teachers try to create lessons that start with exploration (the Socratic notion of implanting doubt) and lead to development of skills and understanding on an individual level, Chinese teachers would most likely practice the opposite (Tweed, 2000). For example, Nield (2004) found that the most common teaching strategy currently employed by Chinese teachers is formal lecturing with students taking notes. This strategy would most likely originate from a dialectic tradition, with many Chinese teachers believing that "skill should be first developed to produce an acceptable output which would then pave the way for creativity to flow" (Wong, 2004, p. 156). Watkins (2003) points out, however, that many Western observers assume that a student-centered, small group approach is the most effective teaching methodology when "a highly teacher-controlled, whole group teaching can be cognitively engaging in the hands of Chinese teachers" (p. 254). This observation will be discussed in greater detail in the section entitled "Silence as a Cultural Expectation."

2.12 Peer Assessment

Issues also arise around conflicting views of assessment. While the ultimate authority in both the Canadian and Chinese educational systems resides with the teacher, many Canadian teachers also see the merit in having students regularly complete peer assessments and view this as an integral part of the learning process. Holmes (2004) notes that peer assessment is often considered by Western teachers to be "useful because it helps students to recognize and understand better the expectations of and standards in performance and assessment and results in effective learning as students collaborate and create in social learning contexts" (p. 303).

To students from a collectivist orientation, however, peer assessment poses yet another source of cultural discontinuity. Students from a Chinese culture of learning, Holmes (2004) reports, felt that it was very difficult to be objective when assessing peers' work as they felt "obliged to show loyalty and respect to [their peers] by giving them a good mark, even though the work may not have merited it" (p. 303). The collectivist value of maintaining harmony and social relations is readily apparent, then, and can make peer assessment a source of angst instead of the opportunity for learning as Canadian teachers may have intended.

Chinese students may also resist peer assessment as it is not commonly used in dialectic cultures of learning. Nield (2004) reports that written exams continue to be the primary method of assessment currently employed in Chinese secondary schools. Due to this, many Chinese students "believe it is the teacher's job to evaluate and [believe] that peers are not qualified to correct others' work" (Hu, 2002, p. 100).

In light of the discussion above, there are many cultural discontinuities surrounding Chinese and Canadian beliefs about how teachers should teach, students should learn, and how that learning should be assessed. It should come as no surprise, then, that many Chinese EFL students seem hesitant to participate in the learner-centered strategies and assessment activities that Canadian teachers value so much.

2.13 The Appropriate Time for Questioning

Another potential source of cultural discontinuity between Canadian and Chinese cultures of learning lies in the value and use of questioning. Like Socrates, many Canadian teachers regard questioning as an invaluable strategy to promote and check for learning. Seen as an integral part of how students learn, Western teachers "expect questions to be asked by students

during the process of learning to fill in gaps in their knowledge or to aid understanding of the reasoning involved . . ." (Watkins, 2000, pp. 169-170).

Chinese beliefs regarding the purpose and appropriate time for questioning, however, are in direct contrast with those held by Canadians. As Watkins (2000) points out, "Chinese students ask questions after they have learnt independently of the teacher. They consider that questions should be based on knowledge" (p. 170) and "sound reflection" (Kennedy, 2002, p. 434) rather than a lack of comprehension. Tweed (2000) adds that "Chinese learners tend to perceive learning as a sequential four stage process: 1) memorizing, 2) understanding, 3) applying, and 4) questioning or modifying" (p. 24). From this standpoint, a question asked for clarification or for any reason other than to add depth and meaning to the conversation would most likely be viewed as a waste of time or shameful, and may cause students to lose face in front of their teacher and peers (Kennedy, 2002). As a result, Chinese learners "often postpone questions until they know more" (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998, p. 753).

This interpretation of the Chinese use of questioning is corroborated by findings from interviews of Chinese students studying in England. Jin and Cortazzi (1998) found that Chinese students often expressed annoyance with their British classmates and felt misunderstood by their British teacher. One student noted that their classmates "are so rude [as] they keep asking questions in class" (p. 753). Another student added that they did not want to ask "these silly questions" (p. 753) as their British peers do, but felt that the teacher expected them to. As a result, the student noted that the Chinese students often prepared "questions in advance so that we are ready to ask them. If we don't ask something the British teachers will think you are stupid" (p. 753).

Ho et al. (2004) note that Chinese students may also be hesitant to ask questions due to their collectivist upbringing. Instead of viewing questions as a part of the learning process, Chinese students may believe that questions challenge the authority of the teacher and cause the teacher to lose face in front of the class (Ho et al., 2004). As one Chinese student explained, "It's very impolite to ask teachers questions…[you should] not challenge the teacher in class. If you have problems you can ask [the] teacher after class, not in class because that makes [the] teacher feel embarrassed" (Ho et al., 2004, p. 12).

Finally, the inability to provide the correct answer to the teacher's question is yet another source of discontinuity between the two educational cultures. For Canadian teachers, a student's inability to answer a question correctly (if there is indeed a correct answer at all) is not necessarily viewed negatively. To students operating from within the Confucian framework, however, an incorrect answer would probably be interpreted as demonstrating a lack of effort and acquisition of the basic knowledge that their esteemed teacher had bestowed upon them (Liu, 2002). As a means of saving face, many Chinese students may choose to remain silent rather than chance an incorrect answer and demonstrate their lack of understanding.

Theses examples illustrate the differing expectations relating to the use of questioning. Whereas Western students and teachers use questions as an integral part of the learning process, Chinese students feel that asking superficial questions slows down the pace of the class, inhibits learning, and causes embarrassment on behalf of the teacher and student. The value and use of questioning is therefore "based on different cultural values: the Chinese ask after knowing, the British know by asking" (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998, p. 753).

2.14 Critical Thinking: A Necessary Skill or an Unwarranted Attack?

The Socratic notion that authority should be questioned and challenged poses a further source of cultural discontinuity for Chinese EFL students. The ability to think critically about ideas and topics posed by the teacher or by another authority (such as a textbook) is commonly accepted in individualist cultures and is central to Canadian teaching. Bailin, Case, Coombs, and Daniels (1999) note that, "support for teaching critical thinking at all levels of education is extremely strong in North America and the UK" (p. 285). In fact, thinking critically is so important that the British Columbia Ministry of Education lists the ability to "respond knowledgeably and critically to what [students] read, view, and hear" (p. 3) as a "major goal of education and a particular focus of the English Language Arts 8-12 curriculum" (p. 3).

In contrast, Chinese students are "taught not to question or challenge their teachers" (Wong, 2004, p. 155) or any other source of authority. Doing so would go against Confucian values of respecting teachers "whose wisdom and knowledge is not to be taken for granted and not to be questioned (Kennedy, 2002, p. 431). Furthermore, many Chinese students and teachers hold that "[t]rue knowledge . . . reside[s] in written texts, especially classics and authoritative works" (Hu, 2002, p. 97). In this light, questioning the authority of textbooks, which have been selected by the teacher, would not only be questioning the "sacred" (Hui, 2005, p. 27) authority of the book, but also may potentially disrupt the delicate balance between teacher and student that is so valued in collectivist societies. For these reasons, rather than disturb social harmony and risk public criticism, many Chinese students are likely to "withhold questions that threaten that power distance and instead display behaviors indicative of submissive respect for their instructors" (Tweed, 2000, p. 22) and the authority of the materials chosen by them.

Holmes (2004) also raises the valuable point that perhaps Chinese students are hesitant to

participate in critical thinking activities for reasons associated with the atrocities committed during the Cultural Revolution. Holmes found that Chinese students studying New Zealand did not fully understand the term "critical analysis" and, instead, confused it with "criticism or an attack on a person for the ideas they hold" (p. 302). This confusion is articulated as one female student from China explained, "In Asian culture [there is] no critique. You can't critique other people" (p. 302). Holmes posits that, "perhaps her comment recalls recent history in China—the brutalities suffered by scholars and teachers at public denunciations during the Cultural Revolution and the suppression of public expression in the aftermath of Tiananmen Square" (p. 302). The hesitance to participate in activities that have, in the past, had such negative repercussions, then, is certainly understandable.

2.15   Who is Responsible for Ensuring Student Learning and Achievement?

Another frequent complaint that has been expressed by many of my Canadian colleagues teaching in China is that many Chinese EFL students do not seem to take responsibility for their own learning. When questioned by the teacher, embarrassed looking students often sheepishly explained that they could not complete their assignment as they "did not know what to do." This excuse was usually met with frustration on behalf of Canadian teachers as they repeatedly reminded the class of their office hours and that, if those times did not work for a student, a new time could be arranged for extra help. Furthermore, few, if any, students ever requested or came for help on their own accord.

What we did notice, however, was that students consistently came for help if they were specifically requested to do so. A note jotted on an assignment or a private request to discuss a test would usually ensure students came for extra help or clarification. The question that

mystified us was, "Why did students wait for us to ask them to come for help when they knew that we were available for help at any time?"

Research by Ho et al. (2004) offers an interesting quotation from a student that echoes similar frustrations about the same situation. From the students' perspective, Western teachers seem unapproachable and the idea of making an appointment for extra help is far too overwhelming for Chinese EFL students. The student notes that many Western teachers are too

> business-like. In class, I teach and you learn. After class, it is my own time. No one can
> deprive me of my private time. If you want to see them, you have to make appointment. It
> is awkward to us. Sometimes our questions are not many and it may take them a few
> minutes. But they want us to make an appointment. It is not like in China, we can ask our
> teachers anytime anywhere. Therefore, we do not or cannot ask them questions. (p. 27)

Again, cultural discontinuities between Chinese EFL students and their Canadian teachers can explain this conundrum. When viewed through the lens of subscription to either the Confucian or Socratic approaches to education, it is clear that both the students and teachers were merely making assumptions based on prior experiences, and on their expectations regarding who is responsible for ensuring student learning and achievement.

As was previously discussed, Confucius believed that teachers were to be viewed as exemplars who embodied truth learned from the collective (Tweed, 2000). According to Gao (2008), this belief still holds true today and can be felt both in the Chinese government's ideological propaganda and in public discourses. Gao notes that Chinese teachers are "consistently portrayed as 'soul engineers', who are responsible for cultivating moral qualities among students. They are also described as 'silkworms', who diligently spin silk thread till death, and 'candles', who selflessly burn themselves to light others" (p. 156).

While this view of teachers may be seen as excessively altruistic today, Hui (2005) reports that Chinese teachers are still highly motivated to "fulfill their roles and live up to their status" (p. 27), which remains by virtue of acting not only as a teacher, but also as a mentor and parent. In this way, Chinese students expect their teachers to notice their learning difficulties and make a personal offer for extra help outside of class time (Kennedy, 2002). At the very least, teachers must be approachable and available for help when students need it and not limit their availability to posted office hours. Furthermore, as Hu (2002) describes, "if a student fails to learn what is taught or progress in a satisfactory manner, it is considered, to a very high degree, a result of the teacher's failure to motivate the student to learn, to present knowledge clearly enough, or to supervise the learning process" (p. 99).

Unfortunately, these expectations for ensuring student achievement are unknown by many Canadian teachers. In the Canadian mindset, a general offer to answer questions both inside and outside of class time made to the whole class is considered sufficient. While a Canadian teacher may single a student out for extra help and practice of skills, it is generally not considered a necessary prerequisite before a student will seek help. Perhaps this explains why many Canadian teachers experience frustration over why many of their Chinese EFL students only come for help when explicitly asked to do so. It also helps to explain why many Chinese students feel that their Canadian teachers are too "business-like" and unapproachable.

2.16 Recent Interpretations: Moving Away from the Confucian Interpretation of Chinese Learners

The previous discussion has focused on cultural discontinuities that arise due to conflicts between the Confucian and Socratic aspects of teaching and learning. While Confucius' influence on Chinese education seems unmistakable, there is some disagreement among

researchers, however, as to the extent of his influence on current education in China. Nield (2004), Wang (2006), Grimshaw (2007), and Cheng (2000) believe that past research has misinterpreted, over-simplified, omitted, and exaggerated many of Confucius' teachings, and, thus, has distorted his supposed influence on Chinese education. The following portion of this literature review will discuss these misinterpretations and offer alternate explanations for the cultural discontinuity experienced between Chinese EFL students and their Canadian teachers.

Nield (2004) offers interesting insight as his research focuses on understanding the extent to which Chinese learners' preferences are influenced by their Confucian heritage. In his research, Nield administered a questionnaire to Chinese university students to determine their preferences for teaching and learning. From this he reached the conclusion that

> it is evident that Chinese national culture is different to that of other countries. The root of these differences lies in Confucianism. This difference in national culture is reflected in education. Chinese learners are different in that they think differently and as a result have different preferences in terms of learning, teaching and assessment. (p. 195)

Nield's case study also presents findings that both confirm and contradict previous research. First of all, Nield's research confirms that the Confucian ideal of the student-teacher relationship still exists today. Students reported that the ideal teacher is expected to be a mentor who is empathetic, sincere, helpful and patient, but who must be respected. Secondly, Nield found Chinese students preferences for learning style and assessment to be contrary to previous research. He also believes that there is "evidence that the concept of Chinese as rote and superficial learners is stereotypical" (p. 195). Chinese students felt that formal lectures that required note-taking was "boring," with 64% preferring group work instead (pp. 193-94). "Group work was preferred as students were able to share pressure, ideas and workloads and

learn from one another. Additionally, group work was thought to promote teamwork and is fun"
(p. 194). Interestingly, of the students who did not prefer group work, none gave a reason linked
to their Confucian heritage, but cited problems with group dynamics instead. Finally, Nield's
research does not support the conventional view that Chinese students prefer examinations with
questions that require definite answers. Almost unanimously, students reported that written
examinations are "boring, a test of memory, not intellect and that [they] may underperform on
the day" (p. 194). These findings clearly contradict the previous claim that Chinese learners
prefer assessments that require nothing more than rote memorization skills, and encourage
teachers of Chinese EFL students to think of more innovative assessment practices.

Similarly, Wang (2006) finds evidence in support of Confucius' influence on modern
Chinese education, but seeks to clarify the misinterpretations and sweeping generalizations made
in previous research. The "influence of the basic tenets of Confucian conceptions of teaching and
learning has been pervasive over the centuries and can still be felt in contemporary Chinese
education" (p. 4). According to Wang, the Confucian influence that can be observed in Chinese
education today is

> a high value placed on education by society; beliefs that learning involves reflection and
> application; that hard work can compensate for a lack of ability; that the teacher is a
> model both of knowledge and morality, and that learning is a moral duty and studying
> hard is a responsibility to the family. (p. 2).

While Confucius' influence appears to be obvious, Wang (2006) notes that the Confucian goals
for learning have "been reduced to a simple stereotype by some Western observers" (p. 4). The
notions of collectivism and conformity have been overemphasized, while the primary purpose of

Confucian education, which is to cultivate intelligent, creative, independent, autonomous, and authentic people, has been largely ignored.

Furthermore, Wang (2006) observes that many researchers (and Western teachers) may misunderstand the complex nature of Chinese learning and fail to look beyond the initial stages of the Chinese teaching and learning process. Confucius emphasized deep rather than superficial knowledge by advocating "studying extensively, enquiring carefully, pondering thoroughly, sifting clearly, and practicing earnestly" (p. 3). This means that "memorizing, understanding, reflecting, and questioning are the basic components of learning" (p. 3). However, many researchers place too much significance on the role of memorization, which is not "an end in itself but as a prelude to deeper understanding" (p. 8). In this way, Wang acknowledges that the potential for cultural discontinuity between the two cultures is great as "Westerners believe in exploring first, then in the development of skill; the Chinese believe in skill development first, which typically involves repetitive learning (as opposed to rote learning), after which there is something to be creative with" (p. 9).

2.17 Leaving the Confucian Framework for Understanding Chinese Learners Altogether: Avoiding Racial Stereotyping

Grimshaw (2007) takes Wang's (2006) belief that the Confucian influence has been oversimplified one step further and proposes that future research must try to move away from understandings of the contemporary Chinese education and learners based solely on their Confucian heritage. Grimshaw would strongly contest Watkins' (2003) statement that "[s]tudents and teachers from Confucian-heritage cultures (CHC) such as China, Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan share a similar set of internal dispositions and external values which influence educational practices and outcomes today" (p. 245). According to Grimshaw, these

generalizations "appear to assume that Chinese students constitute a homogeneous group, embodying the values and behaviors of a reified national or ethnic culture" (p. 300). Furthermore, statements like these "hide as much as they reveal and, in reducing individuals to inadequately understood group characteristics, approach racial stereotyping" (as cited in Grimshaw, 2007, p. 303) as "the 'historical Other' of the non-Western student is contrasted with the 'enlightened self' of the native English-speaking Westerner"(p. 301).

Instead of propagating the "stereotypical representations of a 'reduced Other': passive, uncritical and over-reliant on the instructor" (Grimshaw, 2007, p. 299), Grimshaw (2007) describes the need to look at the individuals themselves rather than as people who unwaveringly subscribe to the values and beliefs associated with their Confucian heritage. When this is done, it can be found that "rather than remaining consistent at all times and in all environments, [students'] attitudes, values and behaviors change in relation to context and experience" (p. 303).

2.18 Chinese Students' Autonomy and Agency

Through his observations and ethnographic interviews with Chinese university students, Grimshaw (2007) found that while the physical organization of the classroom appears to facilitate teacher dominated instruction, "the authority of the teacher is far from absolute" (p. 304). Instead, there is a "considerably amount of student solidarity" (p. 304), whereby students are "able to take collaborative action to protect their interests" (p. 304) if they feel their teacher is inadequately prepared, making unfair demands on them, or is negligent in any way. Furthermore, a complaint by the class monitor, "who was often a Communist Party member and who enjoyed considerable influence at the local level" (p. 304), could cause the instructor to be disciplined by his or her superiors (p. 304).

Grimshaw (2007) continues to report that yet another strategy that students frequently employ to assert their authority is that of passivity. While attendance in class is compulsory (or marks are deducted from the students' final grades), attention to the lesson is not. To corroborate this statement, Grimshaw reports observing students staring out the window, reading unrelated books or newspapers, listening to the radio with earphones, talking to each other, as well as slouching or sleeping in their desks while the teacher was lecturing. This refusal to participate in the lesson is often a form of protest and was "directly related to the importance of the content of the lesson and the instructor's skill at engaging interest" (p. 306). Furthermore, Grimshaw points to a mutual understanding between the teachers and students in terms of students' participation. He notes that:

> [s]ome courses had to be taught because they were compulsory subjects, although the final tests could in fact be passed through individual study. With experience, students learnt which courses needed to be followed more closely. The instructors were aware of this, and showed tact in not obliging the students to pay attention. In short, there was a tacit agreement between instructors and students. (p. 306)

Finally, Grimshaw (2007) found that Chinese learners also exercise "a considerable degree of autonomy" (p. 306). This can be observed in students' need for personal space in which to carry out independent study both within the university campus and inside the shared dormitories. These observations, he believes, "contradict the stereotype of China as a 'collectivist' society" (p. 307) where students are unlikely to function independently. These findings also highlight the importance of looking closely at students as individuals rather than as members of a homogenous group. Instead, Chinese students and education must be viewed as "a complex, dynamic

phenomenon, comprising a multiplicity of beliefs and practices" (p. 303) if an accurate picture of Chinese education and learners is to be had.

Grimshaw is not alone in his efforts to contradict the stereotypes that have been previously put forth about the Chinese culture of learning. Cheng (2000) furthers the discussion by adding research that intends to dispel the cultural "myth" (p. 438) that has previously been used to explain Asian students' lack of active participation in Western schooling. Cheng also addresses the "questionable interpretations" (p. 440) of Confucian doctrine and offers alternate quotations from Confucius' teachings that have been omitted from other discussions of Chinese learners. For example, Cheng challenges the notion that Chinese students are passive vessels waiting to be filled with knowledge from their esteemed teacher. Instead, Cheng offers the following Confucian quotation that advocates a much more egalitarian relationship between the student and teacher than is usually represented by other researchers and scholars. According to Confucius, "the teacher does not always have to be more knowledgeable than the pupil; and the pupil is not necessarily always less learned than the teacher" (as cited in Cheng, p. 440). Quite obviously, this quotation sheds a very different light on the complex relationship between teacher and students than has previously been discussed in other research.

2.19   A Holistic View of Chinese EFL Learners

The research is divided when it comes to understanding Chinese EFL learners. While past research (Greenholtz, 2003; Hu, 2002; Kennedy, 2002; Tweed, 2000; Watkins, 2000; Wong, 2004) seeks to understand Chinese EFL students through a purely cultural lens, other researchers such as Grimshaw (2007) and Cheng (2000) move toward a renunciation of Confucius' influence and call for an understanding based primarily on context and on student specific factors only. Similar to Nield (2004) and Wong (2006), Sowden (2005) believes that culture and context, *as*

well as individual factors, must be examined if we are to have a holistic understanding of Chinese EFL learners. Sowden confirms that "generalizations about cultural background and its influence do need to be taken seriously, but we must beware of them degenerating into stereotypes" (p. 228) as they are "not necessarily false, but they are inherently problematic and misleading . . . [as] they only seem to touch upon the surface without understanding it sufficiently" (p. 228).

To better understand Chinese EFL learners and their ability to adapt to the expectations of their Western teachers, Sowden (2005) outlines the need to take into account "family background, the degree of exposure to foreign ideas, aptitude, previous learning experiences and personality . . ." (p. 228). Furthermore, the extent to which Chinese EFL students desire to adapt to the differences inherent in studying in Western classrooms and, ultimately, to the culture and expectations of their Western teachers also greatly influences their success in overcoming cultural discontinuities. Sowden elaborates that there are three distinct types of students:

> those who aim to make minimal change; those who aim to be bi-cultural; those who aim to identify totally with the foreign context. These aims in turn inform specific attitudes towards the learning process, fellow students, the special subject, academic staff, and so on. . .[Therefore,] we can expect that those students in the third group, who are already predisposed to adopt new academic values, will respond well to the challenges presented by their new academic environment. However, those who fall within the first group will tend to be more resistant to change and adaptation. (p. 228)

There are many factors related to culture, context, and the individual student that all influence Chinese EFL students' experiences in Western classrooms. In light of this, the following section of this literature review will examine the issues of silence and plagiarism as it relates to cultural,

contextual, and individual factors so that a holistic picture of Chinese EFL learners can be had. Furthermore, discussion of specific attitudes toward silence and plagiarism will be discussed whenever possible.

2.20 Silence: Reticence or Something Else?

Perhaps one of the most widely talked about issue when discussing Chinese EFL learners is their silence during class activities and discussions. It is a topic that came up repeatedly during our staff meetings, as sometimes exasperated teachers asked each other, "What can I do to get them talking? The same few students volunteer ideas and opinions, but the rest just won't get involved!" Furthermore, when we approached our Chinese teaching colleagues for advice, they did not seem to understand our problem and suggested that we "try something else." It became readily apparent that this was yet another issue where there were obvious differences between our expectations for the teaching and learning process. To better understand the Chinese and Canadian notions of the value and use of silence, then, this section will discuss the many factors, cultural and other, that contribute to Chinese EFL students' silence in Canadian classrooms.

Before a discussion of silence can be had, silence must be accurately defined. Silence in this case does not refer to the simple absence of sound or noise, but, rather, "the absence of relevant talk" (Jaworski & Sachdev, 1998, p. 274). It is this silence, when teachers ask questions, facilitate discussions, or encourage participation in activities that many Western teachers find so disconcerting.

It may seem obvious that "people enter into an interaction with a schema based on an accumulation of cultural and social knowledge and structural experiences" (Jones, 1999, p. 249). However, unless Western teachers take the time to understand the complex nature of Chinese

students' silence, they may misinterpret this silence as a lack of engagement, independent thinking, or communicative competence (Liu, 2002).

Clearly, the implications of such negative assumptions are dangerous. As Jones (1999) contends, when an EFL student applies "the conversational rules of his or her own culture to the new milieu [of the Western classroom], the risks of communication breakdown loom large" (p. 249). To avoid this breakdown, a discussion of the cultural and personal factors that may cause Chinese EFL students to choose to remain silent rather than actively voice their ideas and opinions will be had. This section will also examine the differing culturally determined perceptions of silence held by Western teachers and Chinese students.

It must be noted, however, that there are some Chinese EFL students who actively participate in class activities and discussions and often contribute their ideas and opinions. Furthermore, these students appear to be confident enough to make mistakes, take risks, and try new activities. Cheng (2000) supports this observation and finds the belief that all "Asian students of English are reticent and passive learners [to be] an overgeneralization" (p. 436). According to Sowden (2005), these highly participatory students would be the ones who aim to be bicultural or who identify totally with Western culture. Furthermore, these students would most likely have had prior experience with Western-type pedagogy or are naturally "predisposed to adopt new academic values" (p. 228). The following does not pertain to these few students.

2.21 Silence as a Cultural Expectation

First of all, Liu (2002) notes that Chinese students' silence is most often *not* the result of reticence, apathy, or disengagement from the learning process. Instead, it is an adherence to the norms required for dialectic teaching and learning. Jin and Cortazzi (1998), in their research on class size and the use of dialogue in China, would agree with Liu and note that many Western

observers misunderstand the use of silence in Chinese classrooms. Silence, they note, "would seem to be a cultural expectation" (p. 748) that involves teaching students to learn through listening. In this "listener-oriented culture" (p. 746), the teacher teaches through the introduction of concepts and then scaffolds practice in the form of an exchange. This usually follows a "three-part sequence of an initiation (I), in which the teacher asks a question; a response, (R), in which a pupil gives an answer; and a follow-up (F), in which the teacher accepts or rejects that answer" (p. 745). When an incorrect answer is given, a second exchange discussing the first is used that involves other learners in correcting the mistake. Jin and Cortazzi note that Chinese teachers will ask other students "'Is he right?', 'What is the mistake? Can you correct it?', 'Can you expand on what she said?', [or] 'Make a comment on the validity of the last statement'" (p. 745).

Listening intently is integral, then, as students know that they could be called on to provide the correct answer or comment on their peers' answer at any time. Moreover, through observation of videos of Chinese classes, Jin and Cortazzi (1998) found that

> the whole class listens with high attention to such metalinguistic and metacognitive exchanges. This is partly because any pupil can be nominated for the second exchange, or sometimes for a third, fourth or fifth exchange, each expanding on, repeating or evaluating the preceding ones. Since pupils stand to speak and such cycles are high paced, pupils are physically and verbally involved in fast action. They listen also because they have been trained to pay close attention, perhaps to repeat what another says. Some will subvocalize, mouthing what others say. Others will clearly be rehearsing mentally: predicting questions, preparing answers or repeating comments. (p. 745)

Rather than a class of passive learners, then, Jin and Cortazzi (1998) find that this highly structured dialogue acts as a collective scaffold whereby "what is said by others is internalized in

each individual" (p. 746). As one eight year old Chinese student further explains, ''I may be listening but I am not passive. I am learning in my head. I learn from my teacher. I also learn from what my friends do. If they make a mistake, I learn from that, too'' (p. 748).

The Chinese culture of learning views silence as a cultural expectation for learning. Whereas a casual observer may believe that Chinese students sit passively until called upon, Jin and Cortazzi's (1998) research illuminates the fact that silent learners are not necessarily passive and disengaged learners. In this case, silent learners can be highly engaged and highly attuned to the learning that is occurring around them.

If silence is a cultural expectation in Chinese classrooms, what happens when Chinese students study in Western classrooms, where learning through *asking* and *doing* rather than *listening* is the cultural expectation?

2.22   Factors Contributing to Chinese EFL Students' Silence in Western Classrooms

Silence, Liu (2002) notes, has "long been associated with the classroom communication behaviour of Chinese students" (p. 37) studying in Western academic institutions. As was previously discussed by Jin and Cortazzi (1998), many Chinese EFL students are aware of the differences in expectations regarding participation, but have difficulties adapting their behaviour. Quite aware that they may be perceived as "stupid" (Jin & Cortazzi, p. 753) if they remain silent in Western classrooms, many Chinese EFL students express the desire to participate more in class, but are inhibited by factors that Liu groups into five main categories:

Cognitive factors (e.g. prior learning experience, background knowledge, or mental readiness), pedagogical factors (e.g. teachings styles, participation as a course requirement, and opportunities to speak up), affective factors (e.g. anxiety, motivation, or risk-taking), sociocultural factors (e.g. facework, showing respect for others by keeping

silent, or the norm of being a good listener as a good student), and linguistic factors (e.g.

proficiency in the target language, communicative competence, or accent). (p. 38)

First of all, Liu (2002) notes that cognitive factors must be taken into consideration when trying

to better understand the reasons for Chinese EFL students' silence in Western classrooms.

Cultural discontinuities surrounding prior learning experiences and differences in teaching are

significant factors that must be considered. Hu and Fell-Eisenkraft (2003) report that many

Chinese students are unfamiliar with Western pedagogy that values talk as a medium for the

construction of learning. "This view of talk is congruent with the notion of a democratic

classroom which values exploration of ideas and thoughts through collaborative talk, and talk to

challenge, analyze and think" (p. 63). Furthermore, the Western concept of using exploratory

talk, which expects students to discuss what they do not or are just beginning to know, lies in

direct opposition with the previous educational experiences of Chinese students. For example, in

typical Chinese classrooms students "do not have to talk to make meaning; the meaning is made

for them and transmitted to them by the teachers" (p. 57). The only student talk that is valued in

Chinese school, they continue to report, is when students are expected to demonstrate their

understanding of concepts through providing correct answers to their teacher's questions.

Pedagogical factors must also be considered when trying to understand Chinese EFL

students' silence. According to Hu and Fell-Eisenkraft (2003), a lack of familiarity with Western

pedagogy plays a significant role in determining Chinese EFL students' level of participation in

Western classrooms:

[Chinese students] may feel unsafe because the schools do not have the familiar hierarchy

where the teacher has all the say. They may not be used to making their own decisions.

And they may have trouble understanding that to speak up in class and to express [their]

own opinion are ways to assert [their] individuality and to demonstrate [their] knowledge,

which is considered culturally appropriate here [in Western countries]. (p. 57)

Well-intentioned teachers may also add to Chinese EFL students' silence through their

unfamiliarity with the needs and preferences of Chinese learners. According to Liu (2002):

[c]lassroom teachers play a very important role in these students' silence. Teacher

factors, such as the lack of understanding of the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of

Chinese students, hesitancy in asking these students to speak up in class for fear of

making them uncomfortable, and the stereotypical view of Chinese students as passive

learners, may lead them to become more accepting of the lack of participation of Chinese

students than from other students. This may perpetuate the cycle of silence as well as

negatively impact those students who do perceive that participation in the classroom is

important, and are in the process of developing the confidence to speak up in class. (p.

50)

There are also many affective factors that also contribute to Chinese students' silence in Western

classrooms (Liu, 2002). While individual students will experience different levels of fear,

anxiety, and risk taking depending on personality and previous experience, when Chinese

students are expected to speak in order to become part of the learning community, they "often

resort to what they have been enculturated with - silence" (Hu & Fell-Eisenkraft, 2003, p. 57).

Linguistic competence is yet another of Liu's (2002) five factors to be considered when

understanding Chinese EFL students' silence in Western classrooms. Similar to the affective

factors, proficiency in the target language and communicative competence will vary from

individual to individual. Students who struggle with basic comprehension can often be left out of

conversations and activities due to a lack of understanding of the English language. Instead of

asking for help or clarification, Chinese EFL students may choose to remain silent rather than risk losing face in front of their peers (Flowerdew, 1998). For other students, the fast pace of the class may cause them to remain silent. Hu and Fell-Eisenkraft (2003) offer a Chinese student's explanation that, "I need time to think what I'm going to say. When I'm thinking, someone will have the answer" (p. 62). For this student, silence is unintentional as he merely needed more time to collect his thoughts.

Other students report remaining silent due to issues surrounding communicative competence. Jones (1999) asserts that "communication in the academic context entails more than mere linguistic proficiency; it requires a high degree of sociolinguistic competence, skills of participation and knowledge of the interactive norms of the target culture" (p. 246). As an example of this, Hu and Fell-Eisenkraft (2003) describe a situation in which a student did not need more time in which to collect her thoughts. She describes that "I had quite a lot to say . . . [b]ut I could not find a polite moment to enter the conversation until, toward the end of the class, the professor called upon me to hear what I had to say" (p. 63). This example clearly demonstrates an instance diverse communication norms may contribute to a Chinese EFL student's decision to remain silent rather than actively participate through sharing their ideas and learning.

2.23 Experience Sharing Indigenous Knowledge

While Liu (2002) points to the cognitive, pedagogical, affective, sociocultural, and linguistic factors that contribute to the cultural discontinuities surrounding the perceived level of passivity and reticence among Chinese learners, Zhou, Knoke, and Sakamoto (2005) add a completely new dimension to the existing literature that has yet to be addressed. Their research discusses Chinese students' experiences sharing indigenous knowledge as yet another factor that

determines their level of participation in classroom discussions. Zhou et al. agree with prior research that has found that poor English proficiency (difficulty understanding class content, taking notes, and understanding and responding to questions) and uncertainty about appropriate forms of interaction play a significant role in determining Chinese students' level of participation. "Unfamiliarity with Canadian educational context (including pedagogy) as well as the Canadian/Western culture and knowledge base" (p. 295) were also found to inhibit participation. Finally, classroom dynamics (concern over how peers and the teacher would react to their language proficiency) and contextual elements (including class size and composition, familiarity with peers, and the professors' personality and teaching style) greatly influenced Chinese students' level of participation in Western classrooms.

However, hesitance to participate among Chinese students, Zhou et al. (2005) believe, "cannot be adequately explained by reducing these experiences to their 'cultural difference' and/or communication capability alone" (p. 307). What needs to be considered, and has been previously overlooked, is that experience sharing indigenous knowledge is an important factor for Chinese students when determining their level of participation.

According to Zhou et al. (2005), indigenous knowledge, or Chinese knowledge, refers to "an in-depth understanding of indigenous/Chinese realities resulting from one's long-term residence in China" (p. 298). This includes information about Chinese history, traditions, culture, economy, politics, geography, and society that has been "informed by individuals' local experiences and/or practices in China, in which they live their day-to-day lives . . . and construct the meanings of those experiences vis-a-vis Chinese socio-cultural context" (p. 298).

Zhou et al. (2005) found that there are six factors related to sharing indigenous knowledge that either limited or encouraged Chinese students' participation. First of all, "the

perceived indifference and the lack of interest of peer students and/or professors toward Chinese knowledge" (p. 299) greatly inhibited students' desire to participate in classroom discussions. Secondly, the "lack of recognition and familiarity from professors and peer students for the distinctive knowledge and perspectives brought by Chinese students to the classroom made meaningful sharing and discussion of indigenous/ Chinese knowledge difficult" (p. 301). Furthermore, "the unfamiliarity of peer students and/or professors with Chinese society, knowledge and culture also limited their ability to respond to and engage in discussion and thus discouraged Chinese students' attempt to exchange cross-context/cultural information/knowledge in class" (p. 301). Fourth, they found that "the existing stereotypes and misconception about China and Chinese society sometimes impeded the ability of Canadian students and/or professors to respond to Chinese students in culturally sensitive ways" (p. 301) and discouraged Chinese students' participation. Next, "overemphasizing the difference of Chinese students from other students" (p. 301) or "the experience of being viewed as a 'representative' of 'Chineseness' or 'Chinese perspective' by their peer students and/or professors" (p. 302) was also found to inhibit participation. Finally, the last factor that limited Chinese students' from sharing indigenous knowledge was "the relative dominance of 'mainstream perspectives' in the classroom" (p. 302).

It is clear that there are many potential sources of cultural discontinuity that influence Chinese students' level of participation within Canadian classrooms. Rather than attributing passivity to their Confucian heritage, Zhou et al. (2005) believe that "classroom processes, in which Chinese students make decisions about knowledge sharing, is *context specific* or *situationally constructed* and thus changeable" (p. 308). It is our duty as teachers, therefore, to be aware of the cognitive, pedagogical, affective, sociocultural, and linguistic factors, as well as the

Chinese students' experience sharing indigenous knowledge, so that we may be able to help decrease the primary cultural discontinuities that Chinese students experience as they study in Western classrooms.

Unquestionably, there are many factors that inhibit Chinese EFL students from actively voicing their opinions, ideas, and learning. What has not been discussed, though, is how Chinese students view this silence. Do they feel that it is an issue to be overcome, as their Canadian teachers do?

2.24 Chinese EFL Students' Perception of Silence

Jaworski & Sachdev (1998) contend that some silences "in the classroom are facilitative and highly preferred by teachers and pupils, and others will be rejected or perceived as disruptive, embarrassing or unpleasant" (p. 279). Silence is a potential source of cultural discontinuity, then, as it can "be seen as positive or negative by members of any culture, as it is measured against what is expected in that context" (as cited in Liu, 2002, p. 40). What needs to be understood are the sociocultural factors that influence how Chinese EFL students and their Western teachers perceive silence within the classroom.

As was previously mentioned, in Chinese classrooms silence is expected and encouraged as a sign of respect for their teachers and fellow classmates. "Due to the large class size in China, teachers usually prefer their students to ask questions or discuss issues after class so that the entire class period can be devoted to a well-organized lecture" (p. 47). Furthermore it may be considered a sign of students' attentive listening, active thinking, or even an "appreciation of the high quality of the question that demands more time for the students to come up with an appropriate answer" (p. 47). Silence, from the Chinese perspective, is akin to reverence and respect for all involved in the teaching and learning process.

Knowing the pervasive influence of Confucian thought in Chinese culture, it should not be surprising that Chinese students "perceive silence as more important, more enjoyable and being used to a greater degree for social control" (Jaworski & Sachdev, 1998, p. 276) than their Western counterparts do. Instead of being a result of deficiency, Chinese learners' silence can, in part, be attributed to the influence of their Confucian heritage as well as the collectivist nature of Chinese society (Carson & Nelson, 1996; Flowerdew, 1998). Carson and Nelson (1996) explain that "members of collectivist cultures believe that the collective or group is the smallest unit of survival (unlike people in individualist cultures who believe that the individual is the smallest unit of survival)" (p. 2). In light of this, the primary goal for members of collectivist cultures is to maintain the relationships that constitute the group so that cohesion and group harmony among the group members is best preserved (Carson & Nelson, 1996). To Chinese students, listening attentively, staying silent, and not voicing their opinion unless specifically asked to do so, is most certainly a way to ensure the delicate balance of power between the teacher and themselves is not disturbed.

Furthermore, the Confucian notions of humanism, faithfulness, and propriety also influence a Chinese student's decision to actively participate or not (Flowerdew, 1998). Flowerdew (1998) posits that "humanism and faithfulness, which emphasize empathy and social relationships, underpin the co-operative nature of individuals. Propriety, which concerns the outward manifestation of humanism and faithfulness through proper social behaviour, embodies the concepts of 'face' and self-effacement" (p. 323). Due to their Confucian heritage, many Chinese students are "hesitant about saying anything unless they are absolutely sure it is correct" (p. 326). Furthermore, Chinese students may wish to avoid "expressing conflicting ideas and opinions in order to maintain group cohesion and harmony" (Liu, 2002, p. 52), and so choose to

abstain from participation in discussions and activities to maintain the status quo by avoiding the loss of face for the instructor, their peers, and themselves.

It should be noted, however, that silence is not only used as a means of avoiding loss of face through making or pointing out an error. Chinese EFL students may be equally hesitant to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. According to Zhou et al. (2005), "Chinese students prefer less frequent participation and brief responses in class so as to avoid dominating the discussion and to avoid being labeled as a 'show-off' by their Chinese peers" (p. 289). This too can be attributed to their Confucian "maxims of modesty" (p. 298), which value active listening over "jumping into discussion" (p. 298).

There are many sociocultural factors that contribute to the Chinese view that silence within the classroom is desirable. The Confucian values of propriety, humanism, faithfulness, and modesty, as well as the desire to maintain the status quo, are all conducive to a classroom of respectful and, for the most part, silent learners.

2.25 Western Teachers' Perception of Silence

Western teachers, on the other hand, do not always view silence in such a positive light. Coming from the Socratic tradition, many Western teachers believe that "there are times in the classroom when silence is perceived as appropriate and times when it is considered inappropriate" (Liu, 2002, p. 47). Silence is considered appropriate when the teacher is talking or giving instructions. However, many teachers rely on their students' active participation in discussions and activities for the individual construction of meaning. In this way, most Western teachers expect a response when they pose a question to the class or raise a topic for discussion. Thus, a lack of response will most often be perceived negatively by Western teachers, as silence is often regarded as a negative quality in conversations (Liu, 2002).

Just as the expectations for silence are well-known to Chinese students, the expectations for participation are well known to Canadian students. Unlike Chinese students, who will often remain silent in class out of respect for their teacher and classmates, many Canadian students would practice the opposite. Out of respect for their teacher, many Canadian students do their best to answer questions and may even "improvise to avoid awkwardness caused by a silent moment" (Liu, 2002, p. 47).

Not surprisingly, a Chinese student's silence during discussions and activities could wrongfully be interpreted as reticence, apathy, or a refusal to participate in the learning process (Liu, 2002). Unfortunately, this misinterpretation of Chinese learners can lead to frustration and has the potential to worsen the pre-existing cultural discontinuities Chinese EFL learners already face. Petress (2001) articulates the exasperation that some teachers may feel when teaching silent students:

> Among the most frustrating classroom phenomena is that of students who will not or can not actively participate in classroom discussions. Student reticence, withdrawal, or fear of interacting not only deprives that students from sharing what they know, it deprives the teacher and classmates from benefiting by what a given student has to offer" (p. 104).

The above quotation demonstrates two important concepts surrounding Western teachers' perceptions of silence (and misperception of Chinese learners). First of all, as was previously mentioned, silence can be irksome for teachers, as many feel it demonstrates a blatant disregard for the learning process. Secondly, this quotation illuminates the belief that students' silence hinders their own learning as well as that of the rest of the class.

Petress (2001) forcefully elaborates on this by pointing out the need for each student to "pull their own weight" by actively participating:

Student silence in class is not exclusively a problem for students who refuse to or are unable to respond to direct questions. The need for students to ask questions of clarification, exemplification, classification, validation, and curiosity; to be able and willing to provide examples that demonstrate that student's understanding and that will aid others in seeing examples not thought of by others; and to be able and willing to civilly challenge others' ideas and claims are paramount for optimum education to transpire in the classroom. Everyone in the classroom is responsible for pulling their own weight; all need to participate -- by discussing and by listening to others. (p. 104)

To best ensure the learning of all, then, Petress (2001) believes that teachers have the "obligation to reduce or eliminate such reticence for the benefit of all involved in the education arena" (p. 104).

While Petress' (2001) comments may appear unnecessarily harsh, they do articulate the feelings that Western teachers (who are unaware of the Chinese cultural expectation that students remain silent unless specifically called upon) may have subconsciously harboured from time to time. While teachers may not like to admit it, many of my colleagues (myself included) have vocalized frustrations similar to Petress' at some point in their teaching career.

Petress' (2001) comments clearly highlight the importance of understanding the differing perceptions of silence within the classroom. When teachers feel such resentment toward silent students, their capacity for kindness and understanding will be diminished and their negative attitudes will most certainly add to the cultural discontinuities their students already face.

It should be noted here, however, that Petress' (2001) assertion that Chinese EFL students' silence is detrimental to the learning process is not widely accepted. Liu (2002) notes that silence has often been misinterpreted as reticence, disengagement or apathy. Furthermore,

Liu sets out to disprove the wrongful assumption that students gain nothing (or very little) unless they are observed to be actively participating in class discussions and activities. On the contrary, Liu found that Chinese students greatly valued and benefitted from "classroom communication without necessarily getting themselves involved in discussions" (p. 47).

Undoubtedly, silence in response to questions or during classroom activities and discussions is an area of great cultural discontinuity between Western teachers and Chinese EFL students. Silence, while viewed positively by students coming from a Confucian heritage (which values learning respectfully from a master), is clearly viewed negatively by teachers coming from a Socratic approach to education (which values active discussion as a means to achieving true learning). It is unexamined cultural expectations like these that are some of the many stumbling blocks to student learning Chinese EFL students must face when attempting to negotiate learning in Western classrooms.

2.26 Plagiarism Defined

Yet another source of cultural discontinuity, and perhaps one of the most emotionally charged topics for teachers of Chinese EFL students, is plagiarism. According to Mallon (1989), the term plagiarism "derives from the Latin term plagium, meaning theft or literary adoption of the thought or works of another and concludes that a plagiarist is 'a thief in literature; one who steals the thoughts or writings of another'" (as cited in Sutherland-Smith, 2005, p. 84).

More specifically, Howard (1995) outlines that there are three forms of textual plagiarism: cheating, non-attribution of sources, and patchwriting. As the name implies, cheating entails "borrowing, purchasing, or otherwise obtaining work composed by someone else and submitting it under one's own name" (p. 799). Non-attribution of sources, according to Howard, is the result of a person writing their own paper, but including

passages copied exactly from the work of another (regardless of whether that work is

published or unpublished or whether it comes from a printed or electronic source)

without providing (a) footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical notes that cite the source and

(b) quotation marks or block indentation to indicate precisely what has been copied from

the source. (p. 799)

Finally, patchwriting involves "copying from a source text and then deleting some words,

altering grammatical structures, or plugging in one-for-one synonym-substitutes" (p. 788). As

patchwriting imitates the original too closely, it is considered a form of plagiarism as "the writer

is falsely claiming original presentation and interpretation of the information" (Types of

plagiarism, 2011), even if acknowledgement of the original source is included.

An important distinction that must be made between the three types of plagiarism is that,

unlike cheating, non-attribution of sources and patchwriting can be the result of inexperience

with the conventions of academic writing and a lack of linguistic competence rather than the

student's blatant "intent to deceive" (Howard, 1995, p. 799).

2.27   A Brief History of Western Authorship: Divine Inspiration or Human Genius?

Before delving into the perceptions of, and reasons for, plagiarism, it is important to have

a basic understanding of the history behind the concept of plagiarism. According to Chou (2010),

the Western notion of plagiarism did not exist prior to the seventeenth century as the imagination

was thought to be a product of divine inspiration. As the author was merely the vessel whose task

it was to transcribe the divinely inspired work, Chou notes that writing was considered to be

"largely a reproductive rather than a productive activity" (p. 37) and, thus, gave the individual no

rights to claim ownership over the material. However, with the rise of the Enlightenment in the

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the prior notions of authorship and imagination changed

drastically to become "a transcendental product of the human mind" (Kearney, 1988, as cited in Pennycook, 1996, p. 204), with the author now being able to claim ownership of the ideas and language.

What is significant, Pennycook (1996) asserts, is that these changing perceptions of creativity and authorship place an emphasis "on 'new' meaning, on originality, [and] on individual creativity" (p. 205) that is valued in Western society, and, thus, schooling today. Pennycook further notes that

> [i]t is with the rise of such individualization that the history of literary plagiarism started to emerge (the notion of copyright and thus "intellectual property" was encoded in British law in 1710; see Willinsky, 1990). Thus, as Willinsky (1990) puts it, "this contest of creative imitation, invention, and authority, which has been at the heart of the force of the book as an intellectual property, is secured by the concept of an originating author, an actual body that gave life to words" (p. 77). In this development, then, we can see the conjunction between the development of the notion of the author and the development of individual property rights, which, allied to other developments such as printing, produced a very particular vision of ownership of language and ideas. (p. 205)

2.28   The "Crime" of Plagiarism

As authors began to take credit for their writing, intellectual property rights and the notion of ownership of language and ideas became increasingly important to Western society (Pennycook, 1996). According to Pennycook (1996), "there is a very clear idea here that texts are 'owned' by their 'original' creators and that to use those words and ideas without acknowledging their ownership is indeed to transgress a moral (and legal) boundary" (p. 214). This is also evident in the emotionally charged language that surrounds plagiarism. As with common

criminals, those who plagiarize are often described as "offenders" who are caught "committing" plagiarism, just as one would murder.

Pennycook (1996) asserts that this severe attitude taken toward plagiarism permeates the educational community as well. The issue of plagiarism is one that cannot be avoided as teachers are faced with the task of identifying plagiarism and issuing consequences that are deemed appropriate. What is of note is the attitude that many teachers take toward students who plagiarize. The "mere hint that a student may have cribbed an essay transforms us from caring, sympathetic teachers into single-minded guardians of honor and truth" (p. 214). Furthermore, when students have actually plagiarized "the extent of moral rectitude and vehemence with which teachers sometimes pursue student plagiarisers can be extreme" (pp. 213-14). As an illustration of this, Pennycook cites an example of the "zeal with which transgressors are pursued" (p. 214):

> Accounts of plagiarism abound with stories of the "hunt," the attempt to catch the offender and bring him or her to trial. "I was thrilled by the chase," recalls Murphy (1990, p. 900), a chase which finally led to the student's confession of having copied some sections from a book. "Within the week," reports Murphy, "he was suspended from the university". (p. 214)

2.29 "They are Just Words . . . What is the Big Deal?"

The question that needs to be asked is why do teachers feel such moral indignation when their students plagiarize? Why is plagiarism seen by many teachers as being unforgivable?

Pennycook (1996) notes that one reason teachers become fervent about catching students who plagiarize is partly due to the fact that teachers may feel that students are undermining the authority of the text. As was previously discussed, with Western perceptions of intellectual

property rights and the importance of respecting authorship, plagiarism would most certainly be viewed as a lack of regard for the text. In choosing to plagiarize the ideas or words of another author, the authority of the text is compromised as the student is attempting, whether consciously or not, to claim someone else's originality as their own.

Not only does plagiarism undermine the authority of the text, it also undermines the authority of the teacher (Pennycook, 1996). Teachers may see plagiarism as a sign of 'sneakiness' and utter disregard for the learning task that has been set for them. This lack of respect for the assignment may then be equated to a lack of respect for the teacher and the effort that goes into their teaching.

Finally, teachers may also view plagiarism as a lack of respect for the learning process. As was previously discussed, many Western teachers subscribe to the Socratic approach to teaching and learning that requires the individual, active construction of meaning that "values the process of generating knowledge over knowledge accepted from others . . ." (Greenholtz, 2003, pp. 122-23). In light of this, Western teachers often try to create assignments that encourage students to become actively engaged in their own learning, so they will be able to find answers and solutions to problems for themselves (Tweed, 2000). For many teachers the value of an assignment is not so much the end product, but the learning that was achieved throughout the learning process. When students plagiarize teachers may feel that students are nullifying their own learning as they are refusing to go through the steps of the learning process *themselves,* and instead hope to pass off the ideas and/or writing of others as their own.

2.30 Classical Confucian Education and its Influence on Chinese Intellectual Property Rights

Now that the notions of authorship and intellectual property rights as well as some of the perceptions surrounding plagiarism in the West have been discussed, it is important to better understand how the same is viewed in China. For, as Stone (2008) points out, "concepts like plagiarism and copyright developed quite differently" (p. 200) in China than they have in Western countries. "Where, for example, a classical Chinese historian found precision, we in the West might see only copying from unidentified sources. Where a student in the traditional Chinese educational system found valuable instruction, we might see only rote memorization" (Stone, p. 200). Clearly, the contrast between Chinese and Western notions of plagiarism stand in stark contrast with each other and warrant further mention.

Stone (2008) identifies Confucius' influence on Chinese culture and education as being the primary contributing factor for why the Chinese concepts of authorship and intellectual property rights developed much more loosely than in the West. As was previously discussed, Confucius valued thoughtful, effortful, and respectful study from a master teacher, which would ultimately lead to a career in the government (Tweed, 2000). From these notions of education came what is now referred to as the 'Classical Confucian Education' that was greatly influential in China throughout the imperial period, and can still be felt to some extent in Chinese education today (Stone, 2008).

Confucius' ideal of learning from a master relied heavily, at least in the early stages, on rote memorization (Tweed, 2000). Based on the belief that "skill should be first developed to produce an acceptable output which would then pave the way for creativity to flow" (Wong, 2004, p. 156), students preparing for the civil service examinations were set the task of

memorizing over 2000 characters before they were taught to read and memorize "verbatim a corpus of classical texts that contained between 500,000 and 600,000 characters" (Stone, 2008, p. 205). This process, according to Stone (2008), would take approximately six years. It was only when students had memorized these texts that they were deemed ready to write essays and, "because a library of classical works was mentally available at all times to all students, appropriate selections would be woven effortlessly into practically everything they wrote" (p. 205), without acknowledgement of the original source.

Stone (2008) further explains that the practice of quoting verbatim without citation of sources was not limited to the study of the classics and extended into the arena of publication of new works of fiction as well. In fact, authors in imperial China often copied whole chapters word for word from previous works without attribution of the original source. Furthermore, in contrast with Western views of intellectual property rights, giving credit to the original source was considered superfluous as Chinese authors expected their reader to be educated enough to be able to discern the origins of the quoted material. Stone (2008) describes that

> [w]hen traditional Chinese authors borrow from a preexisting text, and especially from a classic, the reader is expected to recognize the source of the borrowed material instantly. Chinese texts can therefore quote the classics at great length and the issue of improper borrowing will not arise. If a reader is unfortunate enough to fail to recognize such quoted material, it is his fault, not the author's. (pp. 202-203)

Similarly, Stone (2008) notes, paraphrasing or using sources in any way other than verbatim was considered inaccurate for non-fiction writing as well. The prevailing belief was that the "work of the historian was to compile a set of documents which would speak for themselves rather than to make an imaginative reconstruction of past events" (p. 208). Therefore, historical accounts

"could be constructed almost exclusively of quoted materials and the question of inappropriate borrowing would not even arise" (p. 209).

Clearly, the Western concepts of originality, authorship, and intellectual property stand in direct opposition with the Confucian values of learning through imitation of a master and repeating their words accurately and without variation (Stone, 2008). While Chinese authors would have felt that incorporating quotations and even whole chapters into their writing from other sources demonstrated learning and ensured accuracy, many Westerners of the same time period would have been accused of committing the crime of plagiarism (Stone, 2008).

2.31 Confucian Heritage and "Learned Plagiarism"

Researchers are divided when ascertaining the extent to which Chinese EFL students' perceptions of originality and intellectual property are influenced by their Confucian heritage. Chou (2010), Shei (2005), Sowden (2005), and Sutherland-Smith (2005) would contend that plagiarism is most often a result of Chinese EFL students ". . . simply pursuing the writing task in a manner consistent with [their] educational background and broader cultural experience" (Deckert, 1993, as cited in Sutherland-Smith, p. 86) and, thus, engage in "learned plagiarism" (Deckert, 1993, as cited in Sutherland-Smith, p. 86).

As was discussed in the preceding section, the Chinese culture of learning "generally emphasizes a substantial period of imitation before creativity can be contemplated" (Shei, 2005, p. 1). Due to this, Chinese writers are often accused of plagiarism as a result of their educational system that has, for centuries, encouraged students to "memorize what famous philosophers or scholars have said" (Chou, 2010, p. 38) and incorporate rhetorically 'beautiful' phrases from master writers in their own writing "without bothering to use quotation marks or attribution" (Shei, 2005, p. 4). What is considered blatant plagiarism in the West, then, is often the strategy

employed by Chinese students hoping that, through imitation, they will ultimately become transformed "into a creative writer, not just an automatic vending machine capable only of spitting out what is stored" (Shei, 2005, p. 3).

While copying the ideas, words, and rhetorical style of masters is a means Chinese students employ to become competent writers, Sowden (2005) also adds that plagiarism may be linked to the Confucian ideal that "good students do not challenge their teachers or other authorities, but faithfully copy and reproduce them" (p. 227). Furthermore, Sowden speculates, plagiarism may be a result of an intolerance for ambiguity:

> Closely connected with this perception of roles is the idea of there being a correct answer to every question, which it is the teacher's duty to provide and the student's duty to learn. There is little tolerance of uncertainty. From this perspective, plagiarism can be seen as a virtue: producing what you know to be correct. In contrast, speculating with ideas which may be incorrect will tend to be viewed as pointless or even dangerous. (p. 227)

Finally, differing cultural expectations in terms of what is considered "doing one's own work" (Sowden, 2005, p. 227) between China and Western countries is yet another explanation for why Chinese EFL students may be accused of plagiarism in Western academic institutions. According to Song-Turner (2008), Asian students coming from a collectivist culture reported that working collaboratively (and submitting the work as their own), as well as comparing notes and assignments, was seen as "positive collaboration" (Pecorari, 2003, p. 319) in their previous educational experiences. When asked about this practice it "was not perceived as copying or collusion, but, rather, a matter of demonstrating good sense and adding value to each other in an academically appropriate manner" (Song-Turner, p. 44).

Sowden (2005) believes that this practice stems directly from the collectivist nature of Chinese society where "achieving group consensus is more important than demonstrating one's own understanding and abilities" (p. 227). Considering this, "[i]t is not unreasonable to assume that a culture which tolerates the idea of students sharing knowledge and responsibility in this way, is one which is less likely to discourage copying and the appropriation of ideas from other sources without acknowledgement" (pp. 227-228).

2.32 Looking Beyond Cultural Conditioning

While Shei (2005), Chou (2010), Sowden (2005), and Song-Turner (2008) point to cultural conditioning as the primary factor that leads Chinese students to plagiarize, other researchers are not as convinced. Liu (2005), for example, claims that this interpretation is a "dubious one . . . based primarily on incorrect information and is presented often via unwarranted jumps in reasoning and conflation of separate issues" (p. 239).

To illustrate this, Liu (2005) argues that while memorization and imitation of a master does play an integral role in Chinese education, claiming the work of another as your own is neither taught nor encouraged in China. For example, Liu recalls being warned by teachers "not to copy others' work . . . be it a paragraph or a couple of sentences" (p. 235). Furthermore, upon reviewing six Chinese composition textbooks, Liu found that each clearly indicated that "copying others without giving them due credit is not an acceptable practice" (p. 235).

Similarly, Stone (2008) and Gu and Brooks (2008) assert that an understanding of factors beyond those associated with Chinese EFL students' Confucian heritage is necessary if a comprehensive understanding of plagiarism is to be had. "Even if it is true that 'Confucianism is a cultural predisposition leading to a lack of consciousness of intellectual property,' it is not clear that this tells us anything of practical value that can be applied to the current situation in China"

(Shi, 1995, as cited in Stone, p. 206). Similarly, Gu and Brooks note that while "culture plays an important but not deterministic role in understanding Chinese students' perceptions of plagiarism . . . it is much too easy to attribute the differences observed in Chinese students to the consequences of Confucian heritage culture" (p. 340).

The question that begs to be asked, then, is if textual plagiarism is *not* necessarily a result of cultural conditioning, what reasons lead Chinese EFL students to plagiarize in Western academic institutions?

2.33   Alternate Explanations for Plagiarism

As was previously outlined by Howard (1995), there are three main types of plagiarism - cheating, non-attribution of sources, and patchwriting. While there are many factors that may motivate Chinese EFL students to plagiarize in these ways, it is commonly accepted that a "lack of adequate language proficiency, lack of task-specific writing skills, and, of course, the urge to cheat" (Liu, 2005, p. 239) all contribute to whether Chinese EFL students plagiarize or not.

These three factors are interconnected. Students who lack basic linguistic competence would also most likely lack in knowledge of how to cite sources appropriately and, thus, would be much more apt to plagiarize than their peers who are more proficient in the English language and in proper attribution of sources. For ease of discussion, though, these three factors will be explored separately.

2.34   Negotiating Attribution of Sources and Original Ideas

The easiest explanation for plagiarism is that students do not understand, or lack experience using, the rules surrounding academic referencing and citation practices that are expected in Western academic institutions (Song-Turner, 2008). Even when the basic rules for attribution of sources are understood, Chinese EFL students may struggle with negotiating "the

boundaries between common knowledge, which is itself a culturally or locally defined concept, textual sources of authentic information/knowledge, and [their] own creativity and originality" (Gu & Brooks, 2008, p. 345). As an example of this, Gu and Brooks (2008) provide one Chinese EFL student's explanation that:

> I am not quite clear where to draw a line to distinguish my ideas from other authors' ideas. For example, I read a book and had some ideas of my own. So when I write, maybe half of the sentence is a summary of the author's ideas whilst the other half is about my new ideas drawing upon the ideas in the book. Should I make a reference to the book? It was a real headache for me because I felt that actually my ideas were integrated with someone else's. At present I do indicate the original sources in my essays. But I feel that it seems that my own new ideas have become somebody else's. I find that quite difficult and don't know what to do. (p. 345)

This student's statement clearly demonstrates the difficulties Chinese EFL students may have in understanding exactly how and when attribution of sources is needed. In reference to this students' comments, Gu and Brooks (2008) note that "[b]eneath the surface act of adding references to the original textual sources was his genuine attempt to demonstrate his intellectual contribution, as well as his commitment to academic integrity" (p. 345). Clearly, plagiarism for this student was unintentional and merely a result of a weak knowledge of Western citation practices.

According to Gu and Brooks (2008), the difficulty for many Chinese EFL students lies in the challenge of learning and adapting to citation practices that "may be radically different from their own" (p. 345). Furthermore, many Chinese EFL students may unwittingly plagiarize in an

attempt to satisfy their Western teacher's preference for original ideas supported by an authority rather than a mere summary of arguments put forth by others.

2.35 A Closer Look at Patchwriting

Patchwriting is the second type of plagiarism that is common among Chinese EFL students. As was previously defined by Howard (1995), patchwriting involves copying from a text but changing some of the words and grammatical structures. Commonly used as a "transitional strategy in the student's progress toward membership in a new discourse community" (p. 788), patchwriting has often been linked to Chinese EFL students' limited English proficiency and lack of task-specific writing skills rather than voluntary plagiarism (Currie, 1998; Chou, 2010; Gu & Brooks, 2008; Howard, 1995; Pecorari, 2003; Shei, 2005).

One of the many challenges that Chinese EFL students face, according to Currie (1998), is the discrepancy between the expectations of the Western curriculum and "their still developing linguistic and cognitive resources" (p. 2). Despite their best efforts, "student writers may be unable either to produce a mature, skilled synthesis of the ideas of others, or to attend simultaneously to all the demands of a complex writing task" (p. 2). In order to compensate, then, Chinese EFL students may patchwrite their assignments as their developing linguistic abilities do not allow them to fully understand the words and ideas that they are required to write about (Howard, 1995).

Even when Chinese EFL students do understand what they are reading and writing about, many may lack the task specific skills necessary to paraphrase, make inferences, and then organize their information according to the Western rules of citation (Shei, 2005). In this way patchwriting, Chou (2010) asserts, can be difficult to avoid, as many Chinese EFL students are

"not yet equipped to write autonomously in a new discourse" (p. 39). Chou elaborates on this and adds that

> copying may help novice writers develop language as well as academic skills. When I was learning to write in the academic field, professors often used phrases such as, "say it in your own words." However, from a second language learner's perspective, it was often difficult for me to say things in my own words. First, the sentences in the books I read were sophisticated and concise. They were well written. How was I able to restate these ideas in my own words given my limited English proficiency? Second, no matter how hard I tried, the sentences I read would remain in my mind. Whenever I tried to paraphrase them or express a similar idea in my own papers, equivalent sentence structures or vocabulary usages would appear in my sentences. (p. 39)

Chou (2010) also raises here the important issue of Chinese EFL students inadvertently plagiarizing as a result of imitating what they believe to be "good models" of writing (p. 39). Through imitation of published writing, EFL students can learn how to use sophisticated vocabulary, construct clear and concise sentences and paragraphs, and write academic papers that meet the rigorous expectations of Western academic institutions.

Gu and Brooks (2008) also found that many Chinese EFL students used patchwriting as a means of improving their written expression rather than as a form of intentional plagiarism. One Chinese EFL student interviewed by Gu and Brooks explained that

> [s]ometimes I just want to improve my writing. I read some articles and felt that, ''wow, that was a wonderful sentence. I want to learn it." . . .So I write it down. But I don't write the whole sentence down, not completely. I want to be creative too. I want to reorganise

these sentences, and use them to express my own [subject] knowledge, ...so that they

could be my own sentences. . . . I learned good [sentence] structures from the articles.

The language is beautiful and I want to use it." (p. 347)

Through patchwriting, then, this student is intending, not to steal someone else's sentences, but to improve the quality of their writing. Sowden (2005) notes that, not only is patchwriting a natural process, it is something that cannot be avoided. Chinese EFL students, like apprentices who learn through observing, imitating, and finally through creation of their own, "will naturally model their output on specific examples that they have already encountered, and cannot really do otherwise" (p. 230).

There are many reasons why students may patchwrite their assignments. Their still developing linguistic abilities and skills combined with the challenge of meeting the high expectations of Western academic institutions may cause Chinese EFL students to patchwrite. Considering this, the following section will discuss the need to view patchwriting as a useful and powerful instructional tool, rather than blatant plagiarism and the intent to deceive.

2.36   In Defense of Patchwriting

Sowden (2005) is not alone in his belief that patchwriting is often a necessary strategy that Chinese EFL students use in order to scaffold their learning and develop their linguistic abilities. In fact, Chandrasoma, Thompson, and Pennycook (2004) praise the use of patchwriting as it "is an attempt on part of the writer to engage with the linguistic and discursive forms of particular disciplinary fields, as opposed to wholesale copying of entire paragraphs or texts without modification" (p. 176). Furthermore, when viewed this way, patchwriting shows students not as "failed authors and untrustworthy 'Others' but as genuine learner-writers

authentically engaging with disciplinary discourses: it is a way of acknowledging that learning is taking place" (p. 176).

Rather than stigmatizing students for their use of patchwriting, as many Western teachers would have the tendency to do, Gu and Brooks (2008) encourage teachers to recognize the value of patchwriting and its inherent ability to motivate students. If patchwriting were classified as plagiarism, Gu and Brooks continue, "student writers would be thwarted in their initial, genuine attempts to develop and succeed in the dominant academic community within which they are pursuing their studies" (p. 348). Instead, teachers must view patchwriting as ''a form of textual plagiarism which is caused not by the intention to deceive but by the need for further growth as a writer" (Pecorari, 2003, p. 338). Furthermore, when teachers come to accept that many Chinese EFL students will "use sources inappropriately before they learn how to use them appropriately and focus on supporting novice writers . . . [so that] they emerge from the patchwriting stage" (Pecorari, 2003, p. 342) the learning and language development of Chinese EFL students will be encouraged.

2.37 Voluntary and Involuntary Plagiarism

The above discussion of non-attribution of sources and patchwriting focused on involuntary plagiarism as the result of Chinese cultural practices as well as a lack of language proficiency and task specific skills. Voluntary plagiarism through non-attribution of sources, patchwriting, and cheating among Chinese EFL students also warrants mention .

What is important, Song-Turner (2008) notes, is that while this discussion focuses on Chinese EFL students, it is by no means a problem unique to them. Song-Turner reports that both native and non-native English speakers have been found to plagiarize intentionally, but that "it does appear to be more evident among international students" (p. 39). The following discussion,

then, will offer potential explanations for why Chinese EFL students may plagiarize voluntarily through non-attribution of sources, patchwriting, and cheating.

2.38   Voluntary Plagiarism as the Result of Insufficient Linguistic Competence

There are many reasons why Chinese EFL students may plagiarize intentionally. As is the case with involuntary plagiarism, voluntary plagiarism can be the result of a weak mastery of the English language (Hayes, 2003). Hayes (2003) notes that many EFL students are at a distinct disadvantage as they enter Western classrooms with a "deficit of skills, which is likely to deepen as the expectations and workload increases as the course progresses" (p. 20). This deficit, combined with the extra time EFL students often need in order to complete assignments to the best of their ability, can be extremely stressful for Chinese EFL students. Employed as a coping strategy, then, plagiarism can often be "used as a means of completing a task - moving on - submitting work - getting through rather than a deliberate and planned act of deception and poor behaviour" (Song-Turner, 2008, p. 49).

Plagiarism in written assignments also occurs, Pennycook (1996) asserts, as the result of Chinese EFL students' perceived inability to express the ideas of others adequately. As an illustration of this, a Chinese EFL student interviewed by Pennycook explained that "she had understood the author and felt that to rewrite in her own words would be less effective than using the author's own words. She knew that rewriting would bring about more mistakes and probably a less powerful message" (p. 223). The decision to plagiarize, then, was intentional in this case as the student lacked confidence in her ability to communicate the ideas of others clearly.

A lack of confidence in Chinese EFL students' ability to adequately express their own ideas and opinions in English has also been cited by Pennycook (1996) and Hayes (2003) as further motivation for plagiarism. Patchwriting and issues of non-attribution can often result as

EFL students "fall back on the supposed authority of the text, and string together arguments from a diversity of texts . . .without critical evaluation of the issue or reference to appropriate sources" (Hayes, p. 20).

Furthermore, Song-Turner (2008) notes that the "lack of awareness of Western academic writing style meant that students would sometimes feel almost obliged to copy large slabs of written material to ensure that they 'got the format and style right'" (pp. 45-46). As an example of this, Song-Turner offers one EFL student's explanation that:

> I get so worried about the style, format, referencing and all of that . . . that sometimes I simply do resort of copying down some sections of existing text because at least I know that this is correct and in the right style. I know this is wrong, but - then, and this is the problem - writing in a style which may fail is also not so good either. But it is so hard for us to work out exactly what is required - what the lecturer is asking for sometimes. They tend to assume everyone knows and this is not always the case when you come from a different country with its own language and cultural issues. (p. 46).

While the preceding example demonstrates Chinese EFL student's lack of confidence in their writing ability, it also highlights cultural discontinuities surrounding expectations for assignments as potential motivation for plagiarism. Song-Turner (2008) found that EFL students who are used to a "very formal, rigid and traditional form of education, such innovation and flexibility often seemed to be just too stressful. Eventually some of them would succumb to copying just to cope with what seemed to be a never-ending series of changes from one unit to another" (p. 46), combined with the desire to do as well as possible.

2.39   The Pressure to Succeed

Pressure to succeed is yet another factor that was found to motivate Chinese EFL students to plagiarize (Hayes, 2003; Marshall & Garry, 2005). Marshall and Garry (2005) note that "fear of excessive loss of face and impact on family resulting from poor performance" (p. 27) were of great concern to Chinese EFL students and played a significant role in their decision to plagiarize. As studying at international schools and in Western countries are extremely expensive for Chinese students, Marshall and Garry also listed financial pressure from family as reasons why Chinese students often resorted to plagiarism.

Hayes (2003) also found that Chinese EFL students listed achieving good grades as the main reason for why they chose to plagiarize. "In China, though high marks were seen as important so as to undertake an overseas postgraduate program, they were also important in terms of finding a good job" (p. 17). As one Chinese student describes, "marks mean everything when students have no work experience. Marks are the only thing that companies judge them on" (pp. 17-18). When grades carry this much significance for the future of themselves and, often, their families, the motivation to plagiarize can be quite high for some students.

2.40   The Influence of Student Attitudes on Voluntary Plagiarism

Finally, attitudes toward the dominant culture, the school, their teacher, and assessment tasks have all been found to influence Chinese EFL students' motivation to plagiarize (Marshall & Garry, 2005; Pennycook, 1996; Shei, 2005; Sowden, 2005). As Sowden (2005) notes, students "with a strong integrationist motivation towards their new place of study will be less inclined to practise plagiarism than those who are not and more willing to accept the prevailing academic values" (pp. 228-229). Acceptance of and adherence to Western academic values is most likely when students feel supported and valued in the classroom and wider school community, and

have a positive relationship with their teacher that is built on mutual caring, understanding, respect, and trust (Shei, 2005).

However, instances of voluntary plagiarism increase when EFL students feel dissatisfaction with the teacher, the academic institution and the assessment task (Pennycook, 1996). Pennycook (1996) found that Chinese EFL students who were displeased with their teacher and the academic institution complained of "little incentive to work hard" (p. 223) and, thus, had a higher tendency toward voluntary plagiarism than students who were satisfied with their teacher and school. Similarly, Marshall and Garry (2005) found that EFL students may voluntarily plagiarize as a response to the overwhelming "presumption of dominant cultural knowledge in the design and communication of assessment tasks" (p. 27). In these cases plagiarism is "more a case of resistance than of ignorance, ineptitude, or dishonesty (Pennycook, 1996, p. 223).

These findings suggest that voluntary plagiarism may occur, in part, due to Chinese EFL students' dissatisfaction with their experiences of Western schooling. This is reminiscent of Grimshaw's (2007) research that found that Chinese EFL students may refuse to participate or pay adequate attention in class as a form of resistance or protest for their teacher's perceived shortcomings. Both of these findings further confirm the need to understand and address the cultural discontinuities between Chinese EFL students and Canadian teachers, so that these issues need not stand in the way of student participation or encourage students to plagiarize their assignments voluntarily.

2.41 *Guanxi* and Cheating from Peers

The previous discussion has focused on voluntary and involuntary plagiarism but has not discussed cheating from peers. Rather than collaborating on assignments and submitting the

work as their own, cheating from peers involves borrowing assignments and copying the work

directly as well as cheating during tests and exams (Pecorari, 2003). While the motivation for

weaker students to plagiarize is obvious, it is less clear to Western teachers why stronger

students would knowingly break the rules and risk the consequences of being caught cheating by

allowing their peers to copy from them.

Simpson (2008) points to the Chinese concept of *guanxi* as the explanation for why

Chinese EFL students knowingly allow their peers to cheat off of their assignments, tests, and

exams. Literally translated as "relationship" or "social connection," *guanxi* refers to

"interpersonal relationships or connections and can be applied not only to kinship and friendship

relationships but also to social connections" (Lee & Dawes, 2005, p. 29). One of the most

powerful elements of Chinese society as it "lies at the heart of China's social order, its economic

structure, and its changing institutional landscape" (Lee & Dawes, 2005, p. 29), the influence of

guanxi cannot be underestimated.

Quite simply, *guanxi* expresses the relationship between people or organizations as well

as the obligation between them to reciprocate favours (Lee & Dawes, 2005). According to

Kwintessential (n.d.), a website devoted to cultural awareness and intercultural training,

> [i]f one has *guanxi* with another, one will be quick to do a favour, act on another's behalf
>
> and depending on the depth of the relationship, do anything necessary for the other party.
>
> By establishing this type of relationship with someone, the other party is implicitly
>
> agreeing also to be available to reciprocate when the need arises. (n. pag.)

Furthermore, Chinese EFL students who have relationships based on *guanxi* have little choice

but to allow their peers to copy from them. While this may seem implausible to Western teachers

coming from an individualist culture, Simpson (2008) explains that, "maintaining *guanxi* has

higher cultural value than maintaining integrity, because relation to the group is more important than personal preference or convictions" (p. 388). In light of this, Western teachers "cannot underestimate the importance of face and *guanxi* and their interplay in the classroom and testing environments" (p. 388) when considering the potential reasons for cheating among Chinese EFL students.

2.42 Final Thoughts on Plagiarism

The issues surrounding voluntary and involuntary plagiarism among Chinese EFL learners are complex. While cultural "[d]ifferences in moral perception of plagiarism and its significance" (Marshall & Garry, 2005, p. 27) may account for some of the cultural discontinuities between Chinese EFL students and their Canadian teachers, other factors such as linguistic competence, pressure to succeed, student attitudes, and the pressures of *guanxi* must also be taken into consideration. Hopefully the arguments presented will encourage teachers of Chinese EFL students to think about plagiarism in a new, and more open-minded way. Rather than be personally insulted when Chinese EFL students plagiarize, perhaps Canadian teachers will take a step back and recognize the arrogance and misinformed nature of the following statement that, unfortunately, reflects at least one person's views about Chinese learners and plagiarism:

> [Chinese EFL students] are the proverbial rote memorizers or recyclers. In other words, egocentric concerns of learning well and feeling right about oneself together far exceed concern for either the college, the original writer, one's own classmates, or one's relationship with the teacher. (Deckert, 1993, as cited in Sutherland-Smith, 2005, p. 86)

2.43 Summary

Cultural discontinuities resulting from conflicting cultural frames of reference between the East and West have the potential to impact negatively on Chinese EFL students. While Canadian culture was shown to be individualist in nature with a movement toward dialogic education, Chinese culture was discussed as being collectivist with dialectic teaching and learning being the norm (Hammond & Gao, 2002; Ho et al., 2004). Furthermore, fundamental beliefs about teaching and learning resulting from the Confucian and Socratic origins of Chinese and Canadian education were discussed (Tweed, 2000). The differences inherent in these two educational cultures, then, pose many sources of cultural discontinuity for Chinese learners as they study in Western institutions.

Cast in this light, Chinese learners are often described as passive recipients of knowledge who are overly reliant on their teachers (Hu, 2002; Tweed, 2000). While they are praised for being respectful, thoughtful and very hard-working, they are also criticized for lacking in autonomy and creativity (Grimshaw, 2007; Hu, 2002; Hui, 2005; Kennedy, 2002; Tweed, 2000; Wong, 2006). Chinese students are further characterized as having a preference for superficial learning through rote memorization and being afraid to take risks, ask questions, and think critically for fear of making mistakes, losing face, or disturbing the social harmony within the class (Grimshaw, 2007; Hu, 2002; Liu, 2002; Tweed, 2000; Wong, 2006).

Recent interpretations, however, paint Chinese students much differently. Some researchers (Cheng, 2000; Grimshaw, 2007; Liu, 2002; Nield, 2004; Wang, 2006; Zhou et al., 2005) move away from understandings of Chinese learners based solely on their subscription to their Confucian heritage. These current interpretations find that past research has misrepresented Confucian doctrine and its supposed influence on Chinese students (Grimshaw, 2007; Nield,

2004; Wang, 2006). Instead, they point to previously overlooked contextual and personal factors that either encourage or inhibit Chinese students from participating in the classroom as Canadian teachers would expect them to.

Nield (2004) and Wang (2006) acknowledge that some elements of the students' Confucian heritage can still be felt in Chinese education today. While Nield confirms the traditional student-teacher relationship as espoused by Confucius, his research indicates that Chinese students are not the rote and superficial learners that they were once believed to be. Instead, he finds that they prefer active learning (such as group work) and dislike exams with only one correct answer and, thus, that can be answered through rote memorization.

Similarly, Wang's (2006) research challenges the assumption that Chinese learning is superficial in nature. Wang makes the distinction between rote and repetitive learning and points out that previous researchers have not looked beyond the beginning stages of what constitutes a complex learning process. The point was also made that Confucius valued careful, thoughtful study that relied on memorization, reflection, and practice *before* output. Although memorization is an integral element of Chinese learning, Wang notes, it is not the desired endpoint but, rather, the first stepping-stone to deeper learning.

Unlike many researchers who seek to understand Chinese students through a purely cultural lens, Zhou, Knoke, and Sakamoto (2005) call for interpretations of Chinese learners that look beyond their Confucian heritage. Instead, they ask that Chinese learners be viewed as "a complex, dynamic phenomenon, comprising a multiplicity of beliefs and practices" (Grimshaw, 2007, p. 303).

From this standpoint, then, Grimshaw (2007) found that Chinese students have a high degree of autonomy and do not necessarily view their teacher as a font of knowledge and

learning. In fact, Grimshaw's research challenges the notion that Chinese learners are passive and, instead, asserts that what may appear to be passive behaviour may actually be a form of protest for what they perceive to be inadequate teaching.

Like Grimshaw (2007), Cheng (2000) and Liu (2002) are also interested in alternate understandings for the perceived passive behaviour of Chinese students. Cheng points to situation-specific factors such as teaching methodologies and language proficiency that may encourage or inhibit participation. Liu takes this idea further by calling for teachers of Chinese learners to reassess their assumption that a lack of participation is equitable to a lack of engagement and learning, and to reconsider the cognitive, pedagogical, affective, sociocultural, and linguistic factors that contribute to a Chinese student's likelihood to actively participate in class or not. Specific issues that arise as a result of a lack of familiarity with Western pedagogy that values talk as a medium for learning, as well as the high degree of sociolinguistic competency needed for Western type interactions were discussed in detail, and must also be taken into account when considering Chinese students' active and vocal participation in Western classrooms (Hu & Fell-Eisenkraft, 2003; Jones, 1999).

Zhou, Knoke, and Sakamoto's (2005) research builds on previous findings by adding that Chinese students' hesitance to actively participate in class cannot be adequately explained through cultural difference or communication ability alone. Instead, Zhou et al. found that there are six factors related to sharing indigenous knowledge that influence Chinese students' participation. Indifference and unfamiliarity with Chinese knowledge and society, lack of recognition for, or an overemphasis on, the distinct knowledge and perspectives of Chinese students, and the preexisting stereotypes and misconceptions about Chinese culture were all found to inhibit the active participation of Chinese students in Western classrooms.

Differing perceptions of the value of silence in the classroom between Chinese EFL students and Western teachers were also examined. Silence, coming from a Chinese perspective, is often seen as a sign of active and attentive listening and thinking, which demonstrates respect for all involved in the teaching and learning process (Liu, 2002). Furthermore, as a result of their Confucian heritage, silence is also used to maintain the balance of power within the classroom, to ensure that no one loses face, and as a means of remaining humble (Carson & Nelson, 1996; Zhou et al., 2005). Conversely, Western teachers often regard silence in negative terms. Coming from the Socratic tradition which values the active construction of meaning through dialogue, silence is often misinterpreted for reticence or as a blatant refusal to participate, and is viewed as a hindrance to the student's individual learning and that of others (Petress, 2001).

Finally, cultural discontinuities surrounding the issue of voluntary and involuntary plagiarism through non-attribution of sources, patchwriting, and cheating were discussed. Canadian notions of authorship and attribution of sources were traced back to the Enlightenment, when writers began claiming ideas and language as their own (Pennycook, 1996). These values were contrasted with those inherent to the Classical Confucian Education, which valued memorization and integration of texts seamlessly into written works without attribution of sources (Stone, 2008).

These two conflicting cultural perspectives regarding plagiarism were found to have lasting implications for Chinese EFL students and their Canadian teachers (Chou, 2010; Shei, 2005; Stone, 2008; Pennycook, 1996; Pecorari, 2003). What Chinese EFL students may view as acceptable means of learning through imitation of a master, Canadian teachers view as blatant plagiarism (Shei, 2005). When Chinese EFL students attempt to respect authority and ensure a correct answer is given by copying directly from a text, many Canadian teachers become

indignant and feel the authority of the text, and their own authority as teachers, has been compromised (Sowden, 2005; Pennycook, 1996). Similarly, when Chinese EFL students collaborate as a means of helping each other and maintaining positive group dynamics, Canadian teachers, again, see nothing more than the willful desire to disregard the learning process and deceive (Pecorari, 2003; Pennycook, 1996).

Other researchers, however, doubt that plagiarism among Chinese EFL students is a result of cultural conditioning. Instead, a lack of knowledge and experience with Western expectations surrounding appropriate citation practices, limited English proficiency and task-specific writing skills, and the desire to plagiarize have been found to be reasons why Chinese EFL students may voluntarily or involuntarily plagiarize (Currie, 1998; Chou, 2010; Gu & Brooks, 2008; Howard, 1995; Liu, 2005; Pecorari, 2003; Shei, 2005; Stone, 2008).

Significant attention was also given to the complex issue of patchwriting. While it is a form of plagiarism, Chandrasoma et al., (2004), Chou (2010, Currie (1998), Hayes (2003), and Sowden (2005) assert that it is often employed by Chinese EFL students in an honest attempt to meet the challenging demands of studying in a language in which they are not yet fully equipped to function. Considering this, there is a call for teachers to reexamine their attitudes toward patchwriting. While it remains unacceptable for final draft writing, Pennycook (1996) encourages teachers to praise EFL students for their efforts to become more proficient at writing in English, and to use patchwriting as a strategy for students to become proficient and autonomous writers.

Voluntary plagiarism was also discussed. Pressure to achieve good grades and avoid the loss of face was found by Hayes (2003) and Marshall & Garry (2005) as primary reasons why Chinese EFL students were found to plagiarize voluntarily. Student attitudes toward the

academic institution, the teacher, and the assessment task were also listed as reasons why students may plagiarize intentionally (Marshall & Garry, 2005; Pennycook, 1996; Shei, 2005; Sowden, 2005).

Finally, as a potential explanation for why Chinese EFL students may allow their peers to copy from their assignments, tests, and exams, Simpson (2008) raised the important concept of *guanxi*. This obligation to reciprocate favours, whatever they may be, was found to be of the utmost of importance to Chinese students and can explain why many would risk the consequences of being caught cheating in order to fulfill their *guanxi* obligations.

It is apparent, then, that there are many factors that contribute to the cultural discontinuity experienced by Chinese students as they study in Canadian classrooms. While an understanding of their Confucian heritage provides an excellent starting point for meeting the needs of Chinese learners, it does not provide a complete picture. What needs to be considered, then, are the cognitive, pedagogical, affective, sociocultural, and linguistic factors, combined with students' experience sharing indigenous knowledge. In this way, educators can strive to gain a more complete understanding of the complex issues surrounding Chinese students in Western classrooms (Cheng, 2000; Liu, 2002; Zhou et al., 2005).

Furthermore, if teachers are truly dedicated to becoming cultural mediators and dispelling the primary cultural discontinuities that their Chinese EFL students face, they must also examine their own beliefs and preferences. In this way, teachers may begin to understand how their values affect their pedagogical choices and, ultimately, the learning of the students in their class. However, this knowledge and understanding of the self is not enough. The beliefs, preferences, and experiences of their students must also be examined, understood, acknowledged, and

honored if teachers are truly committed to adopting culturally responsive pedagogy and ensuring

the needs of all students are being met.

3   Implications for Teachers

3.1   Asking Rather Than Assuming

As discussed, the potential for primary cultural discontinuities to arise between Chinese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students and Canadian teachers is great. As Lovelace and Wheeler (2006) have previously noted, teachers must obtain an in-depth understanding of the cultures and beliefs guiding the preferences and practices of both themselves and their students, so that they may be able to teach in a culturally responsive manner. This can be done through familiarizing oneself with relevant research prior to interaction with students.

While research about Chinese learners can offer an excellent starting point, it does not offer a complete picture. The next step, then, is to better understand the individual preferences of Chinese EFL students by *asking* them rather than *assuming* we know based on previous etic research, that is, research on the extrinsic ideas and categories meaningful for researchers. Grimshaw (2007) explains that

> [r]ather than accepting explanations of Chinese students that are based on exotic stereotypes, we should seek to relate to them first and foremost as people, with all the complexity that entails. Rather than assuming what our Chinese students need and seeking to change them accordingly, we should first clarify what capacities they already possess. Rather than presuming what happens in Chinese classrooms, we should inform ourselves through the findings of grounded, emic research that has been conducted in that context. (p. 308)

This emic research, that is, research on the intrinsic cultural distinctions meaningful to the members of a cultural group that Grimshaw calls for, poses yet another potential point of cultural discontinuity between Chinese EFL students and Canadian teachers. While Western teachers

may view open dialogue about how students feel they will learn best as good practice, the idea that the teacher does not know how to best teach students may make Chinese EFL learners uncomfortable. The notion of students describing their preferences for teaching and learning is most certainly at odds with the Confucian ideal of the all-knowing teacher who makes decisions *for* students rather than *with* them (Tweed, 2000).

To avoid this, Canadian teachers can work with Chinese teaching colleagues to gain useful information and perspectives into the past educational experiences of the Chinese students in their class. Some Chinese teachers may even allow their Canadian colleagues to observe their classes in order to gain further insight into the methodologies, student-teacher interactions, and learning environment within the Chinese classes.

However, Chinese and Canadian teachers cannot possibly know the needs, expectations, and previous experiences of each student without asking the students themselves. In asking students to describe their preferences for teaching and learning through activities that are familiar to them (such as short written response questions), valuable insight into the preferences of each student can be gained. Comparing and contrasting this information provided by the students with information that introduces students to Canadian values, strategies, and beliefs about education will provide students with a basic understanding of, and exposure to, the core differences in these often opposite educational paradigms.

3.2 Why Should We Ask?

The purpose of explicitly discussing the two ideologies is twofold. First, it helps the students and teachers become aware of the similarities and differences in fundamental beliefs that each brings to the classroom. This also helps teachers better understand their students, and informs future practice so that local practices can be incorporated and student preferences for the

teaching and learning process can be honoured. This awareness is equally important for the students, as many students studying at international schools plan on attending Western post-secondary institutions in the future. In fact, according to Maple Leaf Educational Systems' website (2010) "nearly 100% of Maple Leaf's high school students will enroll in Western universities or colleges." This explicit discussion of Western beliefs and preferences for the teaching and learning process, then, is an integral first step in preparing Chinese students for their future studies abroad.

Secondly, discussions of this sort help to build trust between teachers and students. Ogbu (1998) notes that students need to believe that the teacher has their best interests at heart and that the teacher believes the students' culture is worthy of respect. Acknowledging and discussing their preferences and previous experiences "will also show the students that the teacher recognizes and honors their cultural and personal experiences and will help make school a less alien place" (p. 180).

3.3 The "My Way Is Better Than Your Way" Mentality

To the discerning reader, some of what was mentioned above may start to ring some warning bells. While it is very important for the teacher to understand the needs and wants of their students, it may be difficult for the teacher to discuss these differences in educational beliefs without attaching a value stance to the discussion and thus adopt a "my way is better than your way" mentality.

As was previously mentioned, many Canadian teachers' pedagogies would most closely align with the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) model, as it advocates "student-centeredness and experience-based practice focusing on the interdependence between form and meaning; students as contributors of knowledge; lighthearted communicative activities, and the

priority of self-expression" (Shi, 2009, p. 48). For Western teachers operating from within a Socratic approach to teaching and learning, CLT also provides the opportunity for active learning and deep thinking. The reality is that the very nature of CLT stands in direct opposition to the more serious Confucian conceptions of teaching and learning.

According to Bax (2003), there is an "unspoken assumption that CLT is not only 'modern', but is in fact the only way to learn a language properly" (p. 279). Furthermore, Bax describes how many teachers wrongfully "assume and insist that CLT is the whole and complete solution to language learning" (p. 280), as "no other method could be any good" (p. 280). These teachers "ignore people's own views of who they are and what they want," and "neglect and ignore all aspects of the local context as being irrelevant" (p. 280).

Even when the disregard and disdain for the Chinese way of teaching and learning is not as overt as Bax (2003) describes, experience has shown me that some well-intentioned teachers I have worked with harbour a sense of pedagogical superiority over their Chinese colleagues. Perhaps this arises from being uninformed about the Chinese way of teaching and learning, or from a lack of conscious thought about their assumptions surrounding Chinese pedagogy that arises when Canadian teachers observe students passively listening (or not) to their Chinese teacher. Furthermore, this may be compounded when Canadian teachers notice Chinese students' preferences for (what appears to be) rote learning and feel that the Canadian way, which values the active construction of learning, is just better. Furthermore, these Canadian teachers may even take steps to avoid cultural discontinuities by making the transition from their Chinese students' previous educational experiences into their new (and better, they feel) Canadian education as smooth as possible. Finally, they will rationalize their students' struggles with the new teaching methodologies by believing that they would be doing a disservice to the students if they taught as

their Chinese colleagues did. Sadly, this was certainly how I felt while teaching in China and, from discussions with Canadian colleagues, I know that I was not alone.

The following research will outline the findings of many well-intentioned researchers who have also come to the same belief that the Canadian culture of learning is superior to the Chinese approach.

3.4   Learning to Embrace the CLT Model

Kennedy (2002) describes the importance of openly discussing differences in teaching and learning preferences, as it encourages the students to begin to understand and accept the foreign methodologies of their Western teachers. Building this "consciousness bridge" (p. 442) between students' previous learning experiences and the new approaches that they will encounter within the new classroom is what Kennedy believes is an integral first step in dispelling the primary cultural discontinuities that will inevitably take place between the two conflicting cultures.

Yu (2006) believes that it is not enough, however, to merely discuss the differences between Chinese and Canadian expectations and preferences for teaching and learning and expect that future cultural discontinuities will not take place. Since cultural conventions are so deeply entrenched in each person, it is unrealistic for teachers to "expect learners to forego their cultural identity and totally conform to the target culture norms" (p. 126). Instead, Yu notes, students need explicit teaching and scaffolded practice so that they may be able to not only understand *what* is expected of them, but also *how* to participate or interact in a given situation.

The implications for teachers, then, are numerous. Yu (2006) describes the need for teachers to "place special emphasis on the importance of cognitive learning, which is the acquisition of knowledge about . . . norms, values and presuppositions of one's own and the

target culture" (p. 124). By teaching students the "ground rules" (Cheng, 2000, p. 444) for interaction and participation in Western classrooms, teachers can best prepare their students for success in their new educational context. Furthermore, carefully choosing strategies and activities that are not too overwhelming for students, continued dialogue about expectations for the activities, explanations of how to participate in each activity, and open dialogue following the activity will all help to lessen the anxiety of students and help them to become increasingly accustomed to participating and interacting in a "Western" way.

Finally, teachers must be patient and understanding as Chinese EFL students try to adjust to the expectations of their Canadian teachers. Not only do Chinese students have to adapt to a new educational paradigm, they also must deal with issues inherent in learning to communicate in English. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that teachers "[r]ecognize that all minority children face problems of social adjustment and academic performance in school because of cultural [and] language differences" (Ogbu, 1992, p. 12) and make necessary allowances for their students to be successful.

3.5   Giving Up the "Chinese Way" of Learning

The preceding suggestions from Kennedy (2002) focusing on open discussions, Yu (2006) describing explicit teaching and scaffolded practices, Cheng (2000) explaining teaching students ground rules and Ogbu (1992) recognizing cultural and language differences, provide parameters for Canadian teachers to introduce and help Chinese EFL students adjust to Western CLT teaching methodologies. What is noticeable in the above suggestions, however, is the subtle assumption that Western pedagogy is superior to the Chinese one.

3.6 The Dangers of Unexamined Beliefs

In carrying out this research I became shocked and distressed to discover that I had been unconsciously imposing my preferences for teaching and learning process on the Chinese students in my classes. I was further upset to discover that I had been making educational decisions based upon my subconscious notion that the Canadian ways of teaching and learning were superior to Chinese ones.

In discussing my findings with a colleague, I found that I was not alone in my disregard for the Chinese way of teaching and learning. In retrospect (and upon discussion with me) a colleague of mine noted that in not consciously examining her beliefs and values surrounding how teachers should teach and how students should learn, she, too, subconsciously harbored the notion that Canadian practices were preferable to many of the Chinese ones that she had observed. For both of us, then, our unexamined beliefs led to teaching practices that were not always as inclusive and egalitarian as they should have been.

Unfortunately, my colleague and I are not alone in our disregard for local practices. While Shi (2009) calls for teachers to adopt local teaching practices, Shi does defend Western teachers teaching abroad and believes that they are not trying to "export their own practices, values, attitudes, and beliefs in any kind of negative way, but to help students communicate better to the Western world" (p. 59). In doing so, these teachers (my colleague and myself included) have been merely creating learning opportunities for their students that they feel are the most effective, will result in the best learning, and will prepare them for their future studies abroad.

Yet another explanation for why many teachers may not examine their beliefs and values associated with the teaching and learning process may stem from their own previous educational

experiences. Rather than taking the time to ponder their educational philosophy, many teachers may teach the way they themselves were taught or how they have found that they have learned the best in the past. Teaching without thought for the reasons behind their decisions, beliefs, and values, then, may not come from a sense of pedagogical superiority, but may still add to the cultural discontinuities inherent to those already present when Chinese students negotiate learning in Western classrooms.

3.7   The Context Approach: Retaining the "Chinese Way" of Learning

Research has identified a viable solution for the problematic issue of how Western teachers may best relate to the Chinese way of learning. Bax (2003) argues that the dominance of CLT has led teachers to neglect considering the educational context and, thus, to hinder the learning of the Chinese EFL students in their class. Furthermore, Bax believes the time has come for Western teachers to "replace CLT as the central paradigm in language teaching with a Context Approach which places context at the heart of the profession" (p. 278).

To accomplish this paradigm shift, Shi (2009) asserts that in "cases where the two cultures do contrast, local teachers should regard Western instruction as an add-on, and Western teachers should not feel that they must do away with the local way of teaching" (p. 60). Rather than helping students to adjust to Western teaching methodologies, Shi continues, the Context Approach calls for Western teachers to "interweave other cultures of learning" (p. 60) into preexisting methodologies to suit the needs and preferences of all students.

Bax (2003) and Shi's (2009) research clearly states that there is a great need to re-orientate Western conceptions of teaching and learning to incorporate (rather than eliminate) students' cultures of learning. For, as Bax points out, the absence of CLT methodologies does

not make an educational system backward. In fact, Chinese students have been learning for hundreds of years without CLT and have been, and continue to be, *very* successful.

Current Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) test scores administered by The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) confirm Bax's (2003) statement about the success of Chinese learners. According to Wente (2011), this test was given to half a million students from 65 countries. The results revealed that students from Shanghai scored an average score of 600 in math, 100 over the OECD average. Furthermore, they also received the highest scores in both science and reading. These results prompted Andreas Schleicher, the director of the OECD's testing program, to comment that the assumption that the Chinese education system creates students who rely on rote learning and lack creativity and imagination is a mere "myth" (para. 6). While these test results may not be representative of all students in China, they clearly demonstrate the Chinese educational system (at least in Shanghai) is producing very accomplished students.

3.8 Teaching Approaches

Looking for the overlap between Chinese and Canadian conceptions of teaching and learning is not as challenging as one might first assume. There are many simple ways in which Canadian teachers can meet the learning needs and preferences of Chinese students while remaining true to their Western approach to education. What follows will outline some of the key points of incongruity between the two cultures of learning, and will offer practical suggestions and teaching strategies that seek the "intersections or points of interface" (Shi, 2009, p. 60) between Canadian and local (in this case, Chinese) cultures of learning.

3.8.1 Negotiating the Conflicting Philosophies, Teachings, and Practices of Both Confucius and Socrates

Canadian teachers teaching Chinese EFL students in China must be aware of the basic tenets of both Confucius and Socrates, as they have greatly influenced the beliefs that both students and teachers hold about teaching and learning (Tweed, 2000). Without examination of their own beliefs and values, teachers cannot fully understand the reasons for their expectations and pedagogical decisions. This is of paramount importance as teachers who are not introspective may unconsciously export their Western practices and attitudes (including, unfortunately, a sense of superiority over Chinese methodology and approaches to teaching and learning) without giving thought to how this may negatively impact the learning of their students (Shi, 2009).

Furthermore, Western teachers must examine the basic assumptions, beliefs, and values that are held by Chinese students, so that they may be able to understand the behaviors, expectations, and activities that lead to a sense of anxiety or security in their students. Through this understanding, teachers may begin to make mindful pedagogical decisions based on local practices that encourage, rather than hinder, the learning of their students (Shi, 2009).

Although research would suggest that Chinese EFL students might be uncomfortable discussing their educational preferences and past experiences (refer back to the "Asking Rather Than Assuming" section of this chapter), my previous teaching experience in China has shown that many Chinese students are more than willing to share their likes and dislikes both during class discussions and/or in questionnaires and writing activities. If students are not comfortable, however, these questionnaires or writing activities could be done anonymously. Furthermore, Chinese students seem to be very interested in the "Canadian way" of doing things and have

been, in my experience, very open to learning about and discussing the ways in which both cultures are similar and different. The following suggestions and teaching strategies, then, are designed to create open communication between Western teachers and Chinese EFL students, so that each will be able to at least explain the basic differences in beliefs, values, and preferences between them. This basic understanding will hopefully lead to a deeper appreciation of each others' backgrounds and, ultimately, a mutual adoption of both cultures of learning.

3.8.2 Suggestions and Teaching Strategies to Help Both Teachers and Students Negotiate Conflicting Cultures of Learning

Cultural awareness for both Canadian teachers and Chinese EFL students is important in order to prevent misunderstandings and in order to begin to address the recurring cultural discontinuities that arise. Ho et al. (2004) suggest intercultural training programmes that can be incorporated into classrooms that "provide a range of experiential exercises to help participants understand cultural differences, appreciate similarities, and reflect on their own cultural mores and the assumptions they make about others" (p. xii).

1. Questionnaires and activities can be used to identify preferences, beliefs, and values for teaching and learning. This can include both the teacher and students writing or representing their own educational autobiographies (Simpson, 2008). Teachers can share this with the class, and students, if they feel comfortable in doing so, can share theirs with the class as well. In identifying previous experiences as well as preferences for teaching and learning, the teacher and students will become more informed as to each other's background, expectations, and preferences.

2. Use class discussions, questionnaires, and activities designed to facilitate a deeper understanding and appreciation of both the Confucian and Socratic approaches to teaching

and learning. Venn diagrams and T-Charts are some of the many ways in which similarities and differences between the two educational paradigms can be highlighted. In explicitly outlining and discussing what both groups "consider to be good teaching practices" (Simpson, 2008, p. 390), both groups will increase understanding and, hopefully, mutually adopt each other's practices

3.8.3   Incorporating Learner and Teacher-Centred Approaches for Teaching and Learning

Many teaching approaches used in China and Canada can be traced back to their Confucian and Socratic traditions (Tweed, 2000), as well as to contrasting beliefs and values associated with collectivist and individualist orientations. Many of these incongruities stem from differences in core beliefs about how best to impart knowledge, the role of the teacher and students, and whether learning is an individualistic process or not (Hu, 2002; Kennedy, 2002; Liu, 2002; Nield, 2004; Tweed, 2000; Watkins, 2000). Because of this, unexamined expectations for participation and acceptance of Canadian teaching methodologies placed upon Chinese EFL students often yields disappointing results. In being aware of the approaches used in a typical Chinese classroom, the Canadian teacher can adopt local practices to help avoid cultural discontinuities as they begin to slowly incorporate learner-centered approaches into their classroom.

3.8.4   Suggestions and Teaching Strategies for Incorporating Learner and Teacher-Centred Approaches

1. Observe and learn from Chinese colleagues (Simpson, 2008). If Chinese teachers are willing, ask them what their practices are, what they expect, and how they feel Chinese students learn best. If possible, develop a relationship where informal observations of

classroom teaching is possible and where there can be an open discussion of issues, concerns, and successes. Whenever possible, the Canadian teacher should incorporate the suggestions and ideas gained from Chinese colleagues into their daily practice.

2. Work collaboratively with other Western EFL teachers (Simpson, 2008). The learning of all students is maximized when teachers come together to share ideas, concerns, and successes. Observation of teaching and mentorship with more experienced EFL teachers is also a possibility.

3. Make it a habit to reflect on what happens both inside and outside of the classroom each day (Simpson, 2008). By thinking critically about their teaching, learning, and interactions with Chinese EFL students, Western EFL teachers can continually assess what worked well (and what did not), so as to make concrete plans for how issues and concerns can be rectified and future cultural discontinuities can be avoided or decreased.

4. Conduct action research within the classroom and school (Simpson, 2008). While action research does not have to be formal, the process of conducting it and thinking critically about the results will allow Western EFL teachers to identify issues and make plans for how cultural discontinuities can be resolved in the future.

5. Give teacher evaluations to the students and encourage constructive feedback for how they believe their learning can be maximized (Simpson, 2008). Discuss the findings of the evaluation with the class and makes appropriate plans for how their suggestions will be incorporated into the classroom. As students from a Confucian Heritage Culture may view this activity as being disrespectful of their teacher, discuss the purpose of it with the students. If students prefer, the evaluation can be anonymous and optional.

6. Clearly outline what students are expected to know by the end of each lesson, class, and unit. This can be done by using a daily agenda written on the board and by working from a detailed course outline. It is also a good idea to include "an introduction, internal summaries, a conclusion, and a review of the important points learned in the lesson" (Ho et al., 2004, p. 73) to provide further structure to the lesson. Shi (2009) reports that Chinese students have complained about a lack of discrete and countable pieces of knowledge in Western teaching. By outlining exactly what is expected for each class, students will be able to know the objectives and learning expectations for the day. At the end of the lesson, refer back to the objectives and ensure students see how (or if) they have been met.

7. Incorporate teacher-centered strategies such as direct teaching and modeling. Explicitly outline concepts and ideas for students so there is no confusion as to what they are expected to know. This can be done at any stage in the learning process and works nicely to solidify concepts that were touched upon in less concrete learning situations (such as group work, exploratory activities, etc.)

8. Provide structural patterns whenever possible. Chinese students, in my experience, respond very well to following a "formula" that outlines exactly how to do something (such as writing a paragraph or an essay). Outlines and graphic organizers are also very beneficial for students and help them see how to structure their writing.

9. Provide examples of both successful and unsuccessful work for students to analyze. Through analyzing the samples, students can gain a better understanding of the elements required for excellent work. Examination of sample work, as well as providing structural

patterns, works very well for Chinese EFL students as they come from a cultural heritage that values learning through imitation of a master (Tweed, 2000).

10. Use a textbook as much as possible. Chinese students are used to following textbooks in class and for individual study (Hu, 2002). Furthermore, textbooks provide the opportunity for pre-reading preparation, post-reading review and will outline key concepts and vocabulary, and in addition they will provide the structure Chinese EFL students desire. When used in conjunction with the Teacher's Guide that accompanies the text, textbooks can be a powerful teaching tool for both the teacher and the students.

11. Provide the opportunity for repetitive learning. Chinese students are used to memorization and repetitive practice (Tweed, 2000). Concepts, vocabulary, and grammar points can be practiced through worksheets and other drill type activities.

12. Provide students with the opportunities to learn what they want to learn. Many students, for example, feel that learning grammar in context is not enough. Instead many Chinese EFL students want explicit instruction and practice for grammar points that many Western teachers feel are unimportant. In not teaching the students what they feel they really *need* to know, Chinese students may feel unprepared and somewhat abandoned by Western teachers and what they feel are the same teacher's misguided priorities.

13. Use teaching strategies and activities that are foreign to students (such as peer and self-evaluations, or any that require the individualistic construction of meaning) mindfully, providing additional support and explanation of expectations throughout as well as closure at the end. In my experience, students are receptive to these new strategies and activities if they do not feel overwhelmed and if they can see the purpose to them. As Shi (2009) points out, Chinese students have their mind set on the assessment task at the end, making

it difficult for them to value the class time that is not clearly centered on preparation for exams. If they can see how strategies and activities are actually preparing them and helping to develop the skills necessary for the exam, Chinese EFL students may be more open to trying them.

14. Provide homework. Chinese students are incredibly hard-working and believe that learning requires practice and effort (Tweed, 2000). In this way, many Chinese students feel that homework is a necessary part of learning and feel concerned when no homework is assigned.

15. Be mindful of how important exams and tests are to students. Shi (2009) reports that many Chinese students see exams as the end goal of their learning. As Chinese students take exams very seriously it is important to give them adequate preparation for all evaluation tasks and summative exams. Furthermore, teachers can use exams as a means to motivate students to study and learn important concepts.

16. Use exams and tests as an assessment for learning as well as an assessment of learning. Using exams to promote learning is a very effective way to motivate Chinese EFL students to improve and to view their learning as an ongoing process rather than something that ends with a test.

3.8.5 Encouraging Questions Throughout the Learning Process

Questioning is a strategy that is valued by both Chinese and Canadian teachers as a means of promoting student learning (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998). However, the two cultures of learning differ in terms of expectations for when and why students should ask questions. Canadian teachers expect that students will ask questions *as* learning is taking place and encourage questions to be asked for clarification as well as to add depth to the conversation or

activity (Watkins, 2000). In contrast, Chinese students believe that questions should be asked *after* learning has taken place and, rather than waste the class' time with questions that could be answered with careful study, only want to pose questions that express a deep understanding and appreciation of the material covered (Kennedy, 2002; Watkins, 2000).

Yet another point of incongruity between the two cultures of learning lies in differing notions surrounding the importance of being able to provide correct answers to the teacher's questions. Whereas a Chinese student may feel ashamed if they are unable to answer the teacher's question correctly, the inability to provide a correct answer (if there is one) is often interpreted by Canadian teachers as a valuable tool for future learning and growth for the individual and, perhaps, the whole class (Kennedy, 2002; Watkins, 2000). Being aware of these fundamental differences in beliefs surrounding the nature and purpose of asking questions, then, will help Canadian teachers understand why Chinese students may seem hesitant to ask and answer questions, and will also help the teacher to adopt strategies that will encourage Chinese students to use questions throughout the learning process.

3.8.6 Suggestions and Teaching Strategies for Encouraging Questions

1. Discuss the Chinese and Canadian use of questioning with Chinese EFL students. Help students to articulate what they believe the purposes of questions are and when questions should be asked in the learning process. Contrast this with a discussion about the Canadian use of questioning. Encourage students to try to use questions "the Canadian way" if they are able to.

2. Remind students that there is not always only "one right answer, but there may be several ways of addressing a problem; give different model answers to a question and discuss the differences" (Ho et al., 2004, p. 73).

3. Provide opportunities for students to pose questions to the class or the teacher. In this way, students can think about their learning and prepare any question they might like to ask. This can be a question that demonstrates a deep understanding of the material or higher level of thinking. It could also be one that asks for clarification or is merely posed as a means for future consideration.

4. Try strategies that encourage all students to ask a question. This can be done anonymously (such as the "ticket out the door" strategy in which students must write a question about the day's learning and submit it before they leave the classroom) so that all questions can be addressed without fear of embarrassment or of losing face.

5. Use group or partner discussions in which questions are generated and then posed to the class for discussion. This helps students save face as students can ask a question that they do or do not know the answer to. If they do know the answer, the question serves as review for the class. If they do not know the answer, the question can be discussed as a class and areas of uncertainty can be addressed.

6. Check for understanding both as a class and individually. In privately checking for understanding and offering extra help, the teacher can help the student avoid losing face in front of their peers as well as demonstrate their caring and concern for the student.

7. If possible, be available for questions both before and after the scheduled class. Some students may feel more comfortable asking questions informally as they are entering or exiting the class.

8. Have regular office hours where students can seek help and clarification privately. Some students may prefer a quiet meeting with the teacher without their peers around.

9. Create a website, wikispace, or vista site for the class to use as a means of posing and discussing questions or topics. Questions can be posed and answered anonymously if students prefer.

3.8.7 Developing Critical Thinking Skills

Differences in Chinese and Canadian notions of respecting authority can be traced back to the influence of Confucius and Socrates (Tweed, 2000). Responding critically to texts, ideas, media, and the world is considered to be necessary for active global citizenship and is a skill that is mandated by the British Columbia Ministry of Education's Prescribed Learning Outcomes. The ability to think critically, however, may lie in direct opposition with the values held by the Chinese educational system and go against collectivist values of maintaining social harmony (Kennedy, 2002; Wong, 2004). For these reasons, critical thinking activities may be interpreted as questioning authority or an inappropriate critique and, as such, may be viewed by many Chinese EFL students as a sign of disrespectful behaviour and a threat to group cohesion and harmony (Holmes, 2004; Kennedy, 2002). Considering these contrasting beliefs, participation in a Canadian classroom environment that seems to value this disrespectful behaviour may threaten the comfort and learning of Chinese EFL learners (Wong, 2004). The following suggestions and teaching strategies are offered, then, as a means of encouraging Chinese EFL students to think critically about texts, ideas, media, and events in a manner that will honour their culturally determined preferences. It should be noted, however, that it is very important to pick topics that are not offensive to Chinese students.

3.8.8 Suggestions and Teaching Strategies to Help Students Develop Critical Thinking Skills

1. Ensure that all students understand that critical thinking is not the same as criticizing or attacking a person's ideas or the text. Ho et al. (2004) discuss the need to explicitly teach students what critical thinking is and how to critically analyze an argument, theory, or a text. This can be accomplished through teaching and guided practice of the following steps:

   - write a summary to identify the main ideas and "identify the line of reasoning" (p. 74) that is being presented

   - question the arguments for and against the topic and evaluate the evidence given

   - consider the point of view of the writer/presenter and identify their conclusions. Decide if the evidence given is adequate support for the conclusions reached

   - compare and contrast prior knowledge with ideas presented in the text, theory, or argument. Consider multiple perspectives.

   - think about the "implications of the evidence and present conclusions" (p. 74) of the findings.

2. Discuss differing views on thinking critically with students and model how to think and respond critically to texts, ideas, media, and events happening in the world around them in a manner that is, at all times, respectful.

3. Look at examples and identify how the "expert" has responded critically to a text. This can be as simple as looking at a piece of text that has been annotated with thoughts, questions, and areas to explore further. Identify what has been done and try to follow the

process the reader has followed as they have read the text. This will help to provide

scaffolding to students as they try to respond critically on their own.

4. Hu and Fell-Eisenkraft (2003) report having success in developing critical thinking skills

and communicative competence by using the fishbowl discussion strategy. This strategy

involves selecting one group of students (with their permission) who are involved in a

discussion or critical thinking activity that seems to be going particularly well. While this

group continues their discussion, the rest of the class gathers in a circle around them.

Observers are asked to notice and take notes on how the sample group participates, enters

into the discussion, adds comments, makes connections, or responds critically. At the end

of the activity, the whole class then comes together to discuss what was noticed, what

was particularly successful, and what could be improved upon.

5. Encourage critical thinking skills by having students work in groups or partners to

respond critically to a text, idea, event, media, or event in the world. As students become

more comfortable with the process they may start to feel comfortable enough to try it

individually.

3.8.9 Monitoring Student Achievement

Both Chinese and Canadian teachers care about the achievement of their students.

Expectations for the role of the teacher in ensuring this achievement, however, differ greatly and

can be attributed to subscription to either the collectivist or individualist cultural orientation.

While the Chinese educational system expects that teachers will be responsible for monitoring

the success of each individual student, the Canadian educational system requires students to take

at least some responsibility for their own learning and achievement (Hui, 2005). Many Canadian

teachers teaching in China may feel frustrated that their students are not seeking help even when

tutorial hours are posted and the class has been invited to attend numerous times. Being aware that many Chinese students are waiting for the teacher to express their care and concern through a personal invitation for extra help would eliminate much frustration and wasted time for both the teacher and students (Kennedy, 2002).

3.8.10   Suggestions and Teaching Strategies to Encourage Students to Monitor Their Own Learning

1. Adopt more of a Chinese style of monitoring individual student understanding and achievement (at least in the beginning months of the school year). While expectations for seeking help individually can be discussed with the class, valuable time and learning will be wasted if students are hesitant to ask for extra help themselves. To avoid this wasted time, make notes on submitted assignments urging students to discuss the assignment with the teacher at a later date and individually seek out struggling students to ask them to come for extra help and clarification of concepts.

2. Organize or encourage students to form their own study groups, mentorship programs, or study partners for students to study with or seek help from. As Chinese society is collectivist in nature, study groups or mentorship programs where students work together would most likely be very successful.

3. Help students keep track of their learning through the use of agendas, daily planners, or learning logs. In this way, students can reflect on their learning daily and make plans for how they will get help and clarification if they need it.

3.8.11   Facilitating Active Participation

Canadians and Chinese view active participation in different terms. While Chinese students value thoughtfulness and quiet contemplation, many Canadian teachers value the active

construction of meaning through spontaneous group discussions and activities (Tweed, 2000). In response to these differing expectations, many Chinese EFL students remain silent rather than participating verbally. The discontinuity is exacerbated further as Chinese students perceive silence in the classroom as a sign of respectful behaviour for both the teacher and other students, while many Canadian teachers often assume that silence is a sign of disinterest or a lack of understanding (Liu, 2002).

3.8.12 Suggestions and Teaching Strategies to Facilitate Active Participation

1. As was previously discussed, many Chinese EFL students wish to participate more in class discussions but lack an understanding of the communicative norms required. Jones (1999) discusses the importance of teaching these norms explicitly as "most language courses are committed to developing phonological, syntactic and semantic proficiency, and also to fostering oral skills as they apply to functions such as greeting, requesting, apologising, leave-taking, and so on" (p. 254). Generally not explicitly taught are what Jones considers to be "the most important norms and patterns of participation in conversation" (p. 254) that EFL students may lack. These would include, for example, the role of eye contact, "judicious use of overlap that does not invade another's turn; strategies for avoiding simultaneous floor-holding where necessary (use of 'sorry' and 'no, go ahead', among others), and face-preserving strategies for polite disagreement" (p. 254).

2. "Recognize that students from traditional educational backgrounds see teachers as holding a position of power and the source of knowledge; therefore, the teacher's voice may be valued more than feedback from students" (Ho et al., 2004, p. 81). Discuss

differing expectations about the role of the teacher and students, and work toward helping students take an active role in the cooperative learning process.

3. Jones (1999) suggests watching a video of native speakers having a discussion. Communicative norms can be observed and discussed as students watch the video.

4. Role play, Jones (1999) believes, is yet another powerful tool for students to practice entering discussions, disagreeing, and keeping the conversation going.

5. Jones (1999) also suggests a game called "equal participation" to practice participatory oral skills. In this game, students are divided into teams and then given a common passage to read. Students are instructed to ask questions of each other based on the reading. One point is awarded for each question, each response, and each elaboration of another person's response. However, no single person on a team is allowed to speak a second time until each person on their own team has spoken at least once.

6. Incorporate as much group work as possible throughout the teaching and learning process. Flowerdew (1998) found that it is a very useful methodological tool for Chinese learners on two accounts: "either because it exploits the Confucian value of co-operation, which would seem to foster a style conducive to learning; or because it can be used to counterbalance the Confucian concepts of 'face' and self-effacement, which could be considered as aspects which impair the learning process" (p. 327).

7. When working in groups, have students choose a specific task that they are accountable for. This ensures that all students are participating but allows those who are more mentally rather than orally active to participate in a way that best suits them. For example, students may be a recorder, reporter, group leader, time keeper, etc.

8. If group work is not possible, incorporate strategies such as "think-pair-share" where students are given time to discuss their ideas with a partner or group before sharing with the rest of the class. A variation of this is "think-ink-pair-share" in which students quickly make notes to themselves about their initial thoughts. These notes can then be added to as they discuss with their partner. They also serve to help students remember what was discussed and provide something to read for students who like to prepare a statement to read or share with the class.

9. Liu (2002) suggests that teachers allow enough time for all students to formulate their ideas before being asked to express their opinion or to answer a question. This "wait time" is integral for EFL students to enter the conversation and share their thoughts, opinions, and ideas.

10. Disallow the more vocal and active students to monopolize class discussions and encourage all students to get involved (Liu, 2002). Asking students to keep a running tally of each time they offer a comment or ask a question is a way to encourage all students to keep track of their own participation and set participation goals for the day.

11. Teachers may choose whether or not to make participation in class a component of students' course grades (Liu, 2002). While receiving a grade may motivate some students, it demotivates others and adds stress and pressure to students who are less vocal in nature. Assigning a grade for participation will also depend on school or university policy and may or may not be allowed depending on the institution.

12. Give students discussion questions or topics in advance. Similarly, give students as much warning as possible about activities that require their active participation so that they may prepare themselves (Cheng, 2000).

13. Allow students the right to pass. This reduces the anxiety of feeling that they must answer a question or volunteer their opinion.

14. Create "no lose" situations for students by providing different options for participation that will ensure success and will instill confidence and cultivate a greater willingness to participate in the future (Petress, 2001).

15. Apply, extend, and take note of student offerings during discussions and activities (Petress, 2001). Students whose ideas and offerings go unacknowledged and unused may be hesitant to participate in the future as they feel their previous contributions were not valued or used. Similarly, encourage the class to respond appropriately to student comments.

16. Use the "jigsaw" strategy to scaffold learning and comprehension and to help students gain confidence. In this strategy, students meet with a small group of their peers who are responsible for covering the same material. In their group, students meet, discuss, clarify any points that may have caused confusion, and agree on the main points of their material. Students then report to a new group consisting of student representatives for each section of material covered. Starting at the beginning, each member of the new group presents the material that was covered in their initial group. Hu and Fell-Eisenkraft (2003) report that this strategy is especially useful for EFL students as teachers can place stronger students with weaker students to ensure all students understand the text or section of material that is being covered. An added benefit of the jigsaw, they note, "is the element of teamwork. Everyone plays a key role in their peers' complete understanding of the text. This means that students who do not usually elect to speak during whole class

discussions must participate within the small group. Plus, those who talk a lot during who class discussions must work on their listening skills" (p. 58).

17. Incorporate alternate methods for students to actively participate. Warnock (2006) believes that participation in message boards, such as WebCT or Wikis, in which students respond to prompts or posts from their peers is an invaluable tool which "can embolden student writers and encourage more equitable participation" (p. 10). Warnock reports that his students have described the message boards as "being more engaging than the in-class conversations in many of their courses" (p. 4) and also provide an excellent means of active participation for students who are hesitant to voice their ideas and opinions audibly.

3.8.13   Rethinking Plagiarism

Research has outlined both cultural and individual factors that may lead Chinese EFL learners to plagiarize voluntarily and involuntarily. The Chinese culture of working together, learning through imitation of a master, and the concepts of *guanxi*, and face are some of the many cultural factors that have been identified by Chou (2010), Shei (2005), Simpson (2008), and Sowden (2005) that can lead to plagiarism. Furthermore, a lack of linguistic competence, task specific writing skills, and experience using Western citation rules have also been found to cause both intentional and unintentional plagiarism (Liu, 2005; Pennycook, 1996; Song-Turner, 2008).

While the reasons and motivations for why Chinese EFL students may plagiarize are clear, for teachers it remains "a highly emotional subject, and the issue of how to deal with it seems muddled by moral confusion, apprehension, and general loathing" (Kolich, 1983, as cited in Pennycook, 1996, p. 213). According to Pennycook (1996), these negative attitudes and many

of the current "ways we approach supposed plagiarism are pedagogically unsound and intellectually arrogant" (p. 227) and must be changed.

While Pennycook's (1996) statement may seem surprising, it is an opinion that is shared by Gu and Brooks (2008), Hayes (2003), Shei (2005), and Song-Turner (2008). Rather than harshly penalizing Chinese EFL students, Hayes (2003) asserts that Western teachers need to show EFL students that we "understand their anxiety and sense of alienation" (p. 25) and, unlike current practices, "we need to treat plagiarism as an inherent part of the teaching and learning process rather than *as a disease* that we would like to ignore or be rid of" (p. 25).

In light of this, teachers of Chinese EFL students must be understanding of the "sociocultural sources of their students' initial frustration, their self-reflection and examination of contrasting cultural values and educational practices, [and] their endeavour to master a different lens through which to view authorship and the ownership of knowledge" (Gu & Brooks, 2008 p. 350). When teachers are able to see the process that EFL students must go through in this way, they will be more inclined to "judge less hard and fast and take more time to consider cases of plagiarism, particularly for newly arrived foreign students (Song-Turner, 2008, p. 49).

Rather than heavily penalizing Chinese EFL students when they do plagiarize, then, Shei (2005) notes that

> it may be more sensible for the teacher to go into the didactic procedure and try to find out the true amount of student effort embodied in the work, the difficulties they encounter, and any problems with the management of the course. Especially, when blatant plagiarism is ruled out, it is only fair that the marking teacher suppress the

'emotional factor' and evaluate the student essay based on its merits such as creativity, relevance to classroom teaching, demonstration of research skills, and so on. (p. 8)

Shei (2005) also raises the important issue of differentiating consequences for cases of voluntary and involuntary plagiarism. Current research by Gu and Brooks (2008), Song-Turner (2008), and Sowden (2005) calls for the distinction in official school policy regarding the nature and severity of student plagiarism. Song-Turner, for example, believes that the appropriate response to involuntary plagiarism should be providing students with the extra help and support needed to rectify the cause of plagiarism and a mandatory rewrite of the assignment. Sowden would agree and asserts that teachers must adopt a lenient policy toward involuntary plagiarism. "If, on the other hand, there is a deliberate choice not to make use of known skills (whatever the reason for this might be, which itself will need addressing), then the charge of plagiarism in its full sense needs to be upheld" (Sowden, 2005, p. 231).

In light of the emotional and moral complexities surrounding plagiarism, educational institutions have to rethink their response to this issue. While involuntary plagiarism should be viewed as temporary part of the learning process, it is certainly not the desired endpoint. Furthermore, the desire to plagiarize voluntarily can be quite strong and difficult to dissuade Chinese EFL students from. The following portion of this section, then, will provide practical suggestions and teaching strategies to help facilitate the movement away from plagiarism to original writing that follows the Western conventions of source attribution.

3.8.14   Learning about Learned Plagiarism

Western individualist notions of authorship and ownership of ideas and language as well as expectations for assignments to be completed individually (unless explicitly instructed to work with a group or partner) can stand in direct opposition with the collectivist ideals that continue to

have an influence on Chinese education (Chou, 2010; Shei, 2005; Sowden, 2005). Discussing the differing expectations for the attribution of sources and expectations for assignments is the first step in avoiding plagiarism that may occur due to conflicting assumptions between Chinese EFL students and their Western teachers.

3.8.15 Suggestions and Teaching Strategies to Discourage Students from Engaging in Learned Plagiarism

1. Explicitly discuss learned plagiarism with students so that the teacher may "understand better the nature of many foreign students for whom copying is a form of respect for the printed text or the work of a lecturer" (Song-Turner, 2008, p. 49). Compare and contrast this information from the students with explicit teaching of Western notions of plagiarism. Western teachers "need to communicate our expectations, explain the logic and values it is based on, and check that the students have the resources to develop the skills they require to meet these expectations" (Hayes, 2003 p. 24).

2. Activities and discussions about the history of authorship and ownership of ideas and writing in China and the West are an excellent introduction to the differences in expectations between Chinese EFL students and their Western teachers. Activities could include Venn diagrams, WebQuests, student-made posters, group presentations and discussions.

3. When Chinese EFL students do plagiarize in this way, Song-Turner (2008) asserts the need for teachers to "develop more comprehensive support and assistance networks for students who fall foul of plagiarism issues and problems in an environment and context where they might feel that they have actually done 'the right thing' while their university managers [or teachers] feel that they have broken the law" (pp. 49-50). This should take

the form of more explicit instruction as to Western expectations and rules surrounding

plagiarism as well as extra assistance from the teacher, a writing centre, or peers to help

the student identify where the plagiarism occurred, why it is considered plagiarism, and

how it can be avoided in the future.

3.8.16   Giving Credit Where Credit is Due

Non-attribution of sources is a common form of plagiarism among Chinese EFL students

and can be the direct result of a lack of understanding of Western citation practices rather than

the intention to deceive (Gu & Brooks, 2008). Helping Chinese EFL students learn the Western

conventions surrounding proper attribution of sources, then, is the second step in avoiding

plagiarism.

3.8.17   Suggestions and Teaching Strategies for Assisting Students with Western Citation Rules

1. Canadian teachers need to understand what their Chinese EFL students already know
    about Western citation practices so they may be able to address any misconceptions and
    areas of uncertainty that their students have (Hayes, 2003). This can be accomplished
    through discussions and activities designed to assess the prior learning and understanding
    (or misunderstandings) that students have.

2. Rather than teaching the rules of citation once and assuming that all students understand
    and are proficient in attribution of sources, teachers "need to develop the infrastructure to
    support [students] in making the transition to an often radically different set of
    expectations and skills required" (Hayes, 2003 p. 24). Guided practice and activities
    designed to offer extra practice with citation will be necessary to help Chinese EFL
    students acquire the skills necessary to avoid plagiarism in their writing.

3. Since non-attribution of sources is most often the result of a lack of understanding of Western citation practices, Howard (1995) encourages teachers to provide students who plagiarize in this way further "instruction in source attribution and subsequent revision of the paper" (p. 799) rather than a failing grade or a similar penalty.

3.8.18   Developing the Skills Necessary to Avoid Patchwriting

Rather than condemning students for their use of patchwriting, teachers must make it clear to their Chinese EFL students that, while unacceptable for final draft writing, "patchwriting and the borrowing of words is a legitimate step towards developing the skills necessary for the independent articulation of a 'voice'" (Hayes, 2003, p. 25). The following suggestions and strategies, then, can be used to help Chinese EFL students develop the linguistic and task-specific writing skills needed to avoid patchwriting.

3.8.19   Suggestions and Teaching Strategies for Avoiding Patchwriting

1. Teacher involvement in all stages of the writing process (from gathering information to writing the final draft) is integral to helping students avoid patchwriting (Howard, 1995; Shei, 2005). Howard (1995) notes that patchwriting is most often an indication that EFL students have not understood what they are reading. To help EFL students build comprehension and summarization skills, teachers must explicitly teach EFL students how to read and write about challenging texts through explicit teaching, modeling, and guided practice of the steps involved.

2. Teach and practice using the steps for EFL students to follow as they learn to write an effective summary. The steps, according to Howard (1995) are to (a) read the source through quickly to understand the general idea, (b) read the source again and take notes on the main ideas using your own words, (c) wait for approximately a half hour and then

write a summary with the book closed (as this ensures that the writing is in the students' own words), (d) re-read the information in the book and check if any of the phrasing resembles that of the source, and, if so, quote it exactly by providing page citations for both your paraphrases and for quotations, (e) check the summary to see what information was omitted. This information is probably what was not understood completely, and (f) get help from a peer or the instructor to understand the missing material and to check the information was cited correctly.

3. Shei (2005) asserts that teachers of Chinese EFL students need to teach, not only how to summarize, but also how to make inferences based on their readings. This can be accomplished through strategies such as the "think-aloud." In this strategy the teacher reads a text with the class and then models how they make inferences through vocalizing their thinking out loud to the class. For example, the teacher may read that Lenny, in *The Catcher in the Rye,* is told to keep quiet and leave all of the talking to his companion, George. When this section is read, the teacher should stop and think out loud to the class "Hmm. From this sentence I can begin to infer something about Lenny. Perhaps Lenny isn't very smart. Or perhaps he is hard to understand. I wonder if that is true? I can also begin to infer something about George. Perhaps he is very eloquent, or perhaps he is a little bit bossy to Lenny? Let's read on and see if my inferences are correct." Extra rhetorical support through strategies such as the think-aloud helps EFL students develop the skills necessary to think independently about texts and avoid falling back on patchwriting as a means of meeting the rigorous demands of learning in a foreign language.

4. Create an open and caring classroom environment where students feel safe and comfortable discussing any issues they may have with their peers and the teacher. Hayes (2003) discusses the need for EFL students to feel free to discuss any comprehension and writing problems, and to ask for support and assistance to move beyond patchwriting without fear of ridicule, embarrassment, or negative repercussions. Due to their Confucian heritage, however, Chinese EFL students may be hesitant to ask the teacher for support in this way (Nield, 2004). Creating peer mentorship partners or groups would be consistent with the Confucian ideal of collaborative learning and would provide the support needed (Pecorari, 2003).

5. Access to a writing centre, learning/language support room, or the equivalent, would also be beneficial for Chinese EFL learners as they work through the writing process. As Chinese EFL students may be hesitant to approach their teacher, a writing centre would "provide ongoing support to develop their linguistic competence, not only in everyday English but, more importantly, also in academic English" (Hayes, 2003 p. 25).

6. Gu and Brooks (2008) assert that rather than penalizing students when they do hand in a final draft that has been patchwritten, teachers of Chinese EFL students must be cognizant that, rather than academic dishonesty, patchwriting usually indicates a lack of proficiency using the English language. Punishment for patchwriting, then, "may have a profoundly detrimental effect on their self-confidence and motivation to learn" (p 340).

3.8.20 Discouraging Voluntary Plagiarism

Voluntary plagiarism has been linked to the Chinese notions of face and *guanxi* that are so prevalent in collectivist cultures, student attitudes toward their academic institution, the teacher, and assessment tasks, and the pressure to succeed in learning environments in which

many Chinese EFL students are not yet fully equipped to function (Hayes, 2003; Marshall & Garry, 2005; Pennycook, 1996; Shei, 2005; Song-Turner, 2008; Sowden, 2005). While it is impossible to stop students from plagiarizing if they wish to do so, the following suggestions can be used to discourage Chinese EFL students from willfully plagiarizing by building the motivation to complete assessment tasks on their own and minimizing the opportunities for instances of, what Canadian teachers view to be, academic dishonesty.

3.8.21   Suggestions and Teaching Strategies to Discourage Voluntary Plagiarism

1. Have a frank discussion about plagiarism with the class. Ensure that students know that plagiarism is unacceptable and are fully aware of the consequences of voluntary plagiarism. A discussion of the many ways in which students plagiarize is also very effective. I have found that students are surprised when I tell them that I have caught students with cellphones up the sleeve, notes jotted on desks, erasers, or calculator lids, and using sign language for multiple choice tests, etc. In openly discussing these things *before* any instances of plagiarism occur, students are forewarned about the consequences and the teacher's ability to catch those who chose to cheat.

2. Create meaningful assessment tasks "that are seen by the students as an opportunity to learn rather than ones that are seen as merely meeting the expectation of some externally imposed logic of judgment, competition, discipline, regulation or award" (Hayes, 2003, p. 25). Students are most motivated to accept a challenge and put in the effort required when they feel that what they are doing is meaningful, relevant, and a good use of their time and effort.

3. Shei (2005) reports that creating positive relationships between teachers and students that are based on respect, trust, and caring is integral in discouraging voluntary plagiarism

among Chinese EFL students. Consistent with Hu's (2002) findings that Chinese students expect their teacher to be concerned about their emotional *and* their intellectual development, Shei found that students are much more likely to cheat on assignments and exams "when a good relationship with school authorities is absent" (p. 10).

4. Hayes (2003) believes that teachers must also be cognizant of the students' workloads in giving assignments and setting exam dates. Chinese EFL students may resort to plagiarism as a coping strategy when they are overwhelmed with the pressures of completing assignments and preparing for exams. Whenever possible, then, teachers should set deadlines with their students so that this can be avoided.

5. If possible, "attempt to create assignments that are difficult to plagiarize" (Warnock, 2006, p. 3) by avoiding assignments with answers that are readily available on the internet. Similarly, it is a good idea for teachers to preview what is available on the internet before planning assessment tasks so that they are aware of what their students are able to access. In discussing what is available on the internet with the class, students will be less likely to attempt to plagiarize in this way.

6. Avoid repeating the same assignments, exams, and tests from year to year. This will eliminate the risk of students obtaining the assessment tasks from students from previous years.

7. Ask students to submit two copies of all assignments and keep one on file as a means of checking that students do not submit assignments from previous students (Ho et al., 2004). Ensure that students are aware that this system is in place.

8. Rather than risk their students plagiarizing, teachers can "choose a syllabus with little or no coursework, or to require pupils to do all coursework under supervision in class"

(Williams, 2001, p. 232). If this solution is too extreme, teachers may decide to have some assessment tasks completed during class time.

9. Use on-line discussion forums such as Wikis and WebCT to help eliminate voluntary plagiarism (Warnock, 2006). Warnock (2006) found that students recognized and commented publicly when they noticed that their peers posted plagiarized materials on the discussion board. "By making a substantial amount of the writing in class public, [electronic asynchronous writing environments] increase the responsibility each author has for original material and each reader has to maintain honesty in the course" (p.11). This increase in responsibility (and therefore, an intolerance for plagiarism), Warnock postulates, is due to the fact that "the message board utilizes not just teacher-to-student communication but student-to-student communication as well" (p. 11).

10. Williams (2001) suggests that teachers adopt the 'CORD' (culture, observation, review, and discussion) method of assessing student work. This entails "developing a culture of honesty" (p. 234) in the classroom whereby teachers emphasize "the nature of cheating, self-respect and taking pride in your own work" (p. 234) as well as the negative consequences that will occur if students are found to be plagiarizing intentionally. Next, through continual observation of student work, teachers will know what their students are capable of producing so plagiarized work can be easily recognized. Constant review of student writing was also found to be effective in reducing instances of plagiarism. Rather than have students submit one finished copy of writing at the end of a unit, Williams suggests that teachers collect and assess multiple drafts throughout the writing process. Finally, discussion with students throughout the writing process was found to be an effective means of reducing plagiarism. "At each stage, the teacher would talk to the

pupil about the piece of work he or she had handed in and would discuss how they

reached that stage and what their next step was going to be" (p. 236). This discussion also

helps teachers to establish whether or not students have "fully understood the work and

whether the ideas and methods were his/her own" (p. 236). Not only is the 'CORD'

method particularly useful in reducing instances of plagiarism, it also provides extra

support for EFL students as they develop their proficiency in using the English language.

This may also discourage voluntary plagiarism that results from a lack of skills and being

overwhelmed by the assessment task, both of which have been listed by Hayes (2003) as

a primary motivation for voluntary plagiarism among EFL students.

11. Sowden (2005) recommends that teachers of EFL students use oral presentations as an

    alternative to written and large project assignments. The primary benefit to oral

    presentations is that they require complex ideas that are organized in a manner similar to

    that of an essay, but use simpler and more direct language. The "need to reduce complex

    ideas obtained from written sources to speech will inevitably force the students to use

    their own words . . . thus largely avoiding the inevitable temptation to plagiarize that

    comes when writing" (p. 232). While plagiarism of ideas can still be an issue for oral

    presentations, with support and a "flexible range of assessment criteria, which reflect the

    quality of delivery, the rhetorical structure and the use of visual aids, as well as command

    of the subject-matter" (p. 232), EFL students will have more chance for success than if

    they were to attempt a written essay or assignment. Furthermore, as EFL students' skills

    in proper attribution of sources and language proficiency improve, more written

    assignments should be introduced and less oral presentations can be assigned.

While oral presentations are beneficial in many ways, (especially for those who have

strong memorization skills, as many Chinese students do) they may be overwhelming for

EFL students. The teacher should be cognizant of the fact that many Chinese EFL

students are more comfortable writing than they are speaking (especially in front of their

peers) and decide to use oral presentations only if they feel that it would be in their

student's best interests to do so.

3.9   Finding the Common Ground

The above suggestions and teaching strategies which have focused on differing

educational practices, developing CT skills, facilitating active participation and addressing the

issue of plagiarism in EFL writing provide some of the many culturally responsive teaching

practices that can be used to construct a pedagogical bridge between Chinese and Canadian

conceptions of teaching and learning. They aim to fuse local teaching practices to the more

communicative and visibly active style of Canadian teachers without compromising the integrity

of either educational paradigm. It should strike teachers that these strategies are in no way new.

They are merely commonly used strategies that many teachers employ on a regular basis to

scaffold the learning of their students. The difference is, however, that these strategies are

purposefully chosen to match the local teaching methodologies to which Chinese students are

accustomed.

3.10   Problem Based Learning: A Direction for the Future?

While adopting culturally responsive teaching practices that echo the local teaching

methodologies has an immediate benefit to the learning of Chinese EFL students, there is a call

from the Chinese government (who advocates the principles of CLT) and many Chinese scholars

to begin to change the face of Chinese education (Shi, 2009; Song, Kwan, Bian, Tai, & Wu,

2005). Song et al. (2005) note that the traditional teaching methodologies currently used in China

"can't adapt to the advancing steps of our era; its yoke and its drawbacks are becoming more obvious. The purpose of education must be to make students become conscientious lifetime learners who can constantly refresh their knowledge" (p. 384). Instead, they find a dialectic approach to teaching and learning which is largely a teacher-centered, examination driven educational system with an irrelevant, "compartmentalized and often congested" (p. 382) curriculum. Furthermore, Lau (2010) speaks from personal experience as an example and notes that her public schooling in Hong Kong left her deficient in communication, teamwork, and problem solving skills.

What can be done, then? How can Canadian teachers suit the immediate needs and preferences of their students, while helping to move the students in a new direction that will prepare them for future studies abroad and life afterward?

The answer may lie in finding yet another point of intersection between Chinese and Canadian beliefs about teaching and learning. Hu (2002) points to Problem Based Learning (PBL) as a very effective means of achieving this as it blends Western conceptions of "collaborative learning, cultivation of sociolinguistic competence, use of authentic teaching materials, and learning strategy training" with the Chinese emphasis on "collective orientation, socially appropriate behaviors, and concern for the right way of doing things" (pp. 102-103).

According to Queen's University's Centre for Teaching and Learning website (n.d.), Problem Based Learning is a "pathway to better learning" as students work individually and collaboratively to solve real world problems. To foster the skills required for independent learning both inside and outside of school, PBL "challenges students to develop the ability to think critically, analyze problems, [and] find and use appropriate learning resources" both individually and collaboratively. "In this way learning is personalized to the needs and learning

styles of the individual" as students decide what they need to know and how they will go about finding the required information. Furthermore, PBL is learner-centered, with the teacher acting as a facilitator who gradually releases more and more responsibility to the students. Finally, PBL encourages students to "develop skills in self-assessment and the constructive assessment of peers" which are necessary for lifelong learning and reflection of personal growth.

Song et al. (2005) find that the benefits of PBL are numerous. First, the "PBL process enhances student thinking, fosters independent self-directed learning and acute insight, and excites enthusiasm . . ." (p. 384). PBL also shifts the focus of learning away from the examination at the end. Instead, students' learning is "refined and improved though cooperative learning, critical thinking, effective feedback, and self-awareness. This is done via group evaluation, self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and tutor evaluation" (p. 383). Finally, as PBL is learner-centred, the learning styles and preferences of all students will be met as they decide the process of how they will go about solving their problem.

Yet another benefit to using PBL is that it addresses the problem of Chinese students' experiences sharing indigenous knowledge. As was previously discussed, all students need to feel that the knowledge they bring to the classroom is valued (Zhou et al., 2005). When their perspectives are appreciated and encouraged, Zhou et al. (2005) found that Chinese students' levels of participation in Western classes increased. When using PBL, the Canadian teacher can select problems that are relevant to the lives and experiences of Chinese students and, in doing so, provide the best opportunity for their students to participate fully.

While Problem Based Learning may seem ideal, it does have its drawbacks. Song et al. (2005) note that many Chinese students "lack skills in self-directed study and may be less mature in their people skills and possibly too spoiled by a historically passive academic culture to take

an active interest in managing their own learning" (p. 383). Furthermore, as PBL is dialogic in nature, it breaks down the traditional teacher-student relationship that is so valued in Chinese education and, at least in its initial stages, may cause discomfort and confusion for Chinese learners.

Clearly, there are obstacles standing in the way of embracing PBL in the classroom. While it pushes the boundaries of what some students may be comfortable with, it also incorporates integral components of both Chinese and Canadian conceptions of teaching and learning. Furthermore, PBL is relevant to the students' lives and encourages them to use their indigenous knowledge to solve problems in a meaningful way. When students are fully prepared, adequately scaffolded, and supported in culturally sensitive ways, Problem Based Learning can be a very effective means of moving Chinese students toward what many Chinese scholars and government officials hope will be the new face of Chinese education.

3.11 Summary

There are many issues involved in becoming a cultural mediator and adopting culturally appropriate pedagogy. Through both etic and emic research, Western teachers can begin to understand the needs and preferences of their Chinese EFL students so that cultural discontinuities can be minimized and the learning of students can be maximized (Grimshaw, 2007). Through engaging in dialogue and activities designed to illuminate the fundamental differences in beliefs that each group holds, teachers can better understand their students in order to inform future practice, and students can gain valuable exposure to the differences in expectations and beliefs in order to prepare them for future studies abroad. Furthermore, activities of this sort build trust and demonstrate teachers' attempt to recognize and honour their students' culture and preferences for teaching and learning (Ogbu, 1998).

Considering the significant differences in preferences for teaching and learning, much research has been devoted to how Western teachers may best construct a "consciousness bridge" (Kennedy, 2002, p. 442) that helps their Chinese EFL students embrace the foreign methodologies of their teachers. Similarly, Yu (2006) and Cheng (2006) both call for teaching Chinese EFL students the "ground rules" (Cheng, 2000, p. 444) for interaction and participation in Western classrooms, as well as for explicit teaching and a scaffolded practice of both what is expected of the students and how they may best conform to those expectations.

Inherent in these suggestions, though, is the subtle belief that the Western approach to teaching and learning is superior to that of the Chinese. According to Bax (2003), much of the current research reflects the unspoken assumption that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) "is not only 'modern', but is in fact the only way to learn a language properly" (p. 279). Unfortunately, this assumption is not limited to the research but is also reflected in the practices of Western teachers teaching abroad.

Research put forth by Bax (2003) and Shi (2009), however, offers a new and much more egalitarian approach to teaching Chinese EFL students that "places the context at the heart of the profession" (Bax, p. 278). Rather than attempting to eliminate the "Chinese way" of teaching and learning, Shi calls for Western teachers to adopt the Context Approach that "interweaves other cultures of learning" (p. 60) into pre-existing methodologies to suit the needs and preferences of all students. In this way, Western teachers must begin to view their CLT approach as an "add-on" (p. 60) that merely supplements the local ways and preferences for teaching and learning.

This chapter has attempted to demonstrate that in adopting the Context Approach (integrating diverse cultural perspectives into learning) Western teachers are making a commitment to ensuring that their students' learning needs are being met in a culturally

responsive manner. In doing so, however, Western teachers do not have to compromise their values and beliefs on what constitutes best practice for teaching and learning.

To demonstrate how this may be done, this thesis has outlined many well-known and commonly used teaching strategies that Canadian teachers can employ to ensure that their approaches are congruent with their Chinese students' previous educational experiences. Teaching strategies to assist Western teachers, as they negotiate the conflicting philosophies, teachings, and practices of both Confucius and Socrates**,** incorporate learner and teacher-centered approaches for teaching and learning, encourage questions throughout the learning process, develop critical thinking skills, monitor student achievement, facilitate active participation, and avoid both voluntary and involuntary plagiarism, were all offered.

Finally, Problem Based Learning was identified as an appropriate means with which to challenge students who express the desire to move toward the next level of cognition and skill development needed to prepare them for the future. Hu (2002) notes how PBL enables Chinese EFL students to cultivate the Western skills of working collaboratively to solve real-world problems, and to develop sociolinguistic competence while retaining the Chinese emphasis on "collective orientation, socially appropriate behaviors, and concern for the right way of doing things" (pp. 102-103). PBL was further identified by Zhou et al. (2005) as an effective way to encourage active participation in the learning process, as it can be used to discuss topics that are personally relevant to the lives of Chinese students and encourage them to use their indigenous knowledge in Western classrooms in meaningful ways.

The drawbacks to Problem Based Learning were also discussed. Song et al. (2005) found that many Chinese students lacked the social skills and ability to engage in self-directed study as a result of their "historically passive academic culture" (p. 383). Furthermore, they found that

PBL breaks down the traditional teacher-student relationship that many Chinese EFL students feel is necessary for true learning to take place.

Finally, it was put forth that while Problem Based Learning has its limitations, with scaffolding, guided practice, support in culturally mindful ways, and an open mind on behalf of both the teacher and students, it can be a very powerful means with which to inspire and motivate Chinese EFL students to take an active role in their learning.

4 Discussion, Conclusion and Implications for Future Research

4.1 Discussion

This thesis discussed many of the cultural miscommunications and misunderstandings that occur between Chinese EFL students and their Canadian teachers. Following this discussion, suggestions relating to teaching approaches and strategies that can be used to lessen the cultural discontinuities of both Canadian teachers and Chinese students were provided.

In seeking to provide an accurate foundation for understanding Chinese and Canadian education, some of the basic precepts of the philosophies of both Confucius and Socrates with regards to education have been defined and analyzed. Conflicting views surrounding the role of the teacher and students, how learning is best facilitated, and the purpose and nature of learning have been addressed. Links to current educational thought and practice in both China and Canada have also been made. In doing so, many potential sources of cultural discontinuities between Chinese students and Canadian teachers have been identified and examined, while commonly held stereotypes about Chinese EFL learners have been explored. Canadian teachers' misperceptions that Chinese students as passive learners who are excessively dependent on the teacher, who learn through rote memorization, and who lack creativity and critical thinking skills were also discussed and evidence to the contrary was offered.

In an effort to provide alternate understandings for these misinterpretations of Chinese learners, an understanding beyond the influence of the students' Confucian heritage was sought. Liu (2002) offered a particularly useful interpretation of Chinese students' silence in Western classrooms and described the cognitive, pedagogical, affective, sociocultural, and linguistic factors that either helped or hindered their active participation. Specific issues such as a lack of familiarity with Western pedagogy, anxiety caused by teaching practices that reflect differences

in beliefs as to how learning is best facilitated, and a lack of knowledge of the "interactive norms of the target culture" (Jones, 1999, p. 246) were also found to have a profound impact on the level of active and vocal participation of Chinese EFL students. Chinese students' experience sharing indigenous knowledge was identified by Zhou et al. (2005) as yet another factor to be considered when examining Chinese students' perceived reticence in Western classrooms. Indifference and unfamiliarity with Chinese knowledge and society, lack of recognition for, or an overemphasis on, the distinct knowledge and perspectives of Chinese students, and the preexisting stereotypes and misconceptions about Chinese culture were all found to inhibit the participation of Chinese students.

In an attempt to better understand the complexity of Chinese EFL students' silence, Chinese and Canadian perceptions of the value of silence in the classroom were also discussed. While Chinese students view silence as respectful and necessary for learning, Canadian teachers often believe the opposite. To Western teachers, silence most often indicates of a lack of engagement and is considered to be detrimental to the learning of all students (Liu, 2002; Petress, 2001). As Confucius valued respectful learning from a master teacher and Socrates valued the individual pursuit of knowledge through dialogue, it is not surprising, then, that these fundamental differences in the value of silence in the classroom can be traced back to the Confucian and Socratic roots of both the Chinese and Canadian educational systems, respectively (Tweed, 2000).

Finally, an in-depth discussion of the issues surrounding plagiarism in both China and Western countries was offered, starting with a brief discussion of the history of plagiarism. In an attempt to better understand the cultural discontinuities between Chinese EFL students and their Canadian teachers, differing notions of plagiarism were traced back to the influence of the

Classical Confucian Education in China and the rise of the Enlightenment in the West (Pennycook, 1996; Stone, 2008). Whereas it was considered the norm in China to quote long passages of text verbatim without acknowledgement of sources, developing notions of intellectual property rights in Western countries disallowed this practice and labeled it as overt plagiarism (Pennycook, 1996; Stone, 2008).

Many different factors that contribute to both voluntary and involuntary plagiarism among Chinese EFL learners were also discussed. Cultural conditioning, a lack of linguistic and task-specific writing skills, inexperience with the Western conventions of attribution of sources, student attitudes, the Chinese concept of *guanxi,* and the urge to cheat were all offered in an attempt to better understand why Chinese EFL students might plagiarize (Chou, 2010; Gu & Brooks, 2008; Liu, 2005; Pennycook, 1996; Shei, 2005; Song-Turner, 2008; Sowden, 2005).

Through this comprehensive discussion of plagiarism, it was argued that Western teachers must put their emotional reaction aside and begin to think objectively about the nature and circumstances surrounding plagiarism. Given that many current thought and practices, as Pennycook (1996) argues, are "pedagogically unsound and intellectually arrogant" (p. 227), the need to accept involuntary plagiarism as an impermanent stage in the learning process was discussed in detail. Furthermore, differentiating consequences for voluntary and involuntary plagiarism and using instances of plagiarism to assist, rather than punish, EFL students were offered as a more pedagogically sound approach to handling student plagiarism (Gu and Brooks, 2008; Song-Turner, 2008; Sowden, 2005).

It was also argued that, while an understanding of Chinese learners and their preferences for teaching and learning is integral to lessening the cultural discontinuities that students face in Canadian classrooms, it is equally important that Canadian teachers examine how their own

beliefs and values influence their pedagogy. In doing this, teachers may begin to see the Eurocentric nature of the curriculum and their teaching practices, as well as the "relative dominance of 'mainstream perspectives' in the classroom" (Zhou et al., 2005, p. 302) that have the potential to alienate Chinese EFL students.

Instead of marginalizing the perspectives and needs of Chinese EFL students, then, this thesis has attempted to convey the importance of becoming a culturally responsive teacher in order to best meet the needs of all students. Ragoonaden (2010) cites findings from Villegas and Lucas (2002) and notes that culturally responsive teachers have a socio-cultural consciousness and values students of culturally diverse backgrounds. Culturally responsive teachers also learn about the lives of their students, in order to better understand their needs, preferences, and previous experiences and to realize that the students' educational needs are not always being met. Furthermore, culturally responsive teachers are not content to merely allow this neglect to happen and, thus, they possess the skills and commitment necessary to act as agents of change by bringing about educational reforms that will "make schools more responsive to all students" (p. 21). In this way, teachers can promote their students' construction of knowledge through adopting culturally responsive teaching practices that are inclusive, egalitarian, and that represent the local interests and traditions of the teaching context (Shi, 2009).

Finally, concrete strategies and teaching approaches that can be used by Canadian teachers to embrace the Context Approach and "interweave other cultures of learning" (Shi, 2009, p. 60) into their pre-existing pedagogy were offered. Problem Based Learning was discussed and put forth as a means through which Canadian teachers may be able to capitalize on Chinese EFL students' strengths of working together, in order to encourage the development of the critical thinking skills needed to solve real-world problems. Above all, the strategies and

approaches suggested in this thesis were offered in an attempt to demonstrate that it is possible to satisfy the needs and preferences of Chinese EFL students and lessen the cultural discontinuities between the two, often very divergent, conceptions of teaching and learning held by Chinese EFL students and their Canadian teachers. Furthermore, it was shown that this can be done without sacrificing the integrity of either the Chinese or Canadian approach to teaching and learning.

4.2 Strengths and Limitations of the Research

The research presented offers a comprehensive overview of the cultural discontinuities that take place between Chinese EFL students and their Canadian teachers. While it does not discuss all issues that arise due to differences in Chinese and Canadian conceptions of teaching and learning, it does offer specific research and findings that relate directly to personal experience teaching Chinese EFL students and working with Canadian colleagues in China.

A limitation of this thesis, however, lies in its lack of first-hand research. Generalizations about Chinese EFL students and Canadian teachers have been made. The risks of generalizing are clear. Inevitably, some people will not fit into these generalizations, thus leaving the conclusions and findings of this thesis open to debate. Furthermore, generalizations can often lead to stereotyping if one is not careful. It must be noted, however, that these generalizations have been made primarily based on findings that have been reported in peer-reviewed journals.

Yet another limitation of this thesis is that the research presented is not specific to Chinese EFL students studying at British Columbian Offshore Secondary Schools located within mainland China. However, the research presented offers a thorough overview of issues that Canadian teachers should be aware of when reflecting on their pedagogical practices and preferences for teaching and learning within the Chinese environment. Therefore, studies

examining Western educators teaching Chinese learners in China were used, as they offer findings that are most relevant to the context of this thesis. While using findings that have been made in other, quite different contexts is less than ideal, there is little research on British Columbian Offshore Schools in China, and, at the time of writing this thesis, none existed that applied to this study.

A final limitation lies in the fact that not all of the strategies and teaching approaches suggested have been empirically proven to lessen the cultural discontinuities that Chinese EFL students face when studying in Western academic institutions (either within China, or in Western countries). Instead, many of the strategies and teaching approaches have been selected based on suggestions put forth by other researchers, personal experience, and an understanding of local practices in China. Furthermore, the successful implementation of teaching approaches and strategies are reliant on the teacher and the class. Thus, a strategy that works well in one class may not work at all in another.

Despite these limitations, this thesis illuminates the cultural miscommunications and misunderstandings that occur between Chinese EFL students and their Canadian teachers. Furthermore, it provides a starting point for thinking about strategies and teaching approaches that can be used to avoid discontinuities between the two cultures of learning to best promote the learning of all students.

4.3 Proposals for New Ideas Related to the Field of Study

There are many proposals that can be put forth as a direct result of this thesis. First and foremost, all teachers and pre-service teachers must be made aware of the implications of culture, cultural discontinuity, educational hegemony, the importance of becoming a culturally responsive teacher, and the need to understand and adopt local practices when teaching abroad.

This could be accomplished through mandatory coursework (for pre-service teachers) and on-going professional development workshops to raise awareness of the importance of intercultural awareness and teaching minority students (K. Ragoonaden, personal communication, February 22, 2011). Terms like "ethnocentrism, stereotyping, prejudice, cultural differences (e.g., individualism/collectivism), [and] differences in education systems and attitudes to knowledge (e.g., dialectic/dialogic communication differences in the classroom)" (Ho et al., 2004, p. 64) should all be discussed in detail.

Courses that offer an in-depth examination of different cultural groups, and that specifically examine "the cultural reasons for silence and reticence, the ethos of education in other societies and examples of oral discourse styles that vary from the local norm" (Jones, 1999, p. 252) would also be highly useful. Jones (1999) believes that this training would help teachers: to recognize the challenges that non-Western students face in Western classrooms, to learn strategies that may encourage their students' to participate in class, and to advise students in a more informed way about what they could to do to improve their contributions if they desire to do so. These courses should be offered to teachers in both Canada and China.

Ho et al. (2004) also believe that teachers should be encouraged "to question their prior assumptions about teaching and learning approaches and students' identities" (p. 70). As students of diverse backgrounds can enrich the classroom with different languages and cultural knowledge, "[i]t is therefore of critical importance that teachers acknowledge and incorporate these diverse knowledges and languages into the teaching and learning process" (p. 70).

One way that this could be accomplished is through participation in intercultural training programs, and in exercises that "provide a range of experiential exercises to help participants understand cultural differences, appreciate similarities, and reflect on their own cultural mores

and the assumptions they make about others" (Ho et al., 2004, p. xii). Participation in role plays, simulation games, and self-awareness inventories, and consideration of case-studies all provide an excellent basis for encouraging teachers to examine their current practice and beliefs about teaching and learning, and for helping teachers begin to move toward "inclusive, reciprocal and reflective teaching and learning" (Ho et al., 2004, p. 54).

Ho et al. (2004) also suggest that teachers take steps to avoid a Eurocentric curriculum by ensuring that "course content covers multiple voices and perspectives" (p. 70). This can be achieved through presenting "multiple perspectives on each topic of the course, including a range of cultures and socio-economic statuses" (p. 70), as well as materials that are produced by people of differing backgrounds and perspectives. Furthermore, in discussing "any limitations in materials (e.g., where groups are marginalized or under-represented)" (p. 70) a more inclusive curriculum will be presented.

Furthermore, all schools in Canada and abroad should also be encouraged to create an intercultural awareness committee of teachers and administrators who are committed to identifying ways in which their school is not yet being fully responsive to all of their students' needs. This group could meet with parents as well as students to address these issues and work to create an inclusive school environment that honours and respects the culturally determined teaching and learning preferences of all students.

Finally, "Western universities need to move away from the Eurocentric literary and scientific traditions and expose undergraduates [and] graduate students to diverse conceptions of teaching and learning" (K. Ragoonaden, personal communication, February 22, 2011). Without exposure to alternate notions of what teaching and learning looks like outside of Western countries, Canadian teachers may not understand the value of other methodologies, and, through

their ignorance, incorrectly judge what they see as being substandard or invaluable. What must be noted, however, is that this thesis only provides a discussion of the Chinese and Canadian cultures of teaching and learning. There are many other educational cultures that should be examined if teachers are to have a comprehensive understanding of what teaching and learning looks like outside of their own country.

4.4 Overall Significance to the Field of Study

This thesis provides a comprehensive overview of research surrounding the cultural discontinuities experienced between Chinese EFL students and Canadian teachers. Unlike other research that addresses one or some of the issues that arise when the East and West meet in the classroom, this thesis presents potential misunderstandings and misinterpretations experienced by Chinese learners and Canadian teachers, provides information about Western pedagogy and practices that may cause discontinuities for Chinese students, as well as addresses issues of Eurocentrism in the attitudes and teaching practices of Canadian teachers. Furthermore, it specifically addresses the need for teachers to adopt culturally responsive teaching practices and discusses underlying issues that may prevent them from doing so. Finally, it provides practical teaching approaches and strategies that may be used to help educators who are teaching abroad begin to adopt egalitarian teaching methodologies that compliment local teaching practices.

4.5 Applications of the Research Findings

Due to the demand for proficiency in the English language and for an understanding of Western culture, the number of International and Offshore Schools in China is growing rapidly. In fact, Maple Leaf Educational Systems currently employs more new teachers than any other district in British Columbia with over 250 BC certified teachers currently teaching for Maple Leaf and approximately 100 new teachers being recruited per year (Maple Leaf Educational

Systems, 2010). For this reason, the discussions put forth in this thesis are highly relevant to

teachers who are currently teaching in China and for those who will do so in the future. While

the research presented in this thesis has primarily focused on cultural discontinuities that arise as

Chinese ESL students study in Western countries, it is reasonable to assume that Canadian

teachers teaching in China share at least some of the same attitudes and misperceptions

surrounding teaching Chinese learners held by their colleagues in Canada. Considering this,

educators in Canada and in China can use this document as a means of becoming aware of the

issues and complexities surrounding teaching Chinese learners, and so begin to move toward

praxis.

Reflecting on my experiences teaching in China, and my observations and discussions

with colleagues and students, I can now vividly see the cultural discontinuities that arose as a

direct result of conflicting Chinese and Canadian conceptions of teaching and learning. While

some of these discontinuities were subtle, others were much more overt. Furthermore, I can

clearly recall instances when Canadian teachers blatantly disregarded the local teaching

methodologies, and the needs and preferences of their students, in favour of the Canadian way of

teaching and learning. While this was not done maliciously, it was done with a conscious

disregard for the existence of local practices to encourage (what we believed was) real learning,

and for the need to prepare students for their future studies abroad. Had we been aware, however,

of our Eurocentrism and the potentially damaging results of the cultural discontinuities we were

causing through our beliefs and pedagogy, I firmly believe that we would have not proceeded in

the same manner.

In the four years that I taught with Maple Leaf, I did not receive any information about

the Chinese culture of learning or how to best teach Chinese EFL students. Needless to say, the

need to adopt culturally appropriate pedagogy that takes into account local teaching practices, and the importance of understanding the needs, preferences, and previous experiences of Chinese EFL students was also never brought to our attention. It is my understanding that this is still the case, as Maple Leaf has no formal policy regarding professional development seminars on these topics for their new or returning teachers.

Even though Maple Leaf did not adequately prepare me for teaching Chinese EFL learners, I could have done this by familiarizing myself with current literature, through discussion with colleagues, and by undertaking action research within my own classroom. Through my ignorance of the need to do so, however, I did not take these steps. I did not realize the extent to which culture permeates the classroom and how our beliefs, values, preferences, and expectations for the teaching and learning process are all influenced by our culture of learning. I was unaware of culturally relevant pedagogy, the Eurocentrism of the curriculum and my teaching practices, and that my students were experiencing cultural discontinuities within my classroom. Had I been aware of these things I firmly believe that the learning and comfort level of my students would have been greatly enhanced.

It is my intention, then, that this thesis be used by Canadian teachers at Maple Leaf schools in China, in order to encourage them to examine their beliefs, practices, and current pedagogy, so that they may begin to take steps to identify points of cultural discontinuity between themselves and their students. In doing this, teachers will hopefully recognize the importance of becoming culturally responsive and adopting local teaching practices to best meet the needs and preferences of their students.

The scope of this thesis does not have to be limited to Maple Leaf teachers in China. All teachers, whether teaching at home or abroad, can use this document as a means through which

to examine their beliefs and practices and how these effect the learning and emotional well-being of their students. Furthermore, in reading this thesis, teachers can begin to recognize the importance of learning about the needs, preferences, and previous experiences of their students, so that they may be inclusive and egalitarian in their teaching practices, resource selection, and knowledge representation.

4.6 Suggestions for Future Research

The findings of this thesis illuminate the need for future research done specifically at British Columbian Offshore Schools within China. While there is ample research that examines the experiences of Chinese students studying within Chinese institutions, as well as in Western post-secondary schools, there is a lack of research that focuses on their experiences studying at a Western institution within China.

Longitudinal research that tracks Maple Leaf students as they move from grades 10-12 could offer valuable insight into the specific cultural discontinuities that may arise between Chinese EFL students and their Canadian teachers. Through interviews of both teachers and students, we could arrive at a better understanding of the teaching methodologies and strategies that have been used (successfully and not) to cross the boundary between Chinese and Canadian conceptions of teaching and learning.

Ethnographic research into the attitudes and perspectives of Canadian teachers in China would also be very useful. An examination of the underlying attitudes and beliefs of these teachers may shed some light onto how this relates to their teaching practice and, in turn, the learning of their students.

Furthermore, as of 2009, the University of British Columbia (Okanagan) has offered Maple Leaf teachers teaching in China the opportunity to undertake their Master of Education or

Master of Arts degree. Part of this degree includes a mandatory course on diversity in the classroom, intercultural education, and the need for intercultural awareness. A case study that examines the impact of this further education on teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and practices and how (or if) this affects the learning of their students could help to inform future Maple Leaf policy regarding professional development for their teachers as per the suggestions in the "Proposals for New Ideas Related to the Field of Study" section of this thesis.

4.7 Final Thoughts

I would like to conclude this thesis with some personal reflection about my hopes for teachers of Chinese EFL students. The importance of teaching Chinese EFL students in a culturally responsive manner that incorporates local practices and conceptions of teaching and learning cannot be overstated. Canadian teachers teaching in China must remember that they are merely invited guests into the wonderful country that is China. Furthermore, Chinese students, for the most part, are polite, kind, fun-loving, hardworking, and incredibly giving, forgiving, and accepting. These attributes, however, can be their downfall. In my experience, Chinese EFL students will try their best to please their teacher, even to their own detriment.

In the past, I created assignments and asked students to participate in activities that I now understand were completely inappropriate for the Chinese students in my classes. In light of this, this thesis is a direct result of the cultural discontinuities that I unwittingly added to, and stems from my desire that steps be taken to avoid this in the future.

It is my sincerest hope that all teachers, whether teaching at home or abroad, will step back and take the time to really understand the needs, preferences, and previous experiences of their students particularly in regard to culture. Similarly, I hope that this thesis will encourage teachers to examine their own beliefs and preferences for the teaching and learning process so

they are better able to understand exactly what they value, why they value it, and how this affects their pedagogical decisions. When this is done, teachers can finally begin to make choices that will encourage rather than hinder the learning and emotional well-being of all students in their class. For, as teachers, this is what we set out to do, isn't it?

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