LEARNERS' CONCEPTIONS OF CROSS-CULTURAL ORIENTATION

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ABSTRACT

With the increase in interaction among people of different cultures and the growing awareness of the importance of strong cross-cultural understanding and communication skills, the need for cross-cultural orientation programs continues to increase. Scholars and practitioners have only just begun to examine trends in cross-cultural orientations in an attempt to draw together theory and practice. Much of this research however, is presented from the perspective of instructors or program developers. Thus, the purpose of this study is to look at cross-cultural orientations from the learners' perspective. This study examines the learners' conceptions in an attempt to obtain a wider understanding of the cross-cultural orientation phenomenon.

The research was guided by an interpretive perspective and a qualitative technique. Two series of interviews with the learners of a cross-cultural orientation program, classroom observations, interviews with the instructors and program documents provided the data for this study.

Analysis of the data indicated that the learners' perspective, participation in and control of orientation programs were important themes to address. Moreover, the learners' held varying conceptions of these two themes.
With regards to the theme of participation, a few learners felt that orientation programs should mainly present information while the majority of them perceived that orientation programs should present information as well as provide opportunities for related experiences. Thus, some saw themselves as passive participants, while others emphasized the importance of being active.

Two conceptions also emerged with regards to the theme of control of orientation programs. Again, there were learners who perceived that orientation programs should be controlled by the instructor, while majority clearly understood orientation programs to be controlled by both the instructor and the learners. Furthermore, the concepts of communication, collaboration and understanding in the orientation process were also emphasized.

While these four varying conceptions represented different ways in which the learners understood the cross-cultural orientation phenomenon, the analysis of the data also indicated that in actual practice, these conceptions were further complicated by the dynamics and the complexities of the nature of cross-cultural orientations.

In exploring the learners' conceptions of cross-cultural orientation programs, this study provided a
different perspective to understanding the cross-cultural orientation phenomenon. It identified the importance of paying closer attention to the adult learner in orientations and the need for further research in the area.
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CHAPTER ONE
SCOPE AND FOCUS OF THE PROBLEM

A. BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

Major developments in telecommunications and the advances made in the transportation industry have resulted in increasing interaction among the people of the world - "global village citizens". Global interdependence and international cooperation continue to grow. Technical assistance advisors, for example, working on development projects in various countries are increasing. Missionaries, government officials, diplomats and military personnel are all involved in cross-cultural interactions. Moreover, to compete effectively in the international marketplace, cross-cultural understanding and communication skills are a must. Furthermore, demographic changes in our own surroundings here in Canada as a result of the growing immigrant and refugee population, call for trained practitioners to assist these people with the transition into the Canadian society. Thus, the need for people to become more literate in the behaviour and skills necessary to engage in effective cross-cultural interaction is crucial.
The field of cross-cultural training, though relatively young, is rapidly growing. Training programs are being designed and implemented at a fairly rapid pace. Theoreticians and practitioners involved come from a vast range of disciplines such as: cross-cultural psychology, linguistics, race relations, ethnic studies, communications, anthropology, and business. Their varying concepts of cross-cultural training have resulted in the eclectic influences on this interdisciplinary field. It is no wonder that consensus over the meaning and focus of the concept of cross-cultural training has been difficult to articulate (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1983).

Realizing the importance of providing some organization to this field, researchers and practitioners have been attempting to systematize and professionalize the developments that have been taking place in what is still a "cottage industry" (Brislin, Landis, Brandt, 1983). Much progress has been made identifying appropriate approaches to intercultural training (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1983), presenting models of cross-cultural interaction and intercultural competency (Brislin, Landis, Brandt, 1983; Dinges, 1983), examining ethical concerns and implications of cross-cultural training programs (Paige & Martin, 1983), and evaluating cross-cultural training (Blake & Heslin, 1983).
In addition to the strides made in the field of cross-cultural training in general, attention is now being focussed on an area of intercultural training: cross-cultural orientations, as evidenced by an increase in available literature in that area. Also, a seminar, the first of its kind, was held in 1984: "Cross-Cultural Orientations: Theories, Practices, Problems and Solutions".

Definitions of cross-cultural orientation vary (Bennett, 1986; Gudykunst & Hammer, 1983; Kohls, 1984). Paige (1986:2) defines cross-cultural orientation as "those intercultural programs that are designed to prepare specific groups of learners to reside in specific target cultures for specific purposes". Orientation programs are distinct from other cross-cultural training in that they focus on specific groups of learners, specific target cultures and specific purposes.

B. RATIONAL FOR THE RESEARCH STUDY

With the ever increasing number of domestic students, foreign students, business persons and officials needing preparation for their cross-cultural sojourn experiences, orientation programs are being designed and implemented by all sorts of professional and quasi-professional agencies and individuals. These programs emerge in various forms, however, mainly as information giving session, and often
with overly simplistic goals and objectives, with little thought given to the learning process or the content. This, unfortunately, has contributed to cross-cultural orientation being viewed as an elementary form of cross-cultural training (Paige, 1986). Therefore, only recently have scholars and practitioners together begun to examine trends in orientation training and to pull together theory, research and practice. Conceptual models are emerging to help understand the development of intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1986), intercultural adjustment (Grove & Torbiorn, 1986), culture shock (Weaver, 1983) and to provide direction for designing and implementing cross-cultural orientations. Issues such as the training of trainers and the ethics of training (Paige & Martin, 1983; Howards, Frank, Pusch & Renwick, 1982), goals of orientations, variables influencing orientations (McCaffery, 1986), learning styles and their implications on orientation training (Hughes-Weiner, 1984), are being addressed. Attempts are being made to arrive at some conceptual and theoretical foundations and to integrate theory and practice (Paige, 1986). Although these developments are helping to better anchor and professionalize the field, much more work needs to be done to ensure that research findings are validated in the reality of the training experience and vice versa. Some questions which still need to be asked are: do the participants share similar views on what the purpose and outcome of orientation should be, what information should be
presented, how it should be presented, who should conduct the training and what variables effect orientations? How are similarities and differences in participants' perceptions reflected in the orientation training in the classroom and what further implications does this have on the design and implementation of orientation programs?

With these questions in mind then, this research study is an investigation of the participants', i.e. the learners', conceptions of cross-cultural orientations. Thus, the purpose of this study is to gain a clearer and more complete understanding of cross-cultural orientation from the participants'/learners' points of view.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a review of some of the literature related to cross-cultural orientations and adult learning. First, the definitions of labels, concepts and categories used in the field are discussed (J.M. Bennett, 1986; Kohls, 1984). Next, some theoretical models and methodologies that have been proposed for cross-cultural orientation training are looked at (J.M. Bennett, 1986; Gundykunst, Hammer and Wiseman, 1977; Albert, 1986; Brislin, 1984; Triandis, 1986;). An examination of some literature on stages in the cross-cultural adjustment process follow (M. Bennett, 1986; Grove & Torbiorn, 1986; Juffer, 1986). Teaching and learning strategies used in cross-cultural training are then discussed (McCaffery, 1984; Hughes-Wiener, 1986; Sawkins, 1987;). Finally, the concepts of independence, self-direction and control as used in adult learning are examined (Knowles, 1975; Tough, 1977; Brookfield, 1983; Chene, 1983; Brookfield, 1986; Garrison & Baynton, 1987; Pratt, 1988; Garrison, 1988).
B. USE OF TERMS IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY

In this investigative study, the term "participants", is used interchangeably with the terms "learners", "trainees" and "students". It is the conceptions of these individuals that are being examined in this study.

The terms "instructor", "trainer" and "teacher" are used interchangeably in this study to refer to the individual who conducts the orientation training.

The term "conceptions" is used to mean categories of description which represent different ways in which people experience or understand a phenomenon.

The term "themes" is used to mean the major elements of the phenomenon studied.

C. DEFINITION OF LABELS, CONCEPTS AND CATEGORIES

J.M. Bennett (1986) in her paper "Modes of cross-cultural training: Conceptualizing cross-cultural training as education", attempts to clarify and distinguish the three terms used most frequently to describe cross-cultural training: orientation, education and training. She does this by comparing the goals, the content and the process used in each. Orientation generally emphasizes survival information, academic content areas and some cultural dos and dont's. Thus, she suggests that "orientation may be
characterized as the who, what, when, and where of the preparation period, an essential but not comprehensive approach." (p.118). "Training" usually refers to an approach with the end goal involving behavior - the 'how'. This perspective according to Bennett, "minimizes conceptual ground work and does not require sojourners to be able to demonstrate their competence outside of the program." (p.118). "Education" focuses on the 'why' perspective and its objective is to help learners in understanding the theoretical foundation of learning. This, Bennett suggests, should be the ideal way of looking at cross-cultural training.

Kohls (1984) also acknowledges the need to distinguish between four approaches and to examine the appropriateness of each approach in preparing people to interact with those of another culture. He states that "education" is suited for developing in-depth mastery of large bodies of knowledge, whereas "training" focuses on developing competency in performing specific skills. "Orientation" prepares one to understand and to function effectively in a new or radically different environment, while "briefing" provides a broad overview in the most efficient way. He examines these four approaches in terms of their major concerns and applications, overall purpose, various means of achieving their purpose, delivery requirements and strongest features. He goes on to argue that a combination of the
four different approaches is often the most effective, keeping in mind the characteristics of the learning group and the sponsoring agency.

D. THEORETICAL MODELS AND METHODOLOGIES

J.M. Bennett (1986) identifies five common models for orientation. The first is the Intellectual Model, stressing cognitive goals, culture specific content and traditional learning process. The second is the Area Training Model emphasizing affective goals, culture specific content and the experiential processes. The third, Self-Awareness Model uses culturally general content, experiential processes and has affective goals. The fourth is the Cultural Awareness Model which emphasizes the individual self. The fifth is the Multi-Dimensional Model, covering cognitive, affective and behavioral goals, with both culture specific and culture general content, using both experiential and intellectual approaches. She also assesses these models in terms of their major advantages and limitations and then places them into a conceptual framework.

Gundykunst, Hammer and Wiseman (1977) review six approaches used in cross-cultural training. Like Bennett, they mention the Intellectual, Area Simulation, Self-awareness and Culture Awareness approaches. In addition, they look at the Behavioral approach and the Interaction approach. The former focuses on teaching the learner specific behaviors that are used in the host culture, and
the latter strives to increase awareness among the learners of their own cultural value orientations through interaction workshops. The advantages of using an integrated approach to cross-cultural training are discussed and a study to support the effectiveness of this approach is presented. The integrated approach used consists of three stages: perspective training, interaction training and context specific training. The authors suggest that the development of the intercultural perspective should be the primary goal in cross-cultural training and can best be achieved by using this three stage approach.

Albert (1986) suggests using the "Intercultural Sensitizer" to develop cross-cultural sensitivity. This approach teaches the learner from one culture to see and interpret situations from the perspective of a member of the other culture. Albert (1986) first identifies factors that hamper the development of effective orientation programs, for example, cultural differences in behavior, interpretations or inferences of behavior, value differences, social factors and context, role of expectations, selectivity of perception, and erroneous assumptions about other cultures. He then, discusses how the Intercultural Sensitizer approach can be used to deal with these issues.
Another term often used for the Intercultural Sensitizer is the Culture Assimilator. Brislin (1984), in his article - "A culture general assimilator", reviews the design, rationale and implementation of the culture assimilator and also provides examples of training contexts in which this approach would be helpful. This then, provides useful guidelines for choosing among methods and approaches for orientation sessions.

Triandis (1986) in his paper "Approaches to cross-cultural orientation and the role of cultural assimilator training", first examines questions like: who is likely to be more effective cross-culturally, where and when should orientation programs be conducted, how should orientation programs be designed and what should be the outcomes. He proposes that it will be more difficult for people with conflicting value systems and conflicting ways of perceiving the social environment to communicate effectively and like others. He suggests that cross-cultural training should be conducted when the learners are most motivated to learn, that is generally after they are in the host culture and have experienced a bit of culture shock. He mentions a variety of training approaches, each having different outcomes. He suggests that the training content should emphasize both culture specific concepts as well as universal constructs. He goes on to say that learning conditions which increase effective cross-cultural
interaction favour interpersonal rather than intergroup behavior, focus on behavior that is appropriate in both cultures, and enable the learners to perceive that their goals can only be reached with the help of the host culture. Triandis then focuses on describing one type of cross-cultural training: the culture assimilator. The purpose of this type of training is to help the learner make attributions that are similar to the attributions made by members of the host culture. This approach interprets one culture for members of another, helping the learner understand the host culture and therefore, lowering the chances of misinterpretations occurring. Triandis also acknowledges some limitations of this approach namely the potential danger of oversensitizing the learner to many potential mistakes that can be made and perhaps sharpening his/her stereotypes of the host culture. The culture assimilator can provide information and 'raise the issue', but the learner should also have actual experiences. In addition, other methods need to be employed to help deal with these actual situations.

E. STAGES IN CROSS-CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Another way to view orientation programs would be to focus on the conceptualizing of the learning process that occurs as learners acquire a multicultural perspective and intercultural effectiveness. Cultures differ fundamentally in the way they create and maintain world views. It is this
difference that is the major factor effecting a person's successful acquisition of an intercultural perspective.

M. Bennett (1986) presents a model that helps describe how people subjectively experience and attach meaning to culture differences. This author posits that as a person moves from an ethnocentric to an ethnorelative stage, from where the world-view of his/her culture is central to all reality and where difference is experienced as threatening, to a greater recognition and acceptance of differences, intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communication effectiveness increase. The stages he identifies are: denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation and integration. He not only explains in detail the process of acquiring a multicultural perspective by going through these stages, but also discusses implications for dealing with the learner at the various stages of his/her development of cross-cultural sensitivity.

Grove and Torbiorn (1986) in their article "A new conceptualization of intercultural adjustment and goals of training" present three psychological constructs to describe intercultural adjustment. They are applicability of behavior, clarity of the mental frame of reference and level of mere adequacy. By explaining what happens to a person in these three psychological constructs, Grove and Torbiorn describe the process of intercultural adjustment both in an
accustomed and unaccustomed setting and offer some practical considerations for bringing about the theoretically desirable changes in the adjustment cycle through orientation training.

Juffer (1986) provides an overview of the different approaches to conceptualizing the adjustment process, particularly focusing on culture shock. She then relates these conceptualizations to existing training methods and offers an approach to better design orientation training.

Juffer suggests that effective training must be learner-centered and results oriented with the desired result being effective cross-cultural adjustment. Trainers need to carefully analyze the cross-cultural adjustment phenomenon and its components in order to design more effective and successful orientation programs. It is her concern that trainers often rely on training techniques and methods that they are comfortable with and on their past experiences and intuition when designing orientation programs without examining their conceptual assumptions of cross-cultural adjustment and culture shock.

Juffer's definition of cross-cultural adjustment/adaptation proposes three goals that are interactive and hierarchical in nature. The first goal is to ameliorate the learner's culture shock experience. The
second is to increase the learner's psychological adjustment and the third is to increase the learner's effectiveness in the new culture. In order for the third goal to occur, the first two goals need to have taken place.

Juffer categorizes culture shock using five causal schemas: confrontation with a new environment or situation, ineffectiveness of intercultural or interpersonal communication, a threat to the sojourners emotional or intra-psychic well-being, the need to adequately modify behaviour to regain positive reinforcement from the new environment and finally the negative aspects of the growth experience. The author then applies these conceptualizations of culture shock to classify types of orientation training and to discuss appropriate train techniques for each one. Furthermore, she adds that no one conceptualization of culture shock is the correct framework to use for improving cross-cultural training, but that orientation programs will likely integrate a variety of approaches that will relate to more than one conceptualization of culture shock. However, critical variables such as: the background of the learner, the amount of time for the orientation, the location of the orientation must be considered when selecting the most appropriate framework for an orientation program. Juffer's conceptualization of intercultural adjustment provides a rationale for the designing of orientation programs and for
the selecting of the most appropriate training methods for orientations.

F. TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

In addition to focusing on the cultural differences between the learner and the host situation, McCaffery (1984) in his paper entitled "Independent effectiveness: A reconsideration of cross-cultural orientation and training", posits that one of the most important variables to consider in designing and implementing orientation programs is the learner's style of learning. He suggests that training methodologies should follow the learning cycle framework. This framework suggests that concrete experience be translated into concepts, which in turn are used as guides for action. The learning cycle, he says, represents the different phases and types of learning that all learners pass through in developing intercultural skills and in using them in an independent manner. These should be the major goals of orientation programs. A lack of such goals often results in unintended outcomes like learner dependency, stereotyping, unrealistic expectations and negative expectations, that can in fact, be counter-productive.

Gail Hughes-Wiener (1986) also uses an adaptation of the learning cycle theory as the basis for developing a learning-how-to-learn curriculum and instructional methodology for cross-cultural orientation programs. This
researcher presents some considerations for designing cross-cultural orientation programs incorporating this approach. She discusses the setting of goals, the designing of curricula and the organizing of instruction using the learning cycle theory. She points out that since one can never teach everything there is to know about a specific culture, assisting learners to learn-how-to-learn in addition to providing them with specific cultural information is the best kind of orientation a learner can have.

Sawkins (1987), another advocate of this theory, suggests that:

Learners should be helped to learn how to learn and how to make the most of the learning opportunities that are available to them in the environments in which they find themselves, so that they can carry on learning independently after their course is finished. (p.60)

She first provides four guiding principles for a teacher in implementing learner training: have a tactical attitude, make strategies explicit, be aware of different styles of learning and teach for transfer. She also identifies some areas that learners need help with to become more independent. She finally suggests five kinds of activities that can foster the strategies needed to become more independent - namely those promoting self and language awareness, self-management, specific task learning, and opportunities for global practice and dealing with
communication breakdown. By working on their strategies in these five areas, Sawkins suggests that "it is possible that learners may incorporate some or all the characteristics of the good learner into their personal learning styles" (p.64). Furthermore, the learners will be well prepared to carry on learning on their own, becoming independent culture learners.

G. CONCEPTS OF INDEPENDENCE, SELF-DIRECTION & CONTROL

The concepts of independence and self-direction have been widely discussed by various proponents in the field of adult education. Knowles (1975) describes self-directed learning as "a process in which individuals take the initiative without the help of others in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating goals, identifying human and material resources, and evaluating learning outcomes" (p.18). Tough (1977) also refers to self-directed learners as those who take responsibility for and control over their own learning. Brookfield (1983) describes independence as the degree of control learners exert over the content and method of learning.

In recent years however, scholars have questioned these conceptualizations of self-directedness and independence. Brookfield (1986), who had once called self-direction in learning "the distinguishing characteristic of adult learning" (p.25), is now suspicious of the singular
importance of this concept to adult learning and the prescriptive aim of encouraging learners' independence. Pratt (1988) questions the assumption that the "self-directedness of adult learners necessitates their control over instructional functions" (p.160). Garrison (1988) believes that "most learners are not capable of choosing and reaching their educational goals without some direction and support" (p.28). Chene (1983) states that "the value of independence or self-reliance is an illusion and adults are trapped in other forms of dependence if they are not aware of the necessity of mediation by others and of recognition in learning" (p.46).

So, it would seem that the concepts of self-direction and independence alone are inadequate to understand the learning process in an educational transaction. Therefore, a model which moves beyond self-direction and independence has been proposed by Garrison & Baynton (1987). This model focuses on the concept of control and provides a more complete conceptualization of the educational transaction (See Table 1: Model of Control by Garrison & Bayton (1987)).
Control, as suggested by Garrison & Baynton (1987), is "concerned with the opportunity and ability to influence, direct and determine decisions related to the educational process" (p.5). The model addresses three essential dimensions of control - independence, proficiency and support. Independence refers to the freedom to choose learning goals, activities and evaluation procedures. Proficiency represents the psychological dimension, the learning skills and abilities, the motivation and confidence needed to learn independently. Support, the sociological and structural dimension, addresses the resources - both
human and non-human, that help guide the learning process. These three dimensions are interrelated and control of the educational process can be achieved by establishing a balance among these three dimensions, through collaboration and communication among the student, teacher and content.

H. SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter has provided a review of some of the literature related to cross-cultural orientations and to adult learning. Recent literature has questioned the concepts of independence and self-directedness as being the ultimate aim of adult learning (Chene, 1983; Brookfield, 1986; Garrison & Baynton, 1987; Pratt, 1988; Garrison, 1988). This has particular significance to cross-cultural orientations as often the importance of developing independent learners has been articulated as one of the main goals of these orientation programs (Mestenhauser, 1983; Hughes-Wiener, 1986; McCaffery 1986, Sawkins, 1987). Thus, in order to move beyond just the concepts of self-direction and independence, a model of control has been proposed instead, to reflect the interaction of some fundamental elements in the educational transaction (Garrison & Baynton, 1987).

Little has been discussed in the literature on cross-cultural orientations, to address these basic concepts in adult learning. Moreover, most of the research focuses on

However, much of this research seems largely to emphasize cross-cultural orientations from the instructors and the program developers perspectives. There is a need to further examine cross-cultural orientations from the learners' perspective. Therefore, the focus of this investigative study has been to explore what conceptions the learners' have of the cross-cultural orientation process.
A. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to gain a clearer and better understanding of the participants' conceptions of cross-cultural orientation. A qualitative research approach using interviews, open-ended classroom observations and descriptions was adopted.

Qualitative research involves understanding a phenomenon from the "native's" point of view, the participants of the orientation program in this case. It is a continual reflexive process that begins with what has been called 'foreshadowed problems or questions' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). The question in this study, what is cross-cultural orientation, first surfaced in this researcher's mind during her initial involvement in the field as a cross-cultural trainer. From discussions with other cross-cultural trainers and researchers in the business and education fields, through the process of designing and implementing orientation programs, by interacting with colleagues, from reading what researchers and practitioners have to say about orientation, the focus for this study gradually emerged.
The researcher began by first acquiring access to the orientation program and its participants/learners. Then, the learners were interviewed to investigate their conceptions of orientation. Each learner was interviewed prior to and following the orientation. Each interview was approximately an hour in length. Instructors of the orientation program were also interviewed to gain a more complete picture of the orientation process. Furthermore, at various stages of the orientations, the researcher took on the role of participant-observer in the classroom. Attempts were also made to develop a rapport and a trust with the participants through informal conversations outside the classroom situation. In addition, the following were examined: documents given initially to all the participants as part of their orientation package, printed handouts received by the trainees in the course of the orientation, suggested curriculum materials, learners' profiles, as well as post program evaluations. Finally, all the data collected through these various sources was analyzed in terms of the concepts and common themes that emerged.

B. SETTING

The regional orientation centre that served as the setting for this research study is located on a fairly large university campus and is a part of an English language training institute which offers year round English language programs. The orientation centre itself provides three
kinds of services: cultural briefings to those Canadians planning to work in China, a network and support system for the Chinese and selected Asian trainees studying in Canada and orientation courses for trainees from China and other selected Asian countries. This research study focuses on this last kind of service.

These orientation courses are of two to six weeks in length and provide language and cultural preparation for the trainees who come to Canada for work/study and technical exchange programs. Being a part of the university community, participants of the orientation programs have access to the libraries, language laboratories, recreational facilities, and have many chances to interact with individuals from other cultures in both planned and unplanned extra-curricular socio-cultural events. Furthermore, many university lectures and seminars are accessible to the participants. The learners are able to visit with specialists in their fields.

The orientation program consists of a classroom component, cultural activities and homestay. The classroom component focuses on three areas: English for Special Purposes, Fluency and Listening Comprehension, and Cultural Orientation. Cultural activities after class and on weekends introduce the trainees to the socio-cultural environment of their surroundings. Living with a Canadian
family during their orientation helps the learners gain a real understanding of Canadian life.

The orientation program is conducted by a team of five to six instructors and cultural assistants. The instructors in addition to training in their specialty areas be it Linguistics, Asian studies, or Education, all have specialized training in teaching English as a second language. Furthermore, they have travelled and in many cases, lived and worked abroad.

It is in the context described above that the phenomenon of orientation was studied.

C. ACCESS

When this researcher first began exploring the components and implications of a study on orientation programs, she had discussions with a number of professionals involved in the cross-cultural training field, including the coordinator of an orientation centre. Thus, some months later, after the focus of this study had been further defined, the researcher requested permission to work with the participants of an orientation program administered by this centre. The coordinator granted permission for the study having dialogued with the researcher before and having had some input into the initial stages of her introspection and exploration. The coordinator was also interviewed in
order to further help him understand the nature of the research. However, as Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) caution, access is "far more than a matter of granting or withholding of permission for research to be conducted". A major factor in determining the nature of the data collected is the establishing and maintaining of good field relationships.

The establishing of rapport between the researcher and the learners began on the very first day the learners arrived. Not only was the researcher there to greet them, but she was officially introduced as part of the team of cross-cultural trainers working with Chinese learners and was given an opportunity to present the research study. This initial contact gave the researcher an identity or a role. To the Chinese, it acknowledged the fact that the researcher had "guanxi" or "relationship" with the orientation centre and thus helped to establish "guanxi" with the trainees. These acknowledgements of "role" and "relationship" are important aspects governing Chinese social behaviour (Bond, 1986).

Rapport between the researcher and the instructors was, in most cases, established before the orientation began. Many of the instructors were colleagues of the researcher and those new to the orientation centre tended to view the researcher as a resource person. Informal chats over
coffee, lunch and during classroom breaks helped maintain a trusting rapport with both the instructors and the learners. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) also mention the importance of "impression management". Thus, attention was given by the researcher to her speech, appearance and demeanor to ensure that they facilitated the construction of a positive working identity. Finally, the learners were better able to identify with the researcher because of the fact that she had worked with other Chinese learners before, had been to China and is of the same ethnic background. Phrases uttered by the learners like: "you understand how the Chinese feel about..." or "as you know, we Chinese...." portrayed this. Thus, more open access was gained.

D. PARTICIPANTS

The eleven participants involved in this research ranged in age between twenty-four and forty-three, and were from the People’s Republic of China. They were part of a human resource development training program, and were selected by their country to come to Canada for work/study and technical exchange programs. They came from a variety of different fields and were individually scheduled to train with various companies, organizations and educational institutions all across Canada for a period of eight to ten months. Prior to their arrival in Canada, all the trainees took a language proficiency test. Eight of this group of learners then attended a six-month course at the
Canada/China Language Centre in Beijing to upgrade their language skills.

E. DATA COLLECTION THROUGH INTERVIEWS

The purpose of this research was to gain a better understanding of the participants' conceptions of orientation. Thus, the questions in the interviews addressed issues that are central to orientation programming: purpose of the orientation, orientation design, content, training approaches, trainer competencies, personal expectations and outcomes. The interviews began with a general question about the meaning of the term cross-cultural orientation and ended with a question on the participants' personal expectations of orientation programs. (See appendix B for a list of the questions used).

Each participant was interviewed individually, with each interview lasting approximately an hour. A short time was spent visiting and chatting with the participants before the interviews formally began. This helped to set both the researcher and the interviewee/participant at ease. Also, the purpose and the nature of the research was once again explained to the participants and interviewee anonymity was ensured. Permission to tape the interviews was granted by all the participants.
The participants appeared to have very little trouble understanding the questions and asked for clarification if they were unsure. The researcher attempted to keep the questions open-ended, to rephrase questions as needed, to paraphrase answers and to ask for examples in order to clarify any ambiguity in the exchange. In the first series of interviews, some learners prefaced their answers by saying that they were unsure of what to say because they had had no experience with orientation before. However, they went on to share their thoughts on the issues raised by the questions. The participants were interviewed again after the orientation program and in addition to similar questions asked in the first series of interviews, were also asked to comment on certain incidences that occurred in class. These incidences were noted by the researcher during her classroom observations.

The same interview questions and process were used with the instructors of the orientation program. The instructors were interviewed to gain a more complete understanding of the orientation process. Their comments often provided further support to confirm what was articulated by the learners or what was observed in the classroom observations.

The interviewees, on the whole seemed at ease during the interviews. In fact, in many instances, the researcher
and the interviewee chatted on after the formal interview was over.

F. DATA COLLECTION THROUGH PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION

As shown on the time chart in appendix C, the researcher took on the role of participant-observer while the orientation program was in progress. Being in the classroom setting with the participants and observing and recording the interaction that was occurring, allowed the researcher to examine how various participants' conceptions as articulated in the first series of interviews were reflected in the orientation process in the classroom.

Since attitudes and activities often vary over time and with different contexts, the observations were spaced so that they occurred during the earlier weeks of the orientation program and then again at the end. Furthermore, two observations were conducted, in each of the instructor's classes, one early on in the program and then another towards the end. The participants' views on the interaction observed in these classes were elicited in the second series of interviews. The observations provided a further background for understanding the participants' conceptions.
G. DOCUMENTS

In addition to the data collected from interviews and observations, documents related to the program like the course brochure and suggested curriculum materials were looked at. Learners' profiles were read to get a better understanding of their background and post program evaluations were examined to gain a more complete picture of the orientation.

H. RELIABILITY & VALIDITY

Qualitative research focuses on obtaining a description of the phenomenon under study. Reliability and validity of the research need to be considered. Reliability refers to the extent to which studies can be replicated. Given the same conditions, though in reality all specifics are never totally replicable, data collection, data analysis and interpretation should be consistent to enhance internal reliability. Furthermore, the importance of thorough methodology to ensure external reliability is pointed out by Goetz & Lecompte (1984:217):

The researcher must clearly identify and fully discuss data analysis processes and provide retrospective accounts of how data were examined and synthesized. Because reliability depends on the potential for subsequent researchers to reconstruct original analysis strategies, only those ethnographic accounts that specify these in sufficient detail are replicable.
Although reliability is a pre-requisite for validity, it does not assure the validity of the research. Validity in research deals with being able to understand the data and draw appropriate conclusions from it. Reliability and validity can be established through the careful balancing of effects operating in a research context.

Multiple data sources and multiple data collection procedures allowed for cross-validation in this research study. Interviewing all the participants provided a good variety of backgrounds. All the interviews were analyzed in terms of the concepts and common themes that emerged. In addition to the interviews of these various participants, data was also obtained through classroom observations, interviews with the instructors and from program documents such as student profiles, course brochure, suggested curriculum materials and post student evaluations. Thus, through the combination of different research strategies and the comparison of information from these multiple sources, reliability and validity of this research study was addressed.

I. SUMMARY

This study of the participants' conceptions of cross-cultural orientation utilizes multiple data sources and multiple data collection. First, the researcher sensitized herself to the research problem by having discussions with
other professionals in the field and by reading studies done in the area of cross-cultural training. With a general research focus, access to the setting was requested and permission acquired. Participants' were interviewed before and after the orientations. During the orientations, observations in the classes were conducted and informal contact with the participants were maintained. Interviews with the instructors were also conducted. Relevant documents were examined and finally all the data collected was analyzed. It should be noted that all through the various steps, the researcher reflected on the information obtained and events observed and on the information between the two.
CHAPTER FOUR
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

A. INTRODUCTION

This research study is an investigation of the participants' conceptions of cross-cultural orientation. Data was collected through interviews conducted before and after the orientation program and through classroom observations. Open-ended questions probed the learners' perspectives on the purpose of orientation, the methodology or approaches suitable for orientation, the content and the outcome of orientation, issues and variables that effect orientation, the role of the instructor and the skills needed to conduct an orientation. Furthermore, the learners' interpretations of behavior and situations that occurred during the orientation were examined.

Long before the data was collected however, the sensitizing phase of analysis began. Discussions with colleagues and other professionals in the early stages of this study indicated a variety of conceptual assumptions regarding orientation training. A review of the literature also suggested various ways of conceptualizing cross-cultural training (Brislin et al. 1983; Bennett, 1986; Gundykunst et al, 1983). Through the process of reflecting on what was discussed and read, questions surfaced in the
researcher's mind. What conceptions of cross-cultural orientation do the participants have? What are their perspectives on what the purpose and outcome of orientation should be, on what information should be presented, on how it should be presented, on who should conduct the orientation and on what issues are important to consider in orientation programs? These questions generated a list that served to guide the interviews.

Two interviews with each learner, once before the orientation program began and then again towards the end of the orientation, were conducted. The first series of interviews were fully transcribed. These transcriptions were carefully read and re-read. The purpose was to gain familiarity with the data and to use it to think with, to look for patterns, contradictions, inconsistencies, themes and concepts (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). Throughout the process of data collection and analysis, reflexivity played an important role. While sifting through the interview data, the researcher asked: Are there any patterns that can be identified in the learners' responses? What themes seem to stand out? Can they be categorized in any way? The themes and concepts that gradually emerged were coded into categories relevant to the research question. These themes provided the focus for the collection of data from classroom observations and for the analysis of the data from the second series of interviews.
Analysis of the second series of interview data began with the listening of the audio tapes several times. Words, phrases or sentences that related to themes relevant to the research question were noted down. Careful attention was given to ensure that the context of the words was maintained.

Initially, the themes that emerged seemed to just describe what the data segments were about. They dealt with the content of the data text and seemed common sense. For example, quotes referring to the cultural context of the learners' living and training (work/study) environment and to their social adjustment in Canada, seemed to focus on themes that referred more to what the data segments were about (See appendix D). However, in the process of reflection, on sifting through the data a few more times and on comparing data from various sources, underlying themes began to emerge. These underlying themes appeared more dominant and reflected not cross-cultural issues, but some fundamental dimensions of the orientation process.

Data segments from which these underlying themes emerged were then sorted into possible groupings. The core meaning was extracted from these groupings of data segments and used to form conceptions. Thus, although constructed by the researcher, the conceptions were well grounded in and abstracted from the language in the data (See Table 2).
Table 2: Emerging themes and conceptions.

Two underlying themes emerged from the analysis of the data in this research study: participation in orientation programs and control of orientation programs. Conceptions within these themes will be presented below.

B. LEARNERS' CONCEPTIONS OF PARTICIPATION IN ORIENTATION PROGRAMS

The theme of participation in orientation programs emerged in the data collected from the interviews and through classroom observations. The learners referred to this participation in terms of how learning should be facilitated in the orientation process. Two conceptions related to this theme:

Conception 1: Orientation Programs should mainly present information

Conception 2: Orientation Programs should present information as well as provide related experiences
i. Conception 1: Orientation Programs should mainly present information

Some learners saw themselves as "receivers", as passive participants in the orientation program. They perceived the orientation program as mainly providing information and knowledge necessary for their stay in Canada. As some participants stated:

Just provide information and tell us to pay attention to something. (T1)*

Give us as much useful knowledge as possible for our stay in Canada. I just want to get more and more information that's useful for me, that's enough. (R2)

Just tell us a general idea about the culture in Canada. (C2)

These learners perceived the instructor as someone who is very knowledgeable and whose role is to impart information. The instructors should:

have a wide range of knowledge. (T1)

give students knowledge. (R1)

be able to cover everything, give comprehensive lectures. They should be able to answer all the questions from the trainees. (C1)

Throughout this document, * indicates direct quotes. The letter refers to the first letter of the speaker's name. All names used were pseudonyms. The number refers to the series of interviews.
Furthermore, the information could be presented in lectures and talks given not only by the instructors, but also by other guest speakers, or in videos and printed materials. As some learners noted:

Ask specialists of each area to give us an outline of history, art, language etc. (C1)

Ask some common people to give us some lesson. Also some VIPs to tell how they feel about their own lives. (T1)

Also, the words "ask", "give us" seem to indicate that importance was placed on knowledge outside themselves and that knowledge was not gained from direct experience.

In order to be able to access this information, it was therefore, important to these learners to work on improving their English in the orientation program. As explained by some participants:

The first important thing is language, because language is the tool to communicate with Canadian people. We use it to learn knowledge. So, if we can master it, you can overcome many difficulties. (T2)

I think another very important purpose of the orientation course is to improve our English. It's kind of an intensive course of English. (C1)
ii. Conception 2: Orientation programs should present information as well as provide related experiences

Data from the interviews indicated that most of the learners viewed orientation programs as presenting information as well as providing opportunities to participate in activities. As stated by some:

Combine what we learn in class with practise. (S2)

Connect the classroom, give us a rough idea and then some special experience to help us connect practical and theory. (R1)

These learners clearly felt that some basic information presented in the form of lectures and talks given by the instructor and guest speakers, as well as through videos and printed materials was necessary because, as one participant noted: "Many people have never been abroad. They know nothing." (K1)

In addition to this, providing opportunities for the learners to take part in activities, to obtain practical experience was strongly emphasized in the data. As some learners explained:

I think the most useful way to remember is to do, practise. (I1)

I want to experience. To me, to experience in this society is very important. (Y1)

Let us do it, demonstrate and let us experience it ourselves. (E2)
Already our teachers (in China) have taught us many things about Canada, but we have never seen it or experienced it. I think it is different to hear from somebody and see by our own eyes and do by ourselves. So I think it's better for us to have some chance to experience it. (L1)

Phrases like "let us experience it ourselves", "see by our own eyes", "do by ourselves", indicate that the learners did not just want to be presented experiences, but wanted to be actively involved in the learning experiences. The importance of being an active participant in the orientation program clearly emerged.

C. DISCUSSION OF PARTICIPATION THEME

The preceding section has described two conceptions of participation in orientation programs held by the learners. It should be noted that conceptions are characteristic ways of understanding a phenomenon, and do not represent characteristics of the individuals. The following discussion will begin by making some general comments on approaches used in cross-cultural training and then attempt to address the two conceptions individually.

The literature on cross-cultural training approaches classify training techniques in various ways and under a variety of labels (Brislin & Pedersen, 1976; Warren & Adler, 1977; Gundykunst, Hammer & Wiseman, 1977; Landis & Brislin,
1983; Gundykunst & Hammer, 1983). The two most common approaches: the provision of information and the provision of experience, identified in these interviews, can be linked to the intellectual or cognitive-didactic approach and to the experiential approach mentioned in the literature. The intellectual/cognitive-didactic approach assumes that a cognitive understanding of another culture is important and focuses on the presentation of information about another culture in a lecture or reading type approach. The learner in this approach plays a passive role.

The experiential approach emphasizes the individual's responsibility for his/her own learning and assumes that interaction with the host culture enhances effective cross-cultural training. Here, active participation is the focus.

Data from the interviews indicated that a few learners conceptualized a cognitive-didactic approach to orientation. Conception 1: Orientation Programs should mainly provide information, was held by learners who expected the instructor to be a language teacher and an information source. The purposes and goals of the orientation for these learners were to improve their English, mainly through listening and reading, and to develop a general impression of Canadian society.
While this conception was held by a few learners, McCaffery (1986) posits that to improve cross-cultural orientation, it is necessary to approach it as an educational discipline and not merely as a chance to dispense information about a particular culture. He suggests that the goal of orientation should be "to move people towards developing/enhancing the skills they need to become independently effective cross-cultural sojourners." (p.166). He further suggests that an experiential training methodology which is congruent with this aim needs to be focussed on building cross-cultural skills. The methodology should ensure that all participants should be actively involved in and contribute to the learning process. Furthermore, for learning to be most effective, the goals should have relevance and meaning for the participants. Thus a variety of approaches need to be incorporated into the curriculum to accommodate various learning styles. Finally, both the instructor and the learner not only contribute to the learning process, but are also jointly responsible for the program outcomes.

Data from the interviews also indicated that most of the learners support McCaffery's proposed aim and methodology for orientations. They too felt that learners should actively contribute to the learning process. The learners conceptualized an integrated approach to cross-cultural orientation, incorporating the cognitive-didactic
and experiential approaches. Conception 2: Orientation Programs should present information as well as provide related experiences, was the more popular of the two conceptions held by the learners. There was a clear understanding that the orientation process should require active participation from the learners. Both the receiving of information and the participation in related activities were considered necessary for the orientation process.

We get some ideas from the teachers and from the experience of the field trips...through doing and through the introduction by the teachers, two kinds of ways. (L2)

First thing,...give us some information. Next go out of the university to do some practical work, to experience something. (Y1)

Thus, the instructor in this conception was seen more as a guide, helper and friend - someone who assists rather than instructs. Furthermore, the purpose or goal of orientation as perceived by these learners was to help them become familiar with Canadian life, to enable them to work, study and live here. As one learner summarized:

Experience Canada from the information given, the activities in the program, from visits to places and from our homestay...but the best way to learn something is to put it to practise. (F2)
D. CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Data from the classroom observations showed that attempts were made to incorporate both the cognitive-didactic approach and the experiential approach in the orientation process. For example, the learners were given an orientation to the library and were then assigned some homework that required them to practise using the library and thus apply what they had been shown. The learners' behavior and responses however, raised questions regarding the success of this integrated approach.

Many of them did not complete the library assignment and the assignments that were done, were not completed well. Why was this so? Did they not see the assignment as providing a chance to practice, to do? - the approach many of them conceptualized for orientation programs?

Another attempt to integrate theory and practice was the trip to London Drugs to learn about Canadian brands of goods and to do some comparison shopping. Although the purpose of this activity was explained to the learners, they participated in this activity rather unenthusiastically. Again, this raised questions regarding the integrated cognitive/experiential approach used and indicated that there must have been more to this concept of "combining theory and practice" as perceived by the learners. What
then were some of the other factors that could have influenced the success of this integrated approach?

Further examination of the data from classroom observations and from interviews with the instructors suggested some possible reasons why learner participation in these activities may have been minimal. As one instructor reported:

The trainees felt that they hadn't been involved in the decision making process at all in terms of what was going to go into the program, even though we said that we wanted their feedback. (W2)

Comments made by the learners during a classroom observation also reflected this perception. They wanted to be consulted and to be given a say in the planning and choosing of their learning activities:

It would be a good idea to get feedback from students. The cultural activities should fit the interest of the group. Should discuss things with students, how they feel about these activities. Get opinion from students ahead of time.

Furthermore, the data showed that the learners had definite ideas about what activities they considered necessary and useful:

The London Drugs trip was not useful because we had already been there. We will not buy things.
People have different opinions. We are adults...if they think it's no use for their future work, they won't do it. For me, it was important so I did it. Some people will go to a practical placement, so the library assignment is not so important to them....We have at least five years of working experience, so we know what is important and useful for us. (K2)

But was this necessarily true? Were these learners the best judges of what was necessary and useful for them to learn in order to adjust more easily and quickly to Canadian life? Having only been in Canada for a few short weeks, were they fully aware of what their needs would be in the future? Were their perceived needs appropriate and accurate? The library assignment and the London Drugs shopping trip in fact, showed that the learners' perception of the usefulness of activities differed from that of the instructors'. As one instructor noted:

They liked the field trips except the ones that they thought were redundant or unnecessary. Like the London Drugs trip. They hadn't really seen London Drugs; they had just gone to the camera department and that's all they saw. They still didn't know - I said to them that the reason they are going is to find out about Canadian brands, but they felt that they had brought their own stuff from home so they didn't need to know about Canadian brands. So, they felt that they had all that they needed. (J2)

But how does one balance the learners' desires and perceived needs with the instructor's view of what the learners need? The two examples indicated that active learner participation depended on whether or not the
learners considered the activity useful and necessary. So, as the learners suggested, it would have been best to have consulted with them in the planning process.

However, although the instructors acknowledged this fact, they further perceived learner participation to be dependent on the cost of the activities. As their comments revealed:

Basically, we ran into problems that anything that cost something for them, they didn’t want to participate in. So what I think might have been useful sometimes wasn’t useful, and they didn’t participate, not because they weren’t interested, but mainly because of the monetary outlay. (Z2)

One of them said that he wanted to find out more about Canadian everyday life such as movies. We had a movie field trip and no one went because they didn’t want to spend the money. It’s not that they didn’t realize the purpose, but it’s a big money problem. They thought that $3.50 was too much to pay for a movie. (J2)

Thus, these examples illustrated some conflicting perceptions between the instructors and the learners. Furthermore, they reflected the complexity of the theme of participation in cross-cultural orientations and suggest the need to pay more attention to the transactional process in cross-cultural orientations.
E. LEARNERS' CONCEPTIONS OF CONTROL IN ORIENTATION PROGRAMS

Closer examination of the data from the interviews and the observations, expanded on this theme of participation. A further theme, that of control in orientation programs emerged. As noted by a learner in his explanation of homework assignments:

If the teacher is a good teacher and the students respect this teacher, then they will do their homework. This may be a way of showing the teacher that he/she should respect the students' wishes. (R2)

In their interview responses, the learners referred to this control in terms of who was to control or make decisions about what was to be learned and how that learning was to occur in the orientation process. Two different conceptions related to this theme were evident:

Conception 1: Orientation programs should be controlled by the instructor

Conception 2: Orientation programs should be controlled by both the instructor and the learners
i. Conception 1: Orientation programs should be controlled by the instructor

From the interview responses, it was clear that some learners perceived control of the orientation process as being in the hands of the instructor. Their perception of the instructor was that of a "teacher" and an "advisor":

- tell us we should do this way or that way, which thing is very important for us. (L1)
- give some advice on how to study, or how to live or how to survive in Canada. (A1)

Others described the instructor as someone who would:

- have strong responsibility for the students. (R1)
- lead you to know something you are not familiar with. (C2)

The instructor was viewed as the possessor of the content and controller of the methods of learning, that is, mainly as a source through which the learners could "get more and more information that's useful." (R1).

In addition, these learners saw themselves as passive recipients in the orientation process. The learner, as one learner noted, should "willingly do what the teacher says, in the class and in the activities." (A1) Thus, communication was one-way in this conception of the orientation process.
ii. Conception 2: Orientation programs should be controlled by both the instructor and the learner

Learners who held this view of orientation expressed the opinion that the parameters of their learning and the learning activities should be defined by both the instructor and the student. Communication and collaboration were emphasized. As some learners stated:

Cooperation on both sides, teacher and student is important. (R2)

Ask the students to tell you what they need to know and plan accordingly. Ask the students what they think is important to learn, discuss and share their opinions. (Y2)

These learners clearly saw the instructor as a guide, a helper, a friend, a colleague - words indicating mutual sharing and a more equal sharing of power and decision making in the instructor/learner relationship. This was reinforced by the comments of an instructor:

This group really wanted a lot of consultation. They wanted a say in what was being taught, when they were being taught and what kinds of field trips they were going on, etc. (J2)

Moreover, the learners felt that rather than telling them what they should do, the instructor should:

accompany the students out of the classroom to practise how to live in Canada. (Fl)
Furthermore, these learners stressed that they were:

- professional adults with lots of experience in life. (R2)
- they know what they should do...have their own ideas. (K2)

There was thus, a sense of confidence in their own abilities to make decisions related to their learning transactions. This was further supported by a learner's explanation of the response to the library homework assignment:

- Students didn't take it seriously, because they thought it was of no use...
- adults are not like children, they know what they should do...if they want to learn it, they will volunteer to learn it even if you don't push them...
- we know what is important and useful for us. If we think it is no use, we won't learn it. (K2)

**F. DISCUSSION OF CONTROL THEME**

The preceding section has described two conceptions that learners held of control in the orientation program. The following discussion will begin by making some general comments on concepts in adult learning related to this theme of control, and then examine the two conceptions in light of that discussion.

Scholars have suggested that since one cannot teach the learner everything there is to know about the target culture, cross-cultural orientation programs should focus on helping the learner "learn how to learn" (McCaffery, 1986;
Hughes-Weiner, 1984; Christopher, 1984, Mestenhauser, 1983). Thus, attempts are being made to focus on the learning process that occurs in cross-cultural orientations. The ultimate goal from this perspective is to develop learners who are independent and self-directing.

The concepts of independence and self-direction have been widely discussed by various proponents in the field of adult education. Some conceptualized these two concepts as being the ultimate aim in adult learning. (Knowles, 1975; Tough, 1977; Brookfield, 1983). These earlier conceptualizations of self-direction and independence have since been questioned by others (Chene, 1983; Brookfield, 1986; Garrison, 1988; Pratt, 1988) and found inadequate in themselves to understand the learning process in an educational transaction. Therefore, a model which moves beyond self-direction and independence has been proposed by Garrison & Baynton (1987). This control model is presented as "an attempt to reflect the fundamental elements and their interrelationships in an educational transaction" (p.58). Let us examine how this model can help conceptualize the learning process in cross-cultural orientations and address the two conceptions of control in the orientation program held by the learners.

First, the balance among the dimensions of independence, proficiency and support which, as the Garrison
and Baynton model suggests, make up control, differ in the two conceptions. In Conception 1: Orientation programs should be controlled by the instructor - the learners seemed to indicate a strong reliance on the instructor to establish their learning goals and design their learning activities. If being responsible means being "aware not only of one’s own needs and abilities but what are worthwhile goals, appropriate standards, and alternative viewpoints" (Garrison, 1989, p.55), then one can surmise that perhaps these learners did not want to assume responsibility for their own learning and were willing to give up some independence since they expected to be told what was important for them and what to do. But why would these learners choose to do so?

Garrison (1989) suggests that "any educational decision must be an informed choice made with awareness of the alternatives as well as the abilities and resources required to reach the intended goal" (p.27). Perhaps the learners were not aware of alternatives to help them make informed choices. Also, they may have lacked confidence and may not have perceived themselves as capable of effecting change. In other words, their level of "proficiency" was low. In addition, if they perceived the goal of an orientation program to be to "get more and more information", then they may have been more apt to give up their independence to reach that goal faster. Moreover, the learners came from a
highly interdependent society, where roles are more clearly defined and maintained. Thus, an instructor's role is to instruct and a learner's role is to do as the instructor directs. Furthermore, if their role in society was other-determined, then not only might they not have been able to choose their own educational goals, but their motivation to assume responsibility may have also been very low. Therefore, the educational and sociological background of the learners may have contributed to the conception of the learning process being controlled by the instructor. Whatever the reasons nevertheless, control in this triadic relationship seemed to shift towards the dimension of "support", with little emphasis on learner "proficiency" and "independence".

In Conception 2: Orientation programs should be controlled by both the instructor and the learner - the learners perceived themselves as being independent and able to determine their own learning goals and activities. They identified themselves as "professional adults" and portrayed confidence in their abilities to plan their own learning. They further acknowledged the instructor as someone who would provide information, assistance, advice and suggestions. Thus, the perception of control in this triadic relationship seemed to indicate a better balance among the three dimensions: proficiency, support and independence. It should be noted here however, that these
learners came from the same sociological background as the learners who held the conception that orientation programs should be controlled by instructors. This then indicates that variables other than societal background may have influenced conceptions.

But how were these conceptions reflected in the orientation process? Closer examination of the data further suggested that while the learners perceived themselves to be capable of assuming some responsibility for their own learning, there were factors that may have influenced the learners achieving appropriate control in the orientation process.

According to the Garrison & Baynton (1987) model of control, three basic components: proficiency, independence and support, need to be in balance to enable the learners to develop and maintain the appropriate degree of control over their learning process. If one of these components is lacking then the degree of control exercised by the learner is lowered. Did the learners in this study have the appropriate balance needed to develop and maintain control in the orientation process? Were they lacking in any of the three components mentioned?

The proficiency component, or what could be perceived as the psychological dimension of control, includes the
learner's cognitive style, self concept, emotional maturity, attitude and motivational level. While the learners in this study perceived a confidence in themselves and in their abilities to determine and achieve their learning goals, data from interviews with the staff suggested that this perception was not necessarily shared by the staff. In fact, some of them regarded the learners to be lacking incentive and ability to carry out the learning activities and to create personal meaning from these learning experiences:

The trainees didn't understand what the program was about. They didn't realize the importance of the program; they didn't realize how it was helping them. (Z2)

The students have to be motivated and interested. (J2)

It was really evident that this group was very apathetic. They weren't really that interested in western whatever. (Q2)

These comments suggested that the learners may have been lacking in the proficiency component and thus, control in this learning situation would have been influenced by their attitudes and motivational levels.

Moreover, data from this study seemed to suggest that perhaps the learners perceived a need for greater freedom and independence. The amount of freedom learners have in an educational context to decide their own learning needs and formulate their own learning goals is addressed by the
independence component of the model. This component also assumes that the learners have and are aware of alternatives. The learners in this study clearly felt that as professional adults, they were aware of what was important and useful for them to learn. They attempted to emphasize this point by resisting to participate in activities they deemed unnecessary and not useful and, at times, by disregarding instructions given by the staff. As reported by an instructor: "We asked them not to ride their bicycles and they rode them." (Q2)

The learners, in turn explained:

    We are adults and have our own ideas... if we think it is no use, we won't learn it. (K2)

    This may be a way of showing the teacher that he/she should respect the students' wishes. (R2)

These comments raised some questions: Why did the learners choose to react in this way? Did they feel that their perception of independence was not supported by the staff?

While support in an educational context may refer to both human and non-human resources, perhaps the most important form in the orientation context is the instructor. However, the question that arose in this study was not whether support was available to the learners, but whether the support available was what the learners perceived necessary for them to maintain some control of their
learning process. Data from the interviews indicated that the learners clearly understood the instructor's role to be that of a helper, guide, friend and an advisor. Someone who would, as one learner described, "help students survive in this society." (Y2) Furthermore, the instructors described their role as being a mediator, guide, information source, resource person and facilitator. Although it seemed that both the learners and the instructors shared similar perceptions of the kind of support learners in the orientation should receive, what in fact took place hinted at some difficulties that could arise in an orientation program and pointed to the complexity of the cross-cultural orientation process.

As the staff explained:

There were a lot of power struggles....a lot of problems came because the staff weren't aware of the way they were coming across to the students. A lot of the time they came across as really authoritarian, even though that wasn't necessarily what they were intending. (J2)

It was a lack of sensitivity to how Chinese perceived someone who is younger. (W2)

Some of the students expressed that we were all too young to be telling them what to do. I think authority is a very important thing in the Chinese culture especially. And I think the students found it difficult because we were younger than most of them were. (Z2)

These explanations showed that there was more to this theme of control in cross-cultural orientations than just maintaining a balance among the components of support,
proficiency and independence. In fact, Garrison (1989) suggests that balance of control can be established through "communication and understanding between the teacher and student" (p. 30). Was this evident in the orientation? A closer analysis of the data also showed that both the learners and the instructors perceived understanding, communication and collaboration between learners and instructors as being important and necessary to cross-cultural orientations. As the learners suggested:

The teacher must not talk, talk, talk. They should consider more what the trainees are thinking about... People should understand each other... a two-way understanding. (K2)

Ask the students what they think is important to learn, discuss and share their opinions. (Y2)

Give students a choice. Cooperation on both sides, teacher and student, is important. (R2)

Similar thoughts were reflected by the instructors:

I think it's really important that there be some sort of bond/confidence between student and teacher. (J2)

The teacher has to be willing to compromise and negotiate with the students on certain things, and to really listen to the students because that way you have a deeper understanding of what their needs are. (Q2)

Communication is the underlying factor... by the staff as a team... communication with the students, what we are doing and why... soliciting direction from the students, feedback about their expectations, their needs. (X2)
Moreover, an added dimension, that of understanding and knowing the learners' culture was also mentioned by all. As an instructor noted:

The staff has to have experience dealing with Chinese students and have cultural sensitivity. (W2)

The learners agreed:

They should understand the Chinese, this is very important. They should have some basic knowledge of the Chinese culture. (F2)

It is very important that the teacher knows the cultural background of the Chinese students. The teacher and students should mutually understand each other. It is very important especially for orientation teachers. (Y2)

In short, the conceptions that the learners held of control in orientation programs proved to be more involved and complex, given the nature of the cross-cultural orientation process.

G. SUMMARY

The chapter has presented an analysis of the data collected for an investigative study of the learners' conceptions of orientation programs. The data was collected through two rounds of interviews with both the instructors and the learners and through classroom observations.

Analysis of the data indicated that two major themes dominated the learners' conceptions of the orientation
program. They were **participation** and **control**. Two different conceptions emerged for each theme.

The two conceptions that emerged, relating to the theme of participation were:  

i. Orientation programs should mainly provide information and  

ii. Orientation programs should provide information as well as related experiences.  
The learners' participation in the first conception was a passive one. They were receivers of information and they perceived their instructors and guest speakers to be givers of information. They expected to be told how to do things, rather than experience the activity themselves. Contrary to this, the learners who held the second conception expected to be active participants in the orientation process. They wanted to be both receivers and doers. They saw the instructor as a facilitator for their learning process and emphasized the importance of communication and collaboration between learners and the instructor. "Combine theory and practise" and "Let us do" were emphasized by these learners.

Two conceptions also emerged related to the theme of control in orientation programs:  

i. Orientation Programs should be controlled by the instructor  

ii. Orientation Programs should be controlled by both the instructor and the learner. Learners who held the first orientation perceived the instructor as being in charge of their learning goals and activities, as the possessor of the
content and method of learning. They expected to be told what to do and felt that they should "willingly" do as told. In contrast however, the learners who held the second conception perceived a more collaborative relationship with the instructor. It was important to them not only to actively participate in the activities, but also to contribute to the planning and be jointly responsible with the instructor for the outcome, thus assuming some control of their learning process.

While the four conceptions reflected the learners point of view on the themes of participation and control in cross-cultural orientations, the analysis further suggested that in practise, these conceptions were largely influenced by the interactions and dynamics that occur in the process of cross-cultural orientation.
CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION

A. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Most of the literature in the field of cross-cultural orientation refers to theoretical models and methodologies (Albert, 1986; J.M.Bennett, 1986; Triandis, 1986, Brislin, 1984; Gundykunst, Hammer & Wiseman, 1977), stages in cross-cultural adjustment and their implications for the design and implementation of cross-cultural programs (Bennett, 1986; Grove & Torbiorn, 1986; Juffer, 1986; Weaver, 1983), and teaching and learning strategies used in cross-cultural training (Hughes-Wiener, 1986; MaCaffery, 1984; Christopher, 1984; Mestenhauser, 1983). This body of research on cross-cultural orientations seems largely to emphasize the perspective of program developers and instructors rather than the learners.

This study however, explored the learners' conceptions of orientation programs. The focus in this study has been to look at issues in orientation programming like goals, approaches, content, expectations, skills and role of the instructor, from the perspective of the learners. Therefore, some research on concepts common in adult learning: independence, self-direction, participation and control, were also reviewed (Knowles, 1975; Tough, 1977; Brookfield, 1983; Chene, 1983, Brookfield, 1986; Garrison &
Baynton, 1987; Pratt, 1988; Garrison, 1988). These studies not only helped provide some insight into characteristics of adult learners, but also served as a reference for the themes and conceptions that emerged in this investigative study.

Two series of interviews were conducted with the eleven learners participating in an orientation program. All were from the same ethnic background – Chinese, and had arrived as a group from China for their orientation. They were all professional adults who were in Canada to work and/or study in different institutions and organizations for eight to ten months.

The research was guided by an interpretive perspective and a qualitative technique. Two series of interviews with the learners, classroom observations, interviews with the instructors and program documents provided the data for this study. Synthesizing the information from these various sources also provided cross-validation for the findings.

Analysis of the data indicated that from the learners' perspective, participation and control were important themes to address regarding cross-cultural orientation programs. While these concepts apply to educational transactions in general, they are particularly important in the cross-cultural orientation process and are further complicated by misinterpretations resulting from language and cultural differences. Thus, there is a need to further consider
adult learning principles in cross-cultural orientations and examine how they may apply to the cross-cultural orientation process.

Two varying conceptions of each theme emerged. With regards to the theme of participation, most of the learners wanted to be active participants and perceived that orientation programs should present information as well as provide opportunities to participate in related activities. A few however, understood that orientation programs mainly present information and indicated their participation to be more passive, as recipients of information. With regards to the theme of control, few learners indicated that orientation programs should be controlled by the instructor. Majority of the learners however, perceived that orientation programs should be controlled by both the instructor and the learners, and emphasized the necessity and the importance of communication, collaboration and understanding between the instructor and the learners. While these four varying conceptions represent different ways in which the learners of an orientation program understood the cross-cultural orientation phenomenon, the analysis of the data also indicated that in actual practice, these conceptions were further complicated by the dynamics and the complexities of the nature of cross-cultural orientations.
B. IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY

Given the limitations of the transferability of the findings, implications of this study can only be made with caution. Nonetheless, attempts will be made to address the findings to orientation programs in general.

Firstly, the findings seemed to draw attention to the interaction and dynamics that can occur in orientation programs. Instructors and program developers need to have a clear understanding of some of the fundamental elements existing in an educational transaction involving adult learners and address them to cross-cultural orientations. They need to further explore the relationship between control and adult decision making in the orientation process and to expand on their knowledge of what is an adult learner.

Secondly, instructors need to examine their own conceptions of orientation programs and to reflect on their role in the orientation process. They need to explore ways of relinquishing exclusive control over the learning situation and encourage autonomy in learners. They need to accept adult learners more as involved partners in the orientation process than as passive recipients. Thus, opportunities for feedback and dialogue between the instructors and the learners need to be available to establish a more equal relationship between the two.
Thirdly, the concept of experiential learning in orientation programs needs to be more closely examined. Do most orientation programs interpret experiential learning mainly as providing the learners with activities and experiences outside the classroom? Are most of these activities then structured by the instructor? Attention needs to be given to designing orientation programs with clear negotiable structures that can more meaningfully involve adult learners in the orientation process.

Fourthly, instructors and program developers need to be aware of the varying conceptions of the orientation process held by learners. They need to be well informed about the professional and cultural background of their learners to help them understand what could influence the learners' conceptions. However, as this study showed, they should also explore other factors like educational background, personality traits, learning styles, language proficiency, to name a few, that might contribute to the learners' varying conceptions of the orientation process.

Finally, by being aware of learners' conceptions, orientation programs can be designed to not only acknowledge their existing conceptions, but to encourage the learners to actively explore and experience new learning situations.
C. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

To begin, the nature and time frame of the orientation program limited the availability of the informants and the time spent with them. All the learners were here only for the duration of the orientation program and left soon after it ended. Therefore, it was not possible to return to these participants with the findings to have them verified or further expanded upon if necessary.

Also, this group of learners were all from the same country and from the same cultural background. So, perhaps the findings cannot be generalized to learners from another country or from another cultural background.

Moreover, the learners in this study were all professional adults and this may have impacted on their conceptions of an organized learning process. Thus, the findings may be limited to adults of similar social backgrounds.

Finally, the personal dynamics and interactional patterns between the instructors and the learners in this study were unique. This could have influence the learners' conceptions. So consequently, the findings of this study must be applied with caution to another orientation environment where the personal dynamics between the instructors and the students may be different.
The limitations discussed could have been overcome by expanding the study to include other similar orientation programs with different instructors and learners or with the same instructors and different learners.

D. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This investigative study has raised some issues and questions for further research. These will be addressed in terms of the participants or learners in orientation programs, the instructors of orientation programs and the orientation programs themselves.

First, in terms of the participants or learners, some questions that need to be addressed through further research are: Do learners from different cultural backgrounds share similar conceptions of orientation programs? Do learners who are professional adults hold similar conceptions of the orientation process as adults who are perhaps students? How does a learner’s preparation or lack of, in terms of language study and cultural briefings in his/her own country, impact on their conceptions of orientation programs? What are some factors that may influence learners’ conceptions of orientation programs, for example, personality, language proficiency, learning styles, and support?
Next, in terms of the instructors in the orientation programs, further research is also needed to explore questions like: How do instructors' conceptions of the orientation process influence orientation programs and thus influence the learners' conceptions? What are some issues instructors of orientation programs need to be aware of that will facilitate their role in the orientation process? What cross-cultural training do instructors themselves need to effectively conduct cross-cultural orientation programs?

Finally, as far as the orientation programs themselves, research into different kinds of cross-cultural orientation programs is needed. Questions that need to be examined are: Does the length of the orientation program influence learners' conceptions? Do learners' conceptions change over the course of the orientation? How does the content impact on learners' conceptions, i.e., orientation programs with an academic component compared to one with a workplace component? Does the size of the orientation program make a difference in learners' conceptions? How do adult learning principles impact on various cross-cultural orientation programs? What are some other issues that could emerge cross-cultural orientation programs?
Cross-cultural orientation is not a static phenomenon. As this study revealed, the cross-cultural orientation process is dynamic and complex. As those involved in the field continue to examine this process from the researchers’, practitioners’ and learners’ perspectives, and work at providing conceptual and theoretical models that are validated in the reality of the orientation process, a wider and more thorough understanding of the phenomenon of cross-cultural orientation will result.
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APPENDIX B

CONCEPTIONS OF CROSS-CULTURAL ORIENTATION

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does the term "cultural orientation" mean to you?
2. What do you think should be the purpose/goal of cross-cultural orientation?
3. What should the content of an orientation program be?
4. What method(s)/approach(es) of instruction would be suitable for an orientation program?
5. How should the content/activities of the orientation program be sequenced?
6. What outcomes should be presented in an orientation program?
7. What do you think is critical to the effectiveness of an orientation program?
8. What can hamper the development of an effective orientation program?
9. What kinds of skills should the instructors have to conduct an orientation program?
10. What should be the role of the instructor in an orientation program?
11. What are some issues that one should be aware of regarding orientation programs?
12. What are your personal expectations of the orientation program?
13. Do you have anything else to add to this interview?

The above questions provided a framework for both the first and second series of interviews. In addition to these question, the interviewee was asked to give examples, to elaborate on a comment and to clarify when needed.
### APPENDIX C
### CONCEPTIONS OF CROSS-CULTURAL ORIENTATION
### OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>CLASS COMPONENT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8:30 am</td>
<td>English for special purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11:30 am</td>
<td>Listening &amp; Speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1:30 pm</td>
<td>Cultural Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>8:30 am</td>
<td>English for special purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>11:30 am</td>
<td>Listening &amp; Speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1:30 pm</td>
<td>Cultural Orientation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D
EXAMPLE OF SOME INITIAL THEMES

CONTENT

CANADIAN SOCIETY

Country

People

Life

Behaviours

Survival skills

Thinking

Appearance

Social skills

EDUCATIONAL

System

Political System

Legal System

History

Festivals

Social Issues

CANADIAN SOCIETY

EDUCATIONAL

System

BEHAVIOURAL

Culture Shock

Independent Learners

Interpersonal Communication

PLACEMENT

Work

Academic

Study skills

Language

Time