

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN CULTURAL MODELS OF TEACHING:  
TRANSNATIONAL CHINESE TEACHERS IN U.S. EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOMS

Pei-Ying Wu

A dissertation submitted to the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Education (Early Childhood, Special Education, and Literacy)

Chapel Hill  
2017

Approved by:

Rebecca New

Lynne Vernon-Feagans

Xue Lan Rong

Cheryl Mason Bolick

Myriam Met

©2017  
Pei-Ying Wu  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

## **ABSTRACT**

Pei-Ying Wu: Continuity and Change in Cultural Models of Teaching: Transnational Chinese Teachers in U.S. Early Childhood Classrooms  
(Under the direction of Rebecca New)

There is a long history of research documenting cultural differences in educational aims and teaching practices. Such studies reveal that what educators want for young children and the practices they use to achieve these goals vary in different nations around the world. However, researchers know little about what happens when educators trained in one part of the world begin to teach in a different national, cultural and political context. This study took advantage of the accelerating trend of teacher migration and the growing number of transnational educators in the U.S. force to explore cultural differences experienced by transnational teachers during their initial transitions into the U.S. schools. This study took place in four U.S. public elementary schools in a southeastern state that recently launched dual language Mandarin immersion programs. Study participants were overseas-trained Chinese teachers hired in the U.S. as primary grade teachers (K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade).

The study was designed to elucidate (1) what transnational teachers know and can articulate about their own teaching; (2) how they approach their responsibilities to students of (and in) a different culture; and (3) what changes emerge (at the group and individual level) as transnational teachers are participating in U.S. schools where they contribute their particular foreign language expertise while simultaneously learning new ideas and practices.

Contemporary scholarship on cultural models guided this exploratory study. Results of this study provide new insights into dynamics of continuity and change in cultural models and

illustrate individual differences in how transnational teachers make sense of and respond to new educational ideas and practices within a different socio-cultural context.

All praise, honor and glory to my Lord for your richest love, grace, and mercy along the way.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With immense gratitude to my husband, parents, family, brothers & sisters, friends, and professors for your support, love, prayers, encouragement, and guidance. Without you, I could not have completed this dissertation.

To my advisor, Dr. Rebecca New, whose high standards and hours of reading, editing, guiding this dissertation is greatly appreciated. I am also very grateful to her for willingly sharing her wealth of knowledge with me. To my committee members, Dr. Lynne Vernon-Feagans, Dr. Xue Lan Rong, Dr. Cheryl Bolick, and Dr. Myriam Met thank you for insightful feedback, kind support, and genuine interest in me and my study. To Dr. Diana Lys, Dr. Nick Cabot, Dr. Deborah Eaker-Rich, Dr. Anne Bryan, Dr. Sharon Palsha, and Dr. Kristin Papoi, thank you for your amazing support throughout my doctoral study at UNC-CH.

Many thanks to the coach K and the colleagues at the recruitment agency and all the teachers, children and schools that I have worked/interacted with. I have gained so many valuable insights into my beliefs and practices about good teaching and learning as a result of working with you.

I greatly appreciate the friendship, advice, and help I have received from my talented professionals, Dr. Maria Cristina Limlingan, Kristin Lowder, Dr. Ling-Yin Chang, Dr. Alison LaGarry, Chin-Hsien Ni, Mei-Chiang Lin, Kao-Hsiang Ni, Chiu-Rong Li. There were numerous occasions when your support, words of encouragement, and interests in my work were instrumental in moving me forward.

I would like to express my gratitude to the brothers and sisters in my church and the UNC-Duke, FYTER and SALT fellowship. Thank you for being my family in NC. Your love, care, and prayers mean so much to me.

And finally, I want to give my biggest thanks to my husband, Dr. Ho-Lung Li, and my parents and family in Taiwan and the U.S., thank you for being my corner and standing beside me through this long journey.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .....	x
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE .....	1
Education in a Heightened Globalized Context .....	1
Personal Scholarly Pursuits .....	4
The Study: Newly Arrived Transnational Teachers in U.S. Classrooms .....	6
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW & CONCEPTURAL FRAMEWORK.....	8
Research on Cultural Differences in Teaching and Learning .....	9
The Case of China .....	13
Changes of Teaching in Different Contexts .....	19
Summary of Literature .....	20
Conceptual Framework .....	21
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY .....	27
The Research Context .....	28
Study Participants.....	32
Research Design .....	36
Data Collection Strategies.....	37
Data Analysis .....	42
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS .....	46



Participant Perspectives on Transition Experiences.....	46
Chinese Transnational Teachers’ Shared Cultural Model of Teaching .....	54
Instantiations of a Chinese Cultural Model within U.S. Classroom .....	66
Resilience and Change in Cultural Models of Teaching.....	94
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION.....	100
Cultural Exchanges Illuminate Different Cultural Models .....	102
Continuity and Change in Cultural Models.....	103
Implications.....	106
Limitations .....	111
APPENDIX A: INTRODUCTORY LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE .....	113
APPENDIX B: THE FIRST CULTURAL MODELS INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	128
APPENDIX C: THE SECOND CULTURAL MODELS INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	132
REFERENCES .....	133

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Demographic Profiles of Four Elementary Schools with Chinese Immersion Programs .....	30
Table 2 Number of Participating Teachers Per School and Per Grade Level.....	33
Table 3 Categories and Number of Teachers' College Majors and Teaching Certifications .....	34
Table 4 Teachers' Years of Teaching in China .....	35
Table 5 Transition Questions in the Transnational Teacher Questionnaire.....	47
Table 6 Transnational Teacher Ratings on Living Context and Social Life.....	48
Table 7 Transnational Teacher Rating about Personal Challenges .....	49
Table 8 Transnational Teacher Ratings of Initial Professional Challenges Due to Lack of Familiarity with U.S. Schools .....	50
Table 9 Transnational Teacher Ratings of Professional Struggles Due to Ideological Differences.....	51
Table 10 Six Kindergarten Teachers' Professional Background.....	52
Table 11 Teacher Beliefs Questions Used to Elicit Interpretations of a Chinese Cultural Model.....	54
Table 12 Teacher Recognition of Differences in Educational Contexts between China and the U.S. ....	55
Table 13 Teacher Reported Goals for Early Elementary Students in China and the U.S. (Modified from Stipek & Byler's (2004) Teacher Survey).....	57
Table 14 Teacher Ratings of Instructional Methods Used in China and the U.S. ....	59
Table 15 Six Kindergarten TNT's Elaborations on Differences in Educational Contexts between China and the U.S. ....	60
Table 16 Early Childhood Classroom Observations of Six Kindergarten Classrooms .....	72
Table 17 Common Daily Routine across Three Classrooms .....	88
Table 18 Teacher Reported Goals of U.S. Public Schools at Two Time Points (Modified from Stipek & Byler's (2004) Teacher Survey).....	96
Table 19 Self-reported Change on Ideology and Practices of Teaching .....	97

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE**

The effect of globalization in conjunction with the trend of teacher migration created a unique set of circumstances for this dissertation project. My personal and professional experiences associated with cross-cultural studies, teaching, and research also became inspirations for this study. With this backdrop, this study focuses on a small group of Chinese transnational teachers with the purpose of exploring their cultural construction of and changes in teaching during their early years in the United States.

### **Education in a Heightened Globalized Context**

In an increasingly globalized world where the flow of information, capital, and people across national borders is without limits, exchanges across cultures are accelerated. The exchange of ideas and practices is prominent in the field of education. Such exchange could be driven by the curiosity about other nations' approaches as they promote certain knowledge and skills, e.g., the surge in teaching math and science in response to "Sputnik humiliation" (Leslie, 1993, p. 203) when "the Soviet Union caught the United States off guard with its successful launch of the satellite Sputnik" (Schoenfeld, 2004, p. 257) or by dissatisfaction with the status quo.

In the field of early childhood education, the exchange of ideas across cultures has a very long history in the U.S. (New, 2005). Clear evidence of the importation of ideas from foreign sources, such as Froebel's kindergarten movement or Montessori-style education, dates as far back as the 19th century (Beatty, 1995). A somewhat more recent example of "foreign

importation” of philosophy and pedagogy occurred when the early childhood education in Reggio Emilia was reported by *Newsweek* as home to one of the 10 best early childhood programs in the world in 1991 (Kantrowitz & Wingert, 1991). Many preschools in the U.S. began to integrate some of the core ideas of that Italian city’s philosophy into their daily practice. Some U.S. schools have also hosted Italian educators to guide their efforts to incorporate “the Reggio Emilia Approach” in American classrooms. These practitioners and researchers in early care and education have played leadership roles in improving understandings about the development and learning of young children and yielding helpful adaptations of educational ideas and practices from abroad (Neuman, 2005; New, 2005). International exchanges of ideas have occasionally influenced educational policies and programs as well as the act of educating young children in some nations (Kammerman, 2005).

Another form of exchange is teacher migration around the world. 21<sup>st</sup> century technological advances have made it easier for national governments to seek teachers beyond the confines of the nation-state. Assisted by new technologies, school districts in the U.S. have begun to recruit overseas-trained educators for reasons of diversifying the teaching force and solving some teacher shortage problems.

To better understand these global (ex)changes as they play out in this study, the following discussion outlines: (1) the rapid increase of teacher migration to the U.S.; and (2) the potential of transnational teachers as agents of cross-cultural exchange.

**The rapid increase of teacher migration to the United States.** In the years leading up to this study, foreign teacher recruitment increased dramatically. One report issued by the National Education Association estimated that “in 2002 there were 14,943 overseas-trained teachers working in the United States on visas, with 10,012 working in public schools” (cited in

American Federation of Teachers (AFT), 2009, p. 10). The most recent estimate (in 2007) of overseas-trained transnational teachers working in U.S. primary and secondary schools was nearly 20,000 (American Federation of Teachers (AFT), 2009). These teachers are being hired to teach different content areas, usually serving the needs of foreign language education (Fee, 2011).

This continued acceleration of teacher migration to the U.S. can be attributed to several “push and pull” factors. Within the U.S., growing teacher shortages in the public school system have become the primary factor that draws international teachers into the U.S. (American Federation of Teachers (AFT), 2009; Hutchison, 2005). Qualified international educators who can teach academic subjects in addition to foreign languages and with the potential to play roles as cultural ambassadors, seem destined to become ideal transnational teacher candidates. Other advantages, such as their strong work ethic and the opportunity to diversify the teaching force, contribute to the view of international teachers as an asset to U.S. schools (Cook, 2000). From the perspective of the teachers, those from relatively poor or less industrialized countries may seek opportunities to migrate to the U.S. in order to obtain higher salaries and better living conditions. Others may simply want to experience American culture or improve their English (Cook, 2000; Hutchison, 2005). Yet another contributing factor to this growing number of transnational teachers is the experience of value-added international teaching that will benefit those who return home.

**Transnational teachers as agents of cross-cultural exchange.** As discussed previously, U.S. educators have long been interested in importing ideas, methods and, more recently, personnel from other cultures. The combination of globalization and curiosity are promoting teacher migration, positioning transnational teachers as agents of cross-cultural exchanges. Although the purported reason for transnational teachers to come to the U.S. is to teach - not to

borrow ideas or practices from their American colleagues - this study is premised on the belief that, as they teach, they also acquire knowledge about education in the U.S. which may call their previously held pedagogical beliefs and practices into question. Based on this premise, this study seeks to understand if and how teachers from one culture modify their teaching beliefs and practices when teaching students in another socio-cultural context.

### **Personal Scholarly Pursuits**

A more personal inspiration for this study came from my scholarly pursuits over the last ten years as an international student in the United States. In 2006, I came to the United States with great curiosity about how Americans educate their children, in part due to the attitudes prevalent in Taiwan that Western early education is better than the traditional Taiwanese practices. As I began graduate study at the University of Pennsylvania and explored more scholarly work, I discovered that a similar debate over what constitutes appropriate instructional practices was also taking place in the United States (Mallory & New, 1994). My experience as a preschool teacher in an urban preschool in Philadelphia also expanded my understanding about the complexity of working with children with cultural and developmental differences. Over time, I came to realize that there is no single, universally applicable, “right” way to educate children. My personally informed cross-cultural studying, international teaching and comparative research experiences have contributed to a growing awareness of the cultural nature of education including beliefs and practices about teaching and learning. These experiences culminated in my decision to pursue doctoral studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and were translated into a research agenda informed by an internship and resulting in this dissertation.

Over the last three years, as a self-initiated experience aligned with my doctoral study, I worked as an intern at an agency that recruits international teachers to teach in U.S. public

schools. Because of my cultural and language background, I was assigned to work with a team that supported elementary-level Mandarin immersion programs. This allowed me to see how the recent rising power of China has contributed to the popularity of learning Mandarin in the United States<sup>1</sup>. At the time of this internship and my dissertation study, the “1 Million Strong” initiative was announced by former President Obama, with the aim of increasing the total number of stateside learners of Mandarin Chinese from approximately 200,000 to 1 million by the year 2020 (Allen-Ebrahimian, 2015; Billings, 2015). This initiative is a compelling illustration of the relationship between U.S. global politics and the practices in foreign language education at the time when this dissertation was proposed.

In every phase of the internship, I was assigned different tasks from which I gained knowledge of international teacher exchange, dual language immersion program practices, and cross-cultural challenges and adjustment. During the first phase of the internship, the tasks focused on development training for Mandarin immersion teachers and the improvement of curricular materials for Mandarin immersion programs based on the required Common Core State Standards alignment. As time went by, I had more opportunities to visit schools, and my supervisor asked me to identify teachers’ needs so that the team could provide support strategies for them with regards to providing engaging, interactive, rigorous instruction in early elementary immersion classrooms. During the second phase of the internship, I had further opportunities to observe classrooms and began to be involved in developing orientation sessions and targeted training plans for Mandarin immersion teachers. Subsequently, my supervisor asked me to design a Mandarin assessment for K-2 grade levels because schools and parents were curious and anxious about children’s language performance. During the pilot testing, I got the chance to

---

<sup>1</sup> The “expansion boom” of Mandarin Chinese immersion programs in the U.S. began in 2007 and the growth rate of U.S. Mandarin immersion programs from 2007 to 2014 was 336% (Weise, 2014).

conduct the assessment with my colleagues at different schools. Afterward, my job continued to focus on the revision, administration, and analyses of assessment data collected from hundreds of students.

Over the course of this internship, I not only acquired a close familiarity with over 40 Chinese teachers and their teaching, but also noticed various phenomena that seemed worthy of further investigation. Of growing interest to me were transnational teachers' adaptations to U.S. school settings, their understandings and interpretations of good instructional practices, and subtle changes in their traditional cultural interpretations of teaching. In addition to these topics of interest, this internship made it apparent that the larger phenomenon of globalization has made an impact on teaching, both locally and internationally.

### **The Study: Newly Arrived Transnational Teachers in U.S. Classrooms**

This dissertation is a part of a larger study designed to take advantage of these trends: the growing numbers of transnational teachers, the heightened interest in the U.S. about China and the Chinese language, and the increased presence of immersion Chinese language programs designed for American students. This dissertation explores the pedagogical beliefs and practices of newly arrived Chinese transnational teachers in the U.S.

This exploration was motivated by several assumptions. Given the great differences between Chinese and American cultures and educational traditions, the American educational context is likely to present challenges even to experienced Chinese teachers. Such challenges, especially those in conflict with their original professional norms, have the potential to raise Chinese teachers' awareness of their own views and habitual teaching behavior. At the same time, the parameters of this study provide an opportunity to examine a question of growing importance, given 21<sup>st</sup> century globalization of education: What happens over time as these



transnational teachers simultaneously teach children while trying to learn new ideas and practices in a foreign cultural context?

These assumptions and curiosities were translated, subsequent to a review of the literature, into the following research questions to be examined in a small group of transnational Chinese teachers in U.S. public schools with Mandarin language immersion programs:

1. What features of a traditional Chinese cultural model of teaching and learning are recognized/articulated by Chinese transnational teachers (at the group level and at individual level)?
2. What features of Chinese cultural models of teaching are instantiated in Chinese transnational teachers' U.S. classrooms?
3. What changes, if any, are evident in Chinese transnational teachers' pedagogical views and practices after they've gained experience teaching in the United States?

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW & CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Three bodies of literature related to teachers' pedagogical beliefs and practices in diverse and changing contexts guided the development of the three aforementioned research questions. This chapter begins with a review of the literature, followed by a discussion of the guiding conceptual framework informed by scholarship in the field of psychological anthropology and cultural models theory.

Given the aims of this study, the chapter begins by reviewing research on the cultural embeddedness of teaching and learning and highlights the diversity of teachers' beliefs and practices in different parts of the world. The second body of literature of relevance to this study reviews China's culturally situated educational beliefs, including the role of teachers and their preparation, and the effects of cross-cultural exchanges on education policy and teaching practices. The case of China not only highlights relationships between that nation's cultural values and educational beliefs and practices but also reflects the impact of the global sharing of ideas across national/cultural contexts on education. A third body of research on changes of teaching in different contexts is also reviewed in this study for it relates to newly arrived transnational Chinese teachers' situations.

With these bodies of literature as a backdrop, the remainder of this chapter draws insights from Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, contemporary psychological anthropology, and scholarly work on cultural models to establish the conceptual framework that guides the research design and analysis.

## **Research on Cultural Differences in Teaching and Learning**

**Anthropological research.** There has been a long history of anthropological research describing, analyzing, and explaining human activities in different cultures. Of particular relevance to this study is the work documenting cultural differences in parenting and child development (LeVine & New, 2008; Whiting, 1963). This work has informed the theory of cultural models of early education by providing evidence of how “moralized knowledge” shared by members of a cultural group guides appropriate practices in the care and socialization of young children (LeVine, 1994, p. 144). An additional subset of this scholarship has focused more explicitly on education, especially for early childhood (Holloway, 2000; New, 1999; Tobin, Hsueh, & Karasawa, 2009; Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989). Such work illustrates how culture gives meaning to the conditions and shapes of children’s developmental and learning pathways. Although these studies may not focus solely on teaching, they reveal the cultural variability of educators’ goals and strategies for attaining those goals. The following foci are of particular relevance to this study: work that has identified the influence of cultural values on educational goals and teaching strategies for young children (New, 1999); the underlying pedagogical beliefs shared by teachers in different cultures (New, 1990; Shimahara, 2002); the role and social responsibilities of teachers (New, 1990, 2003); the implicit cultural practices of teachers across three cultures (Tobin et al., 1989); and the cultural models shared by early educators in an Asian society (Holloway, 2000). When reviewed collectively, the findings of this literature present an introduction of different cultures’ ingrained assumptions about desirable teaching beliefs and practices.

New’s (1999) years of anthropological work in Italy found that the municipal early childhood services in Reggio Emilia have their roots in enduring Italian cultural values,

including the importance of close, interdependent relationships and shared responsibility for the care of young children. This valuing of social relationships and the sense of shared responsibility are reflected in Reggio Emilia's overall educational goals of developing active citizens with critical thinking and collaboration skills (New, 1999; New, 2007). Driven by these educational goals, teachers create learning environments and provide numerous meaningful opportunities to develop the skills and attitudes of "being part of the identity of others" (Rinaldi, 2012, p. 234). The use of projects to cultivate creative thinking and to support and maintain children's and adult's relationships with each other and with members in the larger school community is a good example.

The video-cued multivocal ethnographic studies of Tobin and colleagues, *Preschool in Three Cultures* (1989) and *Preschool in Three Cultures and Preschool in Three Cultures Revisited* (2009), also provide a provocative look at the embedded values in early education in the U.S., Japan, and China over the course of a generation. Specifically, this study captures continuity and change over a period of 20 years. With regard to the continuity of embedded cultural teaching practices, the research team found that even after two decades, Japan's cultural beliefs in "social-mindedness, perseverance, and empathy" remained apparent in teachers' strategies of intervention to resolve students' conflicts and in their emphasis on promoting the development of a group identity and group skills (Tobin et al., 2009, pp. 241-242). Similar to the continuity in the findings from Japan, the cultural beliefs that the Americans shared in "the dyadic intensity of the teacher-child bond along with the emphasis on choice and...on self-expression" still play a prominent part in the pedagogical practices in preschools (Tobin et al., 2009, pp. 244-245).

Both Holloway (2000) and Shimahara (2002) offer a cultural perspective on the practice of teaching in Japan. Holloway's (2000) work focuses on the "cultural models or clusters of beliefs and practices" in Japanese kindergarten education (p.35). Holloway (2000) described that, in order to make sure children learn to become responsible members of a harmonious society, teachers would "downplay individual preferences" and focus on structuring the whole group learning experience (p.68). Similarly, Shimahara (2002) provides an account of ethnopedagogy, or "a theory of teaching grounded on time-honored shared beliefs embodied in the Japanese culture" (p.20). Shimahara's (2002) study noted that Japanese elementary teachers managed their class by "highlight[ing] the importance of harmonious development of the heart and the body through participation in group life" (p.24). Both of these studies find that the Japanese cultural emphasis on group harmony and the individual's relationship to the group is reflected in teachers' educational goals and construction of teaching, showing how the broader cultural ideology influences teaching practices.

Conversely, in the case of China, this work by Tobin and two separate groups of colleagues found the evolution of the cultural values evident in Chinese teaching practices dramatically different in the more recent (2009) study. Historically, the Chinese have placed a high value in perseverance and self-improvement, which reflects the cultural tradition of family honor and the communist ideology of collectivism. However, Tobin's recent study found that in the span of two decades, China's traditional values appeared to have been compromised with progressive educational ideas and practices imported from the West. As a result, traditional Chinese educational practices that highlight "memory, performance, mastery, content knowledge, and critique" were overridden by pedagogical practices that promote creativity, individualism, child-centeredness, and constructivism (Tobin et al., 2009, p. 244). This finding challenges

assumptions of cultural stability and suggests that teachers' cultural beliefs and practices should be understood as variable with respect to time and space.

All the anthropological research reviewed above addresses cultural differences in teaching and learning within a single culture or as compared across nations. The transnational teachers in this study are recently relocated geographically to a nation that has a very different cultural tradition from their country of origin, allowing for an examination of what culturally informed ideology and practices of teaching and learning they brought with them and if they change over time.

**International and comparative studies.** In addition to anthropological scholarship, international organizations such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2001, 2006, 2015) have also conducted large-scale reviews of early childhood education and reported that cultural traditions are related to practices in early childhood education. Considering the U.S.'s "readiness for school" model and many Nordic and Central European countries' socio-pedagogical traditions as examples, the OECD's reviews show that American early educators place emphasis on pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skill. In contrast, teachers in Finland focus on children's active role in learning process, their own investigation, and concrete experimentations. These cross-cultural comparisons illuminate how educational traditions demonstrate the unique goals of early childhood educational systems and guide different practical classroom outcomes in different cultural contexts.

Other comparative studies also provide evidence suggesting that the situated nature of teaching across countries is different. Spindler and Spindler's (1987) study identifies distinctive patterns of the formation of educational goals, the pedagogical practices, the curriculum plan, the use of time, the classroom management approaches and the instructional materials between

elementary teachers in Germany and the U.S. Planel's (1997) comparative ethnographic study of state primary schooling in England and France shows that cultural values give meaning to pedagogy and how pedagogy can reflexively influence cultural values. Alexander's (2001) exploration of culture and pedagogy across five nations (England, France, India, Russia, and the U.S.) presents major differences in respect to lesson time frames, organization of space, teaching materials, how teachers structure students' learning, pedagogical traditions, the forms of assessment and the types of classroom interaction. Givvin and her colleagues' (2005) investigation on national patterns of teaching by using the 1999 Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) video archives reports finds convergence and variability in the patterns of teaching that can be attributed to "organizational and physical constraints", "national-level policies, or similar local policies" and "shared curricula" (p. 340).

Based on the scientific evidence outlined above, this study has endorsed the idea that cultural variations are inseparable from the goals of early education, teaching beliefs, and pedagogical practices in their respective cultural contexts. The scholarly work above examining the culturally-specific, ingrained assumptions that guide teachers' thinking and action provides a theoretical foundation for this study. Building from the premises that teaching is rooted in culture, this study adapts and extends the concept of cultural models to investigate transnational teachers' beliefs and practices developed in their culture of origin, as well as their development and changes over time when exposed to a new cultural model of teaching.

### **The Case of China**

Given that all participants of this study are teachers from China, the second body of the literature review focuses on the educational profile of China. First, a broad view of the Chinese

cultural model of teaching and learning<sup>2</sup> is presented. Second, a descriptive account of changing perspectives on the role of teachers and teacher preparation in contemporary Chinese society is offered. Finally, the section ends with discussion of the Western influence on Chinese early childhood education policy and changes in teacher practices.

**Chinese cultural model of teaching.** While the Chinese cultural model of teaching is grounded in two thousand years of ancient philosophy and testing history, it is also influenced by the importation of Western ideas and practices in recent decades. Ancient Chinese tradition regards teaching as the cultivation of students through producing positive learning outcomes (Chan & Rao, 2010). The introduction of the Western cultural teaching model introduced individualization and contemporary notions of appropriate practices into the Chinese discourse of teaching. The power of these sources of influence on Chinese teachers' beliefs and practices varies with different time and sociocultural contexts, as described below.

**The influence of Confucianism.** Confucian belief is the core of ancient Chinese philosophy. Confucius (551-479 B.C.) believed the purpose of education was to seek self-cultivation which could lead to the well-being of the society. His ideology addressed the virtues of “diligence, practice, perfected mastery, endurance of hardship, concentration, respect for teachers, and humility” (Hsu, 2014, p. 5) and highlighted the importance of an individual's effort in the realization of the greater group benefit. Although self-cultivation is often conceived as an inwardly-directed process, Confucius thought it could be promoted and realized through teaching. As Confucius (551-479 B.C.) explained “There were four things which the Master taught: letters, ethics, devotion of soul, and truthfulness” (Confucius, trans.1966). These four fundamental pillars characterize the traditional view of a Chinese teacher's responsibilities as imparting

---

<sup>2</sup> The Chinese term *Jiaoxue* (教學) contains concepts of teaching and learning but primarily focuses on teaching or instruction.



knowledge and cultivating students' virtues. Given these expectations, only one who could master the knowledge of Chinese classics, literary styles and rules of propriety as well as demonstrate great moral character would be considered a qualified teacher or master. Another ancient Confucian scholar, Han Yu (768-824 A.D.), also composed an essay "Discourse on Teachers" which asserted that teachers' essential duties are to "transmit knowledge, provide for study, and dispel confusion" (Shen & Shun, 2008). In contemporary Chinese society, the deep-rooted Confucian ethos is still a part of the Chinese teachers' mindset. As described in Education as cultivation in Chinese culture, "The tradition of expecting teachers to carry out the dual role of *teacher of knowledge* and *teacher of people* has continued into twentieth century" (Hsu & Hwang, 2014, p. 246).

Throughout centuries-long history of Confucian tradition, teachers in Chinese society have been viewed as moral intellectuals and absolute authority figures. An ancient Chinese proverb states "Whoever is your teacher, even for a day, consider your father (to respect and to care for) your whole life" conveys teachers' high social status in Chinese society (Herzberg & Herzberg, 2012, p. 177; Luo, 1972).

This cultural image of Chinese teachers' role model image as a combination of delivering knowledge and guiding students' good character development has served as the root for traditional acts of teaching. Confucian educational principles expect teachers to put their morality into action by setting good examples for students to follow and strictly governing students' behavior (Ashmore, 1997). Additionally, teachers were expected to restrain their language with the goal of "instilling in them an appreciation for the values of self-control, discipline, social harmony, and responsibility" (Ashmore, 1997; Tobin et al., 1989, p. 93). "Error

detection and correction” (Ashmore, 1997, p. 10) and “compare and appraise” (Tobin et al., 2009, p. 94) are phrases used to describe how Chinese teachers keep order and regimentation in classes.

**Long-standing testing system.** In Chinese society, testing is another cultural tradition that shapes teachers’ beliefs and habits of teaching. The history of testing can be traced back to Sui Dynasty (607 A.D.) when the imperial civil service examination system, also known as the keju, was established as “an efficient, fair, and anti-feudal approach enabling ordinary people to get involved into the system to seek the possibility to rise socially and economically” (Wu, 2014, p. 227). This civil service examination system tested individuals “rote memorization of the classics or regurgitated interpretations of the classics” and connected their testing performance to political position, social status, family honor, and standard of living (Wu, 2014; Zhao, 2009, p. 75). Although the keju ended more than a century ago, its spirit and format extend to the current National College Entrance Exam, also known as gaokao (Zhao, 2009). In today’s China, a college degree is seen as a ticket to success. In other words, students’ performance in gaokao is linked to family honor, job opportunity, social status, and standard of living. Under this system, all parties involved in education naturally put their focus on what is tested and judge a person’s educational achievement by test scores. In such a test-oriented country, teachers tend to focus on outcomes rather than process. Moreover, their instructional strategies are confined to those which can efficiently enhance learning outcomes.

This discussion presents a broad view of traditional Chinese ideologies held by a majority of people in China, especially elementary and secondary school teachers. Guided by this cultural model, Chinese teachers believe that cultivating virtues, imparting knowledge, and promoting learning outcomes are their primary responsibilities.

**Blending the traditional Chinese model with the Western ideas.** In 1976, China adopted the “Reform and Opening-up” policy. Since then, a variety of child development theories and early education approaches have again been transmitted from the West to China. The philosophies of Western educators such as Maria Montessori, Bruner, Piaget, Bronfenbrenner, and others have been widely referenced and adopted in the field of early education (Zhu, 2008, 2010). Child-centered teaching, play-based activity, and developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) as defined by U.S. scholars and leaders in the field of early childhood education (Bredekamp & Copple, 2009) become increasingly convincing ideologies influencing Chinese early educators’ decision making. This embrace of Western models also changed Chinese perspectives on the role of early childhood teachers and the orientation of preservice teacher education.

**Changing perspectives on the role of teachers.** As discussed above, the role of Chinese teachers in schools and their high social status were shaped by the deep-rooted tradition of Confucian thinking. As the concept of professionalism and Western educational theories and practices were transmitted to China, the benchmarks and roles for teachers began to change (Hsu & Hwang, 2014). Conceptually, professionalism highlights the importance of specialized knowledge and involves a set of skills that are used to improve the quality of teaching (Caulfield, 1997). It also promotes “an ongoing effort” for teachers to incorporate new educational theories and practices into their existing teaching (Caulfield, 1997, p. 263). Thus, the expectations for Chinese teachers shift from having virtuous conduct to holding professional knowledge, from keeping firm control of classes to facilitating students in exploration, and from valuing the collective good to emphasizing individual differences. Particularly in the field of early childhood education, the endorsement of a variety of child development theories has made teachers more

conscious of children's developmental needs and, as a result, more willing to adopt changes to their roles and classroom pedagogy. In direct contrast to the traditional roles where teachers have to constantly orchestrate the classroom to ensure children have no chance to become aimless, these Western thoughts prompt teachers to give students space and opportunities to explore, to play, and to develop views of their own. Nevertheless, the adaptation of these Western practices does not seem to have resulted in the diminished appreciation of Chinese traditions. Rather, research suggests that Chinese teachers have managed to fuse Chinese beliefs with Western approaches. For example, in the recent study by Tobin and colleagues (2009), teachers were observed showing warmth and affection to students while still diligently correcting children's behavior (Tobin et al., 2009).

**Changing the theoretical orientation and curricula in teacher preparation.** In addition to changing Chinese perspectives on the teachers' role, Western theories, research, practices, and concepts of professional teaching have altered the basis for today's teacher education in China. As scholars have observed, today's predominant theoretical orientation in teacher preparation programs is developmental psychology and constructivism (Hsu, 2014; Rao, NG, & Pearson, 2010). In addition, the concept of professional teaching has influenced curricula that address teacher candidates' "subject matter knowledge, method of teaching, pedagogical knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge" (Hsu & Hwang, 2014, p. 250).

It appears that the Chinese government and teacher preparation institutions have incorporated Western ideas about education into several aspects of the teacher training system. However, scholars have noticed that the Western scholarship seems to matter only in teacher development. Restrained by unfavorable educational conditions and an apparently unshakable conviction of testing, in reality, traditional teaching approaches remains dominant in Chinese

schools. As Hsu (2014) notes, “as soon as the student teachers go into the classroom, they would find that majority of the schools and classes operate in an entirely different way...[and] have to teach large classes with lectures...watch the students’ performance closely in school tests and ultimately the entrance examination” (p.9). For Chinese teachers, there seems to be a discrepancy between contemporary interpretations of how best to teach and the reality of how they are expected to teach. This situation suggests that both teachers and their education in China are in transition between Chinese cultural traditions and Western cultural influence.

This brief review of China’s cultural-educational profile from ancient to contemporary times deepens understandings of challenges faced by transnational teachers who received education in China and adds much-needed perspective and motivation for studying their pedagogical beliefs and practices in a Western context.

### **Changes of Teaching in Different Contexts**

Given the fact that this study’s participants are experiencing major changes and adjustment in their teaching career, a brief review of literature that provides information related to changes of teaching in different contexts is conducted. As Cranton and Carusetta (2002) point out, any change in a teaching context may lead to reflection on professional practices and eventually a revision of beliefs and assumptions about teaching. Previous research of teacher change has shown that educational reform or new policies (Cohen, 1990; Met, 2015; Spillane & Zeuli, 1999); curiosity about new knowledge and skills (New, 2005), and professional development (DeZutter, 2008) may all lead to practice changes. Some inquiries into teachers’ processes of change have observed that teachers would express advocacy of new concepts or methods in language before they actually make change to their practices (Yerrick, Parke, & Nugent, 1997). Others studies found that practices are easier to change than views (Cohen, 1990),

and inherited knowledge or “underlying epistemological assumptions” is hardest part to change (DeZutter, 2008).

Although scarce research has looked into transnational teachers’ changes, teaching cross-nationally almost guarantees that the context of teaching will vary significantly. Thus, transnational teachers are destined to “go through significant cultural and pedagogical changes” (Hutchison, 2005, p. 66). While experiencing these changes, they are not necessarily giving up their own customary practices, because some of the practices and habits they brought across the border can still be translated into effective teaching in the host country, such as: “(1) their ability to teach skills and content and their passion for doing do; (2) a commitment to implementing a variety of pedagogical strategies, with varying levels of success; (3) a willingness to make accommodations for students with special needs; and (4) their desire to care for their students” (Dunn, 2013, p. 77). Even so, their survival instinct may still prompt them to suspend their own cultural models of teaching temporarily and adopt practices observed from more skilled members of the local community.

### **Summary of Literature**

The literature reviewed above connects several strands of inquiry: anthropological and comparative studies of cultural differences in teaching, examination of teaching in China, and research on teachers’ beliefs and practices in different contexts. These studies, whether of single culture or comparisons across cultures, provide ample evidence of culturally embedded beliefs about education goals and desirable methods of teaching. Yet, few scholars have examined what happens when teachers who were trained in one culture teach in another. The value of studying transnational teachers has the potential to lead to a more nuanced understanding of the cultural basis of differences in teaching while adding new insights to existing knowledge about

transnational teachers' changes. To address this gap in the literature, this study seeks to investigate how one group of teachers makes sense of and adapt to the host country cultural-educational norms as a way of also understanding more about their original cultural beliefs and practices.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of this study builds upon different fields of scholarship that attempt to elucidate the relationship between an individual and the culture in which an individual participates. These fields of scholarship include earlier psychological insights of Vygotsky and contemporary anthropological research. Much of psychology has focused on universal principles of thought and action, which contradicts “a horizontal panorama of human variation” that anthropologists have presented (Super & Harkness, 1986, p. 546). And yet the work of Vygotsky, foundational to developmental psychology, accorded a central role to culture and social interaction in the development of cognition. Building on Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory and the cultural premises in anthropology, this study uses the concept of cultural models to investigate transnational Chinese teachers' shared ideology and practices of teaching. Meanwhile, with changing times and contexts, this study seeks to uncover the continuity and changes of teachers' beliefs and practices of teaching as they participate in teaching practices of new cultural communities.

**Vygotsky's sociocultural theory.** Vygotsky's (1896-1934) sociocultural theory (1978) posits that humans learn and develop through interactions with more competent members of the society. He also believed that humans internalize the culture around them through experiences with language and other cultural tools. These views of Vygotsky can be extended to think about the changes and development of any individual migrating to an area of a different culture, for

instance, the transnational teachers in this study. Through participating in social activities, using cultural tools, and interacting with members of a new culture who are more knowledgeable and skilled with that culture's beliefs and norms, newcomers learn, develop, and internalize the new culture around them. Following this line of thought, I raise the possibility that cross-cultural teaching experiences make transnational teachers change more than their mindsets and behavior. Those changes in ways of thinking about, interpreting and doing things suggest that they are not the same people that they were before.

**Anthropological scholarship on cultural variations.** From the time of Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict, anthropological scholarship continues to confirm the diversity of values, customs, and habits across cultures. There is mounting evidence in the anthropological literature that documents different moral values and social norms (Mead, 1928, 1974; Shweder, Jenson, & Goldstein, 1995), leading personality traits (Benedict, 1934), customs of child care (LeVine, 1994; Whiting, 1963), niches in development (Super & Harkness, 1986), types of schooling (Tobin et al., 2009; Tobin et al., 1989), and indigenous virtues of learning (Li, 2012). This work has informed contemporary theories of cultural models. Drawing on evidence from cross-cultural comparisons, I assume that newly-arrived transnational teachers may have teaching ideologies and practices that derived from their cultural sources.

**Scholarship on cultural models.** Over the last century, psychological anthropologists have worked to refine a theory of cultural models by revealing different parts of this complex construct. Cultural theorists refer to a cultural model as a group's "beliefs about the way things are... and guides to appropriate behavior" (LeVine, 1984, p. 144); a "cognitive schema that is intersubjective shared by a social group" (D'Andrade, 1987, p. 112); as "conceptual frames that shape members' experiences [and] guide people in forming their goals and motivate them toward



obtaining their goals” (Li, 2012, p. 77); or “mental representations shared by members of a culture”(Bennardo & Munck, 2014, p. 3). These varying definitions highlight some common characteristics of a cultural model: (1) it affects all spheres of human life; (2) it has ideological components and can be instantiated in behavior; (3) it is “simultaneously descriptive and normative” (LeVine, 1984, p. 144); and (4) it is held collectively by a group. It should be noted that some scholars might choose other terms to represent cultural models, such as “implicit cultural practices” (Hayashi & Tobin, 2015, p. 3), but the definitions and characteristics are comparable.

The relationship between mind, cultural models, and behavior is complex and dynamic. By living in a cultural context and participating in day-to-day events of life, members of a culture have many channels to observe, learn, and undertake similar social activities and cultural practices, which lead to the internalization of the same cultural value and norms and the construction of cultural models of different domains in minds. This is how cultural knowledge is acquired by community members and can be shared intersubjectively. As individuals accomplish more cultural tasks and gain more socially constrained experiences, more categories of cultural models are stored or “repeatedly incorporated into other cultural models” in their minds (Holland & Quinn, 1987, p. 11). The metaphor of books in a library is a helpful image to clarify the concept of cultural models in mind. Inside individuals’ minds, there is a library keeping “general or special purpose” cultural models (Holland & Quinn, 1987, p. 11), which resemble different types of books that individuals acquire from other authors or construct by themselves. These cultural models are descriptive and normative sources of references to help individuals interpret their encounters in the world and to guide appropriate responses and behavior within each cultural context. As Holland and Quinn (1987) remark, “sometime these cultural models serve

to set goals for action, sometimes to plan the attainment of said goals, sometimes to direct the actualization of these goals, sometimes to make sense of the actions and fathom the goals of others, and sometimes to produce verbalizations that may play various parts in all these projects as well as in the subsequent interpretation of what has happened” (pp.6-7). Cultural models also include “default value” (Bennardo & Munck, 2014, p. 3) that requires minimum mental effort for individuals to employ. These taken-for-granted cultural models allow individuals to make sense of daily experiences and to accomplish social tasks while “on automatic pilot”.

While most anthropologists emphasize the cultural models of groups, some contemporary scholars suggest that “individual psychological differences, life history, context, age, or social status” can influence how people use cultural models in different situations (Bennardo & Munck, 2014, p. 4). In other words, cultural models do not always translate into group behavior nor are they the sole determinants of individual behavior (Holland & Quinn, 1987). Scholars also note that some cultural models are “manifest” and can be “articulated by members of a culture”, but other cultural models are “out of awareness or beyond the capacity for individuals to articulate” except when individuals are in another culture or unfamiliar situation where they become partially aware of their cultural habitus, even if they cannot fully explain why they act as they (Bennardo & Munck, 2014, pp. 4, 22). This observed characteristic of cultural models is of particular relevance to this study because the participants are new to a foreign culture and encountering unfamiliar situations. Teaching transnationally not only provides new patterned experiences but also challenges their previously held “common” sense and “obvious” facts of teaching. Transnational teachers may create idiosyncratic models of their new experiences while also continuing to reference, renegotiate, and evolve their existed ones. This process makes them become more aware of their original cultural models and may produce a more detailed

description of their models. Therefore, this study takes this opportunity to examine transnational teachers' original cultural model of teaching. To my knowledge, few studies have examined cultural models of teachers in settings beyond the culture of origin.

**Studying cultural models.** Psychological anthropologists working within the field of cultural psychology have examined numerous cultures' way of thinking about, interpreting and doing things in different domains. These domains include parental ethnotheories (Harkness, Super, & Keefer, 1992; Super & Harkness, 1986), child development and parenting (LeVine, 1994), , and early education (Hayashi & Tobin, 2015; Tobin et al., 2009; Tobin et al., 1989). In many cases, scholars also conduct deeper historic analysis of the culture in order to understand how history, including larger socio-cultural events, contributes to values and traditions in different domains (New, 2001). Despite the diversity of focus, their research shares theoretical emphases on belief systems and practices in context and the importance of understanding the cultural and historic roots of values and traditions; and much of this work has utilized anthropological methods to study human beliefs and behavior.

In cultural models studies, ethnography is the most widely used method for obtaining in-depth understanding of local knowledge and dynamics among mind, cultural models, and behavior. LeVine's (1994) multi-year study of child care in Africa relies on "an ethnographic reconstruction of the premises on which the child care practices of a people are based", including "lengthy observation and repeated interviews" as a means to elicit the cultural model from local people and to reveal its directive forces in behavior (Ibid., p.248-249). Tobin and his research teams' (2015; Tobin et al., 2009; Tobin et al., 1989) studies of preschool in three cultures include another form of "ethnographic fieldwork method" to document preschool teachers' explanations of their teaching through the use of "video-cued multivocal ethnography" to provoke them to

“turn their usually implicit, nonverbally coded, tacit practices into words” (Hayashi & Tobin, 2015, p. 14).

This study builds on the assumption that a cultural model—whether a model of teaching or learning, is shared by a cultural group, coupled with the questions of individual interpretations and instantiations of a cultural model and about resilience and change when members of one culture live and work in a different cultural context. In this study, data collection strategies were designed to address these questions by eliciting and illuminate features of a cultural model of teaching and learning recognizable to a group of transnational Chinese teachers, separate from whether it serves to influence and guide their thinking and actions of teaching in the foreign context of the U.S.

### **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

The research focus, broadly outlined in the previous chapters, capitalizes on the opportunity to study features of a Chinese cultural model of teaching and learning in a small group of Chinese transnational teachers currently teaching in U.S. public schools; and to explore continuity and changes in their ideological and/or behavioral expressions of that model. The conceptual framework of this study informed the selection of research strategies to elicit key principles in the group's shared beliefs about teaching and learning and illustrate ways in which those beliefs are instantiated in the classrooms. Given the premise that cultural models might not always translate into individual behavior (Holland & Quinn, 1987), data collection and analyses also direct attention toward individuals' beliefs and practices.

Before describing the research methodologies, this chapter begins with a description of the research context and the study participants which are critical dimensions of any study on cultural influences on human behavior and beliefs systems. While the characteristics of transnational teachers and schools were limited to those available and willing to participate, other aspects of the research methodology were chosen in accordance with key features of the conceptual framework and the research questions. The research design, data collection and analytic strategies were intentional choices in response to these three research aims to illustrate: (1) features of a traditional Chinese cultural model of teaching and learning are recognized/articulated by Chinese transnational teachers (at the group and at individual level); (2) the instantiations of Chinese cultural models in Chinese transnational teachers' U.S. classrooms;

and (3) evident changes, if any, in Chinese transnational teachers' pedagogical views and practices after teaching in the United States.

### **The Research Context**

This study took place in a southeastern state experiencing rapid growth in its Chinese population and equally rapid growth in the number of Chinese Mandarin language programs in public and private schools. Consistent with state aims to produce globally competitive graduates, over 100 dual language immersion programs were offered across the state at the time of this study (State Board of Education, 2016). Private agencies assist such schools in recruiting, training and assisting transnational teachers with placement-related activities, generally for fees ranging from \$11,000 - \$12,500 per teacher. The provision of a post-arrival orientation that addresses cultural, logistical, and teaching issues is also provided by recruitment agencies. Given my prior employment relationships with one such agency - the largest and longest presence in the state--I sought permission and assistance in recruiting teachers from five sites currently affiliated with this single agency and with Mandarin immersion programs. Permission was granted for four of the five sites, each within a different school district of varying population size and wealth.

**The schools.** Each of the four schools<sup>3</sup> had both regular English programs and Mandarin immersion programs that began during the Kindergarten year. At the time of this study, English programs already had Kindergarten to 6<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms, but the Mandarin immersion classrooms were continued in subsequent grades depending on length of time in the immersion program. A second immersion kindergarten classroom was in three of the four schools. All four schools had an immersion 1<sup>st</sup> grade classroom. Two schools also had 2<sup>nd</sup> grade immersion

---

<sup>3</sup> Pseudonyms are used to insure confidentiality of school sites and study participants.

classrooms; and one school in its 4<sup>th</sup> year of participating in the Mandarin program had a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade immersion classroom.

The approach to immersion was consistent with strategies utilized statewide (Howard & Sugarman, 2009). The four schools claimed to adopt the 90/10 immersion model, but since special classes (art, music, and physical education) were also taught in English, these schools were actually applying the 80/20<sup>4</sup> immersion model from K to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. One school with 3<sup>rd</sup> grade switched to a 50/50<sup>5</sup> immersion model when the students move to third grade. The average classroom size of the Mandarin immersion classrooms in each of the four schools was 19 students (SD=2.47, Range=16 to 23 students) in compliance with state requirements and varied due to enrollment conditions and student attrition. Beyond these common features, the four schools were diverse in other ways, e.g., total school population, composition in terms of racial and ethnic identities, family income, geographic locale, and provision of pre-K programs (English only). Two schools were predominantly white with a multicultural population of children and families, including 16-20% identified as “Asian.” The other two schools had larger numbers of children of color (Black and Hispanic) who, combined, represented over half of the school population, while children identified as “Asian” represented less than 5% of the population at the time of this study. See Table 1 for demographic and other information about these schools, followed by brief descriptions of each of the individual schools.

---

<sup>4</sup> The target language is used most of the day: 80% of instruction was in Mandarin (Chinese language arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science, recess, lunch); 20% of instruction was in English (45-60 minutes of English time and 45 minutes of one special class, such as gym, music, art, and computer lab, with an English speaking teacher each day).

<sup>5</sup> Instruction was divided evenly in Mandarin and in English.

Table 1

## Demographic Profiles of Four Elementary Schools with Chinese Immersion Programs

School Name	Miller Elementary	Arnold Elementary	Central Elementary	Thomas Elementary
Geographic status of the school*	Rural-fringe <sup>6</sup>	Rural-fringe	Rural-distant <sup>7</sup>	City-large <sup>8</sup>
Title I school	No	No	Yes	Yes
Grades	K-5	PK-5	PK-5	K-5
Size of the school (no. of students)	1,128	608	691	532
Cultural diversity	White 54% Asian 19% Hispanic 6% Black 16% Other 5%	White 73% Asian 16% Hispanic 3% Black 4% Other 4%	White 37% Asian 3% Hispanic 14% Black 40% Other 6%	White 31% Asian 4% Hispanic 24% Black 36% Other 5%
Average Class size (K-3)	21	19	21	21
<b>Chinese Immersion Program**</b>				
Years of implementation	1	4	3	2
No. of immersion classes at each grade	K:2 1 <sup>st</sup> :2	K:1 1 <sup>st</sup> :1 2 <sup>nd</sup> :1 3 <sup>rd</sup> :1	K:2 1 <sup>st</sup> :2 2 <sup>nd</sup> :2	K:2 1 <sup>st</sup> :1
Transnational Chinese teachers as % of classroom teachers	4/72 (5%)	6/41 (15%)	9/44 (20%)	6/45 (13%)

\*Based on a southeastern state's locale code file.

\*\* At the time of this study.

**Miller Elementary School.** Miller Elementary is distinct from the other schools in several ways. It is the largest school and is located in the smallest school district in this study; and has the largest percentage (19%) of students identified as Asian. Its students come from a

<sup>6</sup> Rural, Fringe: Census-defined rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is less than or equal to 2.5 miles from an urban cluster (Phan & Glander, 2008).

<sup>7</sup> Rural, Distant: Census-defined rural territory that is more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster.

<sup>8</sup> City, Large: Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population of 250,000 or more.



wealthy neighborhood close to (less than or equal to 5 miles) an urbanized area in the state. A majority (over half) of the school population is identified as white, and 19% are identified as Asian. In the fall of 2015-2016 school year, Miller Elementary launched a Chinese language immersion program in both kindergarten and first grade. It had two classes per grade level (4 Mandarin classes in total) and the school initially hired four Chinese teachers (1 Chinese teacher per class). Miller Elementary was the only school not to adopt the co-teaching model<sup>9</sup>. According to the program overview posted on the school website, the decision to launch this program was based on the perceived benefits of language immersion education, including “increase[ing] cognitive skills, higher achievement in other academic areas and higher standardized test scores<sup>10</sup>”.

**Arnold Elementary School.** Arnold Elementary is half the size of Miller Elementary with the highest percentage of white students in this study. It is in the wealthiest school district in this study and also in a wealthy neighborhood that is close to (less than or equal to 5 miles) an urbanized area in the state. The Chinese immersion program began in 2012 with one kindergarten class. One grade level was added each year as the students matriculated. As of the year 2015-2016, there were four lead teachers and two co-teachers in the K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade Chinese immersion programs. One co-teacher supported instruction in the kindergarten and first grade classes; and the other co-teacher supported instruction in the second and third grade classes.

**Central Elementary School.** Central Elementary is about the same size as Arnold Elementary and is located in a rural area 5 to 25 miles from an urbanized area in the state. It is a Title I school (43% of the students receive free lunch) with a school population of 40% black

---

<sup>9</sup> Chinese immersion programs that have two Chinese teachers - one lead teacher and one co-teacher – often divide up the instructional content into parts or by subject.

<sup>10</sup> The absence of website citation of this direct quote was due to confidentiality.

students and 37% white students, as well as smaller numbers of children from Asian and other ethnicity groups. Central Elementary is in a district that serves the largest military base in the world, so there are many military-connected students in this school. In the 2013-2014 school year, a Chinese language immersion program was launched at the kindergarten level. It had two classes initially and added one grade level each year. As of the year 2015-2016, there were six lead teachers and three co-teachers hired for the Chinese classes. Two co-teachers supported instruction in two kindergarten classes; one co-teacher supported instruction in two first grade classes; another co-teacher supported instruction in two second grade classes.

**Thomas Elementary School.** Thomas Elementary is a Title I school (54% received free lunch) in a large city in the state. It is also the most culturally diverse school with 31% white, 24% Hispanic, and 36 % black students; and is located in the poorest district in this study. In the 2014-2015 school year, a Chinese language immersion program began with one kindergarten class; the following year when that kindergarten class went up to first grade, an additional kindergarten class was added (for a total of two kindergarten classes and one first grade class). As of the year 2015-2016, there were three lead teachers and three co-teachers hired for the program. Two co-teachers supported instruction in the two kindergarten classes; one co-teacher supported instruction in the first grade class.

These four schools represent a range of characteristics consistent with many elementary schools in the state and, as such, serve as the research contexts for this study of transnational teachers.

### **Study Participants**

Twenty-five transnational teachers employed in these four public elementary schools were invited to participate in this study, 18 of whom (72%) agreed to participate in the

questionnaire portion of the study. A subset of six kindergarten teachers agreed to participate in the more time-intensive interviews and observations; three of those teachers were in their second year in the classroom and were selected as foci of teacher profiles. More specific details about the three teachers are provided in the results chapter (see p. 76-78).

At the time these teachers were recruited, little was known of these transnational teachers other than their placements, role assignments, and years of experience teaching in the U.S. Of the 18 teachers who agreed to participate, six (33.3%) were in their first year of teaching in U.S. public schools [hereafter occasionally referred to as “First Year TNT<sup>11</sup>”], eight (44%) were in their second year, three (16.7%) were in their third year, and one (5.6%) was in her fourth year [collectively sometimes referred to as “Experienced TNT”]. Table 2 shows the schools and grade levels at which these participating teachers are currently teaching. Of the 18 teachers, 13 (72%) were hired as lead teachers and 5 (27.8%) were hired as co-teachers, depending on how their principals evaluated their previous teaching experiences and interview performance.

Table 2

Number of Participating Teachers Per School and Per Grade Level

School	Number of Participants	Teach Kindergarten	Teach 1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	Teach 2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	Teach 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade
Miller Elementary	2	2	0	0	0
Arnold Elementary	4*	1	1	1	1
Central Elementary	8*	3	3	2	0
Thomas Elementary	4**	2	2	0	0
Total	18	8	6	3	1

\* Included one male teacher. \*\* Included two male teachers

Additional information gathered during the recruitment process includes the following demographics. A majority (14 out of 18) were female, and all but one 40-year-old were in their

<sup>11</sup> TNT=Transnational Teachers

late twenties to early thirties (mean=29, range 25 to 31, SD=2.06). Six participants were married and four lived with their spouses while in the United States.

**Teachers’ prior educational backgrounds.** All 18 of the participating transnational teachers were born, raised, and educated in China. A majority (12/18) had earned Bachelor’s degrees and six also held Master’s degrees. As shown in Table 3, the degree discipline ranged widely, from bachelor’s degrees in English/English Education (n=7) to Teaching Chinese for Speakers of Other Languages (TCSOL) (n=6). It is worth noting that, contrary to expectations given their employment in elementary school kindergarten or primary grades, half of the transnational teachers were certified to teach in middle school or secondary school (n=9). Only five were certified to teach elementary school and only one majored and was certified in Early Childhood Education. On the other hand, all but the ECE certified teacher described some kind of university preparation presumably relevant to the demands of teaching in a U.S. dual language immersion program (English, Linguistics, or teaching English or Chinese as a second language).

Table 3  
Categories and Number of Teachers’ College Majors and Teaching Certifications

College Major		
	Number	Percent
Early Childhood	1	6%
English/English Edu	7	41%
TESOL	2	12%
TCSOL	6	35%
Linguistics	1	6%
<b>Total*</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Teaching Certification		
Early Childhood	1	6%
Elementary Edu.	5	29%
Middle & Secondary Grade	9	50.0%
Language teaching	2	15%
<b>Total*</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\*Missing value=1.

**Previous teaching experiences.** As specified in agency agreements with public schools in the state, all teachers were required to have at least three years of formal teaching experience prior to coming to the U.S. In this group of transnational teachers, all had at least one year of teaching in Chinese preschools, kindergartens, or early elementary classrooms (see Table 4). Five of those teachers also had previous cross-cultural experiences as teachers of Chinese and/or English in nations as diverse as South Korea, Indonesia, South Africa, and the Philippines. It is worth noting that one teacher had previously taught in the U.S. for two years as a foreign language teacher, so this was her second trip but the first time teaching in a dual language immersion setting.

Table 4

Teachers' Years of Teaching in China

Year(s) of teaching in China	Number	Percent (%)
> 1 year	1	5.6%
1-3 years	7	38.9%
3-5 years	6	33.3%
5-7 years	3	16.7%
Subtotal	17	94.4%
Missing	1	5.6%
Total	18	100.0%

**Preparation and support for teaching in the U.S.** Fifteen (83.3%) of the participating teachers reported that they received pre-departure professional development that varied from one day to three months. Their professional development was described as covering education policy and the general system of education in the U.S.; differences between U.S. and Chinese culture, life and communication; and common approaches to immersion education.

By the time this study took place, the 12 “Experienced TNTs” had added U.S. classroom teaching to their resumes – nine had teaching experiences in the U.S. kindergarten and first grade, and three had also taught second grade.

## Research Design

The research design of this study followed a schedule that had three “phases” of data collection and included three types of data collection strategies. The data was collected within the 2015-2016 school year. Following a period of introductions and preliminary observations of all participating teachers’ teaching practices at the beginning of the school year was the first round of data collection in late fall and the end-of-year data collection in the late spring. Three types of data collection strategies with two groups of participants were utilized: (1) a questionnaire, distributed to all participating teachers (n=18) at two time points; (2) initial and follow-up semi-structured interviews conducted with six kindergarten teachers; and (3) multiple classroom observations [formal and informal] in the same kindergarten teachers’ classrooms.

The first data collected focused on gaining insights into what a group of Chinese transnational teachers have in common that might correspond to 2000 years of enactment of a Chinese cultural model of teaching and learning. To that end, a questionnaire was designed based on the professional literature as well as my previous work with teachers in China and the U.S. The questionnaire is administered at two time points - previously reported characteristics of the participants were gathered in the first questionnaire. The second questionnaire focused on (changes in) beliefs and practices over time.

Following the administrations of the questionnaire was “person-centered interviews and observations” with a subgroup of kindergarten teachers, which provided a deeper access to these teachers’ subjective interpretations of their own teaching and how they approached their responsibilities to students of (and in) a different culture (Hollan, 2001, p. 48; LeVine, 1982; Levy & Hollan, 1998). Doing so also enables the one to see how the whole group’s commonality

plays out in a particular subgroup of teachers who are in kindergarten classrooms – an age group and school context that have been a touch point and key component of educational reform initiatives in the U.S. field of education (Bredekamp & Copple, 2009; Gullo, 2006; Pianta, Cox, & Snow, 2007).

Guiding by the conceptual framework and the first research question, three out of the six kindergarten teachers who had different educational backgrounds and professional experiences were purposefully selected as foci of teacher profiles to illuminate individual differences in their decisions and actions of teaching.

### **Data Collection Strategies**

As noted previously, the conceptual framework of this study highlights the importance of understanding the cultural roots and contexts in studying human thinking and behavior. Such theoretical emphasis in combination with the research goals of this study – understanding a group and individual teachers’ pedagogical ideologies and practices informed by a Chinese cultural model and examining changes occurred in the teachers’ views and practices as they have gained experience teaching in the U.S. – led to utilization of the following data collection strategies.

**Transnational Teacher Questionnaire.** This questionnaire was developed to serve several purposes, first to gather initial descriptive information about the teachers and their Chinese educational backgrounds, e.g., teacher education, certifications and previous teaching experience as well as teachers’ general interpretations of and professional challenges associated with their transitional experiences. Central to the research questions addressed in this dissertation are a series of questions about traditional Chinese cultural beliefs and practices. The

questionnaire was administered at two time points (December 2015 and May 2016) in order to partially address another research question regarding potential changes in transnational teachers' cultural models over time. Although some teachers had only been in the U.S. for a few months, the second administration of the questionnaire included open-ended questions asking *if*, and if so, in what ways, they had changed in terms of pedagogical beliefs and practices. Of special importance to this study were questions asking teachers to compare and rate the relative importance of educational goals and instructional practices in China and the U.S. Many of these questions were based on scholarly research, including my own, of cultural differences in Chinese and U.S. schools. Others were borrowed from another *Teacher Belief Questionnaire* (Stipek & Byler, 2004). A bulk of the questions included Likert-type responses. See Appendix A for complete versions of the questionnaire at times 1 and 2.

**Semi-Structured Interviews.** The first and second (fall/spring) semi-structured interviews were conducted with six kindergarten teachers (See Appendix B & C) after they completed the questionnaire. This approach allowed me to study their answers on the questionnaire in advance so that I could probe for more information or further explanation during the interviews. The first semi-structured interview focused on five categories: (1) educational experiences in China; (2) previous teaching experiences; (3) U.S.-China comparisons; (4) exploration of questionnaire answers; and (5) teaching and learning in the current classroom.

The second semi-structured interview utilized a form of the “video-cued multi-vocal ethnography” technique featured in the *Preschool in Three Cultures* (China, Japan, and U.S.) projects (Tobin et al., 2009; Tobin et al., 1989). As explained by the authors, this technique includes showing teachers video footage of their own instructional practices as a means of helping stimulate informants' memories and self-reflection as well as provoking discussion



between researchers and informants (Tobin et al. 1989). In the present study, videos recorded on the first full-day observation [described below] were shared with participating teachers during the second interview in the spring with the aim of eliciting explanations of instructional choices. Moreover, although no second video observation was provided during the interview, the teachers were still able to compare their teaching of the day with which was shown in the video and to reflect on their pedagogical changes over time.

**Classroom Observations.** To fulfill the research goal of seeing cultural models in action, several observational strategies and research tools were utilized in the study of the kindergarten sub-sample, both formal and informal.

1. ***Informal classroom observations.*** The nature of this study provided numerous occasions (e.g. collected consent forms, conducted interviews) to visit teachers in their classroom. These classroom visits provided a variety of opportunities to observe classroom features and instructional characteristics, documented by photographs and field notes. The choice of what to observe was guided by the literature and my understandings about Chinese teachers and their teaching. Signs of Chinese transnational teachers' instantiations of Chinese or non-Chinese cultural models in U.S. classrooms were noted during informal observations.
2. ***Formal video-recorded classroom observations.*** Two full-day classroom observations of all six kindergarten classrooms were conducted and recorded on video at two separate times (fall 2015 & spring 2016), resulting in approximately 16 hours of observation per classroom. The foci [and subsequent analyses] of these observations were guided by two different disciplinary approaches to the study of

children's early learning environments, with the aim of providing more nuanced insights into what was actually happening in the classroom .

(1) Classroom as “developmental niche” – this approach to the video observations represents a modification (New, 2012) of anthropologists' efforts to capture the interface between cultural contexts and children's development (Super & Harkness, 1986, p. 545), with specific attention to:

- i. Physical environment: Furnishings, designated areas, and use of space (e.g., the prevalence of tables for small groups of children in lieu of desks).
- ii. Social setting: Demographics of people who are present in the classroom (e.g. English-speaking teacher/ teacher's aides, parents; children with special needs, children/families of Chinese heritage).
- iii. Patterns of teaching: Instruction, interaction, and communication (e.g. routines; large group instruction).

(2) The Early Childhood Classroom Observation Measures (ECCOM) is a standardized instrument developed by Stipek and Byler (2004), was also used in this study in a non-standard way. This measure was developed 11 years ago and is now used less often in comparison to instruments like ECERS-R(Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 2005) or CLASS (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008). However, it has several features that are more suitable for this study. First, it focuses on teachers' instructional practices as well as the social climate and classroom management. It has been established as a valid and

reliable tool for observing kindergarten to first-grade classes.<sup>12</sup> Of special relevance to this study is ECCOM's descriptive rather than evaluative orientation. Unlike most extant classroom observation measures that evaluate classrooms in relation to an endorsed pedagogical model—e.g., child-centered or teacher-directed instruction, the ECCOM was based on two theoretical traditions and allows separate ratings for didactic and constructivist practices. Moreover, this measure has been validated in kindergartens of different cultural contexts, hence the tool is open to diverse cultural interpretations of effective instructional practices (Lerkkanen et al., 2012). Given that the participants in this study came from a culture where students' skills are acquired in discrete, accumulating units through direct instruction and practices, the ECCOM is well suited to examine transnational teachers' uses of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities.

The ECCOM's 17-item scale of practices was used to rate how often certain practices were observed or not observed in the first full day observations of the kindergarten teachers' classrooms. These 17 frequency-based items were rated on a Likert scale of 1-5, such that 1 = practices are rarely seen and 5 = practices can be seen 80%-100% of the time. Items rated included teacher behaviors associated with: (1) child responsibility; (2) management; (3) choice of activities; (4) discipline strategies; (5) relevance of activities to children's experience; (6) teacher warmth & responsiveness; (7) support for communications skills; (8) individualization of learning activities; (9) support for interpersonal skills; (10) student engagement; (11) learning standards; (12) coherence of instructional activities; (13) teaching concept; (14) instructional conversation; (15) literacy instruction; (16) math instruction; and (17) math assessment (Stipek & Byler, 2004). According to the authors of the ECCOM, all items are presented in a three-

---

<sup>12</sup> According to authors, the reliability of this instrument was established by having "agreement on 80% of the items with two classroom observations" (Stipek & Byler, 2004, p. 16)

column format: “A” represents constructivist (child-centered); “T” represents didactic (teacher-directed); and “C” represent no direction practices (except for "Teacher Warmth" and "Relevance of Activities" which only have “A” column) (Stipek & Byler, 2004). Each column provides descriptions and examples of practices and observers will rate classrooms three times on each item based on the frequency of the practices, giving one rating for A, one rating for T, and one rating for C. For example, on the item "student engagement", a "2" might be assigned on A, a "3" on T, and a "1" on C. 32 total scores were produced and the sum could be calculated for each dimension.

### **Data Analysis**

The three datasets (questionnaires, interviews, and observations) were analyzed separately in an iterative process that allowed for an ongoing review of results in relation to the research questions as well as to compare and see if they were consistent in terms of the interpretations of Chinese cultural model being described.

**Questionnaire Data.** The quantitative data from the two questionnaires was entered into SPSS Statistics and statistical procedures were employed to generate descriptions of the group’s transitional experiences and commonly shared pedagogical beliefs and changes in responses over time. The open-ended questions were analyzed to summarize the responses about 18 teachers’ self-reflections on their pedagogical changes. Throughout the analysis process, questionnaire results continued to serve as a reference point in participating teachers’ common views and experiences.

**Interview Data.** Analyses of kindergarten teachers’ interview responses were conducted to establish a coding scheme, identify themes, and examine relationships within their responses. Specific analysis foci were guided by findings from the questionnaire data and the research

questions. Primary aims of analyzing interview data were (1) to illuminate features of Chinese cultural model recognizable to the whole group [as identified in the questionnaire] that were manifest and could be articulated by the kindergarten teachers; and (2) to identify diverse pedagogical beliefs, goals, and strategies of teaching among the six kindergarten teachers that might not correspond to the larger group's shared Chinese cultural model of teaching as revealed in the questionnaire results.

The first phase of interview coding focused on ideologies specific to teachers' goals in terms of student learning. For example, a code of "Make sure student understands" was assigned to the following passage:

*Linda: I would insist that they understand at the beginning why...why we are learning Chinese. And then learn the meaning of this character. In the end, [tell them] what directions may the representation of this character extend to. If [they] had this concept when [they were] young, it would not be a too difficult thing for [them] to pick up again when [they] grows up.*

In this passage, Linda described what she regarded as an important initial step when teaching young children how to comprehend Chinese, and offered an explanation based on developmental perspective on early learning for her view.

Once the data was saturated with base-level codes, the next phase focused on categorizing base-level codes according to the following two themes: (1) aligns with the shared Chinese cultural model; and (2) reflects individual beliefs and practices about teaching in the U.S. For example, the previous passage was coded as 'individual' because the explanation revealed less adherence to the larger group's shared cultural model of teaching and more about this particular teacher's idiosyncratic perceptions and rationale for her instructional practices.

As the data analysis process proceeded, sub-categories under each theme were added, refined and grouped until no revisions were needed. I then summarized themes and used the corresponding passages from the interview data to address the specific areas of inquiry.

Another phase of the analytic process of the interview dataset linked the teachers' discourses to their acts of teaching. This analysis utilized the second semi-structured interviews focused on teachers' explanations and reflections on teaching from previously recorded examples from their classes. Under the theme of explanation, I included teachers' comments regarding the goals, the strategies, and the underlying assumptions aligned with what they did when they taught. These comments provided a better frame of reference when describing how individual teachers' pedagogical ideologies were translated into their classroom practices.

**Observational Data.** The overall aim in the analysis of classroom observations was to look for features of participating teachers' Chinese cultural model that were instantiated in their U.S. kindergarten classrooms. Observational data in the form of field notes, video recordings, and photos were organized according to the previously described 'developmental niche' categories and summarized in terms of each classroom's general physical features, social characteristics, daily routines, and teachers' frequently used instructional practices (New, 2012). In order to better capture the instantiations of Chinese cultural model in U.S. classrooms, additional codes were assigned when Chinese elements [e.g., maps, flags, artifacts, pictures of traditional holidays and activities] were present in the classrooms as well as when the teacher was observed using traditional Chinese instructional approaches [e.g. whole group instruction, repetition]. These classroom features were analyzed in terms of traditional Chinese pedagogy, cultural norms in U.S. educational contexts as well as the teachers' ideas about environments conducive to teaching and learning.

The video recordings of the first formal classroom observation were also rated according to the scale items of The Early Childhood Observation Measure (ECCOM). This process entailed a review of the full day observation videos in which I measured how much time when the

practices described in ECCOM items (according to three columns: “A” constructivist (child-centered), “T” didactic (teacher-centered), and “C” no direction) were shown. Based on the overall percentages of the practices over the entire observation time, each scale item was rated (range from 1 to 5), so a total of 32 scores were produced from each video observation. These scores were summarized according to three columns, which allowed for classification of transnational kindergarten teachers’ classrooms as more child-centered, more teacher-controlled, or one with minimal teacher guidance.

Study findings resulting from these analyses are presented in the next chapter, beginning with a brief description of participants perspectives on transition experiences in the U.S. followed by a discussion on the Chinese transnational teachers’ shared cultural model of teaching. Then the findings associated with the second research question about the instantiations of a Chinese cultural model within U.S. classrooms are presented. The chapter ends with a discussion focusing on continuity and change in cultural model of teaching.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS**

This chapter begins by briefly describing this group of Chinese teachers' transition to life in the U.S. With this cultural transition as backdrop, the chapter then presents results of the study's three research questions: (1) the Chinese cultural model of teaching and learning shared by the Chinese transnational teachers; (2) teachers' interpretations and instantiations of the Chinese cultural models within the classrooms; and (3) continuities and changes in Chinese transnational teachers' pedagogical views and practices.

### **Participant Perspectives on Transition Experiences**

Building upon the objective information about the teachers described in chapter 3, this chapter begins with 18 participating teachers' "subjective" points of view about their transition experiences suggested by their responses to the questionnaire and the select interview questions. This information is important because it shows how the teachers are seeing and experiencing their new personal and professional environments contexts and helps illuminate cultural challenges as part of the particular context for this study on cultural models. This section includes a brief summary of their living context and social life followed by a description of their personal and professional challenges. Table 5 lists the questions asked about transition experiences in the Transnational Teacher Questionnaire (see Appendix A) and the first cultural model interview (see Appendix B).



Table 5  
Transition Questions in the Transnational Teacher Questionnaire

Dataset	Category	Questions
Questionnaire	Socio-demographic Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about your current living context and time after work.</li> <li>• In your personal life, have you had any of the following problems when you first arrived U.S.?</li> </ul>
Interview	Professional Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please describe the situation, feelings, challenges at the beginning of your first school year in U.S. What were the situation, your feeling, and challenges at the beginning of this school year?</li> </ul>

**Personal Life in the U.S.** In spite of the fact that these 18 teachers resided in four different U.S. public elementary schools, most teachers found housing with access to local Chinese restaurants and supermarkets, although few of their neighbors were of Chinese descent. With respect to their social life, approximately half (47%) of the teachers reported that they still got together with their Chinese colleagues after work; only one-third of them reported spending time with people other than their Chinese colleagues (see Table 6).

Table 6  
Transnational Teacher Ratings on Living Context and Social Life

	“When I first arrived in the U.S., I experienced...”			
	Median	IRQ	Agree or Strongly Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
Neighborhood Characteristics				
A lot of Chinese people live in my neighborhood	2	1	5.9%	91.4%
I have sufficient access to local Chinese supermarkets	2	1	47.1%	52.9%
I have sufficient access to local Chinese restaurants	3	1	70.6%	29.4%
Social Life				
After work, I mostly hang out with Chinese colleagues	3	1	47.1%	52.9%
After work, I mostly hang out with non-colleague Chinese people	2	0.5	23.5%	76.5%
After work, I mostly hangout with non-Chinese people	2	1.5	29.4%	70.6%

Note: n=18. Missing data=1 for all items. Scale range: Strongly Disagree=1; Disagree=2; Agree=3; Strongly Agree=4.

This reporting of having access to a familiar taste of home in their respective places of residence suggests the availability of a sense of cultural continuity. The fact that many spent most of their time after work with other Chinese hinted at their need for proximity to the Chinese communities. While these social relationships likely provided a sense of familiarity and comfort, it is important to note that some reported spending more time with non-Chinese acquaintances. Regardless of their composition of their social networks, still many things remained problematic and present in the lives of newly arrived sojourners.

All 18 teachers participating in this study identified challenges in their initial transitions to life in the U.S.; a majority reported experiencing culture shock (82.4%), communication difficulties (76.5%) and home sickness (76.5%) (See Table 7). Many teachers reported some problems with racial discrimination (53%) and economic difficulties (41%). Thankfully, many of these problems became less evident over time.

Table 7  
Transnational Teacher Rating about Personal Challenges

	“When first Arrived in the U.S.”				
	Median	IRQ	Never or Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time or Always
Culture shock	3	0	17.6%	82.4%	0
Communication difficulties	3	0	17.6%	76.5%	5.9%
Homesickness	3	0	17.6%	76.5%	5.6%
Racial discrimination	3	1	47.1%	52.9%	0
Economic difficulties	2	1	58.8%	41.2%	0

Note: n=18. Missing data=1 for all items. Scale range: Never=1; Rarely=2; Sometimes=3; Most of the Time=4; Always=5.

**Professional challenges in U.S. public schools.** This group of teachers also encountered a number of challenges when they began their professional career in U.S. public schools (see Table 8). One common problematic area was their unfamiliarity with U.S. public schools, including the philosophy, structures, procedures, policies, rules, classroom setup, and assessment and grading systems. On the other hand, most teachers reported no or rare problems in relationships with school administrators, parents, and colleagues. About one-third of the teachers reported facing major challenges of inadequate teaching materials, a heavy teaching load resulting in insufficient prep time, and lack of spare time.

Table 8

## Transnational Teacher Ratings of Initial Professional Challenges Due to Lack of Familiarity with U.S. Schools

	“In the beginning of the professional life in U.S.”					
	Miss.	Median	IRQ	Never or Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time or Always
Unfamiliar with philosophy of the U.S. public schools	1	3	1	6%	59%	35%
Unfamiliar with the structure of schools in the U.S.	1	3	1	0	59%	41%
Unfamiliar with school procedures, policies and rules	2	3.5	1	0	50%	50%
Unfamiliar w/ classroom setup	1	3	1	18%	53%	29%
Unfamiliar w/ assessment system	1	3	1	6%	47%	47%
Unfamiliar w/ grading system	1	3	1	12%	41%	47%
Inadequate support from school	1	2	2	53%	41%	6%
Inadequate support from recruitment agency	1	3	1	41%	53%	6%
Inadequate support from parents	1	2	1	53%	47%	0
Inadequate support from district	1	3	1	47%	41%	12%
Inadequate networking	1	3	1	35%	47%	18%
Inadequate teaching materials (e.g. textbooks, manipulative, etc.)	1	3	1	12%	53%	35%
Inadequate professional development	1	3	1	29%	53%	18%
Inadequate school equipment	1	3	1.5	59%	41%	0
Heavy teaching load resulting in insufficient prep. time	1	3	1	12%	53%	35%
Burden of clerical work	1	3	1	35%	47%	18%
Lack of spare time	1	3	1	18%	47%	35%
Communication and relation issues with school administrators	1	2	1.5	77%	23%	0
Relations with colleagues	1	2	1.5	77%	23%	0
Communication and relation issues with parents	1	2	1.5	71%	23%	6%
Lack of emotional support	1	3	1	47%	47%	6%

In terms of the challenges related to teaching, more than half of the participants reported some difficulties in three broad areas: (1) how to work with individual students (rather than the whole class); (2) classroom management; and (3) pedagogy and pedagogical content knowledge (see Table 9). In the first area, the teachers reported having trouble interacting with and motivating American students (71%), especially slow learners (71%); determining learning level of students (71%); and paying attention to individual differences (76%) and addressing individual learning and behavioral problems (88%). With regard to classroom management, the teachers reported struggling with managing the whole class’s behavior (71%). As for the pedagogical content knowledge, the teachers reported having insufficient subject matter

knowledge to plan lessons (59%) and encountering challenges using different teaching methods effectively (82%) and assessing student work (77%).

These findings provide the first evidence in this study of a Chinese cultural model of teaching and learning, given teachers’ struggles with cultural expectations for competent teachers in U.S. schools. For example, the traditional Chinese model of teaching emphasizes the group rather than individual learners, and these teachers reported difficulties in response to many questions about their relationships with children as individuals. Their difficulty adjusting to U.S. ways of classroom management also suggests different expectations for student behavior and ways of governing students’ behavior and keeping order in classes in two cultures. Other struggles they had with U.S. school pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment hint at conflicts in cultural models.

Table 9  
Transnational Teacher Ratings of Professional Struggles Due to Ideological Differences

	“In the beginning of the professional life in U.S.”					
	Miss.	Median	IRQ	Never or Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time or Always
Organization of class work	1	3	1	29%	65%	6%
Difficulties interacting w/ American students	1	3	1	35%	59%	6%
Classroom management and discipline	1	3	1.5	29%	47%	24%
Effective use of different teaching methods	1	3	0	18%	76%	6%
Motivating students	1	3	1	29%	71%	0
The need to deal with individual differences	1	3	0	12%	76%	12%
Assessing students' work	1	3	0.5	23%	71%	6%
Dealing with problems of individual students	2	3	0	0	88%	12%
Planning of lessons and schooldays	2	3	1	31%	63%	6%
Determining learning level of students	1	3	1	29%	71%	0
Insufficient knowledge of subject matter	1	3	1	41%	47%	12%
Dealing with slow learners	1	3	0.5	6%	71%	23%
Dealing with students of different cultures and deprived backgrounds	1	3	1	35%	59%	6%
Effective use of curriculum guides	1	3	1	35%	53%	12%
Lack of subject-specific ideas that could be implemented immediately	1	3	1	41%	53%	6%

Note: n=18. Scale range: Never=1; Rarely=2; Sometimes=3; Most of the Time=4; Always=5.

***Insights into cultural models: six Chinese kindergarten teachers in U.S. Schools.***

Interviews with six kindergarten teachers helped to illuminate the transition challenges as well as ideological differences between U.S. and China approach to teaching. Before describing those conversations, it is important to acknowledge the obvious differences between those teachers and the larger group. They were teaching in kindergarten classrooms – an age group and school context that have been a critical component in the U.S. educational reform initiatives—thereby with the possibility of new and/or heightened expectations. These six kindergarten teachers also shared some similarities with other teachers (all but one were female and were not prepared to teach in the grade level which they were assigned) even as they also reflected the diversity within the whole group in terms of their teacher preparation, college major, teaching certification, and previous teaching experience in China (see Table 10). Despite differences among these six teachers, their interviews show some common themes that corresponded to the questionnaire results.

Table 10  
Six Kindergarten Teachers’ Professional Background

Teacher	School	Cohort	College Major	Teaching Certification	Previous Teaching Experiences in China
Linda	Arnold	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Early Childhood Education	ECE	Private PreK-K 4 years
Sandy	Thomas	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Teaching Chinese as a foreign language	Language teaching (Any grade level)	Public Elementary 3 years Public High 3 years
Zach	Thomas	1 <sup>st</sup>	Education in the English language	High school (English)	Public Elementary 2 years Public High 3 years
Wanda	Central	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Education in the English language	High school (English)	Public PreK-K less than 1 year Public Elementary 1 years
Flora	Miller	1 <sup>st</sup>	Teaching Chinese as a foreign language	Elementary	Private PreK 1 year Private Elementary 1 year
Maya	Miller	3 <sup>rd</sup> *	Teaching Chinese as a foreign language	Elementary	Public Elementary 2 years College 2 years

*“Crossing the river by feeling the stones.”* Zach – the only male in the group - described the first month in his new kindergarten classroom as “a mix of chaos, novelty, and worrisome”.

His female colleagues, however, were not so sanguine or satisfied. The five (female) kindergarten teachers were particularly open about their struggles during their transitions to U.S. public schools. These teachers felt that they were ‘on their own’, noting that “no schedule was given for the first week”, “didn’t know hallway rules, where to drink or to have lunch, and dismissal procedure” (Flora); “no idea about open house, A-sub system, how to take attendance” (Maya). These descriptions helped to explain challenges reported in the questionnaire results, specifically their lack of familiarity with U.S. school system. The Chinese expression in the heading, above, shared by one kindergarten teacher, captured the risks and uncertainties of the acclimation process.

Other specific early transition challenges described at length by the kindergarten teachers helped illustrate their cultural model of teaching and learning. For example, Linda admitted that she knew nothing about IEP, 504, and Common Core. Maya and Flora were also confused about the U.S. way of teaching math to young children. Flora was especially critical. “I can’t stand the way American teachers teach math, too complicated.” She thought she knew a much better way. “Why bother using number line when you can give students a simpler way to do addition?” Another issue raised by several kindergarten teachers was that of lesson planning—especially given the program requirements of meeting students’ level and learning styles. Their struggle with individualization of instruction points to the Chinese cultural model they accustomed to that focuses on whole group instruction. Wanda comments about having “no idea how to do project or hands-on activities because [she] did not have relevant experience in China” particularly highlighted her Chinese origin and personal experiences that made her not accustomed to this sort of instructional practice.

These findings provide a particular understanding of the participants' initial transition experiences and challenges of acclimating to U.S. cultural-educational contexts, which can be considered not only as evidence of a collective culture shock, but their cultural model of teaching and learning.

### **Chinese Transnational Teachers' Shared Cultural Model of Teaching**

In addition to the likely source behind some of the professional challenges noted by the transnational teachers, the group's shared cultural model of teaching was further illuminated by the 18 participants' responses to two additional questions about their educational beliefs in the questionnaire (see Q1 & Q2 in Table 11). Those questions, in turn, were further elaborated by the six kindergarten teachers' discussions about teaching and learning in Chinese culture as it contrasts to U.S. educational norms. (see I1-I5 in Table 11).

Table 11  
Teacher Beliefs Questions Used to Elicit Interpretations of a Chinese Cultural Model

Dataset	Questions
Questionnaire dataset	<p>Q1: In your opinion, how different are the following items between China and U.S.?</p> <p>Q2: Most teachers believe that all of the things listed below are important for young children to develop in school but that some are more important than others. Please indicate below how important each of the following goals are for your current students in U.S. by choosing one of the numbers from 1 to 5. Rate each goal in terms of its importance relative to the other goals. Please also indicate how important each of the following goal is for students at the same age in China.</p>
Interview dataset	<p>I1: How does the role of a teacher differ in China and in U.S.?</p> <p>I2: What kinds of teachers are seen as "good teacher" in China and in the U.S.?</p> <p>I3: What do you believe as most important things as a teacher in China and in the U.S.?</p> <p>I4: What do you believe are the most important expectations of students in China and in the U.S.?</p> <p>I5: What kinds of early elementary students are seen as "good students" in China and in U.S.?</p>



**Recognitions of educational differences between two cultures.** When asked, in the questionnaire, to compare the U.S. education with that of their home country, all respondents noted some or major differences in the two cultures' school operating systems, educational philosophies, and the goals of elementary education (see Table 12). The majority of the respondents also recognized some or major differences in teacher evaluation systems, definitions of good teachers/students and good teaching/learning, useful instructional strategies, methods to assess student learning, and relationships with parents. Many of these differences were associated with previously described transition challenges.

Table 12  
Teacher Recognition of Differences in Educational Contexts between China and the U.S.

Differences between China and the U.S. regarding:	Miss.	Median	IRQ	No or Little Diff.	Some or Major Diff.
School Operating System	2	4	1	0	100%
Education Philosophy	2	3	0	0	100%
The Goal of Elementary Education	2	3	0	0	100%
Teacher Evaluation System	2	3	1	6%	94%
Definition of Good Student and Good Learning	2	3	0.75	13%	87%
The Most Useful Instructional Strategies	2	3	0	13%	87%
Relationships with Parents	2	3	0.75	19%	81%
Definition of Good Teacher and Good Teaching	2	3	0.75	19%	81%
Methods of Assessing Student Learning	2	3	0	19%	81%
Relationships with school administrators	2	3	1.75	31%	69%
Class Management and Discipline Approach	2	3	1	31%	69%
Ideal Class Climate	2	3	1.75	31%	69%
Ideal Learning Environment	2	3	1.75	44%	56%
Relationships with Colleagues	2	3	1	44%	56%

Note: n=18. Scale range: No difference=1; Little Difference=2; Some Difference=3; Major Difference=4.

In addition to asking the participants to discern the differences in educational contexts between the two cultures, teachers were asked to rate the importance of a set of educational goals for their current students (kindergarten to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade) in the U.S. and for students of the same grade level in China. The teachers' reported goals for early elementary students revealed a number of goals common to both cultures, including developing students' basic skills, work

habits, and acquiring knowledge (see Table 13). These goals are consistent with traditional Chinese cultural model. Differences in Chinese and the U.S. educational goals were also noted by the teachers, included the greater importance in the U.S. of critical thinking/problem solving, cooperation, social skills, independence and initiative, self-concept, motor skills, and creativity. These differences provide insights into what were not emphases of traditional Chinese cultural values.

Table 13

Teacher Reported Goals for Early Elementary Students in China and the U.S. (Modified from Stipek &amp; Byler's (2004) Teacher Survey)

	In China					In the U.S.					Diff.
	Miss.	Median	IRQ	Not at all Important or Somewhat Important	Important or Very Important	Miss.	Median	IRQ	Not at all Important or Somewhat Important	Important or Very Important	Sig.
Basic skills (letters/reading and numbers/arithmetic) <sup>13</sup>	2	4	0	0%	100%	3	3	1	13%	87%	.083
Work habits (completing tasks, paying attention) <sup>13</sup>	2	4	0	0%	100%	3	3	1	7%	93%	.180
Knowledge (facts, like the months of the year) <sup>13</sup>	2	3	2	29%	71%	3	3	1	14%	86%	.792
Critical thinking/problem solving <sup>13</sup>	2	3	0	40%	60%	3	4	1	0	100%	.012*
Cooperation (following rules, getting along with adults) <sup>14</sup>	2	2	2	53%	47%	3	3	1	0	100%	.008*
Social skills (getting along with other children) <sup>13</sup>	2	2	2	53%	47%	3	4	1	0	100%	.008*
Independence and initiative (solving problems on own) <sup>13</sup>	2	2	1	53%	47%	3	4	1	0	100%	.008*
Self-concept (self-confidence, feeling good about self) <sup>13</sup>	2	2	1	53%	47%	3	4	1	7%	93%	.002*
Motor skills (sports, coordination) <sup>13</sup>	2	2	1	60%	40%	3	3	1	0	100%	.004*
Creativity (imagination) <sup>13</sup>	2	2	1	67%	33%	3	4	1	7%	93%	.002*

Note: n=18. Scale changed from Stipek & Byler's (2004) 5-point scale to 4-point scale: Not at all important=1; Somewhat important=2; Important=3; Very important=4.

<sup>13</sup> A Related-Samples Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was run because the distribution of differences between paired observations is respectively symmetrical. Asymptotic significance is displayed for the test.

<sup>14</sup> A Related-Sample Signed Test was run because the distribution of differences between paired observations is not respectively symmetrical. Exact significance is displayed for the test.

Coupled with the comparison of educational goals, the participants identified frequently used instructional methods in the two cultures. As displayed in Table 14, a majority of the respondents reported that instruction by lecture is more commonly used in China whereas face-to-face conversation, student-led question and answer sessions, peer teaching (in which students take on the role of teacher), small group work, and pair/triad activity appeared to be more frequently used pedagogical practices in U.S. elementary classrooms. Additionally, a majority of respondents reported that painting/drawing and hands-on activities were more common in the U.S. than in China. With regard to the use of various teaching resources, visual aids, animated pictures/stories, posters, and technology (video media/PowerPoint/smart board) were reported as being used more frequently in U.S. elementary classrooms. It is worth noting that teachers' use of body language was another high frequency instructional practice in the U.S., which may reflect a characteristic of dual language immersion programs.

Table 14  
Teacher Ratings of Instructional Methods Used in China and the U.S.

	In China (Dec 2015)						In the U.S. (Dec 2015)						Diff. Sig.
	Miss.	Median	IRQ	Never or Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time or Always	Miss.	Median	IRQ	Never or Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time or Always	
Lecture (introduction of new material, reviewing previous lesson, explaining work or expectations) <sup>15</sup>	6	4	1	0	17%	83%	3	3	1	7%	67%	26%	.016*
Whole class activity (singing/dancing/movement/recitation) <sup>16</sup>	6	3	1	17%	42%	41%	3	4	2	7%	40%	53%	.334
Teacher-led question and answer (closed or open-ended) with the whole group/small group/individual <sup>15</sup>	6	4	0.75	8%	17%	75%	3	4	1	0	33%	67%	1.00
Repetition and memorization activity (flash card) <sup>16</sup>	6	4	1	17%	25%	58%	3	4	0	0	13%	87%	.121
Guided practice/modeling <sup>15</sup>	6	4	0.75	0	25%	75%	3	4	1	0	7%	93%	.125
Use of workbook/worksheet <sup>16</sup>	6	4	1	8%	8%	84%	3	4	2	7%	20%	73%	.726
Classroom discussion: teacher-initiated/student-initiated <sup>16</sup>	6	3	0.75	8%	67%	25%	3	4	1	7%	20%	73%	.112
Face to face conversation (teacher-student/student-student) <sup>15</sup>	6	3.5	1	8%	42%	50%	3	4	1	0	0	100%	.016*
Warm-up conversational sessions (interest-based/experience-based) <sup>16</sup>	6	4	1.75	8%	33%	59%	3	4	2	0	33%	67%	.157
Student presentation (show & tell, self-introduction, etc.) <sup>16</sup>	6	3	1.75	25%	58%	17%	3	3	1	7%	47%	46%	.131
Student-led question and answer <sup>16</sup>	6	3	1	33%	50%	17%	3	3	1	13%	47%	40%	.030*
Students taking on the role of teacher (teaching/modeling) <sup>15</sup>	7	3	0	18%	64%	18%	3	4	1	0	13%	87%	.008*
Small group work (problem solving/writing project/drama) <sup>15</sup>	6	2.5	1.75	50%	25%	25%	3	4	2	0	27%	73%	.004*
Learning centers <sup>16</sup>	7	4	1	18%	27%	55%	3	4	1	7%	7%	86%	.167
Pair/triad activity <sup>16</sup>	6	3	1	0	67%	33%	3	4	1	0	27%	73%	.031*
Drawing/painting <sup>16</sup>	6	3	1	17%	50%	33%	3	4	0	0	13%	87%	.016*
Hands-on activities (arts & crafts/use of manipulatives/experiment/exploration) <sup>16</sup>	6	3	1.75	25%	33%	42%	3	4	0	7%	13%	80%	.041*
Use of real/concrete material <sup>15</sup>	6	3	1	8%	50%	42%	3	4	1	0	20%	80%	.062
Use of body language (explaining word/concept) <sup>15</sup>	6	3.5	1.75	8%	42%	50%	3	4	0	0	7%	93%	.031*
Use of visual aid (explaining word/concept) <sup>15</sup>	6	4	1	0	42%	58%	3	4	1	0	7%	93%	.031*
Use of animated picture/story <sup>16</sup>	6	3	1	17%	50%	33%	3	4	1	0	20%	80%	.011*
Use of poster <sup>16</sup>	6	3	1	42%	50%	8%	3	4	1	7%	33%	60%	.008*
Use of technology (video media/PowerPoint/smart board) <sup>15</sup>	6	4	2	17%	17%	66%	3	5	1	0	0	100%	.031*

Note: n=18. Scale range: Never=1; Rarely=2; Sometimes=3; Most of the Time=4; Always=5. The significance level is .05.

<sup>15</sup> A Related-Sample Signed Test was run because the distribution of differences between paired observations is respectively not symmetrical. Exact significance is displayed for the test.

<sup>16</sup> A Related-Samples Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was run because the distribution of differences between paired observations is respectively symmetrical. Asymptotic significance is displayed for the test.

As revealed in the questionnaire, these teachers reported substantial educational and pedagogical differences between China and the U.S., hinting at the existence of two larger, societal level cultural models of teaching. These comparisons continued to emerge from the six teachers' responses to interview questions, both generally and sometimes about specific areas in the questionnaire.

*We do things differently in China.* The six kindergarten teachers described their cultural understandings of Chinese school organization, philosophy and practices in a variety of ways and throughout the interview (not only in response to specific questions). Those features most relevant to this study of cultural models are listed in Table 15, each of which were considered most important, most salient, and/or most frequently mentioned by multiple teachers.

Table 15  
Six Kindergarten TNT's Elaborations on Differences in Educational Contexts between China and the U.S.

Differences between China and the U.S. regarding:	China	The United States
Educational Philosophy (Ideologies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• China's collectivistic orientation in education</li> <li>• The hardship inherent in the path of education</li> <li>• Education and knowledge can change fate and lead to better living</li> <li>• Less personal freedom is allowed in Chinese education</li> <li>• Questioning is subdued in Chinese education</li> <li>• Exam- or result-oriented education</li> <li>• Learning content information is more important than thinking about it</li> <li>• Values academic performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US's individualistic orientation in education</li> <li>• Education comes naturally to American children</li> <li>• Education can increase world view and lead to better opportunities</li> <li>• Greater personal freedom is allowed in US education</li> <li>• US education values creativity</li> <li>• Standards and curriculum guide teaching and learning</li> <li>• Value holistic development</li> </ul>
Definition of good student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obedient</li> <li>• Having good grades</li> <li>• Serious attitude</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent thinking and unique ideas</li> </ul>
Definition of good teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imparting as much knowledge as possible</li> <li>• Rote learning and rote knowledge that can promote test scores</li> <li>• Break up whole group instruction into chunks</li> <li>• Differentiate assignments by learning outcome</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasize comprehension</li> <li>• More guided and exploratory learning</li> <li>• Student-centered teaching and cooperative learning</li> <li>• A variety of pedagogical strategies are used</li> </ul>

Given the aims of this study – to understand these teachers’ cultural models of teaching and learning, it is especially important to understand these kindergarten teachers’ individual perspectives on good teaching and good students based on their experiences within the two cultures. With regard to what they referred to as “Chinese ways,” the six teachers’ descriptions were like different pieces of a puzzle, and by putting them together, reveal a contour of a Chinese cultural model. For example, every teacher except Sandy described “imparting knowledge” as a primary responsibility of Chinese teachers. Four teachers (Linda, Wanda, Flora and Zach) described rote instruction as a habitual approach of teaching in China because of its power for promoting test scores. Sandy and Flora added nuance to this description of teaching, pointing out that the act of teaching in China has been contextually bounded by the lengthy historical background of testing system. Furthermore, a “good Chinese teacher”, in Sandy and Zach’s views, knows how to break up whole group instruction into chunks and could differentiate assignments by students’ learning outcomes. As for a ‘good student’ - within the Chinese cultural-educational context, as noted by Wanda, Maya and Zach, the qualities of good students include being obedient, earning good grades, and exhibiting a serious attitude toward studying.

These interview results support an underlying premise of this study – that these teachers represent elements of the complex Chinese cultural model, even though none of them used that term. Their recognition of cultural norms, previously taken for granted, were illuminated (not only to this researcher, but also to them) when faced with the challenges and contradictions of this new socio-cultural-educational context. Key features of a Chinese cultural model articulated by kindergarten teachers as “common and obvious” ways of teaching and learning in China are described in greater detail by individual teachers.

*A common view of education: ability to change fate and lead to a better life.* One common theme from discussions with these kindergarten teachers was that education and the acquisition of knowledge can change one's fate and lead to a better life. For example, Sandy recalled that she was very aware of the consequences of lack of education in China:

My parents' generation had experienced China's Cultural Revolution, so they hardly got any education. However, they were required to provide a degree when looking for a job. We could tell the difficulties that our parents had at that time, so we reached a conclusion: If we did not work hard and study hard, our future would be as hard as our parents' current situation. All the people around me including my generation's children understood this reality. When I talked to my friends when I was in college, everyone else had the same thought. Furthermore, I felt the same way from all the publicity through TV, the books, and [my] parents' lack of education. Besides, Chinese ancient books pointed out "there are golden houses in the books, there are gorgeous faces in the books"; studying can give you a successful career and bring glory to your family. This spirit which comes from the Chinese culture, is as prominent now as ever.

Wanda also made a similar comment: "The saying of 'knowledge changes destiny' is so prevalent in our country...Children from poor families especially need to study hard so that [they can] attend a good college, find a good job, and earn money." Their comments reflect strong, Chinese cultural beliefs in the power of education and the abundant life created by personal success in education. Given the sweet fruit that education bears, the hardship inherent in the path of education seems to become reasonable and worthy; for example, as Sandy described:

When we were entering middle schools from elementary schools, we had to pass an entrance examination. This exam was extremely vital and if we failed it, we could not attend the best middle school in our town. I still remembered we had to carry our backpacks and walk 20 minutes to our school before daybreak. Besides, as a fifth grader, I could not even finish my homework until 12am when I usually went to bed for a short sleep. My mother would wake up at 4:30am and let me finish the rest of the homework. After breakfast, around 5:30am, it was about time to go to school. So that time was extremely tough. Plus, the amount of homework was exceedingly high. Back to that time, I thought it was unacceptable to not finish [all the homework].

Like Sandy, a majority of students in China have tasted similar bitterness in the course of schooling. As Wanda noted,



When we were little, parents would say ‘If you wish to be the best man, you must suffer the bitterest of the bitter’ which probably meant that you had to endure the bitterness in the course of study first and then you could attend a good college, get a good job, and further change [your] fate.

Many Chinese parents also play an important role in the path of their children’s education. For instance, Linda explained that “My mother is a very traditional Chinese parent. She thinks you should study hard and must have good grades”. Wanda also provided a similar description about her mother:

My mother was very strict and wanted me to have good grades. If I did not get good grades, she would express her anger in her face. In every exam, I was required to be the top 10 of the whole grade level. If I reached the goal, she would reward me with buying me something. The level of her strictness was very high. If she ever heard anything negative about me from the teacher-parent meetings, she would scold me roundly. I don’t remember if she ever spanked me, but she was extremely strict to me.

These teachers’ descriptions demonstrate how Chinese parents emphasize children’s academic performance and how strict they can be in order to ensure that their children can rise to the top.

Given the saliency of the view of the parental role in Chinese society, what Chinese teachers think and do is inevitably influenced by the power of association between the students’ education and future well-being. There is reason to expect, on cultural as well as educational grounds, that these teachers (similar to most Chinese teachers) will see supporting students as the keys to an abundant life and as the most important goal. Unsurprisingly, teaching practices derive from these beliefs. In China, the strategies for attaining the goal of an abundant life have been confined by the cultural tradition of testing - the dominant mechanism used to evaluate both teachers’ and students’ endeavors in achieving academic excellence. As reviewed in the literature, such mechanisms have shaped Chinese teachers’ habits of teaching for generations. As Sandy described the image of teachers throughout the schooling experience (from the late 1980s to mid-1990s),

In the environment I grew up, teachers were just [like] machines supplying correct answers [to all exercises we did]. All they did was teach people how to perform in tests. This was the idea I held since I was a child.

Wanda also said:

When I was a student, in general, the length of each class was between 40 to 45 minutes. The teacher was standing on a podium and lecturing...and just kept lecturing until [he/she] finished. Then the teacher would randomly pick some students to answer two questions. After long, tedious lecture, the teacher would say 'today's homework is...'. [I feel] every day was just like that.

These descriptions hint at the Chinese teachers' normal and natural pedagogy, which is based on the assumptions about what is best for their students.

The implicit, cultural logic that a good education leads to a better life tends to make all parties involved in education put their focus on the outcomes of educational activities. It also plays a major role in determining the teaching goals and the means by which they are attained. When asked about the most important thing in Chinese education, many kindergarten teachers replied with "high academic performance". Their comments mark the pedagogical direction represented by the Chinese cultural model as it influences teachers' educational objectives for their students.

*Mastery-based pedagogy.* In keeping with the direction of academic excellence, the Chinese kindergarten teachers' views on traditional Chinese pedagogy tended to emphasize the mastery of content knowledge and testing skills, paying less attention to students' holistic personal development or psychological well-being. As Linda commented,

The education mode in China has a strong focus on knowledge. The quantity of knowledge and learning skills is the priority. As a result, [student and teacher personal development] can hardly be noticed. As long as you are able to concentrate on learning, [understanding] the content, and mastering those skills, these inner changes would not affect the quality of the knowledge obtained or mastery of skills.

Rote learning and utilizing a large number of worksheets are also mentioned as commonly used strategies in Chinese classrooms. Such classroom instructional techniques focus on the student's ability to memorize and reproduce knowledge from textbooks and to give correct answers within a short amount of time rather than to show they comprehend the meaning of the content.

***Compliance requirement.*** Within this mastery-based model, many kindergarten teachers made comments about the exhibit of a high level of teacher dominance and students' passive compliance. For example, Linda described,

[In a typical Chinese classroom] teachers lecture and students just listen. Teachers state, 'Do not ask any questions now [while I am teaching]. If you [students] want to express anything, save it until you go back to your home.' In China, many [things] are disciplined. [Students] don't have too much freedom. For instance, if your teacher doesn't allow you express your opinion, you don't get to make your voice heard freely. Take the implementation of an activity as an example, the same activity can be implemented in the U.S. and in China, but in China, you can't say you don't like it.

They also used similar ways of describing the Chinese image of a "good student", including being obedient and studying hard. Wanda's description of good students in China provides an illustrative example:

Speaking of good students in China, some are from very poor families, so they might know that they have to study hard...as you know, in China, you have to study hard so that you can do a lot of things; still others have good family education, so they are very obedient. They would do whatever you say and they are very smart. Parents will teach them at home, too.

The cultural values embedded in this sense of "good student" are diligence, conformity, and academic success.

This discussion has provided kindergarten teachers' interpretations of three features of a Chinese cultural model most frequently mentioned by the kindergarten teachers. These features resonate with previously described challenges faced by many in the larger group of transnational teachers; and conform to what the literature says about Chinese cultural image of teacher's role

as governing students' behavior, deliver knowledge, and promote learning outcomes. To examine how these teachers' Chinese ideologies were interpreted and instantiated within the U.S. classrooms, the next section directs attention toward the participants' pedagogical practices.

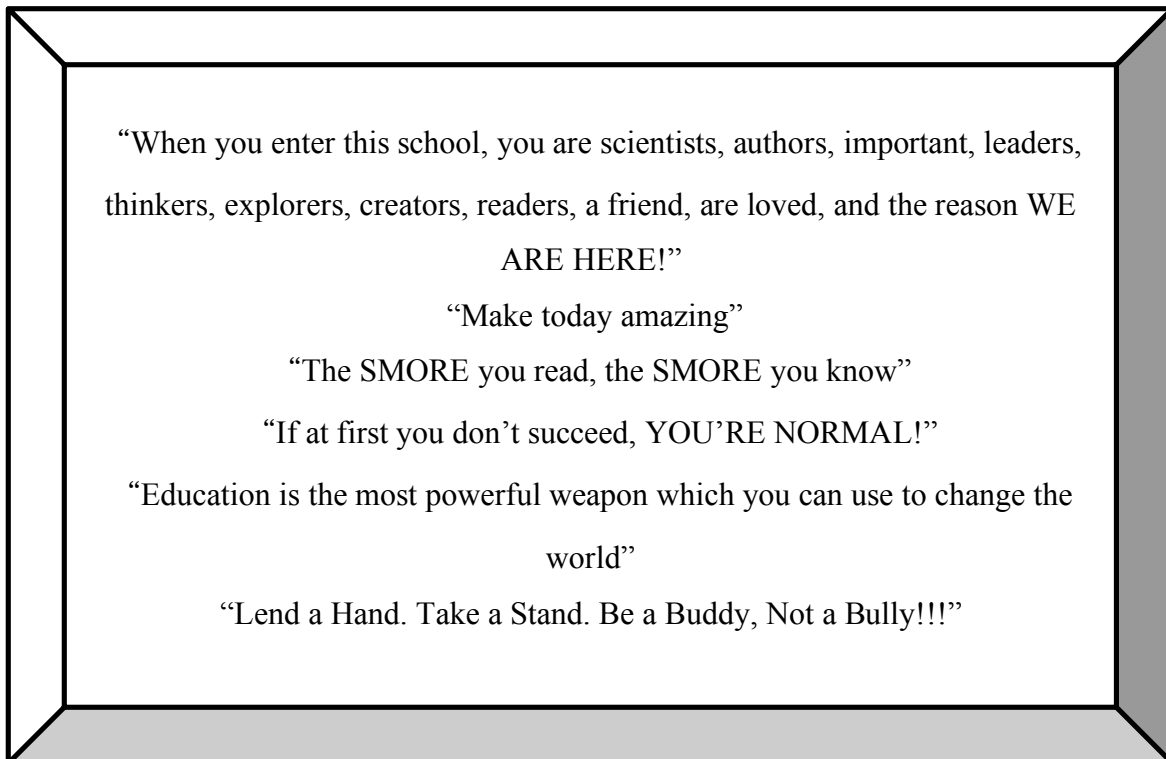
### **Instantiations of a Chinese Cultural Model within U.S. Classroom**

The following discussion drawn from the observational dataset focuses on the subgroup of teachers assigned to kindergarten classrooms with the aim to better understand their interpretations and instantiations of a Chinese cultural model within U.S. classrooms. Some patterns of pedagogical practices observed in these teachers' classrooms illuminated the influence of the cultural-educational ideologies they brought with them from China, but still others provided clues to the influence of the predominant U.S. kindergarten cultural model. The analysis of classroom observations also reveals individual teachers' differences. Thus, three 2<sup>nd</sup> year kindergarten lead teachers' profiles are presented to offer insights into their personal interpretations and instantiations of a Chinese cultural model in their own classrooms.

As noted in chapter 3, the foci and subsequent analyses of the formal classroom observations were guided by two different disciplinary approaches (1) an anthropological approach of classroom as "developmental niche" with specific attention to physical environment, social characteristics, and patterns of teaching (New, 2012; Super & Harkness, 1986); and (2) a standardized assessment tool, ECCOM, to examine transnational teachers' use of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. Results to be presented in the next sections are first the descriptions of the physical and social characteristics of school and classroom contexts in which these six kindergarten teachers work. Then an overall pedagogical orientation of each of the teachers' classrooms measured by ECCOM is reported. The last part of this section presents

three select teachers' classroom contexts and their teaching practices with the purpose to address individual differences.

**Chinese elements blended into U.S. schools/classrooms.** The four schools where the transnational kindergarten teachers worked shared numerous features that are also common to elementary schools in the US: gymnasium, library/media center, computer laboratory with a number of workstations, a cafeteria, teachers' break room; and a suite of offices for the school's principal, assistant principal and clerical staff. In addition to these commonalities, other characteristics were shared by the four schools where this study took place. All schools' entrances and corridors were adorned with students' art work and encouraging messages - such as



Although all of these signs were in English, the four schools had various ways to highlight the Chinese immersion programs and the culture represented by the transnational teachers in that school. Thomas Elementary School's was the most public; throughout the year, anyone visiting the school would enter through foyer decorated with Chinese lanterns, a dragon, calligraphy, and a message of "Discover Thomas...where there is a world of opportunities Chinese Language Immersion. .... [in English, followed by ...]. 我愛漢語[I love Chinese]". In the other three school buildings, Chinese cultural decorations were limited to the corridors where the Chinese classrooms were located. All four libraries had books in Chinese and English available for teachers and/or students to check out. Within each of the immersion classrooms were displays of the flag and a map of China, Chinese paper cut-outs and hand fans, as well as posters of scenery and Chinese performance artists. In spite of this general acknowledgement of the Chinese language immersion program (and the Chinese members of the school faculty), there was little other evidence of Chinese culture in the school environments – e.g., the lunchroom fare was standard American cuisine<sup>17</sup>.

Across four schools, the six Chinese immersion kindergarten classrooms were located on the same corridor with other kindergarten classes. Other than the Chinese decorations described above, the classroom size, furnishings and arrangement were very similar across Chinese and English classrooms. Storage cabinets lined the wall for students' belongings. An open carpeted area for the whole group gatherings was set up in front of the Smartboard. Tables of different sizes and shapes – rectangular, trapezoidal, half-circle – were used to create working spaces for children, who are assigned (via name tags) to specific seats. A few desks were present in one classroom for the purpose of managing individual students with behavioral problems. At least

---

<sup>17</sup> The Chinese teachers brought their own lunch to school, which they ate (sometimes with chopsticks) with their students. Beyond this exposure and food-related lessons, such cultural traditions were generally not part of the Chinese immersion curriculum.

one half-moon table was available for each teacher to do small group instruction. In terms of instructional equipment and materials, some features were observed only in the Chinese immersion classrooms. Chinese picture books were available on the bookshelves for students to read during independent reading time. English-language books (sorted by reading levels) were provided by the English language arts teachers<sup>18</sup>, who came daily for 30-45 minute lessons. Computer stations, laptops, or tablets were available for the teacher to do assessments or for students to use when they had the teachers' permission. Math manipulatives and art materials were available in the classroom, but, again, the children had to ask permission. The use of these and other supplemental materials were, in almost every case, controlled by the teachers.

General social characteristics of the kindergarten classrooms were also typical of the people who would be found in other U.S. kindergartens – with the exception of the presence of transnational teachers. Three of the four schools had adopted a co-teaching model for the kindergarten immersion program; in those classrooms, two teachers' desks were set up at the opposite corners of the classrooms. The kindergarten teachers at Miller Elementary (Flora and Maya) supported each other's literacy rotation when one of their classes was having English lessons. Class size on average was 20 children, ranging from 17 – 23 children across four schools (due to enrollment conditions or legal cap on class size). Four of the six immersion kindergarten classrooms had more girls than boys. Out of the six immersion kindergarten classrooms, only one<sup>19</sup> had a child (presumed Chinese) with identified special needs and IEP. An English speaking TA was responsible for taking him to specialists. Parents were also present in the immersion

---

<sup>18</sup> In these schools, there were three strategies to provide English language arts instruction for children in the immersion classrooms: (1) a teacher hired for the sole purpose of teaching English language arts; (2) a "regular" kindergarten teacher who would come to an Immersion classroom when her children were having 'specials' – e.g., P.E. or, in one school the 'regular' teacher would trade classrooms with one of the transnational teachers, so that one group received English language arts and the other a brief lesson in Chinese foreign language; or (3) the children in the immersion classroom would be divided into smaller groups and sent to regular kindergarten classrooms.

<sup>19</sup> This is to the best of my understanding. I did not inquire, and only one teacher told me about this child's IEP.

kindergartens, especially during events such as Chinese festivals, birthday parties, and the ‘holiday’ shop in December. A few parents were also regular volunteers, during the literacy rotation instructions at Thomas Elementary e.g. as observed in Sandy’s and Zach’s classrooms).

Many of these physical and social characteristics of kindergarten were not influenced by the Chinese cultural model but more consistent with cultural-educational norms in U.S. schools, and as such the transnational teachers were also “immersed” in a foreign language/ foreign cultural setting. Not only did they have little or no control over these features of their school life. Given the contrast with Chinese elementary schools (e.g., large class size, single teacher, limited parent involvement, non-inclusive schools), it is not surprising that so many of the transnational teachers experienced “culture shock” - feeling challenged by and unprepared for some of what they were expected to do in such a new socio-cultural context.

**Teaching under the influences of two distinct cultural models.** The scale items of The Early Childhood Observation Measure (ECCOM) provided an overall index of a wide range of observable classroom components and teaching practices in each of these six teachers’ classroom. The authors of ECCOM considered it as “a global classroom observation research tool which includes scales describing two different approaches to instruction” (Stipek & Byler, 2004, p. 379). The individual item scores utilize ratings based on percentages of time in which behaviors described in coding manual were observed. For example, a score of 1 is given to child-centered items (e.g., teacher is attentive to children’s individual skill level) or teacher-directed items (e.g., task are not flexible and teacher does not consider children’s individual needs) if the described practices were seen 20% of the time or less; 2 if they were seen 21%-40% of the time; 3 if they were present 61%-80% of the time; and 5 if practices were seen 80%-100% of the time. The



overall summary scores<sup>20</sup> (see Table 16) indicate whether the classroom is more (T) “a teacher controlled and directed classroom that emphasizes the acquisition of basic academic skills...and involves primarily drill and practice”—features which, in this study, corresponds to the traditional Chinese cultural model; or more (C) “a child-centered [classroom] that is sensitive to and focused on children’s needs and interests”—an orientation which many early childhood experts in the U.S. tend to favor (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, 2009). As noted previously, this tool was selected due to the relevance of these two overall pedagogical orientations as well as the particular behaviors observed in three sub-categories: Instructional Practices, Classroom Management, and Classroom Climate<sup>21</sup>.

---

<sup>20</sup> All items in the “children given almost complete autonomy” domain were omitted because no such behaviors were observed in the six teachers’ classroom.

<sup>21</sup> Two sub-items were omitted in this analysis – teaching of and math assessment. mathematics (because another teacher taught mathematics in the immersion classrooms)

Table 16  
Early Childhood Classroom Observations of Six Kindergarten Classrooms

Instruction	Practice descriptions	Linda		Wanda		Sandy		Zach		Flora		Maya	
		C	T	C	T	C	T	C	T	C	T	C	T
Teaching of concept	lessons are designed to develop understanding=C; Lessons focus on facts or procedures=T	3	1	0	3	2	3	3	4	2	4	2	4
Instructional conversations	teacher and children equally participate=C; teacher dominates and children's participation is limited=T	4	1	0	3	2	3	1	3	2	4	3	2
Coherence of instructional activities	connections btw and within lessons=C; distinct and disconnected lessons=T	4	1	3	1	5	1	3	2	2	3	3	2
Learning Standards	standards vary depending on individual level=C; standards are universal and rigid=T	4	0	0	4	4	0	4	4	2	3	3	2
Literacy instruction	a broad array of literacy experiences and instructional approaches=C; emphasize rote memorization=T	4	1	0	1	4	3	2	2	3	3	2	2
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>19</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Classroom management</b>													
Choices of activities	a mixture of teacher and child choice=C; teacher makes most choices=T	2	3	0	4	0	5	0	5	0	5	2	5
Discipline strategies	positive techniques=C; negative techniques=T	5	0	2	2	5	0	3	0	5	0	5	0
Child responsibility	have opportunities to take responsibility =C; no opportunities are provided =T	4	2	1	4	5	1	4	1	3	2	3	0
Management strategies	clear but flexible rules and routine=C; rigid rules =T	5	0	1	5	5	0	5	0	4	0	5	0
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Classroom climate (learning and social)</b>													
Relevance of instructional activities	instructions build on prior knowledge and relate to children's experience=C	5	NA	4	NA	5	NA	4	NA	4	NA	2	NA
Children's communication skills	encourage children to engage in conversations or elaborate on their thoughts=C; not encouraged=T	4	1	0	4	3	3	1	4	1	5	1	4
Student engagement	engage all children in ways that improve skills and understanding=C; engage children in rote activities=T	5	0	1	4	5	2	2	2	0	1	3	2
Individualization of instruction	attentive to individual skill level and adapt tasks accordingly=C; not consider individual needs=T	4	0	2	3	4	1	4	3	3	3	4	2
Interpersonal skill	promote children's development=C; not opportunities are provided=T	3	0	0	3	1	3	1	3	2	3	0	1
Teacher warmth	warm and responsive toward children=C	5	NA	1	NA	5	NA	2	NA	4	NA	5	NA
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>26</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Total rating</b>		<b>61</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>26</b>

*Instructional practices.* As sub-scores indicate, instructional strategies, observed in these six kindergarten immersion classrooms varied in the degree to which they are either teacher-dominated or child-centered, as defined by this scale. Linda’s and Wanda’s classrooms represent two extreme examples in terms of their predominant approach to instruction. Linda consistently was observed – and received the highest scores—using child-centered teaching strategies, while using teacher-directed instruction when precision and uniformity were deemed necessary – e.g., when showing the whole class how to write Chinese characters following the traditional order of strokes. Wanda’s preferred teaching style was, in contrast to Linda’s, most often categorized as teacher –directed. In fact, she received one of the highest scores on the teacher-directed subscale and the lowest score on the child-centered dimension of all the immersion kindergarten teachers.

Frequently observed practices in the classrooms that scored high on the child-centered instruction included many of the behaviors used to explain the scoring by the authors of this observational tool,

“the teacher [held] children accountable for completing their work, and for attaining some individualized but clearly articulate standard” [e.g, Linda];

“[the teacher provided] a broad array of literacy experiences and instructional approaches” [e.g., Sandy];

“lessons that [were]...well connected to children’s previous knowledge” [e.g., Linda and Sandy];

“children [were] active participants in instructional conversations, with the teacher soliciting children’s questions, ideas, solutions, and interpretations” [e.g., Linda]” (Stipek & Byler, 2004, p. 386).

The following practices were commonly seen in the classrooms that were given high score on teacher-directed practices:

“the teachers [held] students accountable for completing work and for attaining universal rather than individualized standards” [e.g. Wanda and Zach];

“[the teacher focused] on facts and procedure knowledge” [e.g., Zach, Flora and Maya]

“[teacher controlled] classroom conversation” [e.g., Flora]

and lessons [focused] on discrete skills” [e.g., Wanda] (Stipek & Byler, 2004, p. 387).

Another benefit of this tool is that it does not treat these pedagogical orientations as dichotomous. For example, observations in Sandy's and Flora's classrooms resulted in high scores on both child-centered and teacher-directed items, although each of these teachers seemed to have a preferred style – e.g., child-centered instructional strategies were more frequently used in Sandy's classroom whereas the teacher-directed strategies were more commonly seen in Flora's classroom.

***Classroom management.*** In terms of the classroom management, all but one of the kindergarten teachers used child-centered strategies such as those described by Stipek and Byler (2004): “rules and routines [are] clear but flexible [and] discipline is brief and non-disruptive, often involving explanations” (Stipek & Byler, 2004, p. 386). Wanda was again an outlier, and her approach to classroom management exemplified the ECCOM definition of teacher control, in which “rules and routines are teacher determined and imposed; and the teacher [took] responsibility for maintaining classroom organization and order, and [intervened] quickly in social conflict situations” (Stipek & Byler, 2004, p. 387)

***Classroom climate.*** As for the items assessing classroom climate including learning and social dimensions, the scores also reflected variations among the six teachers. Observations in Linda's and Sandy's classrooms resulted in higher scores on child-centered social climate items because these two teachers were “warm, responsive, understanding, attentive, nurturing, genuinely respectful of, and like children” (Stipek & Byler, 2004, p. 380). The learning climate in their classrooms was also child-centered; they often engaged children in instructions that contributed to their skills and understanding and paid attention to individual skill level. On the contrary, Wanda's classroom was predominantly teacher controlled where children were not encouraged to elaborate on their thoughts and spent most of their time on rote activities.

Overall ECCOM scores pointed out that five out of six kindergarten teachers' teaching demonstrated the influence of the Chinese cultural model. Particularly, Wanda's teaching was consistently didactic across every dimension. In Sandy's, Zach's, Flora's, Maya's classrooms, the attempts of implementing a mix of two distinct or conflict pedagogical practices were apparent. However, Sandy seemed to incorporate a higher level of child-centered practices than the rest of the three. Linda was considered as an outlier whose teaching was very child-centered, which raised an important question about from which her pedagogical ideology and practices originated. Based on these individual differences demonstrated by the scores within standardized observational measurement as well as several common features (other than their Chinese heritage) that distinguished them from the other teachers in this study, Linda, Wanda, and Sandy -three 2<sup>nd</sup> year kindergarten lead teachers - were selected as the foci of the teacher profiles to address the research question about individual differences. In the following profiles, these three teachers' professional backgrounds, their personal views about teaching in the U.S., and their actual instructional practices in immersion kindergarten classrooms offer a multi-dimensional way to understand these three women as well as their particular conditions and processes associated their interpretations and instantiations of Chinese cultural models of teaching across diverse cultural settings.

**Individual Differences: Profiles of Three Kindergarten Teachers.** In this section, I first introduce Linda, Sandy and Wanda and then provide the rationale of selecting them as foci to profile. In order to have a better understanding about their teaching, these three teachers' individual pedagogical views about teaching in the U.S. are first presented followed by the discussion on how they instantiated some features of a Chinese cultural model as well as their personal views in their practices.

Linda, Sandy and Wanda came to the U.S. in August 2014 and were hired as lead teachers, each in three public elementary schools. When this study was conducted, the three teachers were each in their second year of teaching Chinese immersion kindergarten classes. The following discussion presents how they were distinguished from each other by their professional backgrounds, pedagogical ideologies, and orientations in instructional practices.

*Linda was never considered a ‘good’ Chinese student.* Throughout Linda’s schooling experiences, she claimed that she was never a good student according to the Chinese standard. She usually felt bored in class, had trouble listening to the teachers, did not like to do homework, and her grades were at the bottom of the class. After finishing her elementary education, Linda decided to attend a three-year early childhood teacher preparation program in a normal school for two reasons: first, she thought it would be fun to work with young children; and second, she wanted to learn music, art, and dance as these were included the teacher preparation curriculum. Afterward, she completed two years of normal college education in the same area followed by another three years of early childhood teacher education in a non-normal university. After earning her bachelor’s degree, she taught children aged 3 to 5 for four years in China. While her pre-service teacher education was similar to that of many early childhood teachers in China, her teaching experience was different from most. The school at which she taught was an international school which followed a British early childhood curriculum and only admitted non-Chinese students. After four years of working in this setting, Linda decided to come to the U.S. because she was interested in seeing the “great, free and developmentally appropriate education system in the U.S., as it was widely publicized in China” (Linda initial interview, 12.11.15). Over several conversations regarding her reasons for applying for a position to teach in the U.S., she gave more specific explanations about what she expected to see and to learn, including

students' learning processes and styles, the requirements for teaching, and the overall educational quality within this cultural context. At the time of this study, Linda had just begun her second year of teaching in one of the kindergarten classes at Arnold Elementary School.

*Sandy, who never wanted to be a teacher in the first place.* In the initial interview, Sandy shared with me that, due to her long-standing impression about teachers always teaching to the test in China, she never considered teaching as a career option. Like many Chinese students in China, Sandy's university placement and major were decided by her test scores and rank in the gaokao - the national college entrance exam. She wanted to major in law or journalism but was placed in a Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL) program in a non-normal university. Although graduates from this program were allowed to teach English and Chinese in non-public schools in China, it was not until Sandy learned that her profession could allow her to make living abroad that she stopped resisting the idea of being a teacher. After graduating, she worked part-time as an English teacher in a regular public school teaching early elementary English and part-time as a third-grade Chinese teacher in a Korean international elementary school, both in China, for three years. Randomly, one of her colleagues told her about a job opening for a high school Chinese teacher in South Korea, so Sandy gave it a try and got the job. She then moved to South Korea, where she taught high school students for four years. During those four years, she pursued a master's degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) before coming to the U.S. Her main reason for deciding to teach in the U.S. was providing a good English learning environment for her child. As she described: "Although the working environment was great in South Korea, Korean will never be as dominant as English in the world. Therefore, my husband and I think our [two-year-old] child does not need to receive education in South Korea. But here in the U.S., our child can establish a solid foundation

in both English and Chinese” (Sandy initial interview, 12.17.15). The other reason she mentioned was broadening her and her husband’s view of education. Upon arrival in the U.S., Sandy was hired to teach kindergarten at Thomas Elementary School.

***Wanda, a ‘culturally’ good Chinese good student.*** When described her schooling experiences, Wanda shared that her third grade teacher was very encouraging and made her feel known and valued. Because of this teacher, she became a good student who “listened attentively throughout the class, finished all of the homework every day, and had great test scores” (Wanda initial interview 12.04.15). As a high-performing student, Wanda unexpectedly did not get good test scores in the gaokao, so she was placed in a third-tier private non-normal university. Wanda received her bachelor’s degree in education in the English language and passed a licensing exam for teaching. Before coming to the U.S., she first worked as a full time teacher in a public elementary school teaching 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade English for about one year. She then went to South Africa to teach Chinese for two years. Her reasons for coming to teach in the U.S. were to see and experience the U.S. elementary education philosophy, general educational system, and to experience a different culture. When I first met Wanda, she was single and had just begun teaching in one of the kindergarten classes at Central Elementary School; by the time this study began, she was married to an American and was expecting her first child.

To summarize, two commonalities among these three teachers include: (1) having experience teaching young learners in China; and (2) having one full year of experience teaching in U.S. kindergarten immersion programs. In addition to their shared experience in the U.S., each of the three teachers has a unique professional background as well as shows a different teaching style, as demonstrated by ECCOM results that lead to them being selected as foci of the profiles. Linda was the only teacher among the participants who had an early childhood educational



background and experience, which made her a key participant for revealing how early childhood ideology can be translated into a U.S. kindergarten classroom. Although her teaching experience was not in a typical public early childhood program, given that none of the participants have taught in public early childhood settings and that her classroom was very child-centered, she was a good candidate to be profiled. Sandy had the relatively longer teaching experience in Chinese public elementary education among the second year cohort, albeit part-time. Her familiarity with the Chinese elementary educational system and the shifting balance between didactic and child-centered (much higher than Wanda, Zach, Flora and Maya) instructional practices in her classroom make her an ideal reference to illustrate the influence of U.S. and Chinese elementary education goals and practices on transnational teachers' teaching. Wanda was selected because of her full time experience teaching early elementary students in a public school, as well as her very typical, traditional Chinese teaching style, as recognized by ECCOM scores and two other research assistants (after they watched the observations of other teachers): one had worked in an early childhood setting and the other was a former director of a kindergarten in China. Wanda's teaching practices made her crucial for illuminating the instantiation of the participants' shared, traditional, Chinese cultural model of teaching in U.S. classrooms.

***Individual pedagogical views of teaching in the U.S.*** As indicated in the proceeding section of the group's shared cultural model, Linda, Sandy and Wanda all provided illustrative descriptions about the Chinese cultural model of teaching. While each of the three teachers made similar interpretations about specific parts of the Chinese cultural model to which they were accustomed, I found that their personal opinions were not necessarily bound by it. This may be attributed to their diverse professional backgrounds. As noted in cultural model theories, individual life history can influence how people interpret a cultural model and translate it into

behavior. In the following sections, I discuss these three teachers' individual pedagogical views and how their views illustrate the Chinese cultural models of teaching or reflect their own individual professional experiences.

*Greater personal freedom in U.S. education.* In describing the greater personal freedom found in U.S. education, Linda said, "the whole idea of expression... freedom of expression, represents how much it [U.S. culture] values individual freedom. I think it is very good". She elaborated, "It allows children to freely express themselves, which is very important... What I have heard from professional development is that they [teachers] encourage them [students] to express their ideas and that there is no distinction between right and wrong". Linda's comment indicated that not only did she agree with the notion of freedom of expression, she also encouraged students to express themselves.

Wanda also had the same observation: "I feel children in the U.S. are more...not creative...but self-centered. They say whatever they think and their parents encourage them to do so". Unlike Linda's positive attitude, Wanda's statement suggested a different attitude: "In terms of classroom management, I feel Chinese children are easier to teach". From her perspective, being obedient is one of the important attributes that "good students" possess. The Chinese cultural value embedded in this understanding of "good students" is conformity. This value can lead to an interpretation of American students as less obedient, egocentric, and difficult to teach. This perception also affected how Wanda interacted with her students. Particularly, in the interview, Wanda mentioned that this year's students have so many behavioral issues, which made her feel less likely to express warmth and affection to them. However, what are considered as deficiencies by Wanda, on the contrary, might be seen as important traits from the American cultural perspective. For example, self-advocacy and self-expression are considered as talking

back or speaking freely without permission, which would not be encouraged in Wanda's classroom. The observational data also shows that the most frequent verbal reminder from Wanda to her students during instructional time was "do not talk".

In the discussion above, while the two teachers noticed greater personal freedom allowed in U.S. education, their distinct comments begin to reflect the different amount of influence of the Chinese cultural model and the teachers' individual pedagogical views on how they make sense of their experiences in teaching students of another culture.

*Value Individual learning needs.* The attention placed on individual learning needs in the U.S. education drew Sandy's attention. She learned this from the professional development at her school: "last year we talked a lot about intervention and how to enhance low-performing students' learning outcomes; this year we talk more about how to accelerate high-performing students' development". She used a metaphor to interpret her understanding about this idea, explaining:

If a student can jump 10 feet, then [we helped them to] jump 10 feet. But if they can only jump 1 foot, then [we help them] jump 1 foot. Yes, just don't give up [on any students]. I think this concept is pretty good.

For the teachers who are used to focusing on the learning outcome of the whole class, the notion of individual learning needs is unfamiliar and probably seems very idealistic. This may explain why many participants reported difficulty in having to deal with individual differences as they began teaching in the U.S. Although they might appreciate the spirit of this practice, their lack of experience makes more difficult to implement than to theorize. As Sandy revealed about her confusion in practice:

I think when a teacher sees a child's capability [of jumping] 1 meter, personally I [may see] his potential for [jumping] 2 meters or 3 meters. But we teachers are also human beings, so we don't know how well they can truly develop and what their true potential is. Therefore, when I [begin to] think it is good enough for this child to learn like this, I have already lowered my expectations. In this aspect, it is still very confusing.

Although the literature has indicated that many American novice teachers also feel under prepared for dealing with differentiating instruction for children based on their special needs, their awareness of addressing individual differences has been informed by the U.S. cultural model. On the contrary, in Chinese culture, the focus on large group test scores makes it harder for them to see the need to individualize the learning experience for students. Sandy's descriptions leads to a further assumption that the concept of the "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1978) and its application in the classroom are not evident in the Chinese cultural model of teaching.

While many of the participants in this study may have shared similar confusion about differentiation based on student level or potential (see Table 9) , one example in the study suggested that there was a Chinese teacher who acknowledged individual differences and already utilized some strategies to address individual needs in the classroom. As Linda described:

I see every student's ways of learning and [his/her] talent and have different requirements for them. This is why sometimes I would give a lot of praise and encouragement for some students and hardly use a mandatory or tough tone to speak to them. However, for some children, I encourage a little bit, but sometimes give them many direct instructions. It is because I think every child has a different learning style and approach, and their characteristics are also different.

Elsewhere, Linda explained that she thinks a lot of factors influence a child's school learning, including "his learning ability, his cognitive foundation, his family background, his learning rhythm and comprehension, and language absorptive capacity". She further elaborated,

If you only focus on the content knowledge that [a student] needs to learn, you can reach that [goal] through intensive training. You don't need to care about those other factors. But if you care about every child's progress, development and potential level of development, you have to pay attention to those factors. Otherwise, you can't see their emerging and imminent development; or understand why they are is particularly good at comprehending certain things; or even know what they are good at. The discussion above once again suggests that Linda's pedagogical ideology and practice

did not correspond to the conventional Chinese cultural model that many participants of this

study shared. Like she said “I think I am not [a typical] Chinese [teacher] at all because the international school at which I taught before had inspired and transformed me greatly”.

*More standard-based teaching than expected.* In the interview, Linda said that, influenced by the descriptions of “the U.S. education model” in many Chinese articles, she came with an assumption that “education in the U.S. gives children a lot of independent thinking opportunities and inspires them to learn, including looking for information they want in books”. Even though she claimed that it was too early for her to provide a full description of the U.S. educational ideology, she felt that education in the U.S. was “so much about standards”. She pointed out that “I feel [that U.S. schools’] requirements for instruction have very strict standards, meaning that you have to learn this and that, including social studies and science. Many [American teachers] just teach what is in the text. I haven’t found them providing any opportunities for students to discover, explore, and do research”. She also used common core math as an example,

It took me one year to gradually understand why Americans taught math the way they did, which was totally different from how I learned math in China. I finally understood that there was a so called Common Core math, which was based on a [state] standard and required a different approach to teaching math... Every week, Common Core requires [our instructions] to address certain standards... 1.1, 1.2, 1.3... so I have to incorporate these in my lesson plan. The assessment is also very ‘common core’. [Common Core] lists what children need to learn in the second quarter, and I assess those listed things to see which of the standards the children are able to meet.

In this passage, implementing the standards Linda spoke about, “Common Core”, was not optional for her or for the other transnational teachers. The school districts required all teachers to adopt curriculum instruction and assessment toward the Common Core learning standards. Unlike American teachers who might have received university education specifically about the content of the standards and strategies for teaching and supporting students in their acquisition,

Linda found it difficult to incorporate them into the instruction, especially when there was a lack of understanding of what the standards were.

Compared to Linda's strong beliefs about the role of an early educator - "helping children to discover and solve problems" - and what she used to do in her previous school where "all topics and learning contents were based on the children's exploration and questions", the U.S. standard-based instruction was not only different from the cultural model of teaching that she was accustomed to but also gave her little room to do what she believed was best for her students.

Expanding on the notion of standard-based teaching, Sandy said that, at her school, the attention was centered on standard-related "benchmarks". Teachers' instructional performances were influenced by the analysis of the benchmark data. She commented, "in China, we teach toward the test; in the U.S., test results serve as the examination of [the quality] of teaching".

***Individual pedagogical practices in immersion kindergarten classrooms.*** The following discussion on individual pedagogical practices includes the descriptions of these teachers' classroom settings, the common routine they followed every day, and the instructional practices observed during their daily routine.

*Classroom settings.* Classrooms are considered as cultural settings which reflect cultural values and support culturally informed learning and developmental goals (New, 2012; Super & Harkness, 1986). The "classroom ambiance", "furnishings", and "designated areas" all suggest a teacher's interpretation of what students' learning is about (New, 2012). Linda, Sandy and Wanda came from a culture where tables or desks in elementary schools were arranged in rows facing the blackboard, but their classrooms layouts in the U.S. public schools looked nothing like that. On the contrary, their classrooms were very similar to other English classes, with an exception for copious wall-mounted Chinese materials. In each of their classrooms, students'

tables were arranged in groups; an open carpeted area for the whole group gatherings was set up in front of the smartboard; a small reading or dramatic play area was defined at one corner of the classroom. When asked them how they set up their classrooms, the three of them provided different answers.

Sandy's classroom. Sandy inherited a classroom from an American teacher when she first came to Thomas elementary. At one corner of her classroom was a dramatic play area defined by a puppet theater, wooden play kitchen, and block storage cart and contained a child-size wooden table and chair set and some toys. Sandy said she did not design that space and she wanted to make it in to a reading area with a beautiful rug and all books that students had learned so that once they finished their classwork, they could read books quietly in this area. For the last two years, this area had been used for indoor recess or individual assessment since it was a quite space. No instruction or activities were supported by this dramatic play center.

With a TESOL background, she believed that to imbue students with a lot of learning materials such as posters putting on the wall would benefit their second language development. With that concept in mind and also observed how other American teachers emphasized the decoration in the classrooms, in Sandy's first year, she followed the norm by putting everything she had on the wall. This year, much of the display was centered on what students needed to learn over a school year, such as numbers, colors, and Chinese characters of different topics.

Wanda's classroom. Wanda inherited a classroom from a Chinese teacher when she first came to the Central elementary and she kept the same layouts and some decorations. A small reading area was defined by a bookshelf and contained several big bean bags. When asked how the reading area was used, Wanda said "I used this area more often last year and [allowed] more students to go to the reading area. The students this year have worse behavior and I am afraid

that they will tear the books or chat too much, so I hardly allow them to go there.” In addition to the reading center, many books were also displayed on other bookshelves but Wanda said students hardly took or read them.

Many of the display in Wanda’s classroom were decorative or for students to practice academic skills. For example, several merchandized posters were originally posted up on the wall for the decoration purposes, although Wanda found those posters still benefited students’ learning because some students would show interests to the math posters and practice counting on their own. A changeable word wall was also displayed for students to review learned Chinese characters. Students’ work was displayed in the corridor not in the classroom.

Linda’s classroom. Linda inherited a classroom from an American teacher who left a lot of English games, math manipulatives, teaching aids, Legos, and soft blocks, but she made some changes to the arrangement of her classroom. She used bookshelves and file cabinets to define specific areas, such as a dramatic play area, a block area, and a reading area, for students to go to for a specific activity. For example, a small reading area was defined at one corner of the classroom for independent use with one child-size soft couch and materials that stimulated and support reading, such as a radio with a headphone for listening to stories and sufficient basic readers and pictures books. Linda said her classroom design was based on the curriculum:

Based on the contents of different subjects, including Chinese, social study, science and math, I will define necessary [instructional] areas. Small group [instruction] is absolutely necessary [in my class], but depending on the time, I need to use different areas. For example, I need areas for them to write quietly and independently, to read, to do role play. I also need a place to keep math materials that are accessible to them. [I also think] if any of them needs to work one-on-one with me or my co-teacher, separate spaces that do not interfere with each other are needed. All of these are in my consideration [for setting up my classroom].

The belief about the importance of defining different area was originated from her previous teaching experience in an international kindergarten in China. She explained:



I think [learning center] is the place where children can explore, discover, and work. All you need to do is to provide appropriate materials. If every one of them can have an independent working space with some appropriate working materials, this is learning for them. There is not necessary for teachers to participate. If learning center is created appropriately and materials are provided just right, with a little bit "challenge", when students are allowed to finish [the work] on their own, they can totally be self-taught.

Much of the display in Linda's classroom was done by her students. Examples included the display of all students' self-portraits that looked very different and seemed to reflect the likeness and character of each child; and students' work related to a counting activity. Still other items displayed were information that Linda and her co-teacher felt necessary to present to the students. For example, on the left side of the wall upon classroom entrance was a big bulletin board that had a theme of bamboo trees and pandas with a lot of Chinese sight characters posted on it. Next to the bamboo themed character reference bulletin board was a small bulletin board that displayed months of birthdays. Also, a poster of classroom rules with all students' handprint was displayed on a bulletin board, which listed "I will respect. I will work hard. I will be happy. I will make mistake. I will say thank you. I will love you!".

All these features and rationales described above gave a clear overall ambience about each of the three teachers' classroom and characterized their teaching focus. Sandy and Wanda's classroom suggested a combination of academic learning and teacher control. Linda's classroom was more about a balance of child-centered and teacher-directed learning. What these differences hint at is contrasting conceptions of what role teachers should play and what young children should or could do in a classroom.

*Classroom routine and common instructional practices.* In general, the daily routine in each of the three teachers' classroom has some common components (see Table 17). In spite of the sequence of the routine may be different from school to school, basically the routine was designed to supporting the goal of promoting students' Chinese proficiency. In the following

passages, I provide more details about the pedagogical routine that the three teachers led or were heavily involved, which include morning work, academic-oriented calendar practice, singing & dancing, and Chinese language/literary class. This section also looks at some commonly used instructional strategies, and the underlying rationale that each of the three teachers provided (interviewed in May 2016) for their choices of certain strategy. As for the math class, since Sandy and Wanda let their co-teachers take the overall lead in math instruction, I decided not to include in-depth details related to math class. Moreover, other non-instructional routine or English-based classes will not be reported for they were not the focus of this study.

Table 17

Common Daily Routine across Three Classrooms

Arrival
Morning work
Academic-oriented calendar practice
Singing & dancing (in Chinese)
Chinese language/literacy class (incorporate social study and science contents)
Lunch
Special/Resource class (gym, music, art, computer, or library, all in English)
Snack
Math class (in Chinese)
Recess
English class
Dismissal

Worksheet and copying practice. For morning work, Sandy and Wanda assigned Chinese characters or phrase copying practices on worksheets or workbooks throughout the school year. Linda also assigned the same type of morning work, but only for the first two or three quarters. When she sensed that students' writing skills had reached a certain level that could enable them write more freely, she then changed to have the students writing their own stories by giving a topic and a few sample sentences. The copying task commonly assigned for morning work

hinted at a teaching focus of promoting Chinese characters memorization and mastery of writing skill through repetitive practices.

Recitation and closed-ended Q&A drill. Following the morning work was the calendar practice. This was another common routine I found across the three classrooms. All students were gathered on the carpeted area and the teacher randomly selected a few students to update the calendar with the current date and to lead the whole group to recite the date, weather, season or other contents on the board in Mandarin. For example, “Today is Friday, December 15 2015. The season is fall.” What often followed the recitation was the teacher-led or student-led question and answer time asking the whole group several related close-ended questions, such as “Q: Is it sunny today? A: No, it is not sunny today”. When asked the teachers why they did the calendar routine, all three responded with “Because everyone else is doing it.” What they referred to as “everyone else” included Chinese and American teachers, so their response hinted at a normative procedure in elementary education that all teachers were expected to follow. Although Linda expressed that this daily, repetitive routine was very boring, she still felt duty-bound to accomplish this task.

Singing and dancing in Chinese. After six to ten minutes of calendar routine, the three teachers led their classes to do another routine –singing and dancing. Played the videos on YouTube, the teachers asked the students to sing along and dance along. Of course, all the videos and songs were in Chinese but the students seemed to have no problem singing the lyrics. In fact, this was the one part of the day that I found the majority of the students in three classes were extremely engaged, excited, and willing to participate. I also noticed that there are basically two types of the songs that the teachers would played. The first type was associated with the Chinese curriculum contents that the students were learning, such as the “seasons song”, “the day of the

week song”, or the song about “where are you from?”. The second type was Chinese pop songs with easy rhythm, catchy melody but more complicated lyrics. Linda’s provided her criteria for selecting songs:

For the songs I selected, some were for entertainment, others were for giving [the students] more exposure to the language. For example, some songs are very difficult to understand, so I will not try to explain the meaning of every single word because their language levels are not high enough to comprehend the harder phrases. If I explained every word, they might lose their focus. However, for those songs that are related to the teaching content and connected with the [Chinese] curriculum, I usually select them to support my teaching. Usually, after they sing the songs, I purposely ask them some questions related to the content they have learned and the song they just sang.

Her comments indicated that the Chinese teachers often apply this kind of melodic learning strategy of songs, chants, and nursery rhymes to promote the students’ Chinese proficiency.

Although American teachers also incorporate this strategy in their teaching to enhance phonemic awareness or vocabulary knowledge, Linda noticed her American colleagues also used this strategy but for another purpose:

I think American teachers use this method very often. They are very sensitive to children’s attention spans. Once they notice that children have lost their focus, they will let children stand up, dance, or play so that they can release their energy and then [be ready] for the next tasks.

It is worth noting that, unlike two other teachers transited to the language lesson right after this routine, Linda led pair or triad activities afterward. In these activities, she engaged the students in finger play and utilized chants with them. Her rationale was that:

In this small group [activity], I would ask children to have more verbal communication and conversational practices, primarily [because I wanted] them to interact with other children and to have more opportunities to express themselves.

Whole group direct instruction and small group literacy rotation. Following the singing and dancing routine was the approximately 1.5 hour Chinese language and literacy class. Guided by the programmatic requirement, the three teachers adapted the literacy rotation strategy during

the language and literacy lessons. The lesson normally began with 10 to 15 minutes of the teachers' direct instruction in which the teacher gave directions, presented information, or modeled skills with the whole group of students. After the whole group direct instruction, the students who were grouped by three levels would rotate through three literacy centers in the classroom: guided reading (led by the lead teacher), word study (led by the co-teacher), and independent writing (writing tasks pre-assigned by the lead teacher).

Sandy organized the guided reading instruction and prepared the independent in such ways:

We practice different reading strategies on different days of the week. On Mondays and Tuesdays, we recite [mini-readers] for [the students to] learn new words and contents. On Wednesdays, I let students think [about the contents] by asking some extended questions. On Thursdays, I want them to focus on the details in the mini-readers. For example, I ask them to find the word "air" in the mini-reader since they already knew what "air" means. By doing this, [I can push them] to pay attention to the details, instead of reciting the sentences without knowing the details. On Friday, I record each of them reading [the mini-reader with my iPad] and do some review or coloring, which are more relaxing. [With regard to writing], on Monday and Tuesday they copy new words. On Wednesday and Thursday, they practice writing what they have learned before for we usually have dictation tests on Friday.

In this excerpt, I sensed that the primary goal of Sandy's guided reading center was to acquire vocabulary knowledge and to master the contents in the mini-readers. The independent writing tasks were also designed to promote students' mastery of writing skills through rote copying characters.

Wanda's operations of guided reading center basically followed the aforementioned pattern, although she did not seem to fully understand or agree with the value of this kind of instructional strategy. As she asserted:

I personally think it is harder to do the [literacy] rotation [than the whole class instruction]. Although I will teach them different content based on the different levels of the students, most of time I feel no major differences [among them]. For example, the first group has a higher level, so I will let them read more times or give them more books to read even though I still have to use the basic materials. For the mid-level group, [I only] use basic [reading materials] and [expect] them to master it. For the low-level group...For me, I feel [literacy rotations] make my work harder since in China, I only need to teach once to the whole class.

A comment such as this one revealed many Chinese teachers' confusion with how to do differentiation based on student level and why it is necessary. It was also an example showing how a teacher was implementing an instructional practice while having doubts stemmed from a general lack of knowledge and experiences. For example, the statement "I need to repeat the same content three times, which makes [teacher's work] harder; in China, I'd probably just lecture one time to the whole class" hinted at Wanda's lack of knowledge about the differentiation and experiences designing different instructions that could meet the needs of the students at different levels.

Although Linda also adapted literacy rotation in her class, her elaborations about the guided reading and writing assignments contained ideas very different from the traditional Chinese cultural model of teaching:

Since they do not have too many materials to read and the sentences [in the mini-readers] are basically patterned sentences, it is very easy to turn into reciting [the contents] all the time, which is different from reading. [If you really] want children to read, they have to understand the meaning of each word first, and then they will enjoy the reading process. So what I hope for them is to understand every single word, and be able to read the whole sentence by themselves. For those children who are less capable, this might just only be repeating the sounds with others without knowing the meaning if we go through the sentence too fast.

As for writing, I think once their writing has reached the certain level of understanding [the structures of characters] and knowing the meaning [of each character they wrote], I do not let them do too much copying. [I ask them] to practice characters through mass story writing. They will need a lot of words [for writing their stories], so [this is how I] give them opportunities to practice writing.

This passage highlighted the divisions between the emphases on mastery of contents, skills and on comprehension, enjoying reading and practicing characters from story writing.

Repetition and memorization. One of the most commonly seen strategies in Sandy and Wanda's Chinese lessons was teacher-led or student-led repetitive recitation. This strategy was observed over half of the calendar practice or guided reading center. The follow excerpt illustrates a typical repetitive recitation from Wanda's teaching:

W: Now, I am going to say a few words and you repeat three times after me. "Play". S: Play, play, play. W: Friend. S: Friend, friend, friend. W: Now please recite [phrases or short sentences] after me. Let me start and you repeat once. W: "Can I." S: "Can I." W: "Play together." S: "Play together." W: "With you." S: With you." W: "We are good friends." S: "We are good friends".

In listing the most effective ways of teaching, Wanda's first answer was "repeat words and sentences". Wanda explained: "I think repetition is the key of learning [a new/foreign] language. The way I had learned English was by tons and tons of repetitions, so I transited [this strategy] to Chinese teaching." It is apparent that Wanda believed was consistent with what she practiced. I also found this repetition strategy was rooted in her Chinese model of learning foreign language, which focused much on students' memorization and mastery of vocabularies and sentences.

Sandy also applied the same strategy during calendar practice, but her explanation was: "I believe repeating [morning routing] is very useful for student to review [what they have learned]. If they [re-visit] these contents every day, they would [become] very confident [over time]." In this passage, Sandy stated a bi-product of repetition – building students' confidence. Passage such as this provided insight into how she associated the mastery of academic skills with students' beliefs in their ability to succeed. However, there were only a few repetition practices observed in Linda's teaching, which probably because she considered repetition boring and not supporting her students' learning and development.

***Summary of the profiles.*** The profiles of three individual Chinese teachers illustrated portraits of a broad Chinese cultural model, an idiosyncratic ideology and practice, and a newly emergent interpretation of the U.S. cultural model in an educational context. In this study, Wanda and Sandy's educational ideologies and practices differed dramatically from Linda's, with the former emphasizing performance and mastery and the latter giving importance to child-centeredness and self-expression. Chinese traditions were instantiated in Sandy and Wanda's teaching, while Linda's class reflected the power of an imported, Western cultural model existing as a hybrid form of education in China. Despite their differences, all three participants in this study shared the experiences gained through teaching in U.S. public kindergarten classrooms, an emergent interpretation of the U.S. cultural model, and their acknowledgement of the goal of dual language immersion education. Their common, emergent interpretation of the U.S. cultural model suggests a greater understanding of freedom of student self-expression, an emphasis on individual students' learning needs, and standard-based teaching.

### **Resilience and Change in Cultural Models of Teaching**

The central premise of cultural model is its resilience grounded in longstanding cultural traditions that has normative power on shaping a cultural group's belief system and behavior over time. Given such premise, the third research question examined in this study is whether the Chinese cultural model is still so powerful for the transnational teachers that it is "transplanted" into the U.S. socio-cultural context or has been weakened by the predominant U.S. cultural model.

The whole group's questionnaire results first indicate that some of the teachers' professional struggles had lessened after teaching in the U.S for six months or more. The majority of teachers reported having less trouble interacting with, disciplining, and motivating



the students in their classrooms. Many respondents also felt that they had fewer problems paying attention to individual differences, handling individual students' behavioral and learning problems, and dealing with students of different cultures and backgrounds. These findings show how the teachers became acquainted with U.S. interpretations of competent teachers.

The other evidence changes in cultural models of teaching was found in teachers' consistent responses to the questions asking them to prioritize the educational goals of U.S. public schools six month later, as displayed in Table 18. Although this finding seems to suggest that teachers did not change over time, it actually hints at the power of individual experiences within the new cultural context that have changed and informed some of their ideological dimensions of U.S. cultural models.

A similar pattern was also found in the teachers' ratings of instructional methods used in U.S. public schools. When Table 14's questionnaire responses were compared with the same teachers' responses six month later, no significant changes were found. Such findings suggest that the participants had known and acted upon some parts of the U.S. cultural model of teaching.

Table 18  
 Teacher Reported Goals of U.S. Public Schools at Two Time Points (Modified from Stipek & Byler's (2004) Teacher Survey)

	Time point 1 In the U.S. (Dec 2015)					Time point 2 In the U.S. (May 2016)					Diff.
	Miss.	Median	IRQ	Not at all Important or Somewhat Important	Important or Very Important	Miss.	Median	IRQ	Not at all Important or Somewhat Important	Important or Very Important	Sig.
Basic skills (letters/reading and numbers/arithmetic) <sup>22</sup>	3	3	1	13%	87%	4	3	1	14%	86%	.527
Work habits (completing tasks, paying attention) <sup>22</sup>	3	3	1	7%	93%	4	3.5	1	0	100%	.206
Knowledge (facts, like the months of the year) <sup>22</sup>	3	3	1	14%	86%	4	3	0	14%	86%	.414
Critical thinking/problem solving <sup>22</sup>	3	4	1	0	100%	4	4	1	7%	93%	.317
Cooperation (following rules, getting along with adults) <sup>22</sup>	3	3	1	0	100%	4	3.5	1	0	100%	.257
Social skills (getting along with other children) <sup>23</sup>	3	4	1	0	100%	4	3	1	7%	93%	.727
Independence and initiative (solving problems on own) <sup>22</sup>	3	4	1	0	100%	4	3	1	14%	86%	.739
Self-concept (self-confidence, feeling good about self) <sup>22</sup>	3	4	1	7%	93%	4	4	1	0	100%	1.000
Motor skills (sports, coordination) <sup>22</sup>	3	3	1	0	100%	4	3	1	7%	93%	.655
Creativity (imagination) <sup>22</sup>	3	4	1	7%	93%	4	3	1	7%	93%	.414

Note: n=18. Scale changed from Stipek & Byler's (2004) 5-point scale to 4-point scale: Not at all important=1; Somewhat important=2; Important=3; Very important=4. The significance level is .05.

When asked to report whether their ideology and practices have changed over time, the participants' responses revealed that a majority of them have experienced ideological and behavioral changes since they began to teach in U.S. schools (see Table 19). According to the participants' responses to the question "Please describe in what way your thoughts/attitude about teaching have changed", the following themes emerged: (1) acquiring more functional and subject-matter knowledge; (2) understanding students' characteristics and learning styles; (3)

<sup>22</sup> A Related-Samples Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was run because the distribution of differences between paired observations is respectively symmetrical. Asymptotic significance is displayed for the test.

<sup>23</sup> A Related-Sample Signed Test was run because the distribution of differences between paired observations is not respectively symmetrical. Exact significance is displayed for the test.

moving toward individualization; (4) shifting away from the teacher-centered and achievement-oriented mindset; and (5) emphasizing learning process over product. Such themes to a certain extent suggest these teachers' new formation of ideological dimension of a U.S. cultural model.

Table 19  
Self-reported Change on Ideology and Practices of Teaching

	Dec. 2015			May 2016		
	Missing Value	Percent (%)		Missing Value	Percent (%)	
		Yes	No		Yes	No
Ideology	4	100%	0	3	94%	6% <sup>1</sup>
Practices	3	93%	7% <sup>2</sup>	3	87%	13% <sup>3</sup>

Note: n=18. 1: The respondent was a 1<sup>st</sup> year teacher;  
2: The respondent was a 1<sup>st</sup> year teacher;  
3: The respondents were 2<sup>nd</sup> year teachers.

These findings, based on the administration of the questionnaire at two time points, suggest change in how the 18 teachers in 4 elementary schools perceived the challenges associated with teaching practices, the prioritization of the academic-related and non-academic related educational goals, and the appropriateness of teacher-dominant and student-centered instructional methods in U.S. classrooms.

The discussion drawn from the interview and observational datasets focuses on a group of teachers assigned to kindergarten classrooms also reveals the changing parts of their interpretations and practices of teaching. It is worth noted that their personal interpretations of features of the U.S. cultural model reflected more subjective opinions about various and multiple parts, making it difficult to construct a complete picture of U.S. elementary education. This is not surprising given their limited experience (less than three years) in the U.S. Of the six teachers, only Linda and Maya noted that good students in U.S. were expected to display the characteristics of thinking independently and having unique ideas. In terms of their perceptions of what is considered good teaching in the US, Linda, Sandy and Zach (separately) shared their observations that U.S. teachers used a variety of pedagogical strategies. Zach also added that U.S.

teachers emphasized comprehension and implemented more guided and exploratory learning. Wanda regarded student-centered teaching and cooperative learning as highly valued by U.S. teachers. These teachers' efforts to articulate and implement U.S. ways of teaching hint at a predominant cultural model of kindergarten in the U.S. in which, for example, individual differences and constructive ways of teaching are valued. These U.S. ideologies to some extent were instantiated in five out of six kindergarten teachers' instructional practices, classroom management, and classroom climate. As presented earlier in this chapter, with Linda as an outlier whose teaching was very child-centered, overall ECCOM scores showed Sandy, Zach, Flora, and Maya's attempts of implementing a mix of two distinct or conflict pedagogical practices.

The questionnaire responses along with interview and observation results suggest some changes in cultural models at the group level. At the individual level, the profiles of three teachers further illuminate those changes as they did – or did not – occur among those individuals. Of the three teachers, Wanda's profile showed that the influence of the Chinese cultural model was the most evident in and continued to dominate Wanda's teaching. There was no evidence of her shifting from teacher-directed ideology and rote teaching methods.

Although evidence of the mastery-based practices was seen in Sandy's teaching, her new understanding about the importance of students' holistic development and her confusion about how to identify students' potential and provide individual support suggested a changing process taking place in her mind. As for her teaching practices, the influence of the U.S. cultural model was also observed in her incorporation of more child-centered practices in the classroom.

Linda, whom I see as an outlier, had long been guided by her previous school's "microculture" which conveyed a Westernized ideology and practices. From the interview, it was apparent that she had a strong perception of respecting individual development; she was

intention about what learning experiences she wanted students to have; she emphasized differentiating instructions based on students' characteristics and needs; and she caring about students' learning interests and was aware of what types of instruction may be boring young children. No major changes were observed in terms of Linda's ideology and practices of teaching young children, but her critiques about the standard-oriented education suggested that she did not want to change to what she believe was not of the best interest of the students.

## CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

Within the context of a heightened globalized world with a rapid increase of international teacher migration to the U.S., this study sought to explore the features of a traditional Chinese cultural model of teaching and learning interpreted by a group of newly-arrived Chinese teachers in the U.S. vis-à-vis continuities and changes in their cultural models of teaching and learning. As noted in Chapter 1, the overriding assumption of this study is that transnational teachers, as agents of cross-cultural exchange, are not only teaching U.S. students, but are also learning about and being influenced by their experiences with the U.S. educational system and culture. Based on this underlying premise, there were three aims of the study: to (1) understand the teachers' shared the shared, culturally informed views that the teachers held with regard to teaching and learning (at the group and individual level); (2) illuminate how they attempted to instantiate those views in their classrooms; and (3) examine the teachers' pedagogical changes in response to their experiences in the U.S. over time.

The conceptualization of the transnational teachers' pedagogical views and practices was informed by research and theoretical scholarship on cultural models. This scholarship considers cultural models as an explanation of cultural diversity in human development and behavior that incorporates a cultural history and associated values that become routinized and instantiated in traditions and practices along with discourses that reinforce them as normative. This directive power of cultural models can shape members' experiences, inform their views, guide their behavior, or as Rogoff (2003) said, "organize their way of life" (p.366-367). Thus, as in the case

of sojourners or immigrants residing in another culture, it is reasonable to anticipate cultural confusions and conflicts. Less clear is whether coping responses are indicative of substantive changes in cultural models. This study was designed to address this question.

This research is important for several reasons beyond its theoretical contributions. Perhaps due to the rapid increase of overseas-trained teachers working in U.S. schools, empirical research on their perspective on transition experiences is still lacking. Findings from this study, some of which are primarily descriptive, none-the-less serve to illuminate challenges experienced by a small group of transnational teachers, as well as the cultural variations in elementary education contexts that influenced their acclimation to the U.S. Results also reveal pedagogical ideologies shared by a majority of the teachers that resonate with traditional interpretations of a Chinese cultural model of teaching and learning. Interview and observational data reveals teachers' continued instantiation of the Chinese model and their attempts to incorporate both Chinese and the U.S. models into their teaching practices. In addition, even though the cultural model concept was used throughout this study, three teachers' profiles suggested that individual life history (even within a shared cultural model) is key to understanding the reasoning for specific teaching practices.

Informed by the findings of this study, the discussion first centers on the illumination of cultural model through cultural exchanges as well as the continuity and change in cultural models of teaching as the teachers teach in new cultural-educational contexts. Implications for future research are also provided. The chapter concludes with acknowledgement of study limitations.

## **Cultural Exchanges Illuminate Different Cultural Models**

In this study, features of a Chinese cultural model were explored through the lens of transnational teachers, who functioned as agents of cross-cultural exchanges. While such exchanges and differences in cultural models of teaching between the U.S. and China were not the focus of this study, some insights about taken-for-granted features of the U.S. cultural model of elementary education were emerged over the course of this study.

Many of these Chinese teachers' perceptions of features of Chinese cultural model are consistent with previous research on cultural variations in educational goals and practices. For example, the six kindergarten teachers noted one or more differences between U.S. and Chinese early learning priorities, e.g. the Chinese priority of "control, regimentation...memory, performance, mastery, content knowledge, and critique" (Tobin et al., 2009, pp. 232, 236) as sharp and salient contrasts to the U.S. emphasis on "play, choice...child-centeredness...self-expression... and intense dyadic interaction between the teacher and each child" in the U.S. (Tobin et al., 2009, pp. 232-245). Although Tobin et al focused on preschool, the participants of this study extended some of Tobin's findings to these elementary settings and dual language approaches.

When the initial questionnaire responses and interview transcripts were compared with those same teachers' responses six month later, the statistical analyses suggested and their descriptions confirmed the power of individual experience within a new cultural context to learn and develop ideological dimensions from the other cultural model. In some cases, a greater appreciation of select cultural-educational values, e.g., the importance of holistic development, were developed in the process of the teachers' daily "participation in the socio-cultural activities



of their communities” (Rogoff, 2003, p. 7). In other cases, those with prior international or less “Chinese” teaching experiences, such as Maya or Linda, were more “ready” to adapt U.S. educational ideology, e.g. child-centered instructions. However, there were still other teachers who only gained superficial insights and simply borrowed pedagogical practices from observing unfamiliar practices implemented by the Chinese teachers in the senior cohort, e.g. hands-on activities.

### **Continuity and Change in Cultural Models**

There is very limited literature on applying cultural models theory to the study of teaching in a single culture or across cultures (DeZutter, 2008). Moreover, with a few exceptions, little prior research has looked into how cultural models –ways of living - change over time. These exceptions include the ethnographic studies of Tobin et al, *Preschool in Three Cultures* and *Preschool in Three Cultures Revisited* (2009; 1989), that capture continuity and change of preschool education in China over a period of 20 years; Rogoff’s (2011) study on the stability and change in the lives of a Mayan midwife as well as of her communities over the course of 35 years; and Greenfield’s (2004) two decades’ of investigation on Maya weavers and their families’ changing definition of creativity and the shifts in the apprenticeship process. One commonality among these studies is that, through lengthy investigations, they provide a window for understanding and interpreting continuities and changes in different cultural aspects of life across cultural contexts, communities, and individuals. Unlike prior research, this study takes advantage of the growing presence of international educators sojourning in the U.S. educational contexts and explores the continuities and changes associated with a group of teachers as well as three individual teachers’ pedagogical ideologies and practices over a relatively short period of time. It

is also worth noting that the role of the individual is less often addressed in the scholarly literature on cultural models.

As expected and supported given the multi-pronged approach to data collection, this study revealed a cultural model of teaching that was widely shared and not easy to change among the Chinese teachers participating in this study. It is worth pointing out that two dominant characteristics of the Chinese cultural model (teacher dominance within the classroom and emphasis on knowledge/skill mastery) were similar to the goals of this particular interpretation of dual language immersion education – including mastery of language knowledge and skills. This congruence allowed teachers to continue maintaining at least some of their habitual teaching practices within a new cultural context. This study found some instantiation of the Chinese cultural model in the Chinese teachers' U.S. kindergarten classrooms.

This study not only identified a shared Chinese cultural model of teaching among the participants, but also highlighted what cultural models scholars refer to as the influence of personal, idiosyncratic experiences on individual interpretations of new experiences in a foreign context. Although it is assumed that the longer a person lives in a cultural setting, the greater the influence that cultural model will have, this concept did not prove completely accurate in this study. Linda received five years of early childhood teacher education in China and only taught in an international school setting for four years before coming to the U.S., the guiding force of that school's cultural model seemed to overpower many of the Chinese traditions in her teaching. While cultural models theory may illuminate how and why a cultural group shares common understandings and practices, the findings of this study point out a soft spot in this theory: the power of individual experience should not be underemphasized when attempting to explain human behavior.

Change, both personally and professionally, was one of several primary foci of this study, and evidence of the teachers' changes was found in each of the three data sets. These changes included the teachers' pedagogical knowledge enhancement and awareness of the norms in the new educational context. The teachers gained increased and more nuanced knowledge about the U.S. elementary school system and had greater recognition of what they were expected to teach in accordance with the U.S. cultural values of "good teaching", e.g., paying more attention to individual student differences. These ideological changes also led to some attempts by the teachers to modify their teaching practices, albeit for the most part seemingly superficially. Inevitably, by living in the U.S. cultural context and participating in day-to-day school life, these teachers would incorporate new cultural-educational ideas and practices into their original views about and methods of teaching. However, no dramatic transformation of their cultural model of teaching was found in this study, supporting theoretical interpretations of resilient nature of cultural models. After all, it takes repeated enactment of cultural tasks and a significant amount of socially framed experiences to internalize the value, beliefs and goals shared by a social group. Given that the one year duration of this study, it is possible that a form of the U.S. cultural model of teaching is emerging among participating teachers. Nonetheless, three profiles provided compelling evidence to suggest that on an individual level, the specific experiences and interpretations leading to the emerging U.S. model many have varied.

Another specific change regarding the U.S. cultural model of early childhood education was unexpectedly manifested by one of the participating teachers – Linda. The international school in which Linda taught prior to coming to the U.S. was for children from a variety of other nations. As such, it employed what Tobin would consider a "hybrid model of early childhood education" (Tobin et al., 2009, p. 237) that held constructivist, child-centered, play-based, and

exploratory principles, albeit within a Chinese context. Given this professional background, Linda's observations of and concerns too much standards-based teaching among her American colleagues and the lack of attention to exploration, play, and creativity was consistent with the issue of academic pushdown into early childhood education identified by the numerous researchers (Biggam & Hyson, 2014; New & Cochran, 2007). Linda provides an outsider view of changes within the U.S. cultural model of early childhood education.

## **Implications**

**Future research directions.** By revealing transnational teachers' perceptions on transition challenges associated with teaching in a new cultural context, this study has not only contributed to increased understanding regarding transnational teachers and their experiences, but has also revealed some implications for the study of teacher development and culturally responsive in-service teacher education. Given the rapid increase of teacher migration to the U.S. and the promotion of a diverse teaching force in U.S. schools, additional investigation is needed into transnational teachers' personal challenges (e.g. culture shock, racial discrimination) that the teachers of this study reported experiencing in their initial transitions to life in the U.S.; contextual influences on transnational teachers who are in schools that have big socio-cultural and linguistic differences as such characteristics were seen in this study; and the voices of other stakeholders (e.g. school administrators, local teachers and parents) that were not included in this study.

By investigating the transnational teachers' pedagogical beliefs and practices from the perspective of cultural models, my work reveals the possibility for a broader research agenda on issues of transnationalism. As illuminated in this study, as a result of "global transnational

displacements”, the transnational teachers’ “taken-for-granted cultural schemas” were interrupted, albeit some important cultural ties were still sustained (Banks, Suarez-Orozco, & Ben-Peretz, 2016, p. 19). In the current globalized world, mass migration has generated a great number of transnational families who are also living between two cultures. Research utilizing the cultural models theory will provide a more nuanced understanding of these transnational groups’ shared cultural models, the process of their adaptation, negotiation, or even acculturation of a new cultural model shared by the native population, and the continuities and changes of their cultural beliefs over time.

Other possibilities to expand this study include refining the research instrument, recruiting additional participants, and examining the relationship between teachers’ cultural models of teaching and student outcomes. In this study, although the questionnaires have generated descriptive results that were able to address the research questions refinement is necessary for future use. To refine the questionnaires, the current questionnaire data could be used together with the interview data to group, remove, or revise the items in the questionnaires. A power analysis of the current data would also help determine the proper sample size for future studies. Once the questionnaires are refined, these instruments can be used to gather substantial information from a larger population of transnational teachers. In addition to refining the research instrument, including additional participants such as transnational teachers of other cultural backgrounds and local American teachers could inform research on comparing multicultural teacher ideologies and practices. Moreover, systematic research to examine teachers’ cultural models of teaching and student learning performance should be conducted. Such research would serve to obtain further information regarding teaching quality and effectiveness.

**Transnational teaching requires better preparation and support.** Given the current and projected shortage of foreign language teachers in the United States, the need for more transnational teachers seems self-evident. However, a lack of empirical research on transnational teachers in U.S. school settings has created what Dunn (2013) referred to as an “erroneous assumption...that there are no or few differences between teaching abroad and teaching in U.S. urban schools...if there are differences, the assumption is made that they are not enough to merit specialized discussion and preparation for working in a new environment” (p.36). The findings from this study support this concern by highlighting many challenges faced by newly arrived transnational teachers.

Although the participants of this study have at least three years of formal teaching experiences in their country of origin, the fact that they have never taught in U.S. public schools makes their situation, to some extent, very similar to American beginning teachers. This study’s findings about the beginning career of transnational teachers in U.S. echo insights of previous studies conducted in the U.S. that have addressed American novice teachers’ early teaching experiences (Assuncao Flores, 2006; Scherff, 2008) and the challenges they might encounter (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). In the literature, novice teachers are described as “learning while doing” (Assuncao Flores, 2006, p. 2021), or being left to on their own to swim or sink, and often experience “reality shock” (Veenman, 1984, p. 143). The reality shock is mostly due to new teachers’ unfamiliarity with the social organization of schools, school culture, and school operation and their unrealistic expectations about the role demands, heavy workloads, and complex interactive processes that involve school stakeholders (Meister & Melnick, 2003).

The aforementioned hurdles faced by American beginning teachers were encountered by the participants of this study. They reported feeling unfamiliar with school operations and

stressed about learning new rules, procedures, and school cultures in a short period of time. None of the first year participants was formally assigned a mentor, although they all worked with American colleagues to learn how to develop lesson plans in alignment with the state and local curriculum standards. Based on reports of minimal peer observations, it appears that study participants had limited access to American teachers' expertise. Given the importance of "guided participation" and "participant observations" as ways in which novices learn within cultural context, the teachers' lack of such interactions with more knowledgeable others actually constrained their learning of particular U.S. values and practices (Rogoff, 2003, pp. 10, 284).

Adding to the difficulties experienced in transnational teachers' personal and professional transitions, including language barriers and homesickness, the "pedagogical shock" resulting from their growing recognition of differences between the U.S. and Chinese cultural models of teaching further compounded their adjustment to the U.S. (Hutchison, 2005, p.24). Given the great number of challenges discussed above, it is no wonder that Linda recalled her first month of teaching at Arnold Elementary as "simply trying to survive". Thus, in order to help the transnational teachers have smooth initial transitions into U.S. schools, as well as to ensure that the school communities are culturally responsive to the newcomers, improved preparation and ongoing support need to be provided. This study also challenges the effectiveness of the pre-departure preparation provided in China. It was not clear if much of the preparation was based on stereotypes and would correspond to what transnational teachers would eventually find in the U.S., which raises an important question about what parts of U.S. education and by whom the knowledge was shared with the transnational teachers. Although not all knowledge gaps can be filled in advance, this study suggest that the pre-departure training could better prepare transnational teachers if includes more in-depth sessions, filling the transnational teachers'

knowledge gaps regarding U.S. elementary education's goals, values, systems, and norms for interacting with and teaching American students.

This study also suggests the need for both school communities and the transnational teachers themselves to be better prepared both before and as these teachers begin to teach in the U.S. schools. This need could be addressed through several avenues. U.S. school communities (administrators and American teachers) could benefit from advance preparation prior to arrival of transnational teachers, including orientations to cultural and pedagogical differences. Such school-centered professional development could allow them to anticipate differences, to identify ways in which the newcomers could contribute to as well as learn from the larger school community, and to foresee where they might need support.

The participants of this study had additional recommendations, including the need to arrive early enough (e.g. at least three weeks before the school year begins) to become familiar with their working contexts, have time to set up their classrooms, and meet and develop collegial relationships with their new colleagues. Their 'transition' experiences were not usual, given the demands and pace once the school year begins, as all teachers become occupied by the operation of their own classes with limited time to offer or seek extra help. By the time this study began, the participants were already struggling with the heavy teaching loads and were keenly aware of what they viewed as insufficient preparation and lack of planning time.

Advanced preparations and increased time for the transition into a new culture can only do so much. Once school begins, the transnational teachers' needs for both pedagogical and non-pedagogical support are still evident. The findings from this study (and theoretical tenets of cultural models) suggest the need for multiple and diverse opportunities for transnational



teachers to build relationships and work closely with other educators. Possible ways to achieve that goal include (1) formally assigning mentors or pairing one new and one experienced Chinese teachers with one or two experienced American teachers and allowing regular consultation time so that Chinese teachers might be able to help American teachers understand some of the early cultural confusions and conflicts; (2) offering more frequent peer observations, e.g. Lesson studies (Dudley, 2015) followed by meetings focused on peer feedback, self-reflections, and improvement plans; (3) providing ongoing professional development on illustrating aspects of the U.S. cultural models of teaching, e.g. why and how to implement differentiated instruction based on student needs, and the potentials of the Chinese cultural models of teaching, e.g. how to teach math; and (4) providing a variety of collaborative opportunities between Chinese and American teachers.

### **Limitations**

The small size and heterogeneity of the sample and sub-sample, as well as the timing and limited duration of observation are perhaps the most obvious and possibly significant limitations of this study. Ideally, this study could recruit a larger sample and select a more homogeneous sub-sample for participation so that the results could be considered generalizable. And yet, in this first round of inquiry about cultural model of teaching and learning, it is actually a strength to have a homogeneity sample. Despite these teachers coming from different parts of China, having different teaching experiences and personal lives, and coming to the U.S. for different reasons, they are still product of Chinese culture and education system in which they were raised and educated, so if they talked about teaching and learning as a majority of people in China do, that is a coherent picture of Chinese cultural model. As for the timing and duration of this study, ideally, future works should begin to study a cohort of teachers before they migrate to the U.S.

and until they have taught in the U.S. for at least two years. Given that these circumstances were not feasible, the findings of this study might still inform avenues for future research on similar topics.

The second limitation of the study was that the final analysis and interpretation of the results were conducted by myself and are therefore subjective, since my previous experiences working with the participants could potentially create bias with respect to my understanding of data. Although there was an informally trained Research Assistant reading the same data and implementing the coding scheme I had developed to categorize some of the interview transcripts and observations, this study could have been improved by having a researcher who was experienced in qualitative analysis code the all data, so that inter-rater agreement could be established.

Another limitation of this study was that it mostly centered on the Chinese transnational teachers and their teaching in U.S. classrooms. The results from the investigation did not provide detailed insights into the larger school contexts nor did the findings include the voices of other school stakeholders (e.g. principal, parent, American colleagues). Nevertheless, the findings reported in dissertation have good heuristic value as they underlined the need for greater breadth and depth of research on dynamics of continuity and change in cultural models of teaching and learning, particularly within a socio-cultural context where two cultures encounter.

## APPENDIX A: INTRODUCTORY LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear teacher,

I am Pei-Ying Wu, a doctoral student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I am conducting a study to investigate changing educational beliefs and instructional practices of overseas-trained transnational teachers during the beginning years of teaching in U.S. public school immersion programs. This is a self-reported survey and you can type in Chinese. It will take you 30 to 40 minutes to finish this survey. The results of the survey may be reported at an academic conference in education to other disciplines, or published in a peer-reviewed journal, but you will not be personally identified in any of these reports. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Thank you!

Sincerely,  
Pei-Ying Wu

---

### TRANSNATIONAL TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

#### **Socio-demographic Information**

What is your name?

Which school are you currently teaching?

Your current position is

- Lead teacher
- Co-teacher

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

Are you married?

- Yes
- No

Is your spouse with you in U.S.?

- Yes
- No

How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about your current living context and time after work:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
A lot of Chinese people live in my neighborhood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have sufficient access to local Chinese supermarkets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have sufficient access to local Chinese restaurants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After work, I mostly hang out with my Chinese colleagues when I am out of work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After work, I mostly hang out with Chinese people who are not my colleagues when I am out of work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After work, I mostly hang out with non-Chinese when I am out of work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Did you have any of the following problems when you first arrived in the U.S.?

	Problem				
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
Culture shock	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication difficulties	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Homesickness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Racial discrimination	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Economic difficulties	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What grade level are you currently teaching?

- Kindergarten
- 1<sup>st</sup> grade
- 2<sup>nd</sup> grade
- 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- 4<sup>th</sup> grade
- 5<sup>th</sup> grade
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade

This is my...

- 1<sup>st</sup> year of teaching in U.S.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> year of teaching in U.S.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> year of teaching in U.S.
- 4<sup>th</sup> year of teaching in U.S.
- 5<sup>th</sup> year of teaching in U.S.

What other grade levels have you taught previously in the U.S.? For how many years?

	Less than 1 year	1-3 years	3-5 years	5-7 years	7-9 years	9-11 years	more than 11 years
Kindergarten	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1 <sup>st</sup> grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4 <sup>th</sup> grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5 <sup>th</sup> grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6 <sup>th</sup> grade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Chinese Educational Background & Previous Teaching Experiences

What is your highest level of education?

- Two-year college
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

What is the name of your college?

What is your college major?

What is your Master's program?

What is the focus of your doctoral degree?

Do you have an official teaching certificate issued by the Ministry of Education in China?

- Yes
- No

What kind of teaching certificate do you have?

- Early Childhood
- Elementary
- High School
- Language Teaching
- English
- Other subjects \_\_\_\_\_

What kinds of schools had you taught in China before you came to U.S.? In which city and province was your school located? For how many years? What grade levels did you teach in each kind of school? What subjects did you teach in each kind of school?

	For how many years?							What grade level?	What subjects?	Province & City
	Less than 1 year	1-3 years	3-5 years	5-7 years	7-9 years	9-11 years	More than 11 years			
Public Preschool	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
Private Preschool	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
Public Kindergarten	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
Private Kindergarten	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
Public Elementary School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
Private Elementary School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
Public Junior High School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
Private Junior High School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
Public High School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
Private High School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
College	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			

Did you teach in the countries besides China and U.S.?

- Yes
- No

What other countries had you taught before you came to U.S.? In what kinds of schools? At what grade level? Which subjects? For how many years?

**Preparation for teaching in U.S. (Induction Support & Professional Challenges)**

Did you receive any formal training that prepared you for teaching in U.S. BEFORE you came to U.S.?

- Yes
- No

What kinds of training/professional development did you receive BEFORE you came to U.S.? What organization provided that training? How long was the program? What sessions did you find the most useful for your teaching career in U.S.?

	Provider	Length (hours/days/months/years)	Useful sessions
Pre-departure orientations			
Language teaching-related training programs			
Culture related training programs			
U.S. schooling and pedagogy related training programs			
Other training			

How did the pre-departure training/professional development prepare you for your career in U.S.?

- Not at all
- Little
- Some
- Well

AFTER arriving U.S., did you receive any formal training/professional development prior to the opening of the school?

- Yes
- No

What kinds of training did you receive prior to the opening of the schools? Who were the providers of the training (school district, recruitment agency, school, other organizations, etc.)?

How long was the program? What sessions did you find the most useful for your teaching in U.S. schools?

	Provider (School district, school, recruitment agency, other organizations, etc.)	Length (hours/days/months/years)	Useful sessions
Orientations Meetings Workshops Conferences Language teaching-related training programs Culture related training programs U.S. schooling and pedagogy related training programs Others			

How did the training/professional development prepare you for your work in U.S. schools?

- Not at all
- Little
- Some
- Well



DURING the school year, have you received any formal training/professional development?

- Yes
- No

What kinds of training have you received during the school year? Who were the providers of the training (school district, recruitment agency, school, other organizations, etc.)? How long was the program? What sessions did you find the most useful for your teaching in U.S. schools?

	Provider (School district, school, recruitment agency, other organizations, etc.)	Length (hours/days/months/years)	Useful sessions
Orientations Meetings Workshops Conferences Language teaching-related training programs Culture related training programs U.S. schooling and pedagogy related training programs Others			

How have the training/professional development helped you for your work?

- Not at all
- Little
- Some
- Well

As a first-year transnational teacher, I have received the following kinds of support from my school.

	Yes	No
Formally assigned mentor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seminars specifically designed for new teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reduced workload	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Common planning time with other teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Release time to observe other teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Formal time to meet with mentor during school hours	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Orientation for new teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access to professional learning communities where I could discuss concerns with other teacher(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regular communication with principals, other administrator or department chair	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

On average, how often do you engage in each of the following activities with your co-teacher or other Chinese teachers and American colleagues?

	Co-teacher/ Other Chinese teachers/ American teachers					
	Never	Less than once a month	Once a month	Several times a month	Once a week	Almost daily
Developing lesson plans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being observed teaching by my colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Observing my colleagues' teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Analyzing student work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reviewing results of students' assessments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Addressing student or classroom behavioral issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reflecting on the effectiveness of my teaching together	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aligning my lesson planning with the state curriculum and local curriculum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the beginning of your professional life, did you experience any of the following challenges in U.S. schools? Do you still experience the same challenges?

	Initial Challenges / Current situation (Dec 2015)				
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
Unfamiliarity with of philosophy of the U.S. public schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unfamiliarity with the structure of schools in U.S.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unfamiliarity with school procedures, policies, and rules	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unfamiliarity with classroom setup	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unfamiliarity with assessment system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unfamiliarity with the grading system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inadequate support from the school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inadequate support from the recruitment agency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inadequate support from parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inadequate support from the district	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inadequate networking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inadequate teaching materials (e.g. textbooks, manipulative, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inadequate professional development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication and relationship issues with school administrators	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication and relationship issues with parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficulties interacting with American students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Classroom management and discipline	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Effective use of different teaching methods	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Motivating students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The need to dealing with individual differences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assessing students' work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Organization of class work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dealing with problems of individual students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Heavy teaching load resulting in insufficient prep. Time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relations with colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Planning of lessons and schooldays	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Determining learning level of students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Insufficient knowledge of subject matter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Burden of clerical work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inadequate school equipment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dealing with slow learners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dealing with students of different cultures and deprived backgrounds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Effective use of curriculum guides	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of spare time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of subject-specific ideas that could be implemented immediately	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of emotional support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Teacher Beliefs

In your opinion, how different are the following items between China and U.S.?

	No difference	Little different	Some difference	Totally different
Education philosophy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The goals of elementary education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School operating system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teacher evaluation system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Definition of good teachers and good teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Definition of good student and good learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ideals learning environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ideal class climate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The most useful instructional strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Class management and discipline approach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Methods to assessing students' learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationships with parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationships with school administrators	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationships with colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Most teachers believe that all of the things listed below are important for young children to develop in school but that some are more important than others. Please indicate below how important each of the following goals are for your current students in U.S. by choosing one of the numbers from 1 to 5. Rate each goal in terms of its importance relative to the other goals (which means that only a few goals should be given a 5). Please also indicate how important each of the following goal is for students at the same age in China.

	Your current students in U.S./ Students at the same grade-level in China			
	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
Social skills (getting along with other children)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Independence and initiative (solving problems on own)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Basic skills (letters/reading and numbers/arithmetic)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cooperation (following rules, getting along with adults)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Knowledge (facts, like the months of the year)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self-concept (self-confidence, feeling good about self)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work habits (completing tasks, paying attention)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creativity (imagination)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Critical thinking/problem solving	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Motor skills (sports, coordination)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

124

In Mandarin immersion settings, what are the most important pedagogical goals for you? How do you do in the classroom to achieve these goals?

	In immersion programs
The most important pedagogical goals are...	
I achieve these goals by...	

## Instructional Practices

Please indicate how frequently you are using the following teaching methods in your CURRENT instructional program. If you taught the same grade-level students in China before, please also indicate the teaching methods you commonly used previously.

	In your CURRENT class in U.S. / Previously in China				
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
Lecture (introduction of new material/review previous lesson/explaining work or expectations)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Whole class activity (singing/dancing/movement/recitation)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teacher-led question and answer (closed-ended or open-ended) with the whole group/small group/ individual	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Classroom discussion: teacher-initiated/student-initiated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student presentation (show & tell, self-introduction, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student-led question and answer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Small group work (problem solving/writing project/drama)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of body language(explaining word/concept)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of visual aids (explain word/concept)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of animated pictures/stories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hands on activities (art & craft/use of manipulatives/experiment/exploration)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Repetition and memorization activity (flash card)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Face to face conversation (teacher-student/student-student)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guided practice/modeling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students taking on the role of teacher (teaching/modeling)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of posters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of real/concrete material	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Drawing/painting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of workbook/worksheet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning centers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pair/triad activity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of dictionary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of computer (research technique)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Warm-up conversational sessions (interest-based/experience-based)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of technology (video media/PowerPoint/smart board)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



### **Self-Perceptions of Teacher Change**

Do you think your thoughts/attitude about teaching have changed since you taught in U.S. school?

- Yes
- No

Please describe in what way your thoughts/attitude about teaching have changed.

In your opinion, what factors are causing the changes of your thoughts about teaching?

Do you think your teaching practices have changed since you taught in U.S. school?

- Yes
- No

Please describe in what way your teaching practices have changed.

In your opinion, what factors are causing the changes in your teaching practices?

What have you learned from in U.S. that can be applied to your future teaching in China?

Thank you very much for your help with this study!

## APPENDIX B: THE FIRST CULTURAL MODELS INTERVIEW GUIDE

### Opening

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me about your work as a transnational teacher. My goal today is to understand how you are thinking about teaching in U.S., and particularly how you think about educational goals and appropriate practices for your students.

### Introductory

- Please tell me your name, position, school.  
Name  
Position  
School
- Cultural Models of Learning:  
Please describe your learning experience in China.  
What were your parents' educational philosophy and expectations for you?  
What kind of student were you?  
Can you tell me about a good teacher and a bad teacher in your childhood?  
Value: What are the common goals for students in China? What are the most important things for Chinese students?  
Why do you want to be a teacher?  
Can you talk about your teacher education training/life? (What courses did you take that are helpful to your current job? How did you obtain teacher license? Where did you do student teaching? What are most of your school mates doing now? What kind of teacher did you want to become? )
- Why did you decide to come to teach in U.S.?
- Previous Teaching Experience:  
What kind of school did you teach? (rural, urban, suburb? )  
What was a typical day of school in the school you taught in China?  
Were you a lead teacher? How did you usually interact with your students?  
Please compare the leadership, colleague relationships, communication with parents, student population and learning style (good student/bad student), and useful teaching strategies in U.S. and in China.  
What did you do with student with low academic performance in U.S. and in China?  
How does the role of a teacher differ in China and in U.S.? What kinds of teachers are seen as "good teacher" and "bad teachers" in China and in U.S.? What do you believe as most important things as a teacher in China and in U.S.? How are teacher evaluated in China and in U.S.?  
How were your teaching experience in China affect your teaching now?  
What kind of events or routine that you do in U.S. school but not in China? (School

environment, leadership and administration, student population, colleague relationships, relationships with parents, etc.)

- What do you believe are the most important expectations of students in China and in the U.S.? How does the role of an elementary student differ in China and in U.S.? What kinds of early elementary students are seen as "good students" and "bad students" in China and in U.S.?
- Please describe the situation, feeling, challenges at the beginning of your first school year in U.S. What were the situation, your feeling, and challenges at the beginning of this school year?
- How do you help students to achieve these goals? (What strategies or tools do you usually use?)
- Where and how did you learn/know these strategies/methods? (personal educational history, previous teacher education, previous teaching experiences, American colleague, Chinese colleague, improvising, etc.) Can you distinguish which strategies are from your own culture and which are from U.S.?
- How do the activities you engage with your colleague support your teaching?

### **Exploration of key questionnaire responses**

- In your opinion, what is the key educational philosophy of the U.S. education? And what is the key educational philosophy of Chinese education?
- What kind of new procedures, policy or rules that you learned over the last couple months are very different from things in China?
- Please describe the differences of assessment and grading system between U.S. and China.
- What kind of support do you expect from American parents? How did parent involve in students' education in China?
- What kind of teaching materials do you hope to have or increase?

- With regard to interacting with students, motivating students, dealing with individual differences and use different teaching methods effectively, what kind of challenge did you have when you first came to teach in U.S.?
- How did you deal with slow learner? And how do you now?
- Do you still feel that you have insufficient prep time and lack of spare time? Why?
- How does the school operation system differ in China and in U.S.?
- What the ideal class climate looks like in China and in U.S.?
- How do class management and discipline approach differ in two countries?
- Overall, how the literacy objectives and math objectives in for elementary students differ in two countries?

**Now, let's focus on teaching and learning in your classroom.**

Based on field notes of the first full-day classroom observation:

- Describe the children you are currently teach (grade level, learning style, characteristics)
- What are the main educational goals in your class with regard to your students' learning and grade-level readiness? (What your students need to learn or to achieve so that they can be promoted to the next grade level)
- What are your students' responsibilities in your class?
- What are the rules in your class? How are these rules developed?
- What are routines in your class?
- How do you manage your class? What are useful discipline strategies? (visual behavior chart, class dojo, etc.) Can you distinguish which strategies are from your own culture and which are from U.S.? How do you handle students with disruptive behavior?
- In language and literacy, what are the main learning goals with regard to your students' language development? Can you tell where these goals come from?
- In language and literacy: What kinds of instructional activities do you usually provide for your students? How do students respond to different instructional activities? What kinds of instructional methods do you often use when teach language and literacy? What are the

most effective methods? Can you distinguish which activities and which methods are from your own culture and which are from U.S.? Do you think the methods from U.S. can be used in China? and why?

- How do you assess your students' language ability? How do you document your students' language and literacy development? Can you distinguish which strategies are from your own culture and which are from U.S.?
- In math, what are the main learning goals with regard to your students' math development? Can you tell where these goals come from?
- In math: What kinds of instructional activities do you usually provide for your students? How do students respond to different instructional activities? What kinds of instructional methods do you often use when teach language and literacy? What are the most effective methods? Can you distinguish which activities and which methods are from your own culture and which are from U.S.? Do you think the methods from U.S. can be used in China? and why?
- How do you assess your students' math ability? How do you document your students' math development? Do you think it is the same or different in U.S. and in China? Can you distinguish which strategies are from your own culture and which are from U.S.?
- How do you communicate students' performance with their parents? How often? How is teacher-parent communication in U.S. similar to or different from that in China?
- What are the most influential factors affecting how you teach in your class?
- Is there anything we have not discussed that you think is important to know related to transnational teachers in U.S. schools?

Thank you very much for taking time to speak with me today!

## APPENDIX C: THE SECOND CULTURAL MODELS INTERVIEW GUIDE

### Opening

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me about your work as a transnational teacher again. My goal today is to understand how you are thinking about teaching in U.S. now and how has your views and practices changed over the last few months.

### Reflection

- Please describe your situation, feelings, and challenges at the end of this school year in U.S. Is there any change you have noticed between the beginning and the end of the school year in terms of your work, relationships, feeling or challenges?
- What kind of new ideas, beliefs, practices, procedures, policy or rules have you learned over the last couple months?
- Describe the development or progress of children you have been (and are currently) teaching over the last one year. Estimate the percentage of the students who are ready to be promoting to the next grade level. What goals did you set up for them and what criteria do you usually use to assess their performance?

### Video-Cue Questions

I am about to show you a video clip of your teaching from December, 2015.

- Please identify what strategies/methods you used in the instruction. What methods do you think are useful or good ones? Why? Where and how did you learn/know these strategies/methods? (personal educational history, previous teacher education, previous teaching experiences, American colleague, Chinese colleague, improvising, etc.)
- Can you distinguish which strategies are from your own culture and which are from U.S.? Are there any other instructional activities that you often use but not shown in this video?
- Please describe the three (3) most effective/good teaching and classroom management methods.
- Have you noticed any differences in terms of your teaching between two time points (goals, methods, attitude, etc.)?
- What are possible factors that lead to those changes?

### Conclusion

- After a year, what are new ideas or practices that you learned that are worth bringing back and can be applied to your teaching when you return to China? What are not or cannot?
- What advice would you like to give to new Chinese transnational teachers coming next year?

Thank you very much for taking time to speak with me today!

## REFERENCES

- Alexander, R. (2001). *Culture and pedagogy : international comparisons in primary education*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers.
- American Federation of Teachers (AFT). (2009). *Importing educators: Causes and consequences of international teacher recruitment*. Washington D. C.: American Federation of Teachers.
- Ashmore, R. A. (1997). *Teacher education in the People's Republic of China*. Bloomington, Ind., U.S.A.: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.
- Assuncao Flores, M. (2006). Being a novice teacher in two different settings: Struggles, continuities, and discontinuities. *The Teachers College Record*, 108(10), 2021-2052.
- Banks, J. A., Suarez-Orozco, M. M., & Ben-Peretz, M. (Eds.). (2016). *Global migration, diversity, and civic education : improving policy and practice*. New York: Teacher College Press.
- Benedict, R. (1934). *Patterns of culture*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Bennardo, G., & Munck, V. C. D. (2014). *Cultural models : genesis, methods, and experiences*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Biggam, S. C., & Hyson, M. C. (2014). The common core state standards and developmentally appropriate practices: Creating a relationship. In C. Copple, S. Bredekamp, D. Koralek & K. Charner (Eds.), *Developmentally appropriate practice: Focus on kindergarten* (pp. 95-112). Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Bredekamp, S., & Copple, C. (1997). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs* (Rev. ed.). Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Bredekamp, S., & Copple, C. (2009). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8* (3rd ed.). Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

- Caulfield, R. (1997). Professionalism in early care and education. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 24(4), 261-263.
- Chan, C. K. K., & Rao, N. (Eds.). (2010). *Revisiting the Chinese learner: Changing contexts, changing education*. Hong Kong, China: Comparative Education Research Centre.
- Cohen, D. K. (1990). A revolution in one classroom: The case of Mrs. Oublier. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 12(3), 311-329.
- Cook, S. (2000). Foreign teachers find a place in US schools. *Christian Science Monitor*, 92(190).
- Cranton, P., & Carusetta, E. (2002). Reflecting on teaching: The influence of context. *The International Journal for Academic Development*, 7(2), 167-176.
- D'Andrade, R. (1987). A folk model of the mind. In D. C. Holland & N. Quinn (Eds.), *Cultural models in language and thought*. Cambridge Cambridgeshire ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- DeZutter, S. (2008). *Cultural models of teaching in two non-school educational communities*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Washington University.
- Dudley, P. (2015). *Lesson study professional learning for our time*. London ; New York: Routledge.
- Dunn, A. H. (2013). *Teachers without borders? The hidden consequences of international teachers in U.S. schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Fantilli, R. D., & McDougall, D. E. (2009). A study of novice teachers: Challenges and supports in the first years. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25(6), 814-825.
- Fee, J. F. (2011). Latino immigrant and guest bilingual teachers: Overcoming personal, professional, and academic culture shock. *Urban Education*, 46(3), 390-407.
- Givvin, K. B., Hiebert, J., Jacobs, Jennifer K., Hollingsworth, H., & Gallimore, R. (2005). Are there national patterns of teaching? Evidence from the TIMSS 1999 video study. *Comparative Education Review*, 49(3), 311-343. doi: 10.1086/430260



- Greenfield, P. M. (2004). *Weaving generations together : Evolving creativity among the Mayas of Chiapas*. Santa Fe [N.M.]: School of American Research Press.
- Gullo, D. F. (2006). *K today: Teaching and learning in the Kindergarten year*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Harkness, S., Super, C. M., & Keefer, C. H. (1992). Learning to be an American parent: how cultural models gain directive force. In R. G. D'Andrade & C. Strauss (Eds.), *Human motives and cultural models* (pp. 163-178). Cambridge England ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Harms, T., Clifford, R. M., & Cryer, D. (2005). *Early childhood environment rating scale* (Rev. ed.). New York: Teachers College.
- Hayashi, A., & Tobin, J. J. (2015). *Teaching embodied : Cultural practice in Japanese preschools*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Herzberg, Q. X., & Herzberg, L. (2012). *Chinese proverbs and popular sayings: With observations on culture and language*. CA: Stone Bridge Press.
- Hollan, D. (2001). Developments in person-centered ethnography. In C. C. Moore & H. F. Mathews (Eds.), *The Psychology of cultural experience* (pp. 48-67). UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Holland, D. C., & Quinn, N. (1987). Culture and cognition. In D. C. Holland & N. Quinn (Eds.), *Cultural models in language and thought* (pp. 3-40). Cambridge Cambridgeshire ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Holloway, S. D. (2000). *Contested childhood : diversity and change in Japanese preschools*. New York: Routledge.
- Howard, E. R., & Sugarman, J. (2009). Program models and the language of initial literacy in two-way immersion programs: Center for Applied Linguistic.
- Hsu, S. (2014). Introduction. In S. Hsu & Y.-Y. Wu (Eds.), *Education as cultivation in Chinese culture* (pp. 1-18). Singapore: Springer.

- Hsu, S., & Hwang, T.-M. (2014). Finding a new identity for teachers. In S. Hsu & Y.-Y. Wu (Eds.), *Education as cultivation in Chinese culture* (pp. 241-258). Singapore: Springer.
- Hutchison, C. B. (2005). *Teaching in America : A cross-cultural guide for international teachers and their employers*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Kamerman, S. B. (2005). Early childhood education and care in advanced industrialized countries: current policy and program trend. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 87(3).
- Legge, J. (1966). *The four books: Confucian analects, the great learning, the doctrine of the mean, and the works of Mencius*. New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp.
- Lerkkanen, M.-K., Kikas, E., Pakarinen, E., Trossmann, K., Poikkeus, A.-M., Rasku-Puttonen, H., . . . Nurmi, J.-E. (2012). A validation of the early childhood classroom observation measure in Finnish and Estonian kindergartens. *Early Education and Development*, 23(3), 323-350.
- LeVine, R. A. (1982). *Culture, behavior, and personality : An introduction to the comparative study of psychosocial adaptation* (2d ed.). New York: Aldine Pub. Co.
- LeVine, R. A. (1984). Properties of culture: An ethnographic view. In R. A. Shweder & R. A. LeVine (Eds.), *Culture theory: Essays on mind, self, and emotion* (pp. 67-87). Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- LeVine, R. A. (1994). *Child care and culture : Lessons from Africa*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- LeVine, R. A., & New, R. S. (2008). *Anthropology and child development: A cross-cultural reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.
- Levy, R. I., & Hollan, D. W. (1998). Person-centered interviewing and observation. In H. R. Bernard & C. C. Gravlee (Eds.), *Handbook of methods in cultural anthropology* (pp. 333-364). Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Li, J. (2012). *Cultural foundations of learning : East and West*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Luo, Z. (1972). *Mingsha shishi yishu* 鳴沙石室佚書: 鳴沙石室佚書續編. 大通書局 Datong Publisher.
- Mallory, B. L., & New, R. S. (1994). *Diversity and developmentally appropriate practices: Challenges for early childhood education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Mead, M. (1928). *Coming of age in Samoa: A psychological study of primitive youth for western civilisation*. New York,: W. Morrow & Company.
- Mead, M. (1974). Samoan children at work and play. *Education*, 94(4), 626-636.
- Meister, D. G., & Melnick, S. A. (2003). National new teacher study: Beginning teachers' concerns. *Action in Teacher Education*, 24(4), 87-94.
- Met, M. (2015). *Teaching to the national standards: The challenge of change*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Neuman, M. J. (2005). Global early care and education: challenges, responses, and lessons. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 87(3).
- New, R. (1990). Projects and provocations: Preschool curriculum ideas from Reggio Emilia, Italy. Retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED318565>
- New, R. (1999). What should children learn? Making choices and taking chances. *Early childhood research & practice*, 1(2).
- New, R. (2003). Reggio Emilia: New ways to think about schooling. *Educational Leadership*, 60(7), 34-38.
- New, R. (2005). Learning about early childhood education from and with Western European nations. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 87(3), 201-204.
- New, R. (2012). *Developmetnal niche observational chart*. Unpublished observational chart.

- New, R., & Cochran, M. (Eds.). (2007). *Early childhood education : An international encyclopedia*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers.
- New, R. S. (2001). Italian early care and education: The social construction of policies, programs, and practices. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 83(3), 226-236.
- New, R. S. (2007). Reggio Emilia as cultural activity theory in practice. *Theory into Practice*, 46(1), 5-13.
- OECD. (2001). *Starting strong : early childhood education and care*. Paris: OECD.
- OECD. (2006). *Starting strong II: Early childhood education and care*. Paris: OECD.
- OECD. (2015). *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care*. Paris: OECD.
- Phan, T., & Glander, M. (2008). Documentation to the NCES common core of data public elementary/secondary school locale code file: school year 2005-06 (NCES 2008-332). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, Institute for Education Statistics.
- Pianta, R. C., Cox, M. J., & Snow, K. L. (2007). *School readiness and the transition to kindergarten in the era of accountability*: Brookes Baltimore, MD.
- Pianta, R. C., La Paro, K. M., & Hamre, B. K. (2008). *Classroom assessment scoring system (CLASS) manual, K-3*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Pub. Co.
- Planel, C. (1997). National cultural values and their role in learning: A comparative ethnographic study of state primary schooling in England and France. *Comparative Education*, 33(3), 349-373.
- Rao, N., NG, S. S. N., & Pearson, E. (2010). Preschool Pedagogy: A fusion of traditional Chinese beliefs and contemporary notions of appropriate practice. In C. K. K. Chan & N. Rao (Eds.), *Revisiting the Chinese learner changing contexts, changing education* (pp. 225-280). Hong Kong, China: Comparative Education Research Centre, the Univ. of Hong Kong,.

- Rinaldi, C. (2012). The pedagogy of listening: The listening perspective from Reggio Emilia. In C. P. Edwards, G. E. Forman & L. Gandini (Eds.), *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia experience in transformation*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger.
- Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rogoff, B. (2011). *Developing destinies: A Mayan midwife and town*. New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Scherff, L. (2008). Disavowed: The stories of two novice teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24(5), 1317-1332.
- Shen, Q., & Shun, K.-I. (2008). *Confucian ethics in retrospect and prospect*. Washington, D.C.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.
- Shimahara, N. (2002). *Teaching in Japan: A cultural perspective*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Shweder, R. A., Jenson, L. A., & Goldstein, W. M. (1995). Who sleeps by whom revisited: A method for extracting the moral goods implicit in practice. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*(67), 21-39.
- Spillane, J. P., & Zeuli, J. S. (1999). Reform and teaching: Exploring patterns of practice in the context of national and state mathematics reforms. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 21(1), 1-27.
- Spindler, G., & Spindler, L. (1987). Cultural dialogue and schooling in Schoenhausen and Roseville: A comparative analysis. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 18(1), 3-16.
- State Board of Education. (2016). Language diversity in North Carolina: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.
- Stipek, D., & Byler, P. (2004). The early childhood classroom observation measure. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 19(3), 375-397.
- Super, C. M., & Harkness, S. (1986). The developmental niche: A conceptualization at the interface of child and culture. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 9(4), 545-569.

- Tobin, J. J., Hsueh, Y., & Karasawa, M. (2009). *Preschool in three cultures revisited: China, Japan, and the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tobin, J. J., Wu, D. Y. H., & Davidson, D. H. (1989). *Preschool in three cultures: Japan, China, and the United States*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Veenman, S. (1984). Perceived problems of beginning teachers. *Review of Educational Research*, 54(2), 143-178.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher mental processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Whiting, B. B. (Ed.). (1963). *Six cultures: Studies of child rearing*. New York: Wiley.
- Wu, Y.-Y. (2014). Teachers' dual responsibilities for academic achievement and character development. In S. Hsu & Y.-Y. Wu (Eds.), *Education as cultivation in Chinese culture*. Singapore: Springer.
- Yerrick, R., Parke, H., & Nugent, J. (1997). Struggling to promote deeply rooted change: The "filtering effect" of teachers' beliefs on understanding transformational views of teaching science. *Science Education*, 81(2), 137-159.
- Zhao, Y. (2009). *Catching up or leading the way: American education in the age of globalization*. Alexandria, Va.: ASCD.
- Zhu, J. (2008). Implementation of and reflection on Western thought in early childhood education in China. *Journal of Basic Education*, 17(1), 3-16.
- Zhu, J. (2010). *Kindergarten curriculum theory and practice*. Shanghai: China East Normal University.