
*Rethinking Multicultural Education: How
might shi(勢)-inflected thinking enhance
practice?*

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Abstract

The overall purpose of this study is to explore the implementation of an ancient, philosophical Chinese style of thinking, *shi* (勢), as an analytical tool to the field of Education and examine how this approach might inflect professional practice of teaching and learning within Higher Education in the UK. The overarching aim of the study is to inquire into the effectiveness of current approaches to multicultural education as these relate to the practices of tutors and then, in the light of this, to consider the potential resourcefulness of drawing upon traditional Chinese concepts as inaugurating new ways forward.

The methodology of this study is complex in that there are distinct phases to its execution. The initial focus is upon postgraduate students as they interact and participate as members of a multicultural group. This involved adopting a familiar Western framework and style of thinking in order to collect empirical data. The findings supported and contributed to existing knowledge of issues surrounding intercultural communication within group work and re-enforced the prevailing fixed nature of this orientation that little appears to have changed over recent decades.

However, at the same point of time, I had been reading about *shi* (勢), which comes from Chinese philosophy. Its use as a tool in relation to Western styles of thinking is especially associated with the writings of Francois Jullien (1995). Using *shi* as a tool with which to analyse the data, a new direction emerged, one which involved bringing the practitioner into the mix and highlighting the importance of his/her role in multicultural group work. So, by moving the spotlight to the practitioner and comparing the thinking of a conventional practitioner with that of a *shi*-inflected practitioner as they engage with their students, insight is afforded into how an apparent static situation might be moved towards a more dynamic one. The findings indicate how a *shi*-inflected approach to practice necessitates a practitioner engaging with reflexivity and reflectivity and treating each teaching context as unique. This engagement can enhance a practitioner's practice by helping to reduce the anxiety experienced by all students as they engage in multicultural group work and increase the potential for successful intercultural interaction from the start of a programme of study.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The context of the study

Higher Education institutions in English speaking countries have a more socially and culturally diverse student population than ever before, including increasing numbers of international students (Ryan and Carroll, 2005; Jin and Cortazzi, 2017). International students generally refer to those students who have chosen to travel to the UK to further their study. However, in this study the term will refer specifically to Chinese postgraduate students in order to differentiate them from European students who have also travelled to the UK to continue their study at postgraduate level. The increased number of international students in UK universities not only brings challenges for practitioners but also for international and European students. Practitioners, who find they are faced with unfamiliar student characteristics and needs, can be unsure on how to respond. Thus, the increasingly diverse student population has brought with it new and demanding challenges for practitioners as their existing pedagogical models struggle to deal with attitudes, needs and expectations that they have ever encountered before (De Vita, 2005; Korhonen and Weil, 2015). Consequently, it is often easier for them to keep to their existing assumptions about the expectations of their ideal student.

International and European postgraduate students can also face difficulties. Having taken the decision to study abroad, many students encounter difficulties in their pursuit to be academically successful in their new learning environment. All students: home, European and international, can find the transition to postgraduate studies taxing until they become accustomed to academic norms and conventions. Even students with a good command of English can struggle with local language peculiarities and a lack of discipline-specific vocabulary. However, many international and European students are also faced with different social, cultural norms and values from the ones with which they are familiar; different modes of teaching and learning and different expectations and conventions about participation and performance.

Nonetheless, although the participation of overseas students in UK universities has a long history, “the differential fee policy reconfigures them in such a way that they become part of a calculative cash nexus” (De Vita and Case, 2003: 385), but are also seen as the bearers of “alternative knowledge, perspectives and life experiences” (Ryan and Carroll,

2005: 9). This is important because in response to the changing landscape of global higher education, there has been growing emphasis on the role of higher education in developing global citizens for global employability and global responsibility. Accordingly, there is a need for universities to produce graduates who can operate successfully in this diverse and global world. So, increasing diversity in the student population affords universities the opportunity to produce graduates as “global citizens” (Bourn, 2010: 18); graduates who can:

see the relevance of global issues to their own lives and demonstrate the relationship between local actions and global consequences (Bourn, 2010:21).

In order to produce global citizens, universities provide opportunities for international, European and home students to work and study together, so that students might become global learners, who are competent in intercultural communication and understanding. The discourse of global citizenship started to appear and find expression in the internationalisation strategies of UK universities as did strategies for improving the international students’ experience, which has currently changed to the ‘students’ experience’. The emergence of a policy imperative to improve the international students’ experience arose from the Prime Minister’s Initiatives, (1999-2004; 2006-2011) which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. The ‘Initiatives’ resulted in the government producing its *Making it Happen* (British Council, 2010) document which saw the inclusion of internationalisation within policy and strategic planning documents in universities in the UK. These strategies, however, set a high academic premium on intercultural learning, an appreciation of cultural diversity, the development of intercultural communication skills and the promotion of a global perspective across all subject areas. Meanwhile, the second of the ‘Prime Minister’s Initiative’, which was launched in 2006, supported these trends and allocated resources at national level to improve the international student experience (Harrison and Peacock, 2010b: 125).

The challenge of creating curricular spaces, in order to foster intercultural learning also became one for the practitioners, who worked with multicultural cohorts, to resolve. Practitioners addressed this by including multicultural group work into their pedagogy, which they perceived as affording opportunities for authentic intercultural encounters among the group members. However, in De Vita’s words:

The ideal of transforming a culturally diverse student population into a valued resource for activating processes of international connectivity, social cohesion and intercultural learning is still very much that, an ideal (2005:75).

It remains an 'ideal' because the promotion of successful interaction between students as they work in multicultural groups remains a significant challenge, and continues to be a focus of much research. In particular, the lack of interaction between home and international students continues to be a matter of concern. The interactions between them first reached significant academic attention in the mid-1990s as universities began to rapidly internationalise their student bodies (Harrison, 2012:226). In Australian studies, Nesdale and Todd (1993) found that home students were less interested in intercultural contact than international students, while Volet and Ang (1998) observed that multicultural groups presented new opportunities for learning, but that these were not being capitalised upon due to limited social interaction between home and international students. In America, Spencer-Rodgers (2001) and Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern (2002) reported that home students generally had positive, if stereotypical, views about international students, but that they also perceived a range of threats and anxieties in relation to such interaction.

However, at the heart of the challenge to internationalise the HE curriculum is the difficulty in operationalising policy in a way that genuinely changes "entrenched institutional culture and the attitudes and behaviours of students and staff" (Ippolito, 2007: 749). As universities admit more international students, the increasingly diverse student population brings with it new challenges. A deficit approach among some practitioners is that any problem is the student's and the role of the language support staff is to correct the problem: It is the student's responsibility to adjust to 'our' academic tradition (Barron, 2006). For example, international students are expected to perform in, and be assessed against the conventions of the host country's educational values and practices. It is assumed that students will know and understand these conventions. Lawrence (2001) places part of the responsibility for the deficit model on some academics' lack of understanding of the increasing diverse student population and the range of educational backgrounds and experiences that they bring with them.

1.2 Strategic detours

As a practitioner involved in teaching students from different cultures, the interaction between host and in-host students as they work in multicultural groups is of particular

interest and thus is the context for this study. The initial focus of the interaction, however, is limited to features of verbal and non-verbal behaviour and the role they play in enhancing or hindering interaction between and among members as they work in their multicultural groups. As the study develops, however, reference to verbal and non-verbal behaviour is replaced by ‘features of expressivity’ or simply, ‘expressivity’, for reasons that will become clear. The data are collected through interviews with postgraduate students at three different points in their studies: the beginning, the middle and the end. A case study method (Thomas 2011) is adopted with the case being the phenomena *shi* and exploring it as an analytical tool in the field of Education. This involved analysing empirical data collected from eight postgraduate students: four from the School of Management and four from the School of Education with the nationality mix for each School being the same: one Home, one European and two Chinese students. Interviews were conducted at different points during the taught part of their programmes of study to discover whether students’ interactions within multicultural groups changed and if they did, to identify the reasons for such change. Data were also collected by interviewing the practitioner who taught the students. The practitioner was interviewed once at the end of the taught part of the programme with which s/he was associated. A more detailed account of the case study and participants is provided in Chapter 4 under 4.7.1 and 4.7.2.

The data collection followed familiar, Western norms, and was a necessary stage in the process of the whole study. Whilst the focus of the students’ interactions within multicultural group work remained limited to features of verbal and non-verbal behaviour, *shi* (勢) as the framework used to analyse the data becomes the main focus because it introduces an innovative approach which, to date, has not been applied to teaching and learning within Education. *Shi* as an analytical tool introduces a new orientation towards thinking about practice that derives from traditional Chinese thinking. Concepts associated with *shi* are used to analyse the data from the students’ perspective of multicultural group work. Consequently, by bringing a different orientation and way of thinking to the context, the importance of the role of the practitioner becomes apparent. This in turn draws attention to the relative neglect of a focus upon the role of the practitioner within existing literature. Adopting *shi* as an analytical tool, highlights the role afforded to student interaction over the role of the practitioner in relation to educational practice. In order to redress this, a hypothetical context is created, which focuses on the practitioner, and uses the context of *this* study, *these* students with *these*

relational dynamics to imagine the potentialities a different orientation and way of thinking has on professional practice. To explore this further, an illustrative example of the first multicultural group context is used to compare approaches to practice between a conventional practitioner and a *shi*-inflected one as they prepare and teach the same ‘hypothetical’ lesson. The decision to construct hypothetical illustrations was contingent upon pragmatic and ethical considerations. Limitations in existing research, and its significance, only became apparent when working with the empirical data and, given the small scale of the study, a direct critique of practitioner interaction might be considered ethically questionable. A more oblique approach was therefore called for that, whilst drawing upon data collected as a springboard for thinking, nevertheless departed from this in a number of ways. The use of hypothetical illustrations was therefore a considered response to new insights that evolved from the initial theoretical focus of this inquiry. Moreover, these hypothetical illustrations were also of heuristic value in drawing attention to key features between different theoretical orientations that would not otherwise have become visible. As such, this thesis argues for:

- a. a relational perspective that re-dresses the silence with regard to the position of the practitioner
- b. draws upon Chinese traditions that afford new possibilities for thinking about educational practice
 - i. that enables a rethinking about educational practice in situations of multi-cultural encounter
 - ii. that re-frames thinking away from performativity (with its concern with ‘effectiveness’) towards educational *effectivity*.

1.3 A traditional Chinese Framework

Shi (勢) is situated within Chinese philosophy and it has been adopted by Jullien (1995, 2000, 2004, 2011, 2014), a French philosopher and Sinologist, as a resource for thinking. The concepts of *shi* are detailed and explained in Chapter 3; however, as *shi* is based on Sun Tzu’s *The Art of War* (Mondschein, 2016), much of the discussion and examples of strategy refer to warfare. Whilst traditional Chinese thinking is strategic and should not be considered exclusive to the Chinese, it is the manner in which it is used that differs from Western strategic thought. The Chinese consider the skill in which strategies are

employed to be the greatest reward with the strategies being set in motion well in advance of any confrontation because, “the art of war taught how to triumph by avoiding battle altogether” (Jullien, 2000, 35). Therefore the best strategist is the one who is always able to anticipate the course of events, and can situate him/herself before their conception and “thereby thwart manoeuvres [sic] as the enemy planned them” (Jullien, 2000:36). This means that Chinese sages are more “oblique” than “confrontational” (Jullien, 2000:40) in their use of strategy whether it is in warfare or in conversation:

Thus the obliquity recommended in the art of war corresponds to an obliquity in speech,...to the thrust of the hand-to-hand or face-to-face confrontation of soldiers or arguments the Chinese prefer detour (Jullien, 2000:49).

Therefore, different strategies are used in different situations and *shi* is always associated with the strategy being used at that time. It is the skill of the person applying the strategy that determines whether the potential of that situation is successful and *shi* is achieved. Applying *shi* as an analytical tool affords different insights into student’s interactions within multicultural groups. In addition, it provides a different orientation to a practitioner’s practice, to his/her thinking and planning, which enables different outcomes, which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

1.4 Images and metaphors

As mentioned earlier, Chinese thinking is based on a different understanding of reality and is different to the goal-oriented, theory to practice associations of the West. Accordingly, in China, “there is a frequent absence of theoretical explanations” (Jullien, 2004:17) so interpretations are made by using images which feature, for example, flowing water, as water represents fluidity and flexibility which is central to Chinese thought. Therefore, as Chinese traditional thinking employs images, metaphors seem appropriate to be included in this study as a way in which to trigger the imagination and open up new avenues to understand issues. The use of metaphors in language have three main benefits since they allow “a compact version of events without the need for the message to spell out all the details”. Metaphors also enable people to “portray what they cannot portray literally” and are “closer to perceived experience and therefore are more vivid emotionally, sensorially and cognitively” (Weick, 1979: 47-48).

Metaphors are employed as ways of instigating our imagination and furthering our understanding of important topics. The power of the metaphor and its impact on the imagination is that it goes beyond mere words and sentences and helps to make sense of important concepts, whereas, analytical and concise definitions will, in most cases, capture an aspect, but not all of what is needed to be understood. It is arguable that metaphors and the impact they have on the imagination help to understand issues more fully and in synchrony with reality than abstract conceptualisations. Often definitions are enriched and better explained through resorting to metaphors and the imagination. As Sfard (1998: 4) states:

[M]etaphors are the most primitive, most elusive, and yet most amazingly informative objects of analysis. Their special power stems from the fact that they often cross the borders between the spontaneous and the scientific, between the intuitive and the formal.

Thus, metaphors can help not only to make sense of a concept but they are also useful in helping to move from one conceptual domain to another and to relate different concepts. In this study, the use of metaphors complements the use of images necessary in Chinese *shi*-inflected thinking. However, it is acknowledged that there are potential limitations in using metaphors because they can be interpreted and understood in various ways as inference is at the heart of metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 244), which is due to the cultural values associated with them. Nonetheless, in this study they are perceived as a useful bridge between Western and Chinese cultural and conceptual understandings.

1.5 Overview of the thesis

This thesis is divided into four parts with Chapter 1 included within part one.

Part 1: The Context

Chapter two: Literature

This chapter develops the issues arising from the increase number of host country and in-host country students working together on programmes of study. It begins by providing background information on the emergence of the government internationalisation policy and the idiosyncrasies surrounding it. As a large part of this study concerns culture, the following discussion centres around it and the place of intercultural communication within multicultural group work as students from different cultures work and study

together. As the students in the current study are studying in a UK institution and English is the *lingua franca*, some features associated with language are mentioned because features from the student's first language might be included when they are speaking in English, for instance, body language, which will be referred to as a mode of expressivity in this study. The discussion, therefore, includes what role expressivity as it is associated with language plays in students' interaction within multicultural group work. As group work is also a prominent feature of this study, the discussion concludes by including issues which previous studies have identified for host and in-host country students as they work together in groups.

The discussion to this point in the study employs terminology and schema which are known and understood to western academics. The findings discussed in the literature review adopt familiar concepts and methodologies, all of which reinforce a western-style of thinking. The direction of the following chapters, however, travels beyond a western theoretical framing and draws upon eastern resources (Jullien, 1995), which have had, until now limited impact upon educational thinking;

Part 2: The Unfamiliar

Chapter three: Shi (勢): a Chinese Style of Thinking

An understanding of eastern thinking and *shi* is central to this study, thus this chapter begins by describing, discussing and explaining where *shi* is situated within Chinese philosophy and how it has been adopted by Jullien (1995) as a resource for thinking. In an attempt to highlight the affordances offered by *shi* across different domains, discussions on how it is applied are presented from such diverse fields as war to Chinese boxing. The discussion provides understanding and insight into (a broadly drawn) distinction between Eastern and Western thinking. The discussion continues by illustrating how aspects of *shi* (Jullien, 1995, 2004) are applied within academia in disciplines such as Business and Strategic Management. Leading on from the review of the literature, Chapter 2, and from the introduction to *shi*, this chapter concludes by presenting four research questions.

Chapter four: Conceptual Framework and Methods

This chapter discusses and justifies the research design, that is, the decisions that were taken in order to answer the research questions which were stated in Chapter 3. While academics are becoming more aware of how *shi* can be applied to their disciplines it has hitherto not been applied to the field of education. *Shi* provides an innovative approach to thinking about teaching and learning and, as such, chapter four discusses why aspects of it are adopted as the conceptual framework for this study. Thus it is adopted as an innovative tool for analysing data, the focus of which are the students and practitioners. This chapter includes a rationale for the move at this point in the study to how students' understanding and interpretation of expressivity impact on their interaction and participation as they work in multicultural groups. It also highlights how my initial direction of travel was influenced by the work of western inter and cross-cultural theorists such as Hofstede (1991) and Gudykunst and Kim (1997) as well as attempting to build on from and develop my earlier study related to expressivity (Lawrie, 2006);

Part 3: The Gap

Chapter 5: The Application of Concepts of Shi (勢)

This chapter uses the empirical data, which focuses on the interpretations and understandings of expressivity (verbal and non-verbal features), among the multicultural group members and uses *shi* in the analysis. However, it is when the concepts of *shi* are applied to the empirical data that new insights and interpretations are afforded. It becomes apparent that the practitioner plays an important role in the unfolding of situations and should therefore be included in the study. Thus an unforeseen gap in the literature emerges as it is realised that the position and role of the practitioner has not been included in a vast amount of the literature related to intercultural communication within multicultural groups. To redress this situation, the data, context and *shi*-inflected thinking are used as a springboard in the re-focussing of the study to include the practitioner, which will be the focus of Chapter 6;

Part 4: The Implications

Chapter six: The Practitioners and their Orientations

In order to address the gap identified in the literature in Chapter 2 and in the analysis in Chapter five, this chapter introduces a Chinese style of thinking as a conventional and a *shi*-inflected practitioner plan and deliver a teaching session. The aim is to determine in what ways a non *shi*-inflected practitioner and a *shi*-inflected practitioner's approach to teaching and learning differ. In an attempt to address this, an illustrative example is presented whereby each practitioner teaches the same lesson to the same group of students. Whilst these are imaginary constructions of lessons, empirical data (from Chapter 5) are drawn upon as the basis for the practitioners' input to their sessions. The analysis of the sessions focuses on the different stages of the lessons which are then compared in order to afford insight into how Chinese concepts might become a resource for educational thinking. Emerging themes are identified and provide the basis for the discussion in the following chapter.

Chapter seven: Emerging Themes and Final Thoughts

This chapter focuses on the three themes which emerge from chapter six: professional critical reflexivity, educational efficacy and educational theory. The implications each one affords to innovative professional practice will be discussed. This is followed by a brief conclusion.

Chapter 2 Literature

As the number of international students has continued to grow within higher education, the changing demography among the student population presents concerns and challenges particularly for practitioners who teach on programmes of study which attract multicultural students. As already mentioned in Chapter 1, an insistent challenge facing practitioners is how to increase interaction and participation between host and in-host country students as they work together (Volet and Ang, 1998; Popov et al., 2012). This chapter begins by providing background information on the emergence of the government internationalisation policy and the idiosyncrasies surrounding it. As a large part of this study concerns culture, the following discussion centres around it and the place of intercultural communication within multicultural group work as students from different cultures work and study together. As the students in the current study are studying in a UK institution and English is the *lingua franca*, some features associated with language are mentioned because features from the student's first language might be included when they are speaking in English, for instance, body language, which will be referred to as a mode of expressivity in this study. The discussion, therefore, includes what role expressivity, as it is associated with language, plays in students' interaction within multicultural group work. As group work is also a prominent feature of this study, the discussion concludes by including issues which previous studies have identified for host and in-host country students as they work together in groups.

2.1 Internationalisation

Over the last 25 years, Higher Education Institutions (HEI) within the UK have attracted an increasing number of international students and have benefitted from the 4.5 million international students who have registered at universities worldwide (OECD, 2014). In the UK, the changing demography in student population is a consequence of a government policy drive to diversify student population within HEIs which is now commonly referred to as internationalisation (British Council, 2010) and in the UK it occurred at the same time as the government widened access to universities for domestic students. These developments have presented challenges to academic staff, who find themselves teaching students from a wider range of social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds than they had in the past.

Internationalisation as a concept appears to have originated from the original definition of a University being a body of scholars, coming together from across boundaries to share and exchange knowledge (Caruana and Hanstock, 2003). The roots of internationalisation stem from the signing of the Magna Charta Universitatum in Bologna in 1088 by delegates from eighty European Universities (Magna-Charta) with the Sorbonne Joint Declaration Agreement on the ‘harmonisation of the architecture of the European higher education system’ (Sorbonne Joint Declaration Agreement, 1998) emerging a decade later and becoming the precursor for the more familiar and on-going Bologna Declaration Agreement. The Bologna Agreement realised there was a need to find “a common European answer to common European problems” and proposed to increase:

the international competitiveness of the European system of higher education...to ensure that the European higher education system acquires a world-wide degree of attraction equal to our [European universities] extraordinary cultural and scientific traditions (The Bologna Declaration Agreement, 1999).

All signatories of the Bologna Declaration Agreement pledged to reform the structures of their own higher education systems in order to create an overall convergence at a European level (The Bologna Declaration Agreement, 1999). The UK was one of the 29 European countries who signed the agreement and this is what led to the UK Prime Minister’s Initiative 1 (PMI 1) being introduced in the same year. However, the Prime Minister’s Initiative 1 policy document differed from the documented green and white paper process associated with other mainstream FE and HE government policies in two ways: it was introduced and presented as a glossy brochure entitled, *Making it Happen: The Prime Minister’s Initiative for International Education* (British Council, 2010); it was managed by the British Council’s ‘Education UK’ brand with government involvement being their provision of guidelines about the way it was managed (British Council, 2010).

2.1.1 The Prime Minister’s Initiatives

The first phase of the Prime Minister’s Initiative (PMI 1) was from 1999 - 2004 and was launched by the then New Labour Prime Minister, Tony Blair who considered education as, “...our best economic policy” which led to education becoming “the centre of

economic policy making” (Blair cited in Ball, 2008:12). This was reflected in the aim of PMI 1, which was:

to increase the number of international students following a UK education, in recognition of their importance in fostering international relations and bringing long-term political and economic benefits to the UK (British Council, 2010).

Targets were set to increase the number of international students studying in HEIs by 50,000 by 2005, which was achieved (DIUS). Building on the success of PMI 1, the second five year phase of the Initiative (PMI 2) was launched in 2006, with the overall aim to “[s]ecure the UK’s position as a leader in international education and sustain the managed growth of UK international education delivered both in the UK and overseas” (British Council, 2010). The choice of the verb ‘secure’ reinforces how successful UK Education had been in achieving the aims of PMI 1.

By 2011, the Prime Minister’s Initiative 2 (PMI 2) specifically aimed to: attract an additional 70,000 international students to UK higher education; achieve demonstrable improvements to student satisfaction ratings in the UK; achieve significant growth in the number of partnerships between the UK and other countries and double the number of countries sending more than 10,000 students per annum to the UK (British Council, 2010). However, reference to internationalisation in both the PMI 1 and PMI 2 documentation neither explains nor defines the term. In PMI 2, the term appears four times:

...need to embed *internationalisation* into the core of their missions;
...incorporating *internationalisation* into campus life, the curriculum, and management structures;
...value of *internationalisation* is in the way it enhances the learning experiences of both international and home students;
...*internationalisation* is probably the only safe way forward.
was(British Council, 2010, italics added)

The closest explanation provided is the inclusion of four connected areas of work for an internationalisation agenda:

1. Marketing UK education by communicating to prospective students in ways they find both accessible and enjoyable.
2. Ensuring the quality of the student experience, from the application and visa process through to the end of their studies.
3. Supporting UK institutions in the development of lasting and mutually beneficial international partnerships.
4. Prioritising specific countries to increase UK engagement

(British Council, 2010: 4).

Thus, while the policy document fails to provide a definitive definition of internationalisation, the PMI 2 document encourages UK universities to be part of the “complex infrastructure of global capitalism, which relies increasingly on the recognition of knowledge transfer as a key component of economic well-being” (Nixon, 2009:199). Consequently, by not providing a clearly defined definition of internationalisation in the policy documents HEI stake-holders provided their own which was based on their interpretations of the documents.

While not providing a clear definition, PMI 2 did offer more informed detail on what internationalisation entailed. That appeared to reflect the emergence of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) as one of the agreements of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) (Knight, 2003) and the naming of education as one of the sectors in which countries could make commitments to it, such as:

- 1) Cross-border supply, e.g. distance learning;
- 2) Consumption abroad, e.g. travelling abroad to study;
- 3) Commercial presence, e.g. university branch campuses or partnership agreements;
- 4) Presence of natural persons e.g. teachers, professors (Knight, 2003).

The impact on education was swift because with GATS emphasis on enterprise and economic contracting as well as on internal and external markets came the start of change in professionalism within education (Gewirtz et al., 2009:27). Terms which had previously been associated with commerce were adopted into education which started to become “commodified”: a marketable, service product “price-tagged and individually evaluated and remunerated” (Svensson and Evetts, in Evetts, 2009:27). The term “knowledge economy” started to appear in contemporary education policies where it was “treated as a business product” and “educational and innovative intellectual products and services, as productive assets” which apparently could be “exported for a high-value return” (Ball, 2008:19). Students were referred to as “customers” (Willmott, 1995: 1002) within education policies (Department for Education and Skills, 2004: Chapter 4) and so the start of the competition among HEIs to increase their income by looking for new markets and new customers began:

within ten years, students have been metamorphosed from apprentices to

customers, and their teachers from master craftsmen to merchant (Williams in Nixon, 2009: 198).

As a consequence, HEIs were encouraged to act in more business-like ways by “linking funding to recruitment and thus to consumer choice” (Ball, 2008:117). This was the dawn of universities having greater managerial and budgetary autonomy, which enabled them to generate new income streams by devoting “greater attention to their promotional and marketing activities” (Maguire, in Ball, 2008: 118). HEIs started to expand their markets and focus their recruitment on international students whose fees were often double those of home and European ones. Therefore, as international students continued to be recruited and their numbers increased, many in the sector interpreted internationalisation to simply mean that in order for universities to increase their revenue they had to recruit more international students. This belief persisted throughout PMI 1 due to a lack of guidance, explanation or definition of internationalisation in the government documents and texts (Caruana and Hanstock, 2003). The introduction of PMI 2 saw the start of more HEIs within the UK introducing their own internationalisation strategy or policy despite interpretation remaining varied and meaning different things to different institutions. Within the institution in which this study was undertaken, its strategy on internationalisation promotes:

the institution’s core values of respect for diversity in cultures and beliefs and a pursuit of knowledge that sustains beneficial change in local, national and international society. It builds on the University’s ambitions to improve its self-reliance and strengthen its position as a pre-eminent force in Scottish education and research where ability, not background, is valued.

However, it is its “Vision” with which this study most relates:

That all staff and students value and embrace the diversity of international experiences, histories and cultures and actively strive to be *global citizens* (<https://www.stir.ac.uk>, italics added)

The internationalisation strategic policy stated above clearly reflects aspects of PMI 2, for example, its international agenda which is based on reciprocal relationships and a “flow of knowledge and cultures across national boundaries” (Slethaug, 2007:5). However, although PMI 1 and PMI 2 have ended, their legacy is an increase in the international activities undertaken by HEIs which range from traditional study abroad programmes to providing access to higher education in countries where local institutions cannot meet demands (Altbach and Knight, 2007). Other activities emphasise upgrading

the international perspectives and skills of students and providing cross-cultural understanding and intercultural training (Otten, 2003: 20-21). Nonetheless, to ensure universities produce global citizens requires:

[P]edagogical principles to develop and empower students as critical beings, to see the relevance of global issues to their own lives and demonstrate the relationship between local actions and global consequences (Bourn, 2010:21).

This might necessitate practitioners having to adjust their pedagogy to enable students the opportunity to build up and improve the skills necessary to become global citizens, which is perceived by many in-host students as improving their career prospects. For mainland Chinese students, enhancing their career prospects is the “most important reason” why many choose to study abroad (Huang and Turner, 2018: 184) because overseas educational experiences are recognised as being advantageous in the Chinese labour market (Li, 2013). Thus, mainland Chinese students regard study abroad as an opportunity to enhance their experience and provide them a considerable advantage in terms of employment and advancement on their return to China (Huang 2013).

Pedagogically, multicultural group work is accepted as affording opportunities to develop and enhance the skills students need to become global citizens as it provides them the experience of participating in an increasingly globalised society (Spencer-Oatey and Dauber, 2019). The internationalisation of higher education is not an end in itself, but a means to an end, “with the end being the improvement of the quality of education” (Knight, 1999: 20). However, it is the experiences of international students, to a greater or lesser extent, that provide an indicator of the quality of the provision of education (Gu, Schweisfurth and Day, 2010: 10). International students are seen as “vital to the current and future health of UK further and higher education” (Gu, Schweisfurth and Day, 2010: 8) as their contribution is not perceived to be only “academic and cultural” but also “financial”. Consequently, with the UK national economy benefiting from earnings of £12.5 billion per year (British Council 2008), there has been a growing level of concern over the extent to which British universities are continuing to provide appropriate and responsive levels of academic and personal support for international students:

What is becoming increasingly clear is that the various manifestations of internationalisation currently operationalised are not themselves panaceas for institutions seeking to engage positively with the globalising education ‘market’,

and that greater numbers of international students or a higher global institutional ranking do not necessarily reflect a higher degree of beneficial intercultural interaction or education (Young, Handford and Schartner, 2017: 189).

The risk, therefore, is that the growth of a critical intercultural perspective as a component of internationalisation in pedagogy, curriculum design and staff professional learning might be ignored while higher education policy is being steered by economic imperatives (Pillar and Cho, 2013). Nonetheless, according to Pitts and Brooks (2017: 252), for internationalisation endeavours to be effective, education systems need to start to “conceptualise new pedagogical philosophies and redesign curricula” to enable a systematic implementation of “international learning opportunities.”

2.2 Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication is the preferred term used by some cultural anthropologists to describe the study of interaction, generally in a face-to-face informal setting, between individuals representing different cultures (Samavor and Porter, 2009; Gudykunst and Kim, 1997). The growth of in-host country students within academia has made intercultural communication an essential feature of HEIs especially for those institutions which intend to produce graduates who can compete in the global marketplace. Intercultural training for students is seen as the way forward since it would offer an alternative to traditional guidance, which puts the onus on the in-host country student to adjust to and fit in with the dominant culture, thus challenging the positioning of in-host country students as ‘Other’ (Hellmundt and Fox, 2003). Such training recognises that not only is diversity more complex than national difference but also addresses the need to prepare all students for multicultural and international work environments (Haigh, 2002; Nakayama, 2015; Spencer-Oatey and Dauber, 2017, 2019;). However, rather than use ‘training’, Otten (2003:14) uses the more appropriate term ‘learning’ because as he explains ‘training’ can have negative connotations in terms of the flexibility and adaptability needed with regard to the various contexts intercultural communication can present. Personal experience of living and working as an in-host country practitioner in various continents of the world has shown that intercultural communication is something you cannot train for; you can only learn from the experience. Nonetheless, internationalisation has led to an increase in the number of higher education programmes of study and named degrees which include modules in intercultural communication for example in the University of Southampton; University of Sheffield; Robert Gordon

University and Sussex University. In order to pass the modules and graduate with a named degree related to intercultural communication, students will have to be assessed. Considering the number of variables that can influence a person's behaviour and performance in another culture, it is arguable how a test can measure or can predict success in intercultural communication (Arasaratnam and Doerfel, 2005:143). The debate over whether intercultural communication should be taught or learned, whether it should be tested or not is summarised by Koester and Lustig (2015:20) whose comment below will resonate with anyone who has experience of (seemingly) successful communication with colleagues from other cultures:

Competent intercultural communication is not something one *does* but rather something that is *perceived to be*. One's motivations, knowledge, and skills lead to a context-specific *impression* that desirable outcomes (effectiveness, appropriateness, and perhaps satisfaction) have been achieved (original italics).

Nonetheless, intercultural communication should afford learning opportunities for both students and practitioners, alike. For students, it enables them to engage and practise their communication skills as they work collaboratively in groups of students from other cultures. Multicultural group work is a prominent source of interaction between host and in-host country students and can enhance the student learning experience by providing students opportunities to encounter new ideas and values (Mittelmeier et al., 2018: 150). For practitioners, one of the rewards intercultural communication affords is not only the opportunity to learn about other cultures but also to provide them with the chance to appraise their own since "meta-cultural awareness comes with understanding at least two cultures well, including one's own" (Louie, 2005:24). However, this might be questionable considering a majority of academics in many parts of the UK are still "predominantly white...UK born" and to whom few challenges have been made to their "established norms and pedagogic practices" (De Vita and Case, 2003:394). Until such time as the balance of nationalities among academics becomes more international it could be argued that internationalisation and intercultural learning in HEIs, might be in danger of being viewed and experienced as "westernised homogenisation" caused by a one-directional cultural flow from the "West" to the "Rest", which can slip into a "West is Best" philosophy (Trahar, 2007:12). Blaut (1992:289) would classify this as an example of "cultural racism" which he explains is when the "cultural category, European," is substituted for the "racial category, white," resulting in there no longer being a superior

race but a superior culture: European culture, or Western culture, or the West. Nonetheless, Holliday (2017: 216) believes there is a “shift” from western education being seen as “a gift to the deficient non-West” to one that recognises and responds to the “resilient richness of life experience that students from different backgrounds bring to higher education.” However, whether intercultural communication ‘training’ or ‘learning’ can enhance this shift remains debatable.

2.2.1 Culture

In order to know what is meant by intercultural communication, it is important to understand what is meant by culture as it used within this phrase. Culture can be viewed as a shared way of life at both the concrete level, such as, pieces of art and at the cognitive level, for example, language and symbolism (Geertz, 1975) as well as an inherited system of ideas that structures the subjective experiences of individuals, namely our beliefs. However, unlike Hofstede’s (1991) general individualist and collectivist paradigm, Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009:3) explain that culture within communication exchanges is an ambiguous set of basic, “assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions” that are shared by a group of people, and which might influence, but might not determine each member’s behaviour nor his/her “interpretations of the meaning of other people’s behaviour”(Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009: 3).

Their explanation is pertinent to intercultural interactions among and between group members. It also highlights that even within the same cultural group no two individuals share exactly the same cultural characteristics and that:

- Culture affects people’s behaviour in interpretations of behaviour;
- Culture is acquired and/or constructed through interaction with others (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009:13).

The points highlighted by Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009) indicate that culture provides systems of knowledge which allow people to know how to communicate with others and how to interpret others’ behaviour. However, although members of a culture may not share all aspects of their culture there is normally sufficient overlap to enable communication with comparative ease. This supports Hall’s (1959: 169) understanding that, “culture is communication and communication is culture”. Therefore, although real

life experience of intercultural encounters within multicultural group work would seemingly be the most involving form of learning within higher education, it does not mean that it automatically initiates intercultural learning or communication (Otten, 2003:15) which is what previous studies have discovered, some of which are discussed in this chapter.

2.3 Culture and language

Intercultural communication as a field of enquiry is concerned with how people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds interact with one another and what impact these interactions have on group relations as well as individual identity, attitude and behaviour (Gudykunst and Mody, 2002; Zhu, 2011). It has been researched by various disciplines in order to attempt to conceptualise intercultural communication. However, much of the research has been, “limited to identifying lists of characteristics, with few authentic examples that explain or illustrate what is really meant” (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009:51). Intercultural communication includes “understanding the dual relationship between language and culture” (Samovar, Porter and McDaniel, 2009:234), which is often not fully taken into consideration, particularly when language competency has often been cited as an area perceived to be a fundamental barrier to both interaction and learning and a major source of anxiety for host and in-host country students when faced with working in multicultural groups (Ippolito, 2007:758; Spencer-Oatey and Dauber, 2017). Nonetheless, language barriers are often easier to identify and are a natural indicator of difference, whereas, deeper cultural differences such as conflicting value systems or educational backgrounds are not (Hyland et al., 2008). Therefore, can we say that language proficiency is really the barrier in multicultural group work or is it something more?

The following section will provide insight into the ‘something more’ which students and staff potentially face when they are engaged in intercultural communication. The data are taken from a study by Lawrie (2006) and demonstrates the relationship between culture and language by examining how the communication norms of one particular culture, Japan, might be misinterpreted during intercultural exchanges.

As previously mentioned forming groups and/or pairs to complete a task appears to cause many in-host country students difficulty when they initially start a programme of language study. This is compounded by the fact that in-host country students often feel disadvantaged because of their perceived lack of language proficiency. What then do students do when they experience difficulty in expressing their communication intentions because of gaps in their intercultural communicative competence? According to studies by Faerch and Kasper (1983); Bygate (1987) and Lynch (1996), speakers from Western, individualist cultures use devices known as communication strategies in order to help them bridge that gap and suggest that some common language features used are:

Adjustments: hesitations, false starts, self-corrections

Syntactic features: ellipsis and parataxis

Repetition: via expansion or reduction

Formulaic expressions.

Similarly, students from a collectivist culture, for example Japan, use their own culturally acceptable communication strategies. LoCastro (in Smith 1987:101) exemplifies this by describing what the speaker and listener do while engaged in Japanese conversations. LoCastro (in Smith 1987: 101) observes that:

[The speakers] stress certain syllables or words and move their heads forward with a definite, clear nod [while the] listener would do something similar with his/her head, making almost a 'tic' type of movement, and make sounds ('heh', 'hummm', and 'ne') and/or use fixed expressions, such as *so desu ne*, *soo...nee*, and *naruhodo*.

Consequently, the common use of verbal and non-verbal back-channelling devices (nodding and *so desu*) used by Japanese people often make them feel uncomfortable when speaking English because they "feel the weakness in their English language ability is their inability to use proper English *aizuchi*", which LoCastro's (in Smith 1987:102) research findings confirm are different to the use of Japanese back-channelling (*aizuchi*). LoCastro (in Smith, 1987: 102) goes on to suggest that the use of *aizuchi* is more culturally specific for Japanese than other non- native speakers as Japanese speakers use it in communication, whether Japanese or English, to fulfil their cultural expectations of politeness and their need to preserve their public "self image". Maynard (1990) and O'Sullivan (1992) add to this by explaining that silence has a place in Japanese oral interaction. Its use stems from a Japanese tradition that views words as being unnecessary

to reach mutual understanding. In other words, if all is going well, then there should be no need for words; it is preferable for Japanese to sit in silence than to keep up what to their minds would be an artificial stream of conversation.

To Western students, silence, which is an example of non-verbal behaviour, makes them feel uncomfortable and has negative connotations (Lawrie, 2006). It is perceived as an indication that either the listener is not interested in what is being said or does not want to participate in the interaction. This is because English speaking cultures rely on words and gestures in a given communication exchange: a large vocabulary and the ability to use it are highly valued with silence usually being an indication of inability or unwillingness to express oneself (Hirao, 2001:7). However, in Japanese society, silence is generally considered to have a positive meaning as Japanese people are orientated to non-confrontational interpersonal relations, which are based on their high context culture of non-verbal, intuitive communication practices (Hall, 1977). Such cultural differences in communication strategies and practices are noticed by interlocutors and can have an adverse effect on pair and group interactions which occur between students from different cultural backgrounds. Recognition, awareness and understanding of the use and place of silence, for example, and how speech acts can differ from culture to culture are important for effective intercultural communication (Smith, 1987:1) because each individual brings his/her cultural and linguistic norms into an interaction.

Languages comprise both verbal and non-verbal cues, which can be interpreted differently by people from different cultures. The complexity of verbal and non-verbal linguistic behaviour, which members of a multicultural group may encounter, is highlighted in the following examples of the cultural norms each member may bring to this hypothetical multicultural group, who are using English as the *lingua franca*:

- Vietnamese students prefer to move into the main content of a problem rather than engage in polite conversation which can be interpreted by Western students as rudeness or shyness;
- Middle-Eastern students may continue to use the acceptable heavy intonation and relatively loud voices used in Arabic when they speak English which can be perceived as being overbearing or aggressive;
- Greek students use pauses minimally and overlaps regularly in their interactions and consider this as normal behaviour but in English this may be interpreted as rude behaviour;

- Chinese students carefully consider questions before asking them, therefore, few questions are spontaneous;
- Indian students may nod to acknowledge they are listening, not to show agreement or understanding, while Japanese students say ‘yes’ to indicate they hear and understand but not necessarily to show agreement (McLean and Ransom, 2005: 53-54).

The hypothetical multicultural group includes students who represent individualism/collectivism cultures (Hofstede 2011) and high/low context cultures (Hall, 1977). As the differences in their verbal and non-verbal cultural norms indicate, the potential for a break-down in communication during interaction is extremely high. However, it is English language proficiency which is often cited as the reason for a lack of willingness to participate in intercultural exchanges. But when we have to interact with people from other cultures and English is the *lingua franca*, it can often be the first time an in-host country student has heard English spoken by a native English speaker and it may also be the first time the host-country student has heard English spoken with an accent with which they are unfamiliar. In cases like this, it is common to rely on the expressivity associated with language: the verbal and non-verbal cues, which help us understand and be understood. The current study examines the impact that verbal and non-verbal behaviour has on multicultural group work within higher education.

2.4 Features of Language: verbal and non-verbal (expressivity)

Academics who use group work with their students will agree that simply placing students in multicultural groups does not immediately lead to productive collaboration. As English is the *lingua franca* for almost all multicultural groups, interaction and participation may be lacking because of limited comprehension between group members due to different English proficiencies and a wide variation in accents (Popova et al., 2012: 305). The situation can become more complicated when linguistic barriers are compounded by differences in understanding and interpreting non-verbal behaviour (Anderson and Wang, 2006:264). This is because features of language of which verbal and non-verbal behaviour are included, differ between cultures and can cause barriers for successful intercultural communication to occur. For example, if a person is fluent in speaking English but makes pronunciation and intonation mistakes, this can put severe strain on the listener to understand the intended message.

In addition to verbal language, non-verbal features of language can differ from culture to culture and can serve a variety of functions in intercultural communication. They not only reflect strong personal identity, but also can carry and infer powerful feelings, emotions and attitudes usually by facial expression, gesture and tone of voice (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Individual cultures determine the rules of when, how, what and with whom certain non-verbal behaviour should be revealed or suppressed and dictate which non-verbal behaviours are appropriate and in which specific situations (Ekman and Friesen, 1975; Ekman and Oster, 1979), for example, in some cultures it is considered rude to point to someone with your finger or pen when you are speaking.

Non-verbal messages can range from easily read threatening gestures to attitudes expressed by body posture or those hidden beneath the surface of spoken words (Sheridan, 1978). The non-verbal messages can also reveal inner feelings, for example, a smile, a wink, a scowl, prolonged eye contact, fingers drumming on a table (Anderson and Wang, 2006), some of which are used unconsciously by the speaker. The hidden differences and masked meanings of specific non-verbal messages “interweave in any intercultural encounter” (Anderson and Wang, 2006:265) and although some similarities exist across cultures, so, too, do differences, which can “create miscommunication and intercultural friction and confusion” (Anderson and Wang, 2006: 264). Non-verbal communication occurs whenever a person may or may not intentionally influence another by using facial expression, tone of voice, gesture.

The figure below shows the importance of non-verbal factors such as, tone, facial expression and body language when the speaker tries to convey meaning or the listener tries to interpret the meaning.

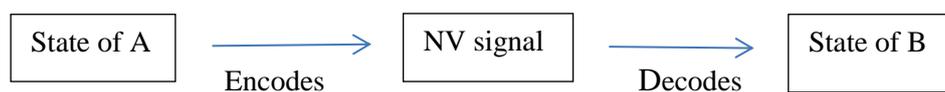


Figure 1: Basic non-verbal paradigm (Argyle, 1988:2)

In an ideal context, ‘A’ encodes the message and ‘B’ decodes it because they share the same understanding of non-verbal behaviour. Alternatively, ‘A’ may communicate a message using non-verbal behaviour which is perceived by ‘B’ as containing information

s/he understands but the unintentional inclusion of non-verbal message leads to misunderstanding. This is because non-verbal behaviour is not just a gesture or a facial expression being used individually; both non-verbal and verbal behaviour are used together as part of a “rapid stream of signals”, which usually result in communication being sent and received in both directions simultaneously (Argyle, 1988:3), as in most mono-cultural contexts. However, in multicultural group work these signals can be misinterpreted and can lead to a break-down in communication. Sometimes group members with different cultural backgrounds may not benefit from the sharing of “culturally divergent knowledge” because of the lack of shared understanding of discourse rules and norms and the underestimation of the role of clarity (Popova et al., 2012: 305). For example, Western cultures typically have a direct, low-context and explicit communication style (Hall and Hall, 1990). Students from these cultures usually act based on certain explicit rules whereas students from Pacific Rim cultures where an indirect and high-context mode of communication are used prefer less verbally explicit messages and act based on an overall situation (Hall and Hall, 1990). Therefore, linguistic conventions, such as speech acts, interaction management, vocabulary and politeness forms may cause significant misunderstandings in intercultural interactions. Most cultures have a number of forms of polite usage; special features of language and certain words or types of conversation which are considered appropriate for situations, for instance, asking someone for something (Argyle, 1988:34). However, problems can arise in the level of directness/indirectness used in those interactions because a question-answer sequence is not used in all cultures. In direct, straight talking, low-context cultures, for example the UK, the onus is on the speaker to ensure the listener understands clearly, whereas in indirect, high-context cultures, for example China, the onus is on the listener to interpret and infer the implicit intent of the message (Hall, 1977).

When we interact and communicate with others we attach meaning to and interpret the messages we construct and transmit. We also attach meaning to or interpret messages we receive from others. Even though we are not consciously aware of this process, we do it nonetheless. On one hand, effective communication requires that when we interact with others we attach and interpret relatively similar meanings to the message sent and received. On the other hand, ineffective communication can occur for a variety of reasons, particularly when communication takes place with strangers because the message may not be expressed in a way that can be understood by others and it may be

misunderstood (Gudykunst and Kim, 1997). Therefore, communication is a process which involves the exchange of messages and the creation of meaning. This is because whether or not specific instances of communication are effective depends on the degree to which the participants attach similar meaning to the message exchanged and to their interpretation of the verbal and non-verbal message.

Within each culture, communication can be based on any one or on some combination of habit, intentions, affect, feelings or emotions (Triandis, 1995). Habit can be exemplified by how we greet one another as greetings in all cultures have set phrases and rules which result in responses being predictable and expected. Intentions might be when we try not to be judgemental and avoid, for example, stereotyping and judging people when we interact with them and an example of affect, feelings or emotions could be the manner in which we react if we feel we are being criticised. Triandis's (1995) study on developing understanding and knowledge on what it takes to interact and communicate successfully with people from another culture has continued to interest researchers and practitioners (Kealey, 2015:14) and includes studies into different patterns of politeness (Scollon and Scollon, 2011); requests, apologies and conflict style (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009). Some studies, which have focused on differences within non-verbal communication, tend to use photographs to identify and explain cultural differences. A recent publication (Gregersen and MacIntyre, 2017: 99-102) on the role non-verbal behaviour plays in target language learning, incorporates photographs which are used to demonstrate, for example, "the face and interpretability." However, the photographs are of Western faces showing Western-style emotions which are interpreted using Western beliefs, which do not seem representative of the diversity of cultures within higher education.

Studies which examine the role played by verbal and non-verbal behaviour in interactions continue to be the focus of academic and professional fields of Nursing, Social Work, Medicine, for example. They are considered paramount in disciplines and professions which involve communication between individuals particularly in doctor and patient consultations. In the medical profession, studies into the role and use of verbal and non-verbal behaviour are many and include examining how they are used in communication skills training for tele-consultations (Liu, Scott, Lim, Taylor and Calvo, 2016) and how team leaders communicate in terms of gaze direction, vocal nuances, and gestures during

trauma team training (Härgestam, Hultin, Brulin and Jacobsson, 2016). Within language education verbal and non-verbal communication as a field of study appears to have been neglected. However, with the number of children from immigrant, refugee and asylum-seeking families attending schools in the UK and university students choosing to study or be placed in countries around the world, there has never been a more obvious need for studies which can inform educators and students, alike, on the role verbal and non-verbal behaviour plays in intercultural communication. The literature has demonstrated that ‘communication’ in its broadest sense is problematic and challenging for host and in-host country students. The issues related to intercultural communication, which have been identified, are some of the ones which students’ face as they engage in multicultural group work.

2.7 Group Dynamics

Communication, interaction and engagement are considered essential tools through which group members can organize their work and cooperate with one another (Marks, Zaccaro, and Mathieu, 2000). Successful communication should enable the group members to reach full understanding, which is achieved by whole group interaction and engagement. This enables the group to collect, collate and feedback to the other groups any information related to the group work task (Stevens and Campion, 1994). However, determining the group dynamics can play an important role in the overall success of a group. If the group dynamics are ignored, they can pose challenges to the cohesion of the group in terms of communication, problem solving and decision making, conflict management and leadership (Halverson and Tirmizi, 2008).

The composition of the members of multicultural groups can help students achieve positive outcomes. For example, a balance of different cultures can promote better knowledge and understanding of a specific topic because the group members can approach a set task from different perspectives. Working and studying with individuals who have diverse backgrounds (McSweeney et al., 2008; Van den Bossche, Gijsselaers, Segers, and Kirschner, 2006) can broaden their experience. However, while differences in students’ experiences, knowledge and abilities can be exploited, they can also cause problems, which are related to differences in their study strategies and learning behaviours (Turner, 2009). Compared to undergraduate students, postgraduate students

may be more prone to the negative aspects of multicultural group work because, generally, like the participants of this study, they have graduated from a university in their home country and bring their undergraduate past learning and group work experiences with them into their graduate studies.

Within the group process, task accomplishment and task satisfaction have been identified as important factors (Thomas and Ravlin, 1995). Generally when practitioners assign tasks to multicultural groups, they assume all members of the group will be able and ready to actively work together and participate in the formulation of the final product. However, one assumes that practitioners tend not to take into consideration students' past educational background when forming multicultural groups and setting tasks. Consequently, and inadvertently, the practitioner might have created a barrier for the students to engage within the multicultural group due to their being educated in a country with particular traditions and characteristics and who view group work as a collaborative form of learning, which may be different from other group members who were educated in a different education system (Summers and Volet, 2008; McSweeney et al., 2008).

2.7.1 Conflict

A lack of awareness of individual cultural differences can result in group members misunderstanding, not communicating and experiencing feelings of anxiety and emotional stress. These tensions can add to the various identities each student brings to the group, for example, race, gender, class (Wiseman and Koester, 1993; Martin and Nakayama, 2015). Nonetheless, within these tensions and differences there is an opportunity and potential for real multicultural learning encounters. Educators within HE repeatedly praise the virtues of internationalisation as a place for enhanced learning as well as a place which offers skill development opportunities (Otten, 2003; Teekens, 2007). However, if the tensions are ignored, they could lead to conflict which may seriously disrupt the cohesiveness not only of the group but of the whole cohort, with comments from students about having to “walk on eggshells”; “feel like an outsider” and “exclude themselves from the group” continuing to be heard (Osmond and Roed, 2010: 119). This suggests a majority of students are not graduating with the proactive skills necessary to interact across cultures, which are the types of intercultural skills that

educators and employers expect in this era of internationalisation (Leggott and Stapleford, 2007; Spencer-Oatey and Dauber, 2019).

Challenges associated with interpersonal tension in the communication process are experienced in both mono-cultural and multicultural groups. This tension may result from a clash of different communication styles from which conflict can result. For example, when group members “with a preference for more ‘aggressive’ communication styles work with members with a preference for more ‘consensus building’ in expressing their points of view” (Behfar et al., 2006: 239). The two most common kinds of conflict are relationship-related and task-related (Behfar et al., 2006: 239). However, relationship-related conflict arises due to issues stemming from the attitude of the group members such as dislike, mistrust and lack of cohesion, while task-related conflict occurs because of a clash of opinions, for example when a group member feels pressured to comply with a group decision with which s/he does not agree (Hall and Hall, 1990). The latter conflict is more relevant to those group members who come from a collectivist culture where students tend to avoid open conflict since it might prevent group cohesion and negatively influence relationships within the group (Triandis, 1995). In multicultural group work this is compounded because what is viewed as conflict in one culture can be seen as a normal situation in another culture.

These cultural nuances afford particular challenges within multicultural group work especially if students have no experience of working with peers from a different culture to their own. Consequently, in the UK context students from a collectivist country such as China, may experience a different style of conflict management within their groups. For example, home or European students might handle any arising problems and conflict differently from the Chinese students. Therefore, success in resolving and handling problems and conflict, may depend on how culturally aware the group members are. So it is possible that in trying to address conflict, the situation worsens: all of which reinforces that the dynamics of working in multicultural groups are beset with potential problems. In mono-cultural groups, similar conflicts may occur but as cultural assumptions are shared, the mono-group is able to function. In multicultural groups, however, group members are unknowingly faced with differences in beliefs and expectations about the interplay within the group; about the norms of communication between members, as discussed earlier, and about the ways in which decisions are made

(Smith and Berg, 1997), all of which reflect the challenges faced by the participants of this study.

The subtleties of culturally based assumptions and diversity can lead to different styles of interaction in group work and can adversely affect the extent of the interaction. An example of this is reported by Wright and Lander (2003) whose study examined multicultural group interactions between Australian and South-East Asian born students. They found that host-country and in-host country students tended to speak less in multicultural groups than in mono-cultural ones. Students' preference to work and speak more to students from a similar culture to their own is supported by Harrison and Peacock (2010b:135), whose findings showed that students tend to seek out like-minded individuals since, "people just tend to flock together if they have things in common", which can lead to the in-group, out-group situation mentioned in 2.6.3.

Cultural diversity, it seems, can lead to an unwillingness to participate in intercultural interactions within multicultural group work despite in-host country students being more positive towards multicultural group work and value it more than host-country students (Wang, 2012, 524). One reason for their more favourable attitude towards multicultural group work could be that although the in-host country students are aware of deferring to host-country students, they also allow (encourage) the host country students to complete a disproportionate amount of the written reports and group tasks (Li and Campbell, 2008; Wright and Lander, 2003; Summers and Volet, 2008). This can result in the host-country students being overall responsible for the grade if the work were being group assessed and seems to confirm host-country students' concerns about multicultural group work (Moore and Hampton, 2015: 392). Thus, diversity within multicultural group work can be a two-edged sword: it can offer opportunities for more creativity and breadth of experience, but it can also result in dissatisfaction and conflict among group members. It is the latter issue which is supported by studies conducted in Australia, UK, Malaysia, USA which suggest that interaction between host-country and in-host country students remains limited and is a source of anxiety for students when they work in multicultural groups (Kelly, 2008; Turner, 2009; Popov et al., 2012). Even when a practitioner develops differentiation strategies to support and encourage interaction within the multicultural group, it does not guarantee the group members will automatically engage in interaction with group members from other cultures (Leask, 2009). There does not

appear to have been many studies undertaken to discover whether there could be another reason for the limited intercultural interaction and source of anxiety among students who work in multicultural groups. Findings from this study might offer insight into what *that* other reason could be.

2.7.2 The Group Leader

Normally, one of the decisions a group makes is to decide who the group leader will be. The leader of the group plays an important role and it is this person who generally directs and manages the other members of the group. However, the perception of leadership behaviours and attributes can vary across cultures with group members from collectivistic cultures being more in favour of choosing a person who demonstrates charismatic leadership behaviour but is also considered as having the foremost authority in the group (Wendt, Euwema, and van Emmerik, 2009). This means the role of group leader might be based on gender, age or position. Group members from individualistic cultures, on the other hand, prefer task-oriented leaders and leaders who have previous experience in the area, such as, Marketing or Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). According to Hofstede (2001:388), “ideas about leadership reflect the dominant culture of a country”; however, in the context of this study the dominant culture is British, which is predominantly individualists, but the dominant culture of the cohort is Chinese, predominantly collectivists. Therefore, it is difficult to determine whose cultural perceptions about leadership will prevail within the multicultural groups in the context of this study.

2.7.3 Group cohesion

Multicultural group work can be a minefield for host and in-host country students particularly when they have had minimal or no prior experience of intercultural contact. Students may feel awkward when interacting with peers from other cultures, particularly at the start of an academic year. On the one hand, UK in-host country students who have never mixed or who have limited experience of mixing and studying with students from other cultures may find accents cognitively and emotionally demanding to process (Yook and Albert, 1999; Stangor and Lange, 1994). On the other hand, host-country students report feelings of impatience and frustration when communicating with in-host country group members whose English language accents are difficult to understand (Volet and

Ang, 1998). They find it difficult to comprehend students whose language skills are perceived as being poor, which the host country students consider slows down the pace of the group work (Turner, 2009) and is often reported as a barrier to wider interaction and successful multicultural group work. The host-country students also view in-host country students as sometimes being rude or inappropriate, cliquy, shy and difficult to get to know (Ippolito, 2007; Harrison and Peacock, 2010b). A further concern which appears to cause anxiety among host-country students is that they perceive being grouped with in-host country students, as compromising their access to staff time and their assessment marks (Harrison and Peacock, 2010b). These reported differences negatively impinge on students' intercultural experience as it exemplifies the cultural distance among in-host country students, the highly visible *others*, whose language skills are often perceived as deficient and whose social patterns differ from the host-country students' norms (Harrison and Peacock, 2010b; Spencer-Oatey and Dauber, 2017). The findings on host and in-host country students' interaction reveal more about host-country students and their apparent inflexibility and lack of willingness to compromise and find common ground when they are interacting with other cultures.

The seminal study in the field is considered to be that of Volet and Ang (1998), which was conducted to investigate students' views of working in international groups. It was undertaken in Australia and examined the factors which students believed affected the formation of mixed nationality groups in the completion of academic group work. Ten years later, Montgomery (2009: 262) conducted a similar study in a British university, investigating domestic and international students' "expectations and experiences of working in mixed-nationality groups". In comparison to Volet and Ang's (1998) study, Montgomery (2009) found that her students interacted more socially and informally, had a more international perspective, and were less likely to engage in conflict around language differences. Yet, although Montgomery's (2009: 268) findings showed there was no change in students' stereotypical perspectives based on their perceived national cultural differences, she concluded there had been a shift towards a more nuanced cultural awareness and appreciation of the value of diversity in group assessment (Montgomery, 2009: 268).

In studies involving interaction between and among students, data collected at the beginning of a programme of study may produce different findings to data collected at

the end of a programme of study. This is because when students from different cultures and language backgrounds interact for the first time, there are bound to be ‘language’ issues until they tune-in to one another’s accents. Hence the students’ perceptions may change the longer they work and study together. It would appear imperative therefore, for cultural differences to be taken into consideration when designing and implementing collaborative forms of learning (Zhu, 2011). As group work remains one of the mainstays of today’s higher education system, an awareness of the challenges for both host-country and in-host country students is needed (Summers and Volet, 2008; Sweeney, Weaven, and Herington, 2008). However, knowledge of what challenges are inherent to learning in academia and how culturally diverse students perceive those challenges to be are still lacking (Popov et al., 2012: 302- 303). Although quantitative studies have helped reveal and highlight the complexities of multicultural group work as well as raise awareness of some of the issues, there has been no apparent in-depth research into the impact and interpretation each group member gives to the tensions they encounter during intercultural interactions over a programme of study.

2.8 Multicultural Group work

Multicultural group work is considered as collaborative learning activities between host and in-host country students that provide a number of benefits to students. Group work can benefit host and in-host country students’ academic and social adjustments (Wang 2012), which in turn can help their development of key graduate employability skills, for example: the ability to work effectively in international contexts; to work collaboratively with teams of people from a range of backgrounds and countries and the ability to negotiate with and influence clients across the globe from different cultures (Spencer-Oatey and Dauber, 2017: 219). However as the literature has indicated, multicultural group work is often fraught with tension, for example, in the UK, Harrison and Peacock (2010b) found that many host country students were negative about working with international students. Similarly, Moore and Hampton (2015) highlighted that host country students preferred to work with students from their own cultural background (Mittelmeier et al., 2018: 150). Therefore, while group work is an integral part of UK university education (Osmond and Roed, 2010) and is perceived as a natural way in which to promote cultural awareness and collaboration between host and in-host country students, it would appear that these opportunities for learning are still not being

capitalised due to limited interaction between host and in-host country students (Volet and Ang, 1998; Lavy, 2016).

Despite the number of studies identifying why there is a lack of interaction within multicultural groups, practitioners in HE who teach multicultural cohorts often assume that the group members interact with one another, participate in discussions and become part of any decision making procedures. However, members of multicultural groups can find it difficult particularly as the dynamics of group work may be different from what they are used to in their home country (Spencer-Oatey and Dauber, 2017). Students believe that *their* understanding of roles and procedures of group work and *their* expressivity are the norm for everyone else in the group, regardless of their cultural background. So, unlike a mono-cultural group where cultural assumptions are shared by each member and enable it to function, members of a multicultural group are confronted by differences in beliefs and expectations about the interplay within the group; about the norms of communication between members, and about the way in which decisions are made (Smith and Berg, 1997). These differences can be trying for students and can present cultural challenges that are both socially and emotionally demanding (Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern, 2002).

Multicultural group work issues can arise from the “complexity of the method itself” (Carroll, 2005:84) as in-host country students, particularly international ones, seemingly, may not have the appropriate language skills; be unsure of what to do, and not know what is expected of them in a Western, UK, context. English language proficiency might be viewed an issue because although in-host country students must have passed the pre-requisite English language proficiency exams, the pace of speech by home practitioners and students could adversely affect interactions and a lack of vocabulary could interfere with in-host country students not being able to understand examples which practitioners may provide to clarify issues (Mills, 1997; Osmond and Roed, 2010). This becomes an issue when host-country practitioners and students do not have experience of working with in-host students (or staff) and do not make allowances for their choice of vocabulary and use of colloquial expressions, when interacting, initially at least. Identifying the cultural differences each student brings into multicultural group work has been the focus of discussion earlier in this chapter as researchers (for example, Turner, 2009) attempt to

identify the types of cultural difficulties that exist within multicultural groups and how these difficulties may affect group participation. Hofstede's (1991) paradigms are often used in studies undertaken to identify and understand cultural differences within multicultural group work.

2.8.1 Multicultural group work: Attitude and Behaviour

Hofstede (1991) conducted surveys of the attitudes and work-related values of IBM employees around the world during the 1960s and 1970s. He accrued and analysed a databank of approximately 116,000 responses from employees in more than 70 countries. His aim was to characterise and identify whole country level differences from which six dimensions of national cultures emerged: power distance; individualism-collectivism; masculinity-femininity; uncertainty avoidance; long/short-term orientation and indulgence/restraint (Hofstede, 2011).

Research replicating and supporting the robustness and validity of Hofstede's dimensions of culture is large in scope, is relevant and has implications for group processes (Watson, Cooper, Neri Torres, Boyd, 2008). However, despite strong evidence about the impact of culture on the functioning of an individual or a community, a comprehensive conceptual model which establishes fundamental rules for applying existing Western cultural values frameworks and their dimensions to multicultural group work has yet to emerge (Geertz, 1975; Triandis, 1995; Arasaratnam and Doerfel, 2005). In most cultural values frameworks associated with Hofstede (2011), the individualist-collectivist dimension has proved to be one of the most robust concepts. The individualism-collectivism dimension has often been adopted by studies, which have focussed on attitudes and behaviours to multicultural group work. Various studies, some of which are mentioned below, include attitude towards diversity among multicultural group members and identify differences between representatives of individualist cultures, for instance, American, British and representatives of collectivist cultures, for example, Japanese, Chinese. For example, individualists are geared specifically to personal goals while collectivists tend to contribute more to group success because their behavioural motives are driven by the common group identity (Triandis, 1995); and individualists tend to prefer not to work in groups as group work is commonly attributed to working together for common goals rather than individual ones, thus it can be difficult to determine individual contributions by judging the final result of group work (Cox et al., 1991).

The individualist-collectivist dimension is relevant and apparent nowadays in higher education in the UK particularly with the increase in Chinese student numbers. On the programmes of study at the centre of this study, Chinese students represent the largest cultural cohort on each programme. Multicultural group work on these programmes of study may comprise members from mainly individualist and mainly collectivist cultures with each member's cultural orientation influencing his/her attitude towards group work. However, a lack of awareness of the individual cultural norms each student brings to group work can result in misunderstandings and anxiety (Lawrie, 2006). This lack of awareness can add to existing tensions, which can arise from the student's various identities such as, race, gender, class (Gudykunst, 1986; Martin and Nakayama, 2015). In many postgraduate programmes of study, the opportunity to exploit the multicultural group work experience can be limited at best and ignored at worst with emotional tensions playing an influential role. These tensions can increase the risk of interpersonal and intrapersonal conflict that may seriously disrupt not only the cohesiveness of the multicultural group but of the whole cohort.

2.8.2 Multicultural group work: Emotions and Attitudes

Common emotions, which each student can bring to a group, are anxiety and stress and are caused by pre-existing, unconscious beliefs and prejudice which can interfere with the success of multicultural group work. These are the findings of Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern's (2002) study which they claim was the first to examine the role that intercultural communication emotions related to factors such as stereotypic beliefs, play in predicting prejudice toward students considered to be culturally different. The aim of their study was first to test a particular model of global attitude, namely, that the source of prejudice towards ethno-linguistic out-groups can be analysed according to the Integrated Threat Theory (ITT) of Prejudice (Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern, 2002: 623) and secondly to learn about the attitude of American students towards the international community. They categorised threat into four broad areas: realistic threats, such as, access to resources; symbolic threats, for example, to established cultural norms; intergroup anxiety, such as arising from actual encounters and negative stereotyping. Although Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern (2002) adopted a different conceptual framework from Hofstede's individualist-collectivist paradigm, their findings provide similar insight that differences exist but they do not attribute those differences to individualism or collectivism. Thus their findings add to the body of knowledge

associated with cultural differences among group members, albeit, from a Western perspective. Nonetheless, although their study was conducted over ten years ago, their concluding comment remains pertinent today,

[t]his antecedent of intergroup attitudes is especially relevant in international contexts and multicultural societies, and is likely to become increasingly important as international migration and globalisation bring more ethnolinguistic groups into contact (Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern, 2002: 629).

Many students within higher education may not have had extensive experience of studying or socialising with students from other cultures, therefore, it is understandable that host and in-host country students may hold stereotypical beliefs about students from a different culture to their own. Interestingly, a later study (Ward et al, 2005) found that although host-country students may hold positive stereotypical views about in-host country students, actual interactions and intercultural friendships between host and in-host country students were relatively rare. This lack of intercultural communication between and among students may be due to the intercultural interactions themselves being perceived as heightening a range of anxieties and threats among in-host country students (Pritchard and Skinner, 2002). Consequently, students intentionally limit such exchanges, which they describe as being “between strangers in forced settings” and are “separate from [their] everyday lives” (Halualani, 2008:2). This is a situation which does not appear to improve over the duration of a programme of study even in universities with a specific intercultural ethos because other studies found that host-country students appear to be less interested in intercultural contact than in-host country students (Groepel-Klein, Germelmann, and Glaum, 2010; Nesdale and Todd, 1993). Some reasons for this lack of interest are provided by English host-country students who explain that when they are trying to understand in-host country students not only do they perceive them as having language difficulties, but they are also afraid of inadvertently making a racist *faux pas*. Thus the high levels of concentration associated with multicultural group interactions eventually lead to avoidance among host-country students (Harrison and Peacock, 2007; Osmond and Roed, 2010). Multicultural group work can create anxiety and stress among its members, which eventually lead to a reduction in intercultural interactions between host and in-host country students. This is a concern because Internationalisation is established within higher education institutions and the number of in-host country students appears to be increasing.

2.8.3 Multicultural group work: In-group and Out-group preference

It is evident from the literature that emotional tension surfaces from intercultural interactions and it can impact on engagement and interaction within multicultural group work (Gudykunst and Mody, 2002). If students experience repeated communication failures and emotionally laden cultural misunderstandings, negative evaluative tendencies towards students from other cultures might emerge and result in a preference among students to work in mono-cultural groups. This can manifest itself as in-group favouritism in which similarities and differences are compared and stressed between the in-group, for example, host country students, and the out-group, for example, in-host country students (Brewer, 2003; Turner, 2009). The differences between the in-group students and the out-group ones appear to support the findings of Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern (2002:624) that, “intercultural communication difficulties underlie prejudice toward foreign students” and that individuals generally prefer interaction with members of their in-group over members of any out-groups that they might encounter.

The distinction between in-group and out-group is that students from more familiar cultures pose less threat and cause less anxiety than students from those that seem more remote or strange. The issues raised by in-host country and host-country students to justify their preference for mixing with peers from similar cultural backgrounds include “perceptions of feeling more comfortable, thinking along the same wavelength and sharing a similar communication style” (Volet and Ang, 1998:10). Therefore, it could be assumed that UK and European group members would feel more relaxed working together as would group members from different regions of Asia. For example, Singaporean students, for whom English is their first language generally, “prefer mixing with Indonesian students rather than to mixing with Australian students” (Harrison and Peacock, 2007:19). Thus, having a common cultural background rather than a shared first language would appear to facilitate better inter-personal communication and make group management easier.

Overall, the literature suggests a strong contrast in reaction between host and in-host country students to the diversity of nationalities and cultures within their programmes of study: some students find the experience unfamiliar and the cause of much anxiety, while others fit in easily and appear to find it enjoyable (Dunne, 2009; Montgomery, 2009). However, many of the issues identified by Volet and Ang (1998) as interfering with

interaction between host and in-host country students prevail. As the literature has shown, the focus of the studies is on the students: the practitioner's voice is silent. Although recent studies (Mittelmeier et al., 2018) include the practitioner's voice, it is generally related to his/her perceptions of students' interactions or to offer advice on pedagogy to other practitioners. Studies which examine a practitioner's preparation and teaching of multicultural groups of students remains limited.

The literature highlights three areas of concern. The first is the focus on the students with no apparent reference to the practitioner. The second is the lack of a practitioner's voice in studies related to interaction between students in multicultural interactions. The third area of concern is the colonial nature of the theories related to intercultural communication and the interpretation of the data, thereof. The literature indicates that little appears to have changed since Volet and Ang's (1998) study identified the reluctance of host and in-host country students to work collaboratively in multicultural group work. The literature is grounded in familiar Western beliefs and understanding of conceptual and theoretical frameworks.

Academics and practitioners from various disciplinary backgrounds, such as, sociolinguistics, language education, communication, business (Martin and Nakayama, 2015; Spencer-Oatey and Dauber, 2019) have investigated and promoted the notion of competence in intercultural interaction. Over the years, they have proposed and applied general and specific cultural models in order to address complex issues in various contexts including workplace interaction. There does, however, appear to be a gradual recognition that the assumptions about the cultural identities in contemporary research and training in intercultural competence:

seem to reinscribe the colonialist traveler/cosmopolitan – focusing on individual characteristics, motivation, and skill sets, often through a Eurocentric lens (Martin and Nakayama, 2015:13).

The Western-based interpretation of intercultural interactions may be a contributing factor to there being little evidence of progress on how to increase interaction among host and in-host country students as they work together in multicultural groups. Thus, it was decided to adopt a new approach, one which does not rely on Western beliefs and norms, with one which affords a different perspective of the data by adopting concepts from

ancient Chinese thinking, *shi*, as a tool with which to analyse the data. This, in turn, affords a new perspective on students' interaction within multicultural group work, whilst highlighting the importance of the voice of the practitioner, which has been missing from previous studies.

Part Two: The Unfamiliar

Divergence...enables consideration of the diversity of cultures or thought as so many available resources, of which any intelligence can make good use in order to enlarge and reacquaint itself, and from which benefit may be gained, which means that they would not be lost, which is the risk run by contemporary uniformity as a result of globalisation (Jullien, 2014: 28).

The aim of Part Two is to introduce and explain an Eastern way of thinking, *shi* (勢). *Shi* (pronounced shrr) comes from Chinese philosophy and has been a focus of theoretical concern by Francois Jullien (1995, 2000, 2004, 2014), a French philosopher, Hellenist and Sinologist, who introduces the concepts of *shi* as a tool for looking at the world. In this study *shi* introduces a different perspective and way of thinking about teaching and learning within the field of education. Although *shi* is not applied until Chapter five, it is appropriate to introduce and explain it at this point to ensure how the subtleties in meaning of familiar terminology change when they are used in relation to *shi*. This will lead to the presentation of the research questions. Following the introduction of *shi* in Chapter three, Chapter four will describe and explain how *shi* is positioned within the methodology adopted for this study. Chapter four will also discuss and justify how the research questions will be addressed.

Chapter 3: Shi (勢): a Chinese Style of Thinking

3.1 Introduction

An understanding of Chinese thinking and *shi* is central to this study. Thus this chapter begins by describing, discussing and explaining where *shi* is situated within Chinese philosophy and how it has been adopted by Jullien (1995) as a resource for thinking. In an attempt to highlight the affordances offered by *shi* across different domains, discussions on how it is applied are presented from such diverse fields as war to Chinese boxing. The discussion provides understanding and insight into a broadly drawn distinction between Eastern and Western thinking. The discussion continues by illustrating how aspects of *shi* (Jullien, 1995, 2004; 2014) are applied within academia in disciplines such as Business and Strategic Management.

Shi as an analytical tool is especially associated with the work of Jullien, who is one of the few scholars to present the concept in this way. Whilst reliance on a single scholar's understanding of a concept in an academic study might be regarded as a potential limitation, particularly as Jullien's work involves a double translation (from Chinese into French and then from French into English), it is, however, noteworthy that Jullien's interpretation of *shi* has been taken up by a number of academics in other disciplines, some of whom are themselves Chinese speakers (for example, Lai, 2004; Law and Lin, 2010; 2016; Liu, 2018). Thus the utilisation of Jullien's work (1995, 2000, 2004, 2011, 2014, 2016) within this thesis can be justified in the light of this.

3.2 Shi and Efficacy

Shi is not a new Chinese concept. It appears as the title of a chapter in Sun Tzu's *Art of War* (Mondschein, 2016), which is "the world's oldest military treasure" (Lai, 2004: vi). The book is described as a military treasure not only because it discusses and explains different facets of warfare but also how warfare is not as unpredictable as it may appear. After the great warring period ended in China between the fifth and third century B.C., Chinese scholars spent a great deal of time and effort on studying warfare and eventually detected that as the warfare progressed and developed, specific aspects of it could be identified as not only being predictable but also as being manageable (Jullien, 1995), which differed from the Western belief that warfare was "unpredictable" and serendipitous (Jullien, 1995:25). The outcome of the ancient Chinese reflections on the

art of warfare was the beginning of the Chinese using strategic thought efficiently to direct and manage reality. Thus, a general theory of efficacy emerged (Jullien, 1995).

In Chinese thought, efficacy and *shi* are closely related as *shi* is often used to explain efficacy. There is, however, no Western equivalent to the concept of *shi*. It is a practical term whose primary use is for the purpose of explaining and describing strategy and politics, and whose meaning changes depending on the context in which it is used. It is a polysemous term. A tenuous comparison is made to the English language word ‘get’ which like *shi* is a simple, inconspicuous word whose meaning changes depending on the situation in which it is used, for example, ‘get a cold’ (catch); ‘get an award’ (be given or receive); ‘get back’(retreat, revenge), ‘get accustomed to something/someone’ (to become). However, the uniqueness of the term *shi* is that one of its characteristics “is its tendency in translation to fall between the static and the dynamic” (Jullien, 1999:16) and is what attracted it to the attention of Jullien (1995:12), who realised it could play an important role in the “articulation” of Chinese thought and in the “justification” of Chinese ideas. Thus Jullien (1995, 2000, 2004) uses the term *shi* in order to scaffold Westerners’ grasp of key notions in ancient Chinese thinking.

Jullien (1995; 1999; 2000; 2004), does not provide a definition of *shi*, nor is it defined in *The Art of War*. Jullien (1995:19) explains that, the “spirit” of his research, “is to rediscover, in concentrated form, the logical, if underlying, features of an entire culture” In order to achieve this, Jullien’s (1995: 20) approach is not to adopt a comparison of Western and Chinese thinking “in the form of [presenting] parallels” but by using “hypothetical conclusions” in order to reveal and indicate the differences. He believes this approach enables the Chinese position to be made more meaningful since he “assumes that reference to China will be new to the reader” (Jullien, 1995:20). Jullien’s indications of difference through drawing hypothetical conclusions informed the methodological design for this project, which adopts a hypothetical context in order to highlight the differences in thinking between a conventional, Western, practitioner and a *shi*-inflected, Chinese, one. The aim is to highlight and identify emerging differences in approach to practice, which is presented and discussed in Chapter 6.

Shi can be used to explain “the alignment of forces,” the “potential born of disposition” or the “propensity of things” (Lai, 2004: vi). The alignment of forces often results in reference to aspects of nature, for example, water, wind, landscapes, birds, animals by

Chinese scholars when *shi* is used to describe and explain situations. This is due to the influence of The Tao, The Way, which Lao Tzu explains, “is that reality, or that level of reality, that existed prior to and gave rise to all other things, the physical universe (Heaven and Earth), and all things in it” (Henricks, 1989: xviii). According to Lao Tzu all things in the world consist of two opposite sides, for example, large-small, long-short, beautiful-ugly, weak-strong, which although conflicting are interrelated, *yin* and *yang*. However, the Taoist ideas that have the greatest impact on strategic thinking are the “dialectic relationship between the contradictory *yin* and *yang*, and the significance of the five basic natural elements of water, fire, wood, metal and earth in warfare” (Dimovski, Maric, Uhan, Durica and Ferjan, 2012: 152). These apparent paradoxical forces are believed to be the foundation of the universe and it is the pattern of thought which Chinese people tend to adopt. This in turn, often results in it being “the characteristic behaviour of the Chinese people that seems to be indecisive and baffling” (Liu, 2018:114) and is the one noticed and commented on by Westerners. Of the natural elements, water, however, appears to be the most commonly used image as the Chinese consider it the closest to the *Tao/Dao*, The Way, because water is flexible, fluid, with no form or sharp edges. It constantly renews itself as it follows its course. To the Chinese, the image of flowing water represents efficacy (Jullien, 2004: 171).

The ‘potential born of disposition’ is one of the expressions Jullien (1995, 2004) adopts to mean that every situation and context has the ability to produce a positive outcome but that outcome will depend on the particular situation or context. What Jullien (1995; 2004) assumes is that the ‘potential’ arising from a context is only achieved as long as all aspects of the situation are considered and manipulated, if necessary, early enough to ensure efficacy. Similarly, the propensity of things is used to indicate that every situation and/or context, has the tendency for *shi* to be achieved but only if all the aspects of the ‘things’ are in accord with each other.

In ancient Chinese, the many meanings of the term *shi* are complex and are determined by the context in which the possibilities and propensities are explained. Propensities are not fixed and as such Chinese scholars use terms associated with water when they use *shi* to describe and explain how the impact of movement or lack of it impinges on an outcome:

things have propensities to shift and change their forms. If the changes and the flows that run through them are blocked, this leads to imbalance

(Law and Lin, 2016)

Although potential and propensity are terms which are closely associated with *shi*, according to Jullien (2004: vii) there is an important difference between the words. In order to understand the difference, he stresses that “potential” has the closest meaning to propensity when it means something “‘has’ potential” rather than “‘a potential for’” something (Jullien, 2004: vii). Jullien (2004) explains that when it is used in this sense potential means that an action or phenomenon has the necessary qualities to develop into something sound and robust. It is, therefore, essential that this ‘something’ is acknowledged so that those who are aware of it can let themselves be “‘carried along’” with it (Jullien, 2004:vii). Sun Tzi (in Mondschein, 2016: chapter 5) illustrates this by using an image of a mountain stream that is fast flowing and strong enough to carry boulders as it travels downstream. The slope of the mountain and the narrow width of the stream, the landscape, is the situation which “‘is itself the source of an effect (the rushing stream is said to ‘obtain the potential,’ to make things happen’”) (Jullien, 2004: 17).

Law and Lin (2016) offer a slightly different perspective. They describe propensities as being “‘situated and relational’” with the ‘situated and relational’ being determined by the nature of the context. In military terms, an example of a context is terrain: is it low-lying or elevated?; accessible or difficult to reach?; open or closed in? In a calligraphy context, examples are the position of the brush; the gesture of the hand; the ink or paint; the interface between the brush and the paper. It is by considering all aspects of a context or situation and by adapting to any changes which might occur that denotes Eastern thinking. Therefore, order is contained within a reality which reflects the *Dao* (the Way) which is pervasive in Chinese thinking. This differs greatly from Western thinking where order is seen as coming from a model (Jullien, 2004:15). Consequently, unlike a Western scholar, a Chinese scholar would not use a model to function as the “‘norm’” for his actions but would focus his attention on the development of things, the propensities of the context, in which he may find himself involved in order to identify their “‘coherence and profit from the way that they evolve’” (Jullien 2004:16). So, as propensities are not static, the skill is knowing when and how to intervene appropriately in order to work with both the subtle and not so subtle ebb and flow of the situation rather than to work against it: knowing when to adopt the line of least resistance and when to go with the flow of things. Therefore, by adopting aspects and meanings of *shi* as mentioned by Sun Tzu in *the Art*

of War (Mondschein, 2016 and discussed by Jullien (1995), not only is a non-Western interpretation of phenomena provided but so too is insight into the intricate and coherent structure underlying Chinese modes of thinking (Jullien 1995). This offers an alternative to Western-formed theoretical assumptions by rethinking and moving beyond them and thus discovering different sources of efficacy (Jullien, 2004).

Conventionally, in Western thinking efficacy is achieved on the basis of abstract, ideal forms, which are presented as models and are attained in goals or outcomes. The:

function of the model set up as a goal remains intact: the model is determined on a ‘theoretical’ basis that, once established, must be submitted to ‘practice’ (Jullien, 2004:3)

Accordingly, efficacy is understood and seen in the West as the relationship between theory and practice. It is also where the ideas and actions of success tend to be only those achievements which are widely recognised, acclaimed and thus celebrated (Jullien, 2004). It has become what Aligica (2007:328) calls part of Western “strategic action” which he explains is “a coupling of theory and practice” and an action that “comes from the outside to impress itself on the world,” which is then demonstrated in facts. He argues that the link between theory and practice has become so ingrained in Western thought that “we [Westerners] no longer even dream of questioning” it (Aligica, 2007:328). Hence, by accepting this as the normal, and only way of thinking it contributes to the difficulty of understanding that there could be a different understanding of efficacy.

In China, efficacy is about learning how to allow an effect to come about by not looking for it but simply by welcoming it and allowing it to happen, “[d]o nothing and let nothing be left undone” (Jullien, 2004: 85). In other words, knowing and choosing when not to take action while enabling what would occur naturally to happen can also bring about a preferred outcome. For Westerners, this mode of thinking can offer an alternative perspective on events but it requires:

a shift in the sense of shifting the impediment that is preventing us [Westerners] from perceiving what we have always blocked out of our thinking and for that very reason, have been unable to think about (Jullien,2004:viii).

Therefore, in order for Westerners to [re]think outside of the box and adopt a Chinese perspective on efficacy it would mean that as the events of a situation develop, they would

need to identify, predict and manage the internal factors of a situation and not refer to a model or plan because according to Chinese scholars:

[a]ny formalisation, which implies repetition, is extremely dangerous. And faced with the impossibility of relying on a model, theory is inevitably found wanting” (Jullien, 2004:12).

This provides insight into how Chinese strategic thought can be considered as an example of reality and how it can be managed since Chinese scholars never constructed:

a world of ideal forms, archetypes, or pure essences that are separate from reality but [which] inform it (Aligica, 2007: 330).

Chinese scholars believe that it is better to rely on the natural potential of a situation to develop. In other words, strategic action is not so much a matter of forcing a model on reality but relying on the way a context or situation matures in order to achieve the desired result. Thus from a Chinese perspective, the whole of reality, “is a regulated and continuous process that stems purely from the interaction of the factors in play” (Aligica, 2007; 330): the situated and relational (Law and Lin, 2016). It is the relationship between *yin* and *yang*, therefore, rather than “order” being something that comes from a model which can be seen and be applied to things; “order” in Chinese thinking is “entirely contained within the course of reality which it directs in an immanent fashion, ensuring its viability in everything” (Aligica, 2007: 330). The difficulty for Western scholars is that this requires them to learn how to “make the most of what is” by always acting openly and, “without risk, neither planning nor forcing anything in advance, but always adapting” to the circumstances (Aligica, 2007: 330). In other words, it requires Westerners to rethink a cultural norm.

In order to highlight the differences between Western and Eastern thought, the logical choice for Jullien (1995; 2004) is *shi* as he believes it has the ability to:

illuminate something that is usually difficult to capture in discourse: namely the kind of potential that originates not in human initiative but instead results from the very disposition of things. Instead of always imposing our own [Western] longing for meaning on reality, let us open ourselves to this immanent [Eastern] force and learn to seize it (Jullien, 1995:13).

In the West, Jullien (1995) explains that when something is described as possessing potential, it means that it is designed for some kind of development which is stable and

steady, for example, a business with a potential. However, Jullien (1995) argues that if Western scholars could realise and identify that situations have a certain potential it would enable them a whole new vision of engagement in the world and an opportunity to rethink and discover different sources of efficacy (Jullien, 1995). The issue is that this would require Westerners to move away from their tradition of conceiving efficacy on the basis of models and goals which have to be achieved, and to develop Eastern concepts of efficacy. This would involve learning how to allow an outcome to come about, and not to pursue it but simply welcome it and allow it to happen naturally.

The ancient Chinese realised that due to variability and the propensity stemming from a situation, events could be advantageously altered. Therefore, using *shi* as potential is about determining what the circumstances are with a view to using them to your own advantage. Thus:

the essence of adaptation lies in anticipating future situations and positioning oneself within upstream conditions to be advantaged by the transformation (Shrivastava and Persson, 2014:48).

Eastern thinking, therefore, differs from the Western logic of goal-oriented, model-making. For example, Eastern thinking allows an effect to develop naturally by virtue of the process that has been set off, rather than following the Western logic of making a model from a plan. It is through circumstances that potential is released (Jullien, 2004). Thus, the potential of the situation (*shi*) is circumstantial and only exists due to the circumstances and vice-versa. Nonetheless, in whatever context *shi* is used whether it is military or politics or calligraphy and painting or Chinese shadow boxing, it involves “organising circumstances in such a way as to derive profit from them” (Jullien, 1995:32). Each one will be discussed in turn in the following contexts.

3.3 *Shi* used in a Military domain

Sun Tzu (in Mondschein, 2016) and Jullien (1995) discuss four key aspects of *shi*: the normal way of doing things (circumstance); creating an overwhelming force with irresistible unleashing power (power); taking and maintaining the initiative (position) and developing a favourable situation with potential to achieve political objectives (potential). Regardless of which key aspect is the focus of *shi*, it involves adopting strategies and tactics in order to create a positive position in relation to the opponent: the greater the advantage, the greater the prospect of success (Dimovski, Maric, Uhan, Durica and

Ferjan, 2012). Hence in warfare, the potential of *shi* is about strategically exploiting an advantage by identifying and working with propensities (*shi*) rather than against them. The end result for Sun Tzu was to win a battle by using strategic tactics and, in so doing, to minimise fighting:

the skilful leader subdues the enemy's troops without any fighting; he captures their cities without laying siege to them; he overthrows their kingdom without lengthy operations in the field (Sun Tzu in Mondschein, 2016: chapter 3)

This is achieved by the commander, normally the General, successfully shaping the outcome of the situation by manipulating dispositions at an early stage, “upstream” (Jullien, 2004: 129; Shrivastava and Persson, 2014: 48), in order to affect events while they can still be easily influenced and modified. The General has to ensure that he does not impose his own ideas of how things ought to be but relies on his assessment of the logical developments of the situation because it is only from his accurate assessment of them that he can benefit. So if any of the General's calculations are faulty, it is because he has not fully understood nor considered all the dispositions of the situation (Jullien, 2004: 25). Therefore, the skill of the General is in constantly evaluating and more importantly assessing the situation rather than planning what he intends to do if he is to fully achieve the potential that can be deduced from his assessment (Jullien, 2004: 19-21). He has to take into consideration, for example, whether he is outnumbered; when to attack; when not to attack; whether to adopt direct or indirect fighting tactics; the mental and physical condition of his troops; the terrain (Sun Tzu in Mondschein, 2016: Chapters 2-5).

The skill in warfare depends on the potential born of disposition (*shi*) (Jullien, 1995: 25-27) which Sun Tzu, (in Mondschein, 2016: Chapter five) illustrates through the imagery of logs and stones. On a level surface, logs and stones are immobile. So in order to move, they need to be on ground that slopes: the steeper the slope, the more the logs and stones move. In addition, if they are square they stop but if they are round, they move and roll (Jullien, 2004:18). The gradient of the slope obtains a potential “to make things happen” (Jullien, 2004:17). The skill of a General, therefore, is to avoid obstacles and to take advantage of any means before him. He needs to demonstrate adaptability and flexibility, just like water which follows the line of least resistance, as he constantly looks out for and identifies where it is easiest to move forward (Jullien, 2004:173).

War is described by Jullien (1995) as a process that develops only in relation to the force it puts into play. He goes on to explain that the role of a good General and Commander is to accurately anticipate and calculate all aspects of the situation to ensure that as the war unfolds, it is the General's side that benefits the most. Thus,

victory is then simply a necessary consequence – and the predictable outcome – of the imbalance that operates in his [the General's] favour and that he has been able to influence (Jullien, 1995: 16)

The objective of the General is to thoroughly scrutinise the forces which are present in order to gauge which factors are favourable. A successful outcome is therefore achieved by the General identifying, manipulating and working with propensities (*shi*) rather than against them. Accordingly, the aspects of *shi* which provide potential within the domain of warfare are position, circumstance and power, all of which require the use of strategies which are about “action, flexibility and change, both at the individual and collective levels” (Shrivastava and Persson, 2014:55).

3.3.1 Shi in Politics

In the domain of politics, efficacy is explained as the logic of manipulation. Jullien (1995:60) highlights the similarities between “strategic and political mechanisms” where the former “sets out to destroy, not the enemy, but his power of resistance”, the latter is willing to eliminate any “subject once he becomes an obstacle”. Thus, within the context of politics, power relations are more important than human virtues, (Jullien, 1995:30). Efficacy in politics, therefore, does not depend on personality because political position functions through hierarchical power relations.

Chinese scholars believe that the propensity of things should be allowed to operate without the intervention of a person and without that person imposing his values and desires on them. This results in a more natural situation emerging, one which tends to be more stable but a situation, nonetheless, where a person needs to be alert and be able to adapt constantly to the dispositions as they evolve (Jullien, 1995). Therefore, as the dispositions constantly change, the person needs to adapt to them. Any form of subjectivity which intervenes in the natural tendency within the system by introducing “human assumptions and calculations”, results in “mismanagement” (Jullien, 1995: 40). Thus, in a political context, order and stability are determined in an entirely objective way and benefit from existing relations of a hierarchy (Jullien, 1995).

In politics, the term *shi* is generally used to describe the formation of power relations in the same way it is used in warfare to signify strategic setup. However, in politics, potential is represented as a kind of hierarchical position, which results in dispositions generally providing predictable outcomes. The potential effectiveness from hierarchical positions is determined not by personal merit, which is subjective, but by the objective level of support which the person at the top of the hierarchy has been afforded. Jullien (1995: 40- 41) uses the imagery of the wind, a bow and an arrow to exemplify how political hierarchical positions adopt a powerful and influential sense of support in order to provide outcomes (Jullien, 1995: 40-41). The arrow released from the bow is supported and carried by the wind, which enables it to fly through the air. The wind provides the support (*shi*), which enables the arrow to soar high in the air. If there is no wind, the arrow cannot travel as far nor ascend as high. In political terms this imagery can be interpreted to show that the most educated politician cannot be sure of influencing others, however close they are to him, if he does not enjoy the support of a position (*shi*). Conversely, if a less educated man has the benefit of support, it provides him the position and power to force the most educated leader to follow him (Jullien, 1995). Therefore, where strategy in warfare is about the General, or Commander, having the ability to exploit the potential born of the situation rather than about who has the greater number of soldiers or how well the soldiers can fight, in politics, a leader depends not on his forces but on his position and the influential support bestowed upon him (Jullien, 1995: 41-42).

In Chinese thought, the opposition of force and position is significant in politics as it is believed to reinforce the issues of subjectivity and objectivity: force has negative connotations of a personal, subjective nature while position has positive connotations because it can objectively explain the external disposition of influential factors in any situation (Jullien, 1995). Chinese scholars acknowledge that if the position of authority is in the hands of a good leader, he will rule well, whereas if it is in the hands of a bad leader, “[authority] can also become an instrument of totalitarianism” (Shrivastava and Persson, 2014:46).

In a political context, it is unusual for *shi* to occur as a natural disposition; consequently, politicians or persons of authority are prevented from being able to manipulate what they would normally be able to control, for example in a warfare context. Hence in politics, *shi* is considered as an “institutional relation of authority” (Jullien, 1995: 43), a hierarchy, and as such can exist on its own to generate order. A politician or governor can use his

dominant and supported position to maintain the authority provided by that position. A person's hierarchical position operates as a power relation (Jullien, 1995:44) with the person at the top of the hierarchy having supreme power. In terms of *shi*, in order to address issues of threat from other people in positions of power, which might adversely affect the person at the top of the hierarchy, the threat has to be removed. So, in order to maintain a position of power, the ruler needs to be aware of, and know about, any threats. This is achieved by the leader or head of state relying on information, which is gathered through a network of informants and spies, and is used to maintain the position and support for the person at the top of the hierarchy (Jullien, 1995). Information is important as it ensures the ruler is considered as "enlightened" (Jullien, 1995:49) since he appears to know and hear everything so that he is able to detect early signs of revolt and eliminate it while it is still in its infancy. Thus the support intrinsic to the position of the ruler is achieved by delegating and using others to contribute towards the maintenance of his/her position. The political *shi* is defined as the mechanism which improves the use of power by making it quicker, more manageable and more efficient, because it:

has its principle not so much in a person as in...an arrangement whose internal workings produce the relation in which individuals are caught up (Jullien, 1995:56).

Efficacy in politics does not depend on personality but operates as a power relation so, although strategy is necessary in politics, the propensity of the situation and the ability to benefit from that situation uses *shi* in terms of support and power relations. Whether it is in warfare or in politics, *shi* is achieved in a similar manner: the manipulation of forces at play in order to benefit from them (Jullien, 1995:60).

3.3.2 *Shi* in Calligraphy, Painting, Writing and Chinese Boxing

Shi is an important factor in the art of Chinese calligraphy and writing. Chinese calligraphy involves the combination of individual Chinese characters being arranged and placed in a particular formation in order to convey a meaning: a word or a phrase. The positioning of the individual characters in calligraphy is significant because how they are organised and arranged gives rise to their potential (*shi*). The positioning of the Chinese characters and the potential (*shi*) emerging from their "disposition" is auspicious and understood as providing "the key to success" (Kang Youwei quoted by Jullien, 1995:76).

The Chinese art of calligraphy is considered to epitomise dynamism. The composition or the configuration of each Chinese character is the result of a particular brush stroke

which is converted into a calligraphy character, similarly, each calligraphic character is the result of a specific brush stroke. The Chinese character which is produced and the movement required to produce it are equal: the *shi* of the brush stroke defines the Chinese character just as the *shi* of the character defines the stroke of the brush. Thus *shi* in calligraphy can be defined as “the force that runs through the form of the written character and animates it aesthetically” (Jullien, 1995: 76). The potential of the Chinese character is established by how it looks: the effect of using different strokes; how tensions and contrasts are created by the manner in which the strokes are used: thick, thin; heavy, light. Nonetheless, the Chinese characters in calligraphy need to be balanced in order for them to have *shi*.

Shi enhances and gives depth to Chinese calligraphy by revealing that within the actual Chinese character it is not only the internal energy from which that character has resulted, it is also the effect of the tension that the energy produces. Therefore, a Chinese character is not just viewed as calligraphy but as a continuing process where the different elements in the Chinese character play off each other with no evidence of “bleeding” of the ink or colour at any point (Jullien, 1995:79). This is what produces *shi* in the Chinese character.

The same principle applies to Chinese painting and writing. In the composition of a painting the “dynamic configuration” (*shi*) is important (Jullien, 1995:80). For example, when an artist is painting a mountain s/he can exploit all the possibilities of height and distance to produce an effect (*shi*). The artist can also exploit the possibilities of change and contrast: high and low, dark and light. Like a Chinese calligraphic character, the mountain can be pictured in all its propensity with the tension being heightened by the contrast, for example, between the rise and fall of its slopes. However, in calligraphy, the primary art is that of the brush and the manner in which it is handled in relation to its “efficacious dispositions” (Jullien, 1995:109). In order to master the dispositions, artists practice Nine *Shi*, which is one of the earliest texts on the art of calligraphy and sets out nine techniques for using the brush tip (Jullien, 1995: 109). The ‘art’ is broken into small steps which when put together should present a continuous flow of movement. Similarly, in the practice of Tai Chi Chinese Boxing, mastering it requires students to practise the ‘form’ which can be for example, the 24-step form, or the 48-step form, but will depend on the branch of Tai Chi which is being followed. Each form/branch of Tai Chi comprises a different number of steps. Students practise the individual steps and when they put them together, the individual steps should flow into one another seamlessly. It can take many

years of practice before *shi* is successfully achieved at which point one might be considered a Master in the art of Chinese boxing or in the art calligraphy. the dispositions are different: positioning (*shi*), balance of feet; correct breathing and movement of the hands and feet in Chinese boxing; types of brush, brush strokes and positioning (*shi*) of characters in calligraphy, the effective combination and working together of the respective dispositions ideally produce an effortless and smooth flow of movement (*shi*).

Western translators often describe *shi* as postures (positions) or movements. However, both postures and movements are involved simultaneously in calligraphy and Chinese Boxing (Jullien, 1995:113). On its own, posture seems inadequate because it implies immobility, however temporarily. For example, as one gesture follows another it should not be possible to distinguish between an individual position and the movement that both comes from it and leads into it. The series of *shi* could therefore be considered as having different sections that “cut through a continuous movement” (Jullien, 1995: 113). This is exemplified in Chinese Boxing where each section reveals in itself a fixed step but the overall configuration of the form is seen as matching the dynamic force invested in it: one flow of movement. These dispositions are not only dynamic but also strategic. The sets of steps (*shi*) represent not just random parts of movement but those that most fully exploit the powers of the dynamism and are the most potentially effective. Thus, to achieve the ultimate in the art of calligraphy and in the art of Chinese boxing is to capture the potential of each arrangement and position of characters and steps, respectively. The propensity indicates the particular circumstances which characterises the various stages in the process. It is this propensity that brings the potential for existence to fulfilment because the tendency toward the fullness of actualisation is already present. Consequently, this tendency needs to be scrutinised carefully from the first hint of its existence because it can provide information regarding the development of things and offer a reliable basis for success (Jullien, 1995:225). This in turn is inclined to produce a particular effect. Therefore, as reality portrays itself as a particular situation which results from a distinct disposition of circumstances, it is up to the general, the politician, the painter and the Chinese boxer to take advantage of the *shi* so as to exploit it to its maximum potential and to profit from it: achieve *shi* (Jullien, (1995:260).

3.4 Shi in academia

There has been an increasing interest in China, particularly since 2001 when it was accepted as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) (He, Xue and Zhu, 2017:1598). As the Chinese economic market has strengthened and grown, so, too, has Western interest in the study of Chinese strategy, particularly in academic disciplines such as Business and Management. The strategies of Sun Tzu (in Mondschein, 2016) have been incorporated into academic programmes and studies of Western military, business management and commerce, human resource management, marketing, commerce, finance as well as internet-based businesses (Liu, 2018: xiv). Recently, Law and Lin (2016) applied concepts of *shi* to the discipline of Science, Technology and Society (STS) to analyse the Foot and Mouth outbreak of 2001 in the UK and Liu (2018) adopts a Chinese perspective and offers insightful knowledge for undergraduates, postgraduates and executives planning to engage in business in China.

Studies have started to emerge whose authors refer to Sun Tzu's *Art of War* as they compare and attempt to demonstrate the different attitudes to Eastern and Western strategic thinking. They all include reference to Sun Tzu and his *Art of War*: Aligica (2007) does not mention *shi* but talks about strategy and efficacy; Law and Lin (2016) discuss and apply appropriate concepts of *shi* to STS and Liu (2018) refers to strategy, *shi* and efficacy in the field of Business. All of these researchers refer to Sun Tzu and adopt terminology associated with Jullien (1995; 2004). The only researcher not to refer to Jullien is Lai (2004) who uses the game *Go* in his discussion and explanation of the different aspects of *shi* according to Sun Tzu as it applies to game theory and strategic interaction. Aligica (2007) adopts the Chinese understanding of efficacy to discuss its relation to strategy and strategic interaction. Although strategic interaction is generally associated with game theory, it is how Goffman (1969) relates it to context and communication in face-to-face interaction, and how Aligica (2007) adopts aspects of *shi*, as they are used in the *Art of War* (Sun Tzu in Mondschein, 2016), and efficacy as it is discussed and explained by Jullien (1995, 2004, 2008), which increase its relevance to this study. Strategic interaction is what postgraduate students have to engage in as they manoeuvre their communicate skills in order to participate and interact in the game that is called multicultural group work. The students find themselves in a position in which they (eventually) have to strategically adopt and adapt their body language in order to participate in group discussions once they become attuned to the different situations they

encounter. Within intercultural communication, strategies are vital and are needed to avoid potential conflict between ideas and cultural 'norms' from breaking down communication. Working in multicultural groups can be stressful for all involved particularly when postgraduate students have never experienced such a situation during their undergraduate programmes of study, which is the case with the participants of this study. Therefore, to succeed, skilful use of strategies plays an important role in the efficacy of the interaction and participation within multicultural group work.

The meanings of *shi* are varied and understanding the different meanings will depend on the context in which it is being used. In this study, as it is the first time for the postgraduate students to study and work together in multicultural groups, they have to adapt to situations and contexts which are dynamic. This may involve students consciously and unconsciously adopting strategies in order to help them interact and participate so their success may depend on the strategies they adopt as they interact with others. It is within this context that the concepts of *shi*, which are considered relevant and appropriate to multicultural group work, will be adopted.

As was previously discussed and highlighted in the literature, studies related to intercultural communication and interactions within multicultural groups have mainly drawn on aspects of Western inter and cross-cultural theories (Gudykunst, 1986; Hofstede, 1991) to discuss findings which are concurrent with western beliefs. However, as the number of Chinese international students continues to grow, this study will analyse and discuss the empirical data by adopting Chinese concepts of *shi* as discussed by Jullien (1995; 2004). This embraces the ancient Chinese understanding of reality, understanding and use of efficacy, the dispositions associated with a context and the strategies of identifying and, if necessary, manipulating the dispositions to enable the *potential* of a situation to be successfully achieved. These dimensions of *shi* will be used as an analytical tool with which to investigate learning and intercultural communication within multicultural group work. It is anticipated that by introducing a different approach to teaching and learning, a rethinking about educational practice in situations of multicultural encounter will emerge.

3.5 The Research Questions

Chapter two discussed Western theories associated with intercultural communication and group work and whilst the studies focus on students, the voice of the practitioner was missing. This chapter introduced a traditional Chinese style of thinking, *shi*, which affords a different orientation and approach to practice than Western thought and is an approach which affords the practitioner a voice. Thus, the following research questions are asked:

The overarching aim of the study is to inquire into the effectiveness of current approaches to multicultural education as these relate to the practices of tutors and then, in the light of this, to consider the potential resourcefulness of drawing upon traditional Chinese concepts as inaugurating new ways forward:

How effective are current approaches to multicultural education as they relate to the practices of tutors?

Research questions:

- 1) How are multicultural encounters in education theorised?
- 2) What are the limitations of current theorisations of multicultural encounters in education with regard to how these might inform the practitioners' practices with students? Specifically:
 - a) How cosmopolitan is the theorisation of multicultural encounters in education?
 - b) How inclusive is current theorising of multicultural encounters in education, with regard to teachers and students?
- 3) Is there value in engaging with theories other than those informed by Western styles of thinking, in relation to informing multicultural encounters in education?
- 4) How might *shi*-inflected thinking assist practitioners' reflexivity when exploring their practices?

The manner in which the research questions is addressed will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the rationale that informed the methodological decisions taken in the design and implementation of this study, including the theory employed, are described. This includes discussion of the limitations of theory typically employed with research of this type, that is, research that aims to further understanding of approaches to multicultural education, much of which has already been introduced within the literature research.

Addressing the research questions requires two tranches of research which are outlined and justified in this chapter. Firstly, the empirical research designed to reveal the inadequacies of current approaches to understanding multicultural encounter in education is outlined, which addresses research question 2. Secondly, the selection of an alternative way of considering these educational matters is justified through adopting an approach in Chinese thinking, *shi*, as the analytical tool and including a justification of that choice. The research activity in the form of a discussion of a hypothetical teaching context, which is discussed in Chapter 6, is also explained and justified and has been designed to demonstrate possibilities that this alternative thinking might offer to practitioners. It is this second part of research that responds to research questions 3 and 4.

However, to address the above two tranches requires some necessary contextual information. In the literature, Chapter 2, the field of research as it relates to multicultural encounters with students is discussed and gives an indication of how such encounters are currently theorised, which responds to research question 1. This methodology chapter, commences by summarising this part of the literature specifically how it relates to the first research question, that is, '*how are multicultural encounters in education theorised.*' This is a necessary prerequisite to designing empirical research in line with these theorisations as well as acting as a springboard from which alternative non-Western forms of thinking might be compared.

4.2 Summary of how multicultural encounters in education are theorised

As internationalisation started to grow within higher education, and increased numbers of overseas students registered for programmes of study, the resulting interactions between host and in-host country students started to draw the attention of academics

worldwide (Harrison, 2012). In the UK, internationalisation within higher education was mainly due to the Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI 1, 1999 and PMI 2, 2006), which became the main driving force for international student recruitment (Trahar, 2007). As student mobility increased and more students chose to study overseas, higher education institutions worldwide became more international and host and in-host country students found themselves in situations where intercultural interaction was a necessary feature of their studies. As multicultural group work became normal pedagogic practice for practitioners, who taught multicultural cohorts (De Vita, 2005), interest in how students engage in cultural exchanges grew. Consequently, interaction and engagement between host and in-host country students became the focus of, and has remained the source of, much of the research into intercultural communication.

In Australian studies, Nesdale and Todd (1993) found that home students were less interested in intercultural contact than international students, while Volet and Ang (1998) observed that multicultural groups presented new opportunities for learning, but that these were not being capitalised upon due to limited social interaction between home and international students. Studies in the US (Spencer-Rodgers, 2001; Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern, 2002) reported that home students generally had positive, if stereotypical, views about international students, but that they also perceived a range of threats and anxieties. In New Zealand, Ward et al.'s (2005) report found that although home students tended to have positive views about international students, actual interactions and intercultural friendships were relatively rare. In the UK, Peacock and Harrison (2010b) used interviews and focus groups with host country students to explore the barriers to intercultural interaction in greater depth. The participants reported that language difficulties and fears about making an inadvertent racist *faux pas* required a mindfulness that made interaction wearing, which passively led to avoidance. Similar findings emerged from a comparable study in Ireland (Dunne, 2009) and Hong Kong (Ladegaard, 2015), where a fear about negative judgements from international students and negative stereotypes and prejudice were also important factors in limiting contact.

Another thread of research (Spencer-Oatey and Dauber, 2017) has focused on multicultural workgroups in the classroom. Wright and Lander (2003) noted that both host and in-host country students in their Australian study tended to speak less in mixed groups than in mono-cultural ones. Also in Australia, Summers and Volet (2008) found

that in-host country students were more positive than host country students about multicultural group work. However, they also found that all students were less positive about multicultural group work after they had experienced it. Li and Campbell (2008) found that international students in New Zealand valued group work, but that they often deferred to home students or allowed them to complete a disproportionate amount of the work. Ippolito (2007) reports that language barriers, cultural indifference and time pressures are barriers to successful multicultural group work. Le Roux (2001) and Kelly (2008) conclude that diversity in the classroom is a two-edged sword, for example, not only can it offer opportunities for more creativity and breadth of experience, but also it risks dissatisfaction, conflict and difficulties with coordination. Thus, the literature from a range of countries suggests that interaction between host and in-host country students remains limited and a source of anxiety for students and teachers alike. However, many of the theories looking at interaction in multicultural contexts, draw upon Hofstede's (1991) dimensions, which have had a significant impact on behaviour in all cultures: individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance and masculinity and femininity, for example, (O'Neill, McLarnon, Xiu, and Law, 2016). The theories used in intercultural communication research derive from, and are based on, Western beliefs. Whilst this was acknowledged as a potential issue within the field over twenty years ago, the status quo remains.

the omission of theorists from outside the United states may be a function of the role of theory in scholarship in different cultures. There is, nevertheless, a need for theories developed by scholars out-side the United States (Gudykunst, 2002:183).

Nonetheless, regardless which theory is adopted to explore the students' interactions, the focus has tended to be exclusively on the students without input from the practitioner on the types of support they provide students before any planned intercultural encounter. Thus, the voice of the practitioners as they explain and describe how they organise and plan their teaching and how it contributes to students' learning has been missing from studies exploring intercultural encounters in the classroom. In addition, the literature is based only on Western beliefs and norms. These three issues, a) based on Western beliefs b) focus on student and c) lack of practitioner's voice relate to research questions 1 (a) and 2 (b and c).

4.3 Empirical research designed to reveal limitations in how multicultural encounters in education are theorised

To address research question 2 required a two-part research design for the study: the first tranche provides the context and data for the second tranche, which are discussed in chapters 5 and 6, respectively. The first part involved collecting empirical data which used Hofstede's (1991) cultural dimension theory of individualism and collectivism with some input from Hall's (1977) high, low contexts of communication in the selection of the participants. Hofstede's (1980) work was one of the earliest attempts to use statistical data to examine cultural values in forty countries. After scrutinising his data, Hofstede (1980) assigned each country a rank from one to forty in each value's category, depending on how it compared to the other countries. He classified the low scoring countries as individualism and the high scoring countries as collectivist: the UK and European countries scored lower than East Asian countries such as China (Hofstede, 1991). Thus all the participants' cultures were identified based on Hofstede's ranking. However, it is important to recognise that while the terms individualism and collectivism are used as though they are separate "entities", all people and cultures have both individual and collective characteristics (Samovar et al., 2011:49). Hall (1977) categorized cultures as being either high or low context, depending on the degree to which meaning comes from the setting or from the words being exchanged. This was considered relevant to this nature of this study because participants from high-context and low-context cultures offer insight into what they pay attention to and what they choose to ignore.

Holiday (2015:208) warns against adopting labels when discussing Home and International students as it can make one "complicit in the act of Othering." The terms host and in-host country students are adopted in this study in an attempt to avoid Othering any particular students. However, in response to Holliday, one might question whether a change in labelling is sufficient in itself to avoid Othering. I would argue that by attempting to understand and interpret educational situations from a non-western perspective, the more nuanced approach choreographed in this study which includes engaging with broader theoretical framings rather than simply expecting students to fully embrace western conventions, might raise alternative identifications and labels.

As the field of intercultural communication is vast, the first tranche of this project limited its focus to the different uses and interpretation of verbal and non-verbal behaviour

between and among all persons involved in intercultural encounters in the classroom, namely, students and practitioners. The data were collected via interviews with the students and their respective tutors, which were classified using the features of verbal and non-verbal and which are discussed later in this chapter. However, the data were analysed using concepts of *shi*: the use of strategy and its relationship to the Chinese understanding of efficacy. The overall aim is to demonstrate an alternative non-Western approach to thinking and analysing data, one that would include the voices of both the students and the practitioners, which relates to research question 2. As ‘verbal and non-verbal behaviour’ were considered to have Western connotations, ‘features of expressivity’ or simply ‘expressivity’ became the preferred term as it was considered more in accord with *shi*, and the Chinese thinking associated with it. The concepts of *shi*, which are used to analyse the data are discussed in Chapter 5 and relates to research question 3.

The data from the first part of the project is necessary for the second part, which is a hypothetical context whereby the practice of a *shi*-inflected and a non, *shi*-inflected practitioner is compared as they plan and teach the same hypothetical class. However, whilst practitioners’ planning and teaching are hypothetical, it is the context of *this* study, *these* students with *these* relational dynamics that are used to imagine the potentialities a different orientation and way of thinking has on professional practice. To explore this further, an illustrative example of the first multicultural group context is used to compare approaches to practice between a conventional practitioner and a *shi*-inflected one as they prepare and teach the same ‘hypothetical’ lesson.

The decision to construct hypothetical illustrations (Jullien, 1995. Also see page 43 of this study) was contingent upon pragmatic and ethical considerations. It was pragmatic due to the practical nature and requirements of the illustrative examples, which was to compare and critique the practice of the conventional and *shi*-inflected practitioner in order to highlight differences. It was also to highlight how a different approach by a practitioner might overcome some of the challenges and issues mentioned in the students’ interview extracts as they interacted for the first time in multicultural groups. Ethical considerations and feelings of unease grew since an empirical investigation would entail the critique of colleagues’ practice as they taught. The demands associated with this increased particularly as one of the practitioners would have been asked to adopt a very different orientation to thinking about pedagogy, which s/he would have to have become acquainted with and apply to his/her teaching. In light of these consideration, the heuristic

nature of the illustrations seemed better suited, therefore, to adopting a hypothetical example using the empirical data as a springboard in an attempt to show how *shi*-inflected thinking might influence current pedagogy.

Limitations in existing research and their significance only became apparent when working with the data collected and, given the small scale of the study, a direct critique of practitioner interaction might be considered ethically questionable. A more oblique approach was therefore called for that, whilst drawing upon data collected as a springboard for thinking, nevertheless departed from this in a number of ways. The use of hypothetical illustrations was therefore a considered response to new insights that evolved from the initial theoretical focus of this inquiry. These are considered of heuristic value in drawing attention to key features between different theoretical orientations that would not otherwise have become visible. This relates to research question 4. The analysis of the data is discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

4.4 Justification of introducing *shi*-inflected thinking

The influence of theories which have traditionally been associated with Culture and Intercultural Communication, such as those adopted by Gudykunst and Kim (1992); Hofstede (2011) were explored and considered. The cultural dimensions from Hofstede's (1980) work and the theoretical frameworks associated with them are often adopted and referred to in studies related to intercultural interactions between and among students. His work has been cited and used in studies relating to the interaction of individuals from different cultures in various contexts for almost thirty years (Gudykunst, 1988; Harrison, 2012; Desmarchelier and Fang, 2016). This is despite Hofstede's research remaining somewhat controversial and attracting numerous critics (Baskerville, 2003; McSweeney, 2002), who have provoked scholarly debates as they meticulously question the underlying assumptions of the research paradigm and problematised the theoretical and methodological considerations while also questioning the value laden framework or its Westernised perspectives. More recently McSweeney (2013) among others expressed doubts, not only regarding the credibility of the large body of past empirical research employing Hofstede, but called for its abandonment as a future platform (Venkateswaran and Ojha, 2019:414). Nonetheless, Hofstede's largely positivistic approach, despite its flaws, remains widely accepted because it provides the "best available explanation for

many cross-cultural issues especially for practice” (Venkateswaran and Ojha, 2019: 425). Therefore, Hofstede’s (1980) and Hofstede et al’s (2010) dimensions of culture: power distance, individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, uncertainty-avoidance and long term orientation and Hall’s (1977) categorising of cultures as being high or low context, depending on the degree to which meaning comes from the setting or from the words being exchanged seemed to be appropriate in providing criteria and identifying the diversity of cultures of the participants.

For this study, the masculinity-femininity dimension was not relevant because females tended to outnumber males on the postgraduate programmes of study used in this project, therefore, the participants were females. Thus, by simply making the choice to exclude masculinity-femininity, any implicit differences between the genders suggested by this dimension were removed. The remaining four dimensions helped in confirming the cultural diversity among the participants. For example: power distance, on the one hand is between the Home, European and Chinese students and on the other hand the interviewer and the interviewees: collectivism and individualism interaction norms might be reflected in the interactional norms each student brings to the multicultural context; uncertainty/avoidance and the anxiety associated with being faced with uncertain or unknown situations might lead students to choose not to participate in multicultural groups, preferring mono-cultural ones instead and Confucian Dynamism where particular teachings lead to a society which values: perseverance, follows a hierarchy, has social obligations and avoids loss of face (Desmarchelier and Fang, 2016). Nonetheless, for this study, Hofstede’s (2011) cultural dimensions were only referred to in order to ensure the participants came from a country which was considered as being classified as either mostly individualist or mostly collectivist. It was anticipated that having students with such diverse cultural backgrounds and perspectives would provide a rich source of data as they recounted their multicultural group experiences.

To analyse the data, the dimensions of cultures proposed by Hofstede are examples of Western colonial thought; they focus on the students and not on the practitioner and they do not offer affordances in developing helpful understandings for practitioners. The following section will briefly discuss and justify the issues with Western theories related to intercultural communication: the neglect of the practitioner and a colonial approach before discussing how a *shi*-inflected style of thinking enables affordances for thinking

differently in ways that might be helpful to tutors and finally, why a hypothetical analysis using *shi* is adopted

4.4.1 Neglect of the tutor

One of the key aims of the Prime Minister's Initiative 2 was to "ensure the quality of the student experience" (Clark, 2006; 80) yet many academics believed there was a lack of support, resources and recognition for innovative teaching practices in multicultural environments. However, the attitude of the practitioners is crucial in determining possibilities for intercultural dialogue. It is their beliefs about learning and teaching that guide the way they work and influence whether they position international students as needing to acquire a set of skills to assimilate with the dominant pedagogical approaches or whether they position themselves, as local academics and students, needing to learn and be open to change (Hyland et.al, 2008). Being open to change is positive yet there are very few in-depth investigations of the interactions between international students and academics (Brunner, 2006), especially in the UK. The majority of research conducted in this field tends to compare the experiences of students from 'one culture' with those of another, or is an evaluation of internationalisation strategies developed by institutions. Whilst such research is valuable, it neglects to explore the complexities of interactions between students and academics from many different cultures (Arasaratnam and Doerfel, 2005). Therefore, whilst reference might be made for the need of cultural sensitivity in pedagogical approaches, it is rarely supported or informed by accounts of the experiences of practitioners as they tackle the layers of cultural complexity with which they are faced (Hyland et al., 2008). An assumption exists that intercultural communication and learning will happen automatically without effort being made by learners and teachers to effect such a process.

As the literature has highlighted, most studies focus on the issues experienced between host and in-host students as they engage in intercultural communication. The voice of the practitioner is missing from these studies. Where the occasional study includes the practitioner, it is not an account of their actual practice, for example, the scaffolding they provide before or during their teaching or how their scaffolding may have increased intercultural interaction among and between the group members. Thus, the 'voice' of the practitioner tends to be their account of the issues the students have identified (Ryan, 2005; Valiente, 2008). Chapter 6, which is related to research question 4, demonstrates

how a Chinese orientation to practice, enables a practitioner's voice to be included in accounts of multicultural encounter in the classroom.

4.4.2 Colonial approach

The theories and interpretation of data which are related to intercultural communication stem from Western beliefs and ideals. The vast majority of the theorists on intercultural communication were born in the USA and although researchers born in other cultures have contributed to research on which the theories are based, the theories remain Western. Gudykunst (2002: 200-201), points out that there is a need for theories to be developed by scholars outside of the USA. One reading of Gudykunst's point is the scholars should be from non-Western countries.

In addition to research, a non-cosmopolitan approach can exist within higher education classrooms, which have tended to remain configured according to implicit local norms that silently privilege home students over others (Turner, 2009). Within a highly diverse international learning context, the notion that any group of students is somehow "at home" is dubious. Nonetheless, the formal structures of programme design, the values and practices of teachers, the structures of institutions and their local settings tend to work against the positioning of the higher education learning space as an international one (Walker, 2004). Rather, it is constructed as a place fraught with invisible traps and pitfalls for those uninitiated into local ways of doing things (Turner & Robson, 2008). Discussions about the extent to which such conceptual colonialism dominates higher education practices are plentiful (Turner, 2009: 243; Martin and Nakayama, 2015). In addition to these positive moves, adopting an ancient Chinese style of thinking to practice in the classroom, affords an alternative way of thinking. It permits different questions to be asked and different approaches, which could enhance research as well as practice. This is discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, respectively.

4.4.3 Affordances for thinking differently in ways that might be helpful to practitioners

Internationalisation of higher education has resulted in the increased diversity within classrooms. This has presented challenges for practitioners who are more accustomed to working with mono-cultural groups who probably share the same cultural values and belief as the practitioner. Insight into how to engage and encourage cohorts of multicultural students to interact would enhance these practitioners' practice (Turner, 2009). Support for practitioners who want to rise to the challenges associated with teaching multicultural cohorts is lacking. The literature related to intercultural

communication details accounts for the lack of interaction between host and in-host country students, but does not provide practical support for practitioners. Introducing a *shi*-inflected style of thinking into practice provides affordances for practitioners which links their practice more directly to students' learning. *Shi*-inflected thinking includes reflexivity as part of practice, not as an option, and provides the necessary support for practitioners new to multicultural encounters. If *shi*-inflected thinking were applied to research into intercultural interaction practice, it would not only include the practitioners' voice but also support at a practical level, which Western studies are lacking. This relates to research question 4 and is discussed in Chapter 6.

4.4.4 Why the hypothetical analysis using *shi*?

Adopting concepts of *shi* as an analytical tool introduces a different orientation and way of thinking to the analysis of the data, and the importance of the role of the practitioner becomes apparent. This in turn draws attention to the relative neglect of a focus upon the role of the practitioner within existing literature. In other words, from a non, *shi*-informed perspective, the focus in much research to date, and one with which the initial focus of this study was aligned, privileged student interaction over the role of the practitioner in relation to educational practice. In order to redress this, a hypothetical context is created, which focuses on the practitioner, and uses the context of *this* study, *these* students with *these* relational dynamics to imagine the potentialities a different orientation and way of thinking has on professional practice. An illustrative example of the first multicultural group context is used to compare approaches to practice between a conventional practitioner and a *shi*-inflected one as they prepare and teach the same 'hypothetical' lesson. The overall purpose of the hypothetical illustrations is heuristic: to draw out key differences in orientation between the two practitioners and to afford an opportunity to critically reflect on and highlight any similarities and differences without potentially offending colleagues. However, the significance of the limitations in existing research only became apparent when working with the empirical data and, given the small scale of the study, a direct critique of practitioner interaction might be considered ethically questionable. Consequently, a more oblique (Jullien, 2000) approach was called for that, whilst drawing upon the data collected as a springboard for thinking, nevertheless departed from this in a number of ways. The use of hypothetical illustrations was therefore a considered response to new insights that evolved from the initial theoretical focus of this inquiry. Moreover, these hypothetical illustrations were also of heuristic

value in drawing attention to key features between different theoretical orientations that would not otherwise have become visible.

The hypothetical explorations and analysis are for demonstration purposes only and as such, the differences are exaggerated as a way of illustrating the contrast in approach to practice. Whilst there are overlaps in approaches, the illustrative examples highlight the possibilities that *shi*-inflected thinking might afford as a resource to encourage practitioner reflexivity. This informs research questions 3 and 4 and is discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

4.5 Transitioning to the unfamiliar

The innovative yet unfamiliar territory of applying *shi* as an analytical tool affords the opportunity to bring in a different discourse which allows the posing of different questions and opens up new opportunities for those working in multicultural contexts. This section, therefore, explains why Chinese concepts of *shi* are considered appropriate to this study. It starts by explaining some of the differences between ways of thinking between the West and the Chinese and uses a Western definition of theory to make the comparison between how the means-to-an-end thinking of the West differs from the go-with-the flow thinking of the Chinese (Jullien, 1995:86). The discussion leads to how Chinese thinking affords a different understanding of familiar Western terms. This is important because an understanding of the difference in discourse is fundamental since it is the Chinese meaning which is adopted and referred to throughout the following chapters.

In ancient Chinese, the theory-practice relationship and its connotations to models, goals and rigidity are in complete contrast to their fluid, non-interventionist-go-with-the-flow philosophy. The differences in their thinking about theory-practice between Western and Chinese thinking will be provided in this section and will show how this difference impacts on their approach to situations. The following definition is used to show how theory represents everything that Chinese thinking is not. In general Western terms, theory exists as a way of:

establishing absolute laws that can be laid out in an organised framework that can explain. It must be able to withstand tests to its validity, and

needs to be consistent (Thomas, 2010: 578).

Whilst the quote is more representative of theories found in natural science, it infers the rigidity the Chinese associate with the West in the use of terms such as “absolute”; “able to withstand”; “consistent” and suggests a tendency towards a regimented organised way of thinking. At a basic level, the quote represents a general Western way of thinking which, according to Jullien (2000; 2004) is goal-oriented where goals are set which then influences one’s actions so as to make them become real. Whether it is a goal or an ideal, a Westerner’s focus is on the model that s/he has envisaged and this becomes the basis of a plan s/he has to implement. In order to ensure the plan moves from the stage of being in the Westerner’s mind to that of being something that can be seen and touched, intervention by the Westerner might be needed to ensure the plan becomes a reality. The move from a plan being an idea to becoming something tangible and relating it from theory to practice is provided by Jullien:

The function of the model set up as a goal remains intact: the model is determined on a ‘theoretical’ basis that, once established, must be submitted to ‘practice’ (Jullien, 2004:3).

Jullien continues by pointing out the inevitability of there being a discrepancy between the planned model inside one’s head and the end result, “practice always to some degree falls short of theory” (Jullien, 2004:5). Being a philosopher as well as a sinologist, Jullien (2004) explains that such a failure to match theory and practice, form and matter was the topic of much debate in ancient Greece. He explains that ancient Western philosophers had unsuccessfully tried to, “forge some means of mediation between theory and practice” in which *phronesis* represented the first step; however, the gap between reality and its model could not be “plugged” (Jullien, 2004: 14). His description of *phronesis* explains the logical thinking behind those initial ideas when:

Aristotle thought he had discovered a faculty for dealing with practice, a faculty that, taking over from theory, could fill the gap. This ability was at once intellectual...and directly linked with action and could thus mediate as was required. “Prudence” (*phronesis*) is the name traditionally given to this practical wisdom. Whoever “is able to deliberate well about what is good and advantageous for himself” may be called prudent and possess this practical ability (Jullien, 2004: 5).

What Jullien goes on to explain is that the tensions which exist today between the natural and the social sciences stem from ancient Greece and involve Aristotle's concept of *phronesis*. Aristotle was Plato's pupil and while Plato was searching for universal truths, Aristotle argued that "one cannot be satisfied with universals and that knowledge is validly conceived of as *phronesis*" (Thomas, 2011b: 23, original italics). However, as Plato's thinking worked so well for the natural sciences it overshadowed that of Aristotle's which, being:

located in the *phronesis* of human learning and behaviour, was largely disregarded. This mistake...has led to two millennia of false starts in understanding social phenomena (Thomas, 2011b: 24, original italics).

Consequently, as it was Plato's thinking which found acceptance and success within the natural sciences, it is his thinking that has dominated the West and according to Jullien (2004) has resulted in the accepted norm of Western goal-oriented thinking. However, although Aristotle's thinking was disregarded in favour of Plato's, *phronesis* has never disappeared in Western thinking. Thomas, while having a very different agenda to that of Jullien, provides a definition which is similar in meaning to that of Aristotle's but with a more modern relevance:

In the practical (or tacit) knowledge of *phronesis*, there are none of these expectations as to consistency; *phronesis* is about understanding and behavior [*sic*] in particular situations (Thomas, 2010: 578).

Contrasting Jullien's (2010) definition to the natural science one given earlier indicates that Jullien's focusses more on understanding and acceptance of difference and focusses less on rules and consistency; plans and goals. Perhaps if it had been Aristotle's thinking that had been accepted by the natural sciences, western thinking might not be in the "rut" Jullien (2004:15) considers it to be currently in; nonetheless, it provides the backdrop to why he believes ancient Chinese thought is a "way out" and it is what he argues for. Although this is not what this thesis argues for, it nevertheless offers a better understanding of how Jullien views Western thinking. His understanding and study of ancient Chinese thinking has enabled him to share an alternative way of thinking which affords a different orientation towards teaching and learning and the impact it has on a practitioner's practice. The concepts of *shi* will be applied in Chapter 5 and its approaches to thinking styles and practice discussed in Chapter 6, which are related to research questions 3 and 4, respectively.

4.5.1 Explaining the unfamiliar: efficacy

The previous section showed how Western thinking is goal-oriented and where a plan is worked on until it becomes a reality. In contrast to this, Chinese thinking does not consist of ideal forms or models which are considered as being separate from reality but as informing it. Reality is regarded as being a natural, ordered and continuous process that stems solely from the interaction of the factors in play in the situation. A successful outcome does not come from a model that is altered and changed to make it real. Instead, the feasibility of a successful outcome depends on how well the other factors within the reality are guided to provide the most natural outcome possible:

Setting out to illuminate the progress of things, by elucidating its internal coherence and in order to act in accordance with it, the Chinese sage never conceived of a contemplative activity that was pure knowledge, possessing an end in itself... For him the “world” was not an object of speculation; it was not a matter of “knowledge” on the one hand and “action” on the other (Jullien, 2004: 15).

So, unlike Westerners who set up a model and work to make sure there is ‘something’ to show at the end of it, something real, the ancient Chinese sage focusses his/her attention on the situation in which s/he finds her/himself in order to detect any factors within the situation which might naturally work together in such a way as to be advantageous to the sage. Therefore rather than setting up a plan which is imposed on the world, by it being forced to become ‘real’, Jullien (2004: 16) proposes Westerners could, “try to detect the factors whose configuration is favourable to the task at hand” and allow themselves to be “carried along by the propensity of things” and “rely on the potential inherent in the situation.” An example might be trying to change the course of a river. Westerners will have a plan of where the new course will flow, from A to B, and will work to ensure the river will be moved and travel from A to B, regardless. This might involve moving boulders, cutting trees, digging deeper trenches and building up the banks on either side of the water. The Chinese sage, on the other hand, will look at the river and detect all the factors (the dispositions) associated with its current course, for example, the boulders, the trees, the different levels of the water, the difference in flow, the width of the channels in order to determine how they might work together in the sage’s favour. This enables the course of the river to be changed with the minimum amount of effort, for example, the trees and the boulders might not need to change. However, unlike Westerners, the outcome is never guaranteed for the Chinese sage. Success depends on how skilfully the

dispositions have been identified and manipulated: that is what determines whether they evolve and work in the sage's favour and efficacy is achieved.

As Jullien's (1995; 2000; 2004) concepts of *shi* are influenced by the *Art of War*, understanding of Chinese discourse and the place of strategy can appear more relatable when used in a military context. Whilst warfare and conflict have seemed the domain of the unpredictable, ancient Chinese thinkers believed they could detect in the unfolding of the conflict events that could be logically foreseen and thus be managed. This resulted in Chinese strategic thought being considered an exemplar of how one can manage reality and is the basis of efficacy (Jullien, 1995: 25). Conflict is viewed as a process that evolves only in relation to the force it puts into play. The task of a good General is to calculate in advance and with accuracy every disposition so that the situation develops in a way that is as beneficial as possible to him/her. Winning (success) simply becomes a necessary consequence and the predictable outcome of the imbalance that operates in his/her favour which s/he has been able to influence. Once the General has taken the necessary measures to ensure a favourable outcome, s/he takes no further action since the circumstances for an advantageous result should inevitably evolve if the appropriate measures have been taken:

The entire art of the general, thus, consists in seeing that those measures are taken before the confrontation takes place, and in recognising early enough – in the opening stages - all the factors, so that he [sic] can influence the situation even before it has taken place and become a reality. For the sooner this favourable orientation is imposed, the more easily it will take effect (Jullien, 1995:26).

Therefore, efficacy is the skilful use of strategy long before the confrontation occurs. In terms of multicultural encounters, the strategy involves the practitioner identifying and accurately assessing the dispositions and to position or re-position them in order that they offer the greatest potential for successful interaction within the group. There is no force involved in achieving an outcome. Once the group work tasks start, efficacy is determined on how the dispositions unfold. Therefore, alternative thinking can produce a different orientation to how success is achieved and a different understanding of efficacy, which relates to research question 3.

4.5.1.1 The potential of the situation

The importance of the notion of the potential of the situation is that it takes the place of theory and practice in Chinese thinking (Jullien 2004). Rather than using models and

plans, ancient Chinese thinking involves the use of strategy and the more skilled a person is in using strategies, the more successful the outcome will be. However, unlike Western thinking, the strategies are not used as interventions in order to force the required outcome, *after* a ‘plan’ is put motion. The intervention, as such, is *before* the ‘plan’ is activated. The skill is in studying the potential of the situation and identifying which factors or dispositions provide the most probability for success. It is in the examination of the circumstances surrounding each situation that strategies are used if needed so that as the situation develops naturally, it proves to be favourable: there are no interventions and nothing is forced. The skill rests in the use of strategies which determines the efficacy of the situation and whether the potential will be achieved. The ancient Chinese have a proverb:

However acute one’s intelligence may be, it is better to rely on the potential inherent in the situation; even with a mattock and a hoe to hand, it is better to wait for the moment of ripening (Jullien, 2004: 16).

The proverb suggests that rather than depending on tools to attain the desired result, Westerners should rely on the way in which the process unfolds. In other words, unlike their norm of drawing up plans, Jullien (2004) proposes that perhaps Westerners should consider making the most of what is inferred by the situation and leave it to develop of its own accord, thus, be carried along by it as it unfolds. The strategy employed by Chinese inflected thinking is to examine and study the situation from which various potentials become apparent. These are then further examined to determine how each one might evolve. The final part of the strategy is to focus on the one considered to have the most favourable inherent potential and be carried along as it evolves. The main point is to ensure the situation develops favourably for the person who has assessed it. This will depend on the circumstances, which play an important role if the potential of the situation is to be achieved. Jullien explains that:

potential consists in determining the circumstances with a view to profiting from them [and that circumstances with their variability can] progressively be turned to advantage by the propensity emanating from the situation (Jullien, 2004:21).

This enables the person, who assessed and ensured the circumstances were favourable in order to profit from them, to allow the evolving effect to develop by itself, by virtue of the process that s/he has set in motion. Jullien refers to this as “unfolding” (Jullien, 2004:

22) because as the potential of the situation changes all the time and the outcome is not known, all the person is doing is manoeuvring the circumstances of the situation in an attempt to ensure the outcome is advantageous to him/her.

4.5.1.2 Potential (*shi*)

At the heart of ancient Chinese philosophy lie two notions forming a pair, the notion of a situation or configuration as it develops and takes shape before our eyes (as a relation of forces) and, to counterbalance this, the notion of potential (*shi*) which is implied by that situation and can be made to play in one's favour. In the absence of theoretical explanations, the Chinese tend to use illustrations so, for example, the image of a river that as it rushes down a mountain is strong enough to carry boulders with it. To ancient Chinese this shows that due to the downward direction and the narrow banks of the river, the "situation is itself the source of an effect", with the "rushing stream said to obtain a potential to make things happen" (Jullien, 2004:17).

The similarities in aspect between soldiers engaged in warfare and postgraduates working in multicultural group work are conflict and strategic interaction. Many postgraduate students find themselves studying and working for the first time with fellow students from different countries and cultures and have to adapt to changing situations and contexts over the duration of their programmes of study. Potentially they are engaged in a conflict situation: conflict in terms of misunderstanding cultural norms and practices. The students consciously and possibly unconsciously adopt strategies in order to help them cope. Their success, perhaps, might depend on the efficacy of the strategies they adopt as they interact with others. If the strategies have been skilfully employed, the potential for success within the situation is increased. If everything comes together and there is a successful outcome, *shi* has been achieved and the outcome is efficacious.

The association between aspects of warfare, strategy, strategic interaction positioning (*shi*), is argued by Aligica (2007: 326):

[g]iven that warfare, as social action, is radical and leads to extremes...it is particularly well-suited to illustrate strategic interaction

Aligica's (2007:326) quote resonates with observations of students as they work in multicultural groups: while some members appear to be talkative and proactive other group members tend to be reactive and passive. Consequently, strategic interaction (Aligica, 2007) and aspects of *shi* and efficacy as discussed and explained by Jullien

(1995, 2004, 2008) are considered appropriate to this study because within intercultural communication, strategies are vital for practitioners and students, alike. Strategies can be used to encourage intercultural communication as well as prevent potential breakdown in interactions caused by differences in ideas and cultural norms. Each multicultural group context has potential (*shi*) as has each student within the group. *Shi* occurs when all the factors (dispositions) of the situation have been considered and if necessary have been manipulated at an early stage in their development in order to ensure the outcome is efficacious.

However, different outcomes can emerge depending on the manner in which a practitioner, or a General, utilises the different dispositions of the situation. Hence, a skilled practitioner/General needs to be flexible enough to adapt and react quickly to any changes that occur within the situation to ensure the outcome is to his/her advantage. As in politics, (Jullien, 1995) where the main concepts of *shi* are power and position, within multicultural group work, these concepts are appropriate in relation to the emergence of a group leader and will be included in the discussion within the following chapter. Chapter 5 will adopt the main concepts of *shi*: strategic manipulation of dispositions, power and potential in order to understand the influence expressivity has on the interactions and experiences of postgraduate students as they work together in multicultural groups in a higher education educational setting.

4.6 Methodological approach

Having outlined the research design and framework the methodological approach taken within this study is presented and justified in order to express how interaction in multicultural group-based teaching was perceived and interpreted by the participants involved an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the context in which it took place. To begin to understand and be able to relate what was happening within the multicultural groups involved an understanding of the cultures and personalities of the participants who were interviewed and of the disciplines in which the activity took place were needed.

As the focus of the study was on verbal and non-verbal behaviour, its nature suggested videoing or observing the participants, however both were dismissed as options because the nationality mix of the cohorts was unknown and there was a strong possibility that some students may not permit to being either filmed, observed or both. Thus the data collection came from interviews.

4.7 Methods

This study adopts a qualitative, collective case study methodology. Despite the criticism of qualitative approaches being over-subjective (Bryman, 1998) and lacking in reliability and validity (Silverman, 2006), qualitative research serves several purposes in the present study. For example, it focuses on one thing in detail and does not try to generalise from it because the interest is in the “thing in itself, as a whole” (Thomas, 2011a:3). In this study ‘the whole’ is the influence *shi* has on teaching and learning. The case study explores the multicultural group setting and the use of *shi* as an analytical tool in the field of education. Thus, *shi* is used to interpret the empirical data within the context of multicultural group work interactions. It affords an opportunity to understand the ‘how’ and ‘why’ some multicultural groups appear to interact well while others do not. In their explanation of the purpose of a case study, Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2011:289) succinctly described it as striving to:

portray ‘what it is like’ to be in a particular situation, to catch the close-up reality and ‘thick description’ of participants’ lived experiences of, thoughts about, and feelings for, a situation. They [case studies] involve looking at a case or phenomenon in its real-life context.

This case study adopts *shi* to explore a different orientation to ‘what it is like’ for the students in the context of multicultural group work and affords a different understanding of their reality of working in groups. My exploration of *shi* as an analytical tool and way of thinking provides the same affordances to the practitioners as to the students. *Shi* is used not only as an analytical tool but also compares how *shi*-inflected thinking influences a practitioner’s practice. The use of *shi* as an analytical tool first of all focusses on and interprets the impact features of expressivity has on student’s intercultural interaction within multicultural group-based teaching. Secondly, as the *shi*-interpretation of the students’ data indicate the importance of the practitioner’s role in reducing perceived obstacles, *shi* is then applied to the practitioners. To complete the focus of applying *shi* as an analytical tool within pedagogy the study then compares the similarities and difference *shi*-inflected and non *shi*-inflected teaching makes to a practitioner’s practice. In order to explain the data, phronesis is used because, as Thomas (2011b:33) argues, it is “phronesis that enables the construction of a good case study”.

Whilst Jullien (2004) had a different agenda for his argument on phronesis it appears to be in accord with what Thomas (2010) argues for: a different way of thinking about things. Therefore, not only is phronesis being shown as being a strength in social science but it is finding a place in case study where Thomas (2011b) argues its use is more appropriate than a theory. He explains that this is achieved by finding alternatives that are based in phronesis, which he believes is in the provision of “tentative models for interpretation and analysis”, which he believes provide for assumptions of variability in the interpretation of horizontal knowledge which is where examples are:

viewed and heard in the context of another’s experience (another horizon) but used in the context of one’s own (where the horizon’s change): the example is not taken to be representative, typical or standard, nor is it exemplary in the sense of being a model or an exemplar... the example is interpretable only in the context of one’s own experience...in other words, of one’s phronesis, rather than one’s theory (Thomas, 2011b : 31 original italics).

However, the implications of there not being any theoretical analysis in a case study subjects it as being perceived as simply a method that incorporates and uses a number of ideas. Therefore, rather than seeking the case study’s validation through reference to a body of theory or generalised knowledge, case study can offer a series of ways and proceedings based on horizontal knowledge (Thomas, 2011b:32). It is the use of ‘horizontal knowledge’ that affords validation for making connections between someone else’s experience and one’s own. It enables links and insights to be made hence, “the essence comes in understandability emerging from phronesis” (Thomas, 2011b: 32). Consequently, from the connection to one’s own situation due to phronesis, the case study offers understanding presented from another’s horizon of meaning, but understood from one’s own (Thomas, 2011b: 32). Therefore, while phronesis is not Chinese thinking, its epistemological leanings are in harmony with the thesis, thus it is included.

4.7.1 Selecting the type of case

A case study strategy that can be used in educational research was constructed by Bassey (1999). He suggests that a case study is “a prime strategy for developing educational theory which illuminates educational policy and enhances educational practice” (Bassey, 1999: 3). He identifies three types of educational case study: theory-seeking and theory-testing, story-telling and picture-drawing, and evaluative. None of the case study types proposed by Bassey (1999) were considered appropriate nor appeared to chime with the spirit of exploring the use of *shi* as an analytical tool in this study. Stake (1995:3-4),

however, also makes the distinction between three types of case study: the intrinsic, the instrumental and the collective. In selecting a case, consideration was taken into what it offered in relation to what could be learned. The choice, therefore, depended on the purpose, for example, an intrinsic case study would be chosen not because studying it leads to learning about other cases or about general problems but because there is a need to learn about that particular case. An instrumental case study, on the other hand, would be chosen if a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or to “redraw” a generalisation (Stake, 2005: 445). The collective case study, however, would provide a general understanding using a number of instrumental case studies that either occur on the same site or come from multiple sites. This study explores how *shi* might be mobilised as an analytical tool to interpret the perceptions and interpretations of students of different nationalities as they work within multicultural groups. It is also used to analyse how a *shi*-inflected orientation might afford new insights into the practice of tutors. Therefore, *shi* is used to compare and analyse the practice of a conventional and a *shi*-inflected practitioner as they teach the same hypothetical lesson. Thus not only is *shi* being used as an analytical tool for analysing students’ responses to multicultural group work, it is also being explored as a resource for practitioners to apply to their practice. Hence, a collective case study seemed the most appropriate choice.

4.7.2 Selection of participants

Eight participants were selected as this allowed a range of cultures to be included and raised opportunities for various responses to group work to be observed. The literature (Gudykunst, 2002: 173) suggested that students who originate from ‘individualist’ or ‘collectivist’ cultures may make a difference to the interaction within multicultural group work, and whilst this notion might be disputed, it was incorporated within a research design aimed at drawing upon Western understandings of multicultural education. It was not assumed the case would be:

in any way representative of a wider whole – it is a one-off, defined by the peculiar circumstances that...the researcher, describe (Thomas, 2016:13).

A convenience sampling strategy, which is a type of “nonprobability or nonrandom sampling” was adopted to select the participants who met “practical criteria”, for example, they were accessible, available and willing to participate (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim, 2016: 2). The participants were from a group dominated by female students,

which resulted in female only participants. Whilst acknowledging the possibility of a gendered dimension to the resulting data, it was not investigated because gender in education is not a focus for this study. Hofstede's (2001) categorization of individualist and collectivist cultures was used as a guide in identifying the cultural background of participants in the study. Consulting Hofstede's (2001:500) ranking of 50 countries, those represented by the participants were ranked at different ends of all of the values scale: power distance; uncertainty avoidance; individualism/collectivism and long/short-term orientation. The higher the ranking, the more characteristics of individualism were identified. The Home and European students ranked, 3 and 15, respectively, while the Chinese students ranked 40-41. Halls' (1977) high low context was also used to ensure there was cultural diversity within the participants. Hall (1977) categorized cultures as being either high or low context, depending on the degree to which meaning comes from the setting or from the words being exchanged. This was considered relevant to this nature of this study because participants from high-context and low-context cultures offer insight into what they pay attention to and what they choose to ignore. Hall (1977: 79) defines the terms in the following manner:

A high context (HC) communication or message is one in which most of the information is already in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicitly transmitted part of the message. A low-context (LC) communication is just the opposite; i.e. the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code.

High-context cultures include Japan and China, whilst low-context cultures include Germany and Great Britain. In both Hofstede's (1991) and Hall's (1977) ranking, Romania was placed closer to collectivism and high-context cultures than to individualism and low-context ones.

The research took place within a Scottish university with postgraduate students who were studying either Education or Management. Four students from each programme of study participated in the research and were representative of individualistic and collectivistic; high-context and low-context cultures (Hofstede, 2001; Hall, 1977, respectively). Table 1 below provides some background information on the students and on their tutors: education (ET) and management (MT).

	Field of study	Nationality	Age	Exposure to other nationalities	Previous experience of living/studying out of own country	Describe themselves as...
Sara	E (Education)	Chinese: Shanxi	23/24	None	Never	“Easy going and likes to help others. Really enjoy my life”
Yana	E	Chinese: Yunan	23/24	None	Never	“Liking to talk, cycle, western culture and western food”
Ruth	E	Romanian	28	Yes	Never	“Talk too much which is also very upsetting to me that I realise that I do that and yet I can't stop it”
Gwen	E	Scottish	23/24	Limited	Never	“Being a little unsure of just about everything really”
Gail	M (Management)	Chinese: Guangdong	23/24 (twin)	Limited	Limited	“Very easy-going and outgoing and likes to share opinions with others”
Sharon	M	Chinese: Shanghai	23/24	None	Never	“Having a very positive attitude and I like to make friends”
Susan	M	Scottish	23/24	None	Never	“Being very smiley”
Gemma	M	German	26	Limited	Never	“Being a very outgoing international person that is really open minded”
	ET	Scottish	50ish	Extensive	Extensive	n/a
	MT	Scottish	50ish	Extensive	Extensive	n/a

Table 1: Background information on the participants

Postgraduates were chosen as they have the least amount of time together in a new study environment. In contrast to undergraduate students, who have at least three years to become used to studying with students from different cultures, full-time postgraduate students generally have one year of academic study in a multicultural setting. Thus, the only criterion for choosing the participants was that there should be a mix of students who come from a predominantly individualist culture with those who come from a predominantly collectivist one. Whilst a culture cannot be stereotyped as being individualist or collectivist, generally, China is considered an example of a collectivist culture (Hofstede, 2001) and the UK and Europe as examples of individualist cultures. Thus, the participants in each discipline afforded difference in cultural values, beliefs and communication (Hall, 1977; Hofstede, 2001).

4.7.3 Interview schedule

Semi-structure interviews as a research method (Thomas, 2016) are consistent with the endeavour of researching verbal and non-verbal behaviour. Interviews enable face-to-face meetings with the possibility of developing dialogue, which perhaps might permit greater depth by encouraging participants to discuss their experiences of intercultural interactions in their multicultural encounters (Merriam, 2001). A semi-structured interview schedule was developed that might reveal which features of verbal and non-verbal behaviour were perceived to hinder and/or enhance intercultural communication during group work. The researcher was interested in noting when and what changes occurred among the participants over a period of time, therefore, changes in their awareness and use of expressivity were recorded over the taught part of the students' programmes of study. Similarly, changes to the role they played within their groups and what their preferred cultural mix within their groups were also recorded.

The students' semi-structured interview questions relate to multicultural group work and are drawn from the associated literature, which is discussed in Chapter 2. Thus, the features which tended to be focused upon in each round of interviews are: the role played by the participants in their groups; their level of participation and interaction within their groups; their preferred mix of nationalities within their groups. The following initial interview schedule was designed to achieve this:

1. *Background information:*

What experience do you have of living with or studying with other nationalities? What were the nationalities? Can you tell me how you got on? Did you like it? Why/why not?

- How much English did you speak outside of class before you came to Scotland?
- How much do you use now that you are here?
- Why do/don't you use English outside class?
- What sort of things do you do to relax?
 - What kind of films do you like?
 - What sort of music?
 - What sort of sport?
 - Have you joined any clubs since you have been in Scotland? Why/why not?
- Do you have any UK/non-UK friends?

2. *Understanding and awareness of verbal and non-verbal behaviour*

- Can you tell me what your understanding of verbal and non-verbal behaviour is within communication?
 - Are there any that you are aware of using?
 - What about in class?
 - Have you noticed any V and NV behaviour being used by your classmates?
 - What have you noticed in particular?
 - When you are working with anyone who uses different verbal and non-verbal behaviour to you, how does it make you feel?
3. *Understanding and interpretation of verbal and non-verbal behaviour within intercultural interactions as:*
- a) *Contributing to successful exchange in learning and teaching environments?*
 - Do you feel the use of the V and NV behaviour you have noticed help the interaction?
 - How?
 - b) *Preventing successful exchange in learning and teaching environments?*
 - Do you feel the use of the V and NV behaviour you have noticed help the interaction?
 - How?
 - c) *Group work*
 - When working in groups, which nationality of students would you choose to work with? Why?

The structure of the students' interview schedules for the second and then for the third round of interviews was the same as for the initial one but the focus changed. As the first round of interviews raised the participants' awareness to the focus of the data collection: verbal and non-verbal behaviour, the second round focussed on the participants' awareness of changes in their verbal and non-verbal behaviour. They were also asked if they noticed changes in verbal and non-verbal behaviour among their fellow group members. The third round of interviews focussed on the participants' reflective account of interactions and their participation within their multicultural groups throughout their programmes of study.

The practitioners who taught the participants were also interviewed (Appendix A). Their interviews were conducted individually in their office at the end of the taught part of their programmes. The purpose of interviewing them was to enable them to reflect on their input sessions and to explore whether they were aware of their own and their students' use of verbal and non-verbal features in the classroom. The questions in their interview schedule arose from the iterative process of reading the students' interview transcripts.

Thus, the practitioners' interview focused on how much of the interaction among and between the members of the multicultural groups they 'noticed' and what they did to increase interaction and participation within the multicultural groups (Appendix A).

Interview	Aims	Rationale
Students	Background information	To determine participant's experience of working and/or studying with other cultures.
	Understanding and awareness of verbal and non-verbal behaviour	To establish a common understanding of what constitutes verbal and non-verbal behaviour
	Understanding and interpretation of verbal and non-verbal behaviour within intercultural interactions	To determine the participants' perceptions of features of verbal and non-verbal behaviour which enhanced or prevented interaction within the multicultural groups
	Initial reaction to multicultural group work participation	To determine their initial preferences of nationality mix in their multicultural groups
Round 2 Students	Who do students mix with socially?	To monitor whether or not students are more comfortable mixing with other nationalities.
	Experience of working in different multicultural groups.	To determine whether they were aware of changes to their and others' verbal and non-verbal behaviour both socially and in class
	Awareness of changes in using and V and NVB both socially and in-class	To determine whether changes to verbal and non-verbal behaviour increased or decreased interaction within multicultural group work
	Choice of nationality to work with in your multicultural groups	To determine any change in their preference of nationalities with which to work in groups to determine any change in their preference of nationalities with which to work in groups
Round 3 Students	Recap on their overall experience of multicultural group work	Reflective account of their use of changes in their and others verbal and non-verbal behaviour
	The role V and NVB played in interaction within multicultural group work	Reflect on how awareness to changes to V and NVB enhanced or hindered their role and participation in group work
	The participants' ideal mix of nationality of group members	Their preference of nationality with which they would like to work in groups
Practitioner's	Their awareness of their use of verbal and non-verbal use during their teaching	To determine their understanding of what the focus is
	Their awareness of the students' verbal and non-verbal behaviour during group interactions	To determine the level of noticing and attentiveness during multicultural group interactions

How tutors increased interaction within multicultural groups.	Indication of reflexivity and reflectivity in which practitioners' engage
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Table 2: Aims and rationale for interviews

The use of semi-structured questions in the interview schedules with the students and the practitioners, as summarised in Table 2, provided structure to the interviews and enabled a level of freedom to follow-up points as and when they were considered appropriate and necessary (Merriam, 2001).

4.8 Data collection procedure

Meetings were scheduled via individual emails. Before participating the students were made aware of the organisation of the study and the time commitment involved. Three interviews were scheduled: at the beginning¹, the middle² and the end³ of the taught part of their programmes of study. Superscripts are included in the students' extracts to indicate at which point of their programme of study the extract was taken. The interviews were held in an office in the university. This increased issues of power between practitioner and student. To alleviate this, the participants were informed that they were participating in a research project and that the interviews had nothing to do with their studies. To reassure the participants, at the start of every interview they were told they could withdraw at any point. They were also informed that they would be given a transcript of the interview to check for accuracy. A more detailed account of Ethics is discussed later in section 4.11.

4.8.1 Pilot Interview

A pilot interview was conducted prior to the first round of interviews with the participants. The participant for the interview was a former Polish undergraduate and postgraduate School of Education student. As a postgraduate, she had studied on the same programme of study as the Education participants. She understood all the questions and her answers appeared to address the research questions, therefore, no changes were made to the interview questions. It was decided not to use any of the data from this student as her background differed from the participants of study. Unlike the postgraduates in the study, this former student had had experience of studying with students from other cultures during her undergraduate studies, and she had lived and worked in the UK for a few years.

Nonetheless, she provided formative input which confirmed how the frustrations and issues of working in multicultural groups are linked to perceptions and understandings of verbal and non-verbal behaviour within the group.

4.8.2 Conducting the Interviews

The student's interviews were conducted three times: weeks four and thirteen of a 15-week autumn semester and week thirteen of the 15-week spring semester. The interviews with the students lasted between 30-50 minutes and the interviews with the practitioners between 50-60 minutes. All recordings were made on an iPhone before they were downloaded onto a password protected laptop. 'Transcriber', which is a free, downloadable programme, was used to transcribe each interview. The interviews were transcribed verbatim with the transcripts from each interview sent to the participant to ensure it was an accurate record of what had been recorded. The participants returned the transcripts either with or without comments which enabled any necessary changes to be made to the transcripts in order to reflect the participants' feedback.

4.9 Analysing the data

The richness in data appeared to justify the adoption of Hofstede's (1991; 2011) and Hall's (1977) work in the selection of the participants. The data from the students were divided into two broad classifications, language and group work: verbal and non-verbal behaviour and interaction within multicultural group work, respectively. The features of verbal and non-verbal behaviour were classified using Western terminology as were the issues within the multicultural groups. The areas of verbal behaviour used in the initial analysis of the data are drawn from different disciplines: Paralinguistics, Kinesics, Proxemics from psychology counselling (Highlen and Hill, 1984) and Chronemics from cultural anthropology and linguistics (Yammiyavar, Clemmensen and Kumar, 2008):

Verbal Features:

Paralinguistics, which are sounds which are produced orally that are not words and include laughter and fillers, such as, 'ummmm', 'aaaa', 'uhuh', 'you know';

Non-Verbal Features:

Kinesics, which are movements such as, gestures, head-nods, facial expressions and eye contact;

Proxemics, which refer to personal space

Chronemics, which refer to features such, pauses, silences, and response time during an interaction.

All four areas were identified in the preliminary analysis of the data (Appendix B). However, as only two of the eight participants referred to Proxemics it was not included in the final data analysis. Within the classification Chronemics, reference to being ‘*quiet*’; ‘*not talking*’ and being ‘*silent*’ were the most common terms used f by the participants, for example, “*people are really quiet and don’t want to talk*’ (Gwen from Glasgow¹), “*Chinese members don’t know how to talk in English so they stay quiet*” (Sharon from Shanghai¹), “*everyone keeps silent*” (Yana from Yunan¹), “*nobody’s communicating with me*” (Susan from Stirling¹), thus, ‘*silence*’ was the term adopted rather than ‘*Chronemics*’. Accordingly, it was decided that rather than use the terms, Chronemics, Kinesics, Paralinguistics and Proxemics, it would be clearer if most of the terms used and referred to by the participants were adopted, namely, ‘*silence*’ rather than Chronemics; ‘*eye contact*’, ‘*gesture*’ and ‘*facial expression*’ as sub-divisions of Kinesics. Paralinguistics remained since it was easier to identify the verbal features as a whole because the individual sub-features often occurred simultaneously. Proxemics was removed because not all of the participants mentioned it and when they did it was not in the context of group work. Table 3 shows the five terms, which were adopted to analyse the data: Facial features, Eye contact and frowning, Gesture, Silence and Paralinguistics.

Language	
Verbal Behaviour	Non-verbal Behaviour
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paralinguistic features: <i>Laughter</i> <i>Tone of Voice</i> <i>Rate of speech</i> <i>Fillers</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facial features: <i>Smiling and nodding</i> <i>Lack of facial expression</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eye contact and frowning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gesture
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silence
Group Work	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role within group <i>Mono-cultural group</i> <i>Multicultural group</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction <i>Participation</i> <i>Non-participation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferred nationality mix 	

Table 3: Features of Language and Group work

The process of reading and re-reading the students' transcripts continued in order to identify the sub-headings of the features of verbal and non-verbal behaviour, by colour coding them and 'ticking' the number of occurrences, where appropriate. This enabled patterns to be seen and connections to be developed (Thomas, 2011a:171). Table 3 indicates the headings and subheadings which were colour coded as they appeared in the transcripts. A summary profile was then produced for each participant. The profiles, however, adopted the more formal classifications, which included all sub-divisions (Appendix C). This made it easier to identify what general features of verbal and non-verbal behaviour were referred to in each round of interviews. It also made it simpler and clearer to then cross-reference changes within the participant's awareness and use of those features. The profiles also recorded changes in the student's participation and role within their multicultural group encounters. Each profile was colour coded depending on the round of interviews to which it referred: Round 1, black; Round 2, orange; Round 3, green (Appendix C). This enabled connections to be made between the features of verbal and non-verbal behaviour and the participant's level of participation within the multicultural group work encounters. The coding made it easier to inform decisions on which data to include in Chapter 5. Features with the highest number of mentions across the participants were included.

It was during this tranche of the project that familiar, Western norms and beliefs are adopted in the interpretation and analysis of the empirical data. The initial analysis of coding and identifying themes are a necessary stage in the overall study as it provides a focus and springboard for the following tranche. The overall focus of the project is to explore a non-Western style of interpreting the data. Therefore, using *shi* as an analytical tool with which to interpret the empirical data is adopted. This is the second tranche and is where the researcher's reading and understanding of *shi* are used to analyse and provide a different orientation to interpreting multicultural group encounters. This leads to the

second tranche also adopting *shi* in order to explore and highlight differences it affords in orientation to a tutor's practice. This is achieved by following Jullien's (1995) example of presenting a hypothetical illustration and is where a conventional and *shi*-inflected practitioner's practice is compared and critiqued as they teach the same hypothetical lesson.

4.10 Reliability and Validity

It is argued by Thomas (2012; 2016) that reliability and validity are not of primary concern when undertaking a case study. He explains that because the concepts of validity and reliability have been "imported" from certain kinds of research their meaning in the case study is less apparent (Thomas, 2012: 63). Thomas qualifies this by explaining that reliability is primarily from a branch of psychology that is about testing people's mental faculties. Therefore, it is important that the tests are reliable and can provide accurate data on different occasions and in different circumstances. In a case study, however, expectations about reliability are reduced because there are no assumptions from the outset that if the inquiry were to be repeated by different people at a different time, similar findings would result. Thomas (2016:63-64) argues that:

Validity is similar to reliability when it comes to making judgements about its value in case study research...In many kinds of research – in those, for example, where probability samples are used - validity is about the extent to which a piece of research is finding out what the researcher intends to find out...[in case study research] there is no probability sample and there is often no idea what will transpire from the research thus the idea of validity is less meaningful

Therefore, rather than validity, Thomas adopts the terms of 'Rigour and Quality' (2016: 62-76). How rigour and quality are achieved in this project whilst at the same time addressing the notions of validity and reliability was by ensuring the interview questions were clear and easy to understand. Maximising opportunities for the postgraduate students to detail their participation within group work and how their awareness of and reaction to verbal and non-verbal behaviour, expressivity, contributed to their degree of interaction within multicultural group work was also important. Therefore, the participants' perceptions and their responses to features of expressivity within multicultural group work were foregrounded.

In collating the responses, one's own background, experiences and knowledge of living and working in different countries can influence the interpretation of the findings. Therefore, to add rigour to the study, "member checking" is used, which is when participants read transcripts of their interviews, return them to the researcher who then incorporates their feedback or corrections into the final document (Birt et al.:2016).

The interview questions were clear and easy to understand while opportunities were maximised which enabled the participants to detail their participation within their multicultural group encounter. The questions also enabled the students to express how their awareness of, and reaction to, verbal and non-verbal behaviour contributed to their degree of interaction within intercultural communication between and among fellow group members.

4.11 Ethics

There are several ethical considerations which arise in relation to this research: the participants' informed consent, their ability to opt out of the research, anonymity, confidentiality, and the perceived 'power' of the role of the researcher. In order to address these issues the ethical approval form was approved by the ethics committee within the university in which the study was conducted.

Before starting the research, acceptance of my email to invite the students to meet was considered initial consent. Consent was entirely voluntary and participants were made aware of the aims of the research, the process in which they would be involved, their level of participation and how the research would be used. At the end of this initial meeting and at the beginning of every subsequent face-to-face meeting with each of the participants, verbal consent was sought and recorded on the tapescript.

The participants' anonymity was guaranteed and the names of individuals, actual departments and any other identifiable information were changed to protect identities. Confidentiality required consideration as quotes and excerpts from the participants' interviews are presented in the thesis as an integral part of the findings. To address the participants' right to refuse to allow publication of any material they might consider would harm them in any way, after each interview they were given the transcripts to read and to check for accuracy. These were returned either with or without corrections. Oral

permission was sought from the participants for the use of the data in the context of the thesis or for any other teaching or research purposes. The participants were reminded at the start of each interview that they could withdraw from the research at any time. When the final interviews were concluded, the participants were thanked for their contributions.

The role of practitioner-researcher brings into question certain issues of power in relation to the postgraduate student participants. To help redress this issue and to reinforce their role as participants and not students, a verbatim transcription of their interviews was given to the participants for comment and or correction. From the outset of the study it was necessary to clarify for the participants that the research was related entirely to the Ed.D study. Assurances of anonymity and the opportunity for participants to withdraw at any time were given at the start of each round of interviews.

Van Maanen, (1988:2) talks about the “professional stranger” and as an educator within the same university in which the participants were studying one was probably perceived as an authority figure, which contributed to the relationship with them as that of ‘stranger’. There was an understanding that being perceived as a ‘stranger’ might be affected and perhaps adversely influence the interviews and how the participants talked about their experience and interpretation of expressivity. Nonetheless, one’s experience of having either worked and lived in the participants’ countries and how this insight might influence how their interpretations were understood and interpreted, could not be ignored. This concept of double sense-making is referred to by Giddens (in Flyvbjerg, 2001:32) as the “double hermeneutic” and explains that in the study of the natural world, “the world does not answer back”, however in the study of the social world the double hermeneutic takes account of two levels of self-interpretation at play:

First are the self-interpretations among those people the researchers study...The second aspect of the double hermeneutic concerns the researcher’s self-interpretations. Just as the people studied are part of a context, research itself constitutes a context and the researchers are a part of it. The researcher’s self-understanding and concepts do not exist in a vacuum, but must be understood in relation to this context. Context both determines and is determined by the researchers’ self-understanding (Giddens in Flyvbjerg, 2001: 32-33).

Usher’s (1996:19) explanation is more succinct and less detailed when he states that “in social research both the subject (the researcher) and the object (other people) of research

have the same characteristic of being interpreters or sense-seekers.” Therefore, although there was an awareness of being perceived as an authority figure, experience of living and working in countries such as the Middle East, China, Africa made it difficult not to influence the interpretations of the participants’ interpretations because “it is impossible to separate oneself as a researcher from the historical and cultural context that defines one’s interpretative framework” (Gadamer in Usher, 1996:19). Therefore, in this study, one viewed oneself as being researcher as participant rather than as a professional stranger.

This chapter started by summarising how multicultural encounters have been theorised to date, which relates to research question 1. This was followed by an outline and rationale for the two inter-related parts of this research project. It demonstrated how the adoption of Hofstede’s (1980; 1991) Western classifications of individualism and collectivism and Hall’s (1977) Western classification of High and Low Context distinction provided the collection of rich data. This data will be used for the following tranche of this project where it moves away from Western theories towards an ancient Chinese style of thinking and adopts aspects of *shi* to analyse the students’ data. This, in turn, leads to a hypothetical situation being created, one on which the focus is the practitioner. Adopting a hypothetical situation of the same teaching session avoided the issue of the practitioners’ being misled as to the purposes of their initial participation in the study, which was to discover what they noticed and how they encouraged interaction when their students worked in multicultural groups.

In order to compare how *shi* would influence a practitioner’s approach and practice, an illustrative example will be used in Chapter 6 to compare the planning and teaching of the same ‘hypothetical’ lesson by a conventional practitioner and a *shi*-inflected one. This relates to research question 3.

The overall discussion in this chapter attempted to show that by adopting concepts of ancient Chinese thinking, *shi*, as an analytical tool, greater insight is afforded not only into students’ interactions within multicultural groups but also for wider educational practice. The introduction of a different orientation to thinking about a particular context allows this thesis to argue for:

- a) a relational perspective that re-dresses the silence with regard to the position of the tutor, and
- b) draws upon Chinese traditions that afford new possibilities for thinking about educational practice
 - a. that enable a rethinking about educational practice in multicultural contexts
 - b. that re-frame thinking away from performativity, with its concern with effectiveness, towards educational effectivity.

The following chapter adopts concepts of *shi* as a tool to analyse the students' data. The data from the students' first multicultural encounter are compared with their final multicultural group encounter, which relates to research question 3. From Chapter 5, rather than reference being made to verbal and non-verbal behaviour, the preferred term 'features of expressivity' or simply 'expressivity' is adopted.

Part three: The gap

When it is obvious that the goals cannot be reached, don't adjust the goals, adjust the action steps – Confucius

During the initial analysis of the data it became obvious that there was a fundamental gap in the literature: a vast amount of literature is concerned with the students. Empirical studies repeatedly demonstrate that the problems associated with a lack of interaction among host and in-host country students lie with them. To address this, the empirical data from this project is used as a springboard from which to explore how *shi* can be used as an analytical tool to inform a practitioners' approach to practice, which addresses research question 4 and is discussed in chapter 6.

Chapter 5: Applying Concepts of Shi (勢)

5.1 The Manipulation of Dispositions

Rather than adopt the familiar Western understanding and thinking in the discussion of the data, a different orientation and thinking are adopted and are based on the ancient Chinese concepts of *shi* as discussed and explained by Jullien (1995; 2004) in Chapter 3. The main concepts to be adopted relate to ancient Chinese understanding and use of reality and efficacy, and how this understanding influences the use of strategy to identify dispositions and successfully achieve the potential of a situation, *shi*. As these concepts are comparatively new to higher education and completely new to Education as a subject area, they afford new possibilities for thinking about educational practice.

Over the past couple of decades the findings from studies which have focussed on the broad area of intercultural communication and group work have basically remained unchanged. Any reported changes have been subtle ones (Montgomery 2009; Spencer-Oatey and Dauber, 2017; Mittelmeier et al., 2018). Consequently, the cause for concern which was originally reported by Volet and Ang (1998) remains and is the lack of interaction between host and in-host country students as they work together in groups. As the fields of intercultural communication and multicultural group work are vast, the focus of this study is limited to the influence, awareness, use and understanding that expressivity has on the experience of postgraduate students as they work in multicultural groups over a programme of study.

In higher education, one of the purposes of including multicultural group work as part of pedagogy is to enable students to share their experiences, perspectives and previous knowledge in order to complete the task set by the practitioner. Therefore, working together in multicultural groups helps and encourages students to become culturally sensitive and more aware of their own and other cultures (Popova et al., 2012). However, at the start of an academic year, postgraduate students can find themselves working in groups not only with complete strangers but also with students from a different culture to their own. Initially, there can be social tensions between group members which could be due to a lack of shared understanding about one another's backgrounds and experiences (Mittelmeier et al., 2018:150). Finding themselves in a situation like this, most group

members adopt strategies in an attempt to interact and communicate with the other members of their group. Similarities can be drawn between postgraduate students joining a multicultural group for the first time and soldiers joining a battle. Both want to succeed in what they are engaged: interact and participate in the group work; a successful outcome in the battle, respectively. However, before the soldiers go into battle, their leader has worked in the background to assess and examine the situation in order to identify the potential for success. S/he does this by considering all the dispositions of the situation in which the battle will take place, such as the terrain, the number of soldiers on the opposing side, the weaponry, the weather, and identifies the ones which are most likely to help the potential s/he has identified to be achieved. His/her assessment of the dispositions may involve the leader having to manipulate one or two in such a way that it increases the potential of the situation to be achieved. For example, the leader might simply move his/her troops onto higher, firmer ground in order to ensure their advantage. The leader's manipulation of the dispositions is undertaken well in advance of the battle, "upstream", not during the battle: his/her "intervention allows effect from a distance, instead of waiting for an effect from confrontation (Shrivastava and Persson, 2014: 48). It is the careful detection and analysis of the dispositions at the upstream stage that sets in motion the potential of the situation (*shi*) to be achieved.

The two main notions in Chinese strategy are the notion of a situation and the notion of potential. The former is how a situation "develops and takes shape before our eyes" in relation to its dispositions, while the latter "counterbalances" the potential (*shi*) of that situation and "can be made to play" to one's advantage (Jullien, 2004:17). In order to gain from the situation, the skill is in being vigilant and flexible because the potential of the situation can only be detected, not determined in advance, as it changes all the time (Jullien, 2004:22). So in the context of multicultural group work there is potential for successful intercultural exchanges among and between group members (the notion of the situation). The concept of dispositions, which might hinder or enhance the potential for success include: the use of English as the *lingua franca*; understanding the requirements of the task; the role of the group members and the composition of the cultures within the group. In preparation before the scheduled lesson, the practitioner needs to consider the dispositions and manipulate the ones s/he considers to be the most favourable to ensure the potential (*shi*) is achieved (the notion of potential). However, it is mainly the students' experience of multicultural group work that is discussed in the following section. The

discussion focuses on the differences between the initial and the final group work as they represent the beginning and end of the participants' programmes of study and highlight the influence expressivity plays on the participants' multicultural group experiences.

5.2 The multicultural group work experience

Throughout a programme of study, practitioners generally try to ensure there is a mix of nationalities within each group. However, due to the high number of Chinese students registered on each programme in this study, it often happened that the home and European students were the only non-Chinese members of their groups. For the participants in this study it was the first time any of them had experience of working in a multicultural group. Their undergraduate programmes of study had been mono-cultural so although group work was not unfamiliar to them, the multicultural aspect of it was. The practitioner's expectation of students working together in multicultural groups is that they work collaboratively, share their ideas and experiences so as to complete the task which their practitioner had set for them.

The students' data were collected at different points during their taught part of their postgraduate programmes: the beginning¹, the middle², and the end³; the inclusion of a number in superscript at the end of each extract identifies the point on the programme at which the interview was recorded. The practitioners were interviewed once, which was at the end of the taught part of their respective programmes. Extracts from their interviews are included only to provide their perspective on points made by the students. The main focus of the empirical data is on the students' interaction and participation in multicultural group work.

5.2.1 The first round of interviews

The first interviews with the students were conducted in week four of the 15-week autumn semester and after they had experienced being part of a multicultural group for the first time. The extracts indicate that it was a challenging and emotional experience which was compounded by the students' adopting their cultural norms and understandings to interpret the expressivity of others. This leads to group members experiencing feelings of frustration and anxiety but also to feelings of exclusion.

One student explained that when her fellow Chinese students have difficulty explaining something and they do not know how to describe it they feel excluded as they are

stuck there with some native speakers who don't like to talk to us when we don't know what the question is, what we should ask, what we should talk (Yana from Yunan¹)

While another Chinese student considered the members of her first group, who were mainly Indian students, to be serious because they did not smile, which adversely affected her participation in the group:

If I will not see a smile on their face [Indian students], I will not go on. I do not know whether or not they [Indian students] feel impatient with us [Chinese students] (Sharon from Shanghai¹)

Similarly, the Home and European students found the initial multicultural group work experience difficult:

They [Chinese students] agreed with what I said and what I told them to do but no feedback and no own opinions, so it was really hard to work with them (Gemma from Germany¹)

I just wanted someone to bounce off or somebody that actually knew what they were doing, to help me along but I felt very solo at first and I was like for goodness sake somebody say something (Susan from Stirling¹)

Gemma from Germany interprets the Chinese students' apparent agreement with their understanding what she had said and asked them to do. She also interpreted their use of silence as being negative and not wanting to participate which caused her to experience feelings of frustration. Susan from Stirling also experienced feelings of frustration by misinterpreting the Chinese students' use of silence as a reluctance to participate within the group.

The extracts suggest that there is not much collaboration and interaction within the initial group work. Being privileged to view multicultural group work through the eyes of the student provides insight into how challenging and emotional the experience is for them, taking into account that focus of their experience was limited to expressivity.

From the practitioners' perspective, while they are aware of a lack of participation among the group members, they appear to interpret that as being related to language.

It was mostly Chinese students and they don't participate as quickly as some of the European students and I think it's often to do with them wanting to know for sure or be confident in what they're saying, you know, that it's correct (ET).

The students were not prepared and I recognised it wasn't because they were lazy, it wasn't because they didn't care about what they were doing, it was because they were totally baffled and at sea and actually feeling quite vulnerable (MT)

The practitioners were aware that not all of the group members were participating or interacting in their multicultural groups. The practitioners appear to have had encountered similar situations when teaching multicultural groups: "...it's *often* to do with them wanting to know..." (ET) and "...I *recognised* it wasn't because they were lazy..." (MT). However, it would appear that neither practitioner drew on their previous experience to assess their new teaching situation beforehand, nor identified the necessary dispositions, which might have increased the potential (*shi*) for successful interaction to be achieved among group members.

The interview extracts suggest an imbalance within the group. There appears to be a lack of flow of ideas between the Chinese, Home and European group members, which interfered with participation and interaction within the group. In Chinese thinking maintaining fluidity and flow are essential for *shi* to be achieved, that is the reason the 'leader' or practitioner removes as many obstacles as possible upstream. It would appear this did not occur as there is a plethora of obstacles preventing the flow: the composition of cultures within the group; a lack of understanding one another's cultural norms in terms of group work conventions; misinterpretation of expressivity. Consequently, not only was there an imbalance in interact and participation within the group discussion, the extracts also suggest undertones of upset and frustration among all of the group members. Jullien (1995:195) warns of this when he describes the dangers of imbalanced situations:

The more one becomes committed to an impractical path, [the more] inevitable is the distress that follows

and goes on to explain that "resentment" is often the emotion associated with imbalanced situations. Although it may not be the emotion expressed in the multicultural group work context, the initial group work experience gave rise to other negative emotions:

*My first experience of working with Chinese students was **horrible**, nobody did anything and I ended up submitting just my thoughts (Ruth from Romania¹)*

*Initially I had to learn to get the Chinese students to participate in the group work quickly because I realised I was a one-man band [she was the only non-Chinese member of her group] and this **terrified** me and I was **angry*** (Susan from Stirling¹)

*I thought the Indian student was rather too frank and he could have expressed what he said **in another way that will make me feel comfortable*** (Sharon from Shanghai¹)

*I felt **terrible** when the other Chinese students sit with straight face and not saying anything* (Yana from Yunan¹)

Applying *shi* to the initial multicultural group work experience leads one to wonder why the Home and European students felt ‘horrible’ and ‘angry’. Perhaps it was because they were more concerned with the Western goal of completing and getting the task done regardless of what they had to do to complete it because completing the task was their end goal. Achieving goals is part of the “Western thought framework” in which the “means-end relationship” is included and in multicultural group work the Home and European members seem to “march on” regardless with their “[Westerners] eyes fixed upon it [goal of completing the task]” (Jullien, 2004:32). In ancient Chinese thinking there is no means-end point of view, instead Chinese scholars endeavour to exploit the situation by finding the best way to profit from it.

The initial multicultural group work experience lost its potential [*shi*] to complete the task through collaborative group interaction and participation. On the one hand, the Home and European students demonstrated the rigidity associated with Western goal-oriented characteristics by focussing on the completion of the task, even if they had to complete it themselves. On the other hand, some of the Chinese students tried to participate in the initial group work by strategically adapting their expressivity to suit Western norms, thus demonstrating the flexibility of water which “stands opposed to rigidity” (Jullien, 1995:33).

I use gestures when I speak English because that is what people do when they speak English (Sara from Shanxi¹)

Because I use more facial expressions like smiling the native speakers spoke more to me and asked me questions (Yana from Yunan¹)

Overall, the initial multicultural group work context reveals how the efficacy and potential of the situation (*shi*) of the initial multicultural group work were not **achieved**

because the dispositions in play within the situation had not been addressed, upstream, by the practitioners beforehand. This appears to have exacerbated the situation in that there was little room for flexibility nor for a re-balancing of interactivity. It would seem reasonable to assume that this also contributed to the potential for group interaction not being achieved, thus highlighting the importance of the role of the practitioner in creating successful interaction within multicultural group work.

5.2.2 The second round of interviews

This round of interviews was conducted in week 13 of the 15-week autumn semester. The focus of the interviews was to discover the extent to which the participants were aware of changes in their own and others' expressivity and the specific features which they considered enhanced or hindered participation and interaction within multicultural group work. At this stage in their programme of study, the participants had experienced being members of both mono and multicultural groups.

This round of interviews appeared to reveal a transitional stage where the participants, by observing others' use of expressivity enabled them to compare those features to their own. For example, the Chinese participants' observations suggest that their use of features of expressivity depended on whether they worked in mono or multi-cultural groups. In groups which comprise all Chinese students, Sharon and Gail explained that the Chinese, "*do not use eye contact*" (Sharon from Shanghai²) and "*do not tend to smile*" (Gail from Guangdong²). Sharon summed it up by explaining that when she is speaking to other Chinese students, "*the rule is that if I can make you understand, I don't need to use gestures*" (Sharon from Shanghai²). In multicultural groups, Yana from Yunan², observed that the Home and European students: "*are unfamiliar with silence and do not know how to react to it*". She did not, however, say whether this influenced her use of it or not. The Europeans commented and compared their use of features of expressivity to the Home students, for example, Gemma from Germany² noticed that, "*the Scottish girls use eye contact when they are speaking to you*" and Ruth from Romania² that, "*the native speaker I sit beside in class makes a lot of eye contact,*" however, Ruth² was aware that she used, "*a lot more gestures than the native speaker*". The Home students' comments referred to differences in the verbal and non-verbal behaviour between and among other nationalities, for example, Susan from Stirling² noticed that, "*the Japanese, Indian and Taiwanese members of my group don't use their hands or gestures*" while Gwen from

Glasgow² observed that, “*Sophie [from France] uses a lot of gestures when she’s speaking whereas the Chinese only use their hands if they are trying to convey something they can’t do verbally.*”

The participants’ comments showed that by observing others’ use of features of expressivity, they had begun to understand more clearly and explore the reactions to why the different features of expressivity were being used. For example, in Gwen’s comment she demonstrated an understanding of two different uses of gesture: one as an extension of speaking and the other when trying to explain something. The participants’ interpretations of the different features of expressivity they observed and experienced in their groups provided a deeper insight into how their own understanding of expressivity contributed to group participation both positively and negatively:

If I frown, that means, I don't understand what they are saying and maybe they will frown as well and think, 'oh, she's not understand', then he will stop and ask me and explain it to me (Sara from Shanxi ²)

She goes on to explain how changes in expressivity start to make her feel included:

At the very beginning of this semester every time people will meet, they will ask, 'how are you' or something like that but now they will just say, 'what's up?' Just make the sentence shorter and make me feel that people are getting familiar with you and you are not a stranger to them.

Susan from Stirling² used her initial group work experience as group leader to help her prepare for following multicultural group work:

I was definitely prepared for the almost inevitable but it was okay...like there was one particular girl in the group and she kept saying, 'I don't understand' but I was ready for it so I used all my hand gestures and my smiles and all that so it was just mainly her but it was quite helpful because em the bigger character in the group called Rose em she really helped me as in she was very vocal but if I was ever struggling with this other girl who was like 'Oh, I don't understand' she would very quickly talk to her in Chinese and then get back to me so it was quite it was quite a good relationship I had there whereas in the other group everybody was scared and nobody was really talking to me

According to ancient Chinese thinking, the “unfolding of time” allows the relation of forces to eventually gravitate “to one’s own advantage” (Jullien, 2004: 50). This “indirect efficacy” (Jullien, 2004:50) is observed from the interview extracts and appear

to show the process of ‘unfolding’ in progress and that the time in-between multicultural group work encounters was “not sterile” but was the beginning of interactions being transformed silently (Jullien, 2011: 150)

The practitioners noticed changes or tensions within the cohort they taught. Whilst one practitioner became aware of an issue, she did not elaborate on whether she address it:

I think there is a bit of a tension not necessarily always negative but always there's the group and there's the Chinese students yeah and some of them obviously don't want to or can't mix as readily either in that it's less of a problem (ET)

Whereas the other practitioner, who also noticed that the Chinese students were not interacting and participating in their multicultural groups observed that:

There's something not right here because students aren't participating in class, they're sitting passively listening and recording what we're saying without interacting and this isn't a good learning experience experiencing (MT).

Therefore, in an attempt to enhance the students’ learning experience, she decided she should not assume the students understood everything she said nor that they knew what was expected of them. She address this by providing them more explicit information regarding how to answer exam questions:

...I decided to teach them in a different way in seminar and not to assume that they knew what an exam question should look like, not to assume that they understood what we were looking for in an exam but to actually give them detailed and practical examples and instead of saying oh you can't tell somebody that an exam answer should be so long, recognise that for these students some sort of guidance was necessary because they were totally in the dark and saying to them well 500 words is about appropriate actually helped them... the good news is the results in that exam were far better than the cohort the year before (MT).

By adjusting some of the dispositions related to the context of answer an exam question, this practitioner appears to have increased the potential of a successful outcome being achieved (shi). The other practitioner only indicates she is aware of tension but does not mention whether she tried to address it in this or other classes:

I think there is a bit of a tension not necessarily always negative but always there's the group and there's the Chinese students, yeah, and some of them obviously don't want to or can't mix as readily either in that it's less of a problem

Overall, the second round of interviews appears to indicate that subtle changes to the students' use of expressivity increased the potential of the situation (*shi*) of multicultural group work being achieved. The extracts suggest that by the end of the first semester, the students were interacting and feeling more comfortable with one another and the Chinese students were starting to feel included.

In terms of *shi*-inflected thinking, the exemplification of one of the practitioners in changing her 'normal' approach to teaching indicates an engagement in the upstream and downstream process of efficacy. Although the example is not related to multicultural group work, the practitioner increased the potential of her students to do better in their exams by adopting and adapting her teaching style, upstream, and then observed how the outcome "unfolded" downstream by comparing the grades to the previous year (Jullien 1995). This is an example of how *shi* can be applied to teaching and learning.

5.2.3 The third and final round of interviews

The final group work experience indicates that the potential (*shi*) for group interaction was achieved more often than during the initial group experience. However it was a gradual process and appears to have been because of the strategies adopted by the students rather than by the practitioner. The following discussion provides insight into how the strategic use of expressivity contributed to *shi* being achieved.

As their studies progressed, the postgraduate students became accustomed to the 'terrain' of working in multicultural groups, hence their level of participation changed and they incorporate additional strategies into their interactions within their groups. The Chinese group members, in particular, adapted and adopted strategies and resembled what Sun Tzu (in Mondschein, 2016:26) describes as being like water when it, "matches its flow to fit the landscape in order to find its way through the path of least resistance." However, after the initial group work experience, the Chinese participants continued to adapt and adjust their expressivity as they 'shadow-boxed' and mimicked the expressivity of the Home and European group members:

[i]f you know your enemy and you know yourself, your victory will not stand in doubt (Sun Tzu in Mondschein, 2016:27).

Thus, as the Chinese participants became more accustomed to one another's English accents and by strategically adjusting their expressivity to fit in with that adopted by the Home and European students, the Chinese students eventually became full members of the group. The adjustments to their expressivity were achieved by them watching and learning how Home and European students interact with one another and how they use expressivity as part of that interaction.

When I'm speaking to Westerners I try to use more Westerners' gesture which I have learned when I'm watching them talking to their friends (Sharon from Shanghai³).

This subtle change in expressivity appears to have enhanced the potential [*shi*] of whole group participation and interaction as they worked together to complete a task. However, Chinese students still tended to use nodding as a strategy when they wanted to prevent loss of face. It was a form of expressivity that they used throughout their studies when they wanted to end a conversation or simply appear to understand what was being said:

Sometimes if I want to finish that conversation very fast, sometimes I'm not quite understand what he or she is talking about I would just nod. For example, the Glasgow people in class sometimes I just can't understand what they are talking about (Sara from Shanxi³).

The use of silence was a common strategy used by the Chinese participants throughout their programmes of study; however, it was one which the Home and European participants had never encountered before. During the initial multicultural group work experiences, it caused some anxiety but this lessened as the cohort became more familiar with one another.

I probably feel a bit more relaxed when I'm talking to Chinese people because I feel their understanding has got better. I still speak slower but I feel I don't have to pronounce absolutely everything. I'm probably not as awkward with silences or anything like that and if there is a silence, I don't feel the need to talk all the time (Gwen from Glasgow³)

Initially, the Chinese use of silence made Gwen feel uncomfortable which she reacted to by adopting her own strategy of speaking more. By the end of her studies, as she became more comfortable with the use of silence, she altered her initial strategy of feeling she had to fill the silence with her voice by respecting the silence. In doing this, she provided

space for the Chinese group members to participate as she became a less dominant member of the group.

The difference in efficacy and potential (*shi*) of collaborative multicultural group work between the initial and final group work is the level of flexibility the participants demonstrate in their use of expressivity. The Home and European participants were aware that certain forms of expressivity enabled them to be understood by the members of their group while other forms encouraged the group members to contribute to the discussion. The Home and European students appeared to use the same expressivity throughout their programmes of study when they worked in a multicultural group. The Chinese participants, manipulated their expressivity by adapting and adjusting it to the expressivity of the Home and European group members they worked with. Their flexibility appears to have created harmony within the group, thus the propensity (*shi*) was achieved more frequently in the final group tasks than during the initial group ones.

5.2.3.1 The strategic use of expressivity

The strategic use of expressivity contributed to the gradual increase in interaction within the multicultural groups. The following discussion highlights how strategic the Chinese group members are in their use of expressivity and how this helped them to feel part of the group. It discusses the different manner in which expressivity is used between the Home, European and Chinese students. It also appears to show that it is the Chinese group members who adapt and adopt their expressivity to 'fit in' with the expressivity used by the Home and European students.

Comparing the first and last multicultural group work experiences, the dispositions in the initial group work were not addressed: Chinese students did not understand the task; all the group members had different expectations as to their role within the group and group members misinterpreted one another's expressivity. This led to a lack of participation among the Chinese group members and exasperation among the Home and European ones. However, in the final multicultural group, there was less exasperation among the Home and European members which could be due to their applying features of their expressivity, which they knew ensured they would be understood by the Chinese members of their group:

Everything I say it again in a different way so different words, using facial expressions, my hands everything to underline it and make sure they've [Chinese]

understood the message and I wait for more reaction from them (Gemma from Germany³)

The Chinese students, on the other hand, participated more in group work and they appeared to find ways to manipulate the familiar context of the multicultural group work to their advantage in order to achieve potential (*shi*):

To begin, the Europeans were frowning and had an unhappy face because they are not confident with us. We [Chinese] did not participate and the Europeans did not know our [Chinese] capability. Now they know our capability and they changed and smile a lot and they tend to ask our opinions. The group discussion was better (Sharon from Shanghai³)

The Chinese students participated more in group work and achieved this without the Home and European members noticing that while they facilitated the interaction by speaking slower and adopting the role of group leader, it was the Chinese students who enhanced the interaction and increased the harmony by adopting and adapting their expressivity to match that of the Home or European member of their group. The Chinese participants realised that the Home and European students reacted to strategies which they themselves used and were familiar with: their norm. For example, the strategy Susan from Stirling used to help relax herself as well as the other group members was to laugh and tell jokes. So, when she was in a group of Chinese students who used similar strategies she responded positively:

If you said something even if it wasn't funny really, you know, but they were 'ha, ha, it was the funniest thing they'd [Chinese members] ever heard so that made it easier, it was a nicer atmosphere but a lot of the time it was silent still but we could break the silence with chat (Susan from Stirling³)

By being flexible and by adopting Susan's strategy of laughter, it was the Chinese students who helped to create the "nicer atmosphere" and contributed to more harmony within the multicultural group. They used expressivity to their advantage and to feel part of the group.

5.2.3.2 Different uses of strategies

All group members in the study adopted strategies to enrich the group work experience. However, the strategies they adopted in order to interact differed. For the Home and European students, their strategies were used to enable the Chinese students to understand them, particularly when it was related to a group assessment. The Home and European

participants' use of strategies was predominantly used not necessarily to ensure all the group members participated in group interaction but to make sure the Chinese members of the group understood what the Home and European students were saying to them and advising them on how to complete the task.

The Chinese group members' use of strategies was more subtle. They had studied the Home and European students' expressivity and had assimilated it into their own expressivity in order to be accepted by the group. They also wanted the Home and European group members to feel comfortable having Chinese students as part of their group. However, the Chinese students also wanted to ensure that the groups they were accepted into had the students who they considered had very good language skills or had received very good grades. Identifying and manipulating these dispositions increased the Chinese students' potential [*shi*] of being accepted into the desired group. This required the student to strategically work out beforehand which students had received good grades and which student's had a higher English proficiency level than theirs. This was strategically worked out upstream so that when the time came to choose or be accepted into a group, the upstream planning advantaged the Chinese student and increased the potential of being in the right group. However, it also suggests some long term strategic planning by some of the Chinese students. The students knew that by the middle of the second semester, they could choose their own groups. The subtlety of this is that it was advantageous for the student, not necessarily for the group. The Chinese participants saw the potential in the multicultural group and manipulated the dispositions they identified in order to achieve the potential which was favourable to them.

I choose to sit with some people from India because he would do the layout of the report because the layout is important...because some of us our first language is not English some people will read the report and then to understand it...a Scottish girl she will finalise and then edit it (Gail from Guangdong³)

In terms of *shi*, the Chinese students appear more strategic than the Home and European students. They seem to adopt similar strategies to those previously discussed in the political domain, position and power. In order to have the advantage in dealing with the Home and European students in group work situations, the Chinese participants adapted their expressivity to suit the individual Home and European student they worked with. Therefore, by constantly adapting their expressivity to that of the Home and European

members of their group and avoiding alienating them, the Chinese participants gradually increased their power within multicultural group work and by so doing manipulated it to their benefit (Jullien, 2004:27).

Some Chinese participants also used the Western characteristic of bragging to their advantage. The German participant was not reticent in informing her classmates how well she had done in her individual assignment. She enjoyed the accolades bestowed upon her and seemed to welcome the increased popularity her grade afforded particularly among the Chinese students:

I did really well in the individual assignment so the Asian students all want me in their groups for the next group assessment (Gemma from Germany²)

The Chinese students were interested in knowing which students in their cohort received the good grades because they understood that if one of those students were in the same multicultural group, it would increase their potential for a better grade. This suggests that the Chinese participants use potential (*shi*) to their own advantage by identifying and manipulating dispositions within the multicultural group work context which can contribute to their success in achieving a good grade. It could be argued that they are not relying on “the potential inherent in the situation” (Jullien, 2004:16), rather, they are forcing a pre-determined plan on the situation, thus *shi* cannot be achieved. However, having a pre-determined plan comes under the Western characteristic of the means-end relationship. The overall strategies adopted by the Chinese indicate that although they detected dispositions within the multicultural group situation as precisely as possible and identified the ones which were the most favourable to them, it did not guarantee *shi* was achieved. If the Chinese students are to be advantaged by the situation, then they should not try to orchestrate the situation but leave it to play in their favour (Jullien, 2004:26).

In the final multicultural group work, the members adapted their strategic interactions in order to understand and correctly interpret each other’s expressivity. Each group member adapted or adopted strategies which she knew were successful. For example, the expressivity the Home and European group members adopted was to emphasise what they were saying and was to ensure the Chinese members of the group understood and knew what they were being asked to do. Strategic use of expressivity was also used to encourage participation in group discussions. For example, the strategic use of expressivity by the Chinese students enabled them to feel they were accepted as part of

the group and thus allowed them to feel included. Consequently, the Chinese students adapted their expressivity to include more features which were familiar and used by the Western students. This appears to be part of their strategy to be accepted into the group by the Home and European members.

The Home and European participants seemed to apply the same expressivity throughout the taught part of the programme and particularly that which they knew increased their being understood by the in-host members of their group: speaking slowly, repeating information. The Chinese participants, on the other hand, adapted their expressivity to suit the Home or European members of the group. By anticipating future multicultural group work situations and by consciously or unconsciously positioning themselves within upstream conditions (Jullien, 1995), all members of the groups experienced a more harmonious final multicultural group encounter. This led to more group interaction being achieved and enabled group members benefit from the potential (*shi*) of the situation.

5.3 The Group Leader

The group leaders of the multicultural groups were the Home and European students. The following discussion will use aspects of *shi* to explain why it was the Home and European participants and not the Chinese ones who became the group leaders of the multicultural groups.

In initial multicultural groups, it was the first time the participants had experience of working with students from a different culture to their own. The interaction and participation was limited mainly due to participants having their own expectations of what constitutes group work, which they based on their previous experience in their home countries (Spencer-Oatey and Dauber, 2017). Throughout their programmes of study, the Home and European participants often found they were the only non-Chinese member of their group and their misinterpretation of the Chinese students' expressivity contributed to them emerging as group leader. When the postgraduate students found themselves working with students from other cultures, it was a new and challenging experience for them. With no preparation of what multicultural group work entailed, it was up to individuals to find ways of coping and overcoming any challenges they faced; however, some of the challenges impacted on others. For example, the Chinese students were uncertain whether they had understood the requirements of the tasks, which required them

to concentrate on trying to make sure they had understood. However, while they were engaged in this activity, their apparent lack of expressivity was interpreted by the Home and European students to mean that they were disinterested in participating in the group which was far from the truth but is indicative how misinterpretation of expressivity can adversely affect group interaction. In Chinese thinking, a lack of expressivity is not associated with a lack of interest in the activity, “the precept of non-action does not lead to disengagement” (Jullien, 2004:84). This misinterpretation contributed to the Home and European students becoming the group leaders, a role they adopted for all their multicultural group experiences throughout their programmes of study.

Based on their undergraduate experience of group work, there was an assumption among the Home and European students that all the multicultural group members would participate in the group discussion and would accept responsibility for completing a part of the assessed task. However, communication started to break down with the group leader misinterpreting the Chinese students’ use of ‘yeh, yeh, yeh,’ The group leader misunderstood the Chinese student’s use of “yeh, yeh, yeh” for agreement and understanding which soon led to her feeling:

frustrated because when I asked a question I had to also prompt them, so it was like, ‘Okay, did you understand?’, and then they’d be like ‘yeh, yeh, yeh’ but they didn’t understand (Susan from Stirling¹).

Initially, the Home and European students believed that everyone in the group understood what was to be done and what each member’s responsibilities were. However, during the group discussion when the Home and European student were met with silence and a lack of (apparent) communication, both verbally, apart from the ‘yeh, yeh, yeh’, and non-verbally, in the form of no facial expressions nor gestures from most of the Chinese members in their group, they assumed the Chinese members of the group did not want to participate. The Home and European students were also aware there was no group leader so they either assumed the role or the role was assumed for them. The latter was what happened to Susan from Stirling. In the initial, multicultural group, Susan was the only native English speaking group member and with no previous experience of Marketing she was surprised to discover she was perceived as group leader:

I suddenly got put in the position where I’d become a leader of this group, never done marketing before in my life, and I had to, you know, so you were given instructions, and all these people who had done business degrees, marketing

degrees, you know, so I'd say 'right, so I understand it this way', but I was waiting for somebody to say 'well, actually I've done marketing before, and the marketing strategy is..' (Susan from Stirling¹)

The other Home student, Gwen from Glasgow, was also the only native English speaker in her group. She assumed the role of group leader because she felt that as the Chinese members of her group were not talking that nothing was getting done so she felt someone had to take charge and direct the group:

They'll [Chinese members of the group] just kind of sit really quietly and you're just like okay we really need to do something and it's just like 'oh god, okay' we're not doing this right so I started telling them, you do this and...
(Gwen from Glasgow¹)

For one of the European students, it was on the recommendation of a friend who informed Ruth from Romania that Chinese students respond well to being 'told' what to do. And for Gemma from Germany it was her dominant personality of needing to lead that led her to be the group leader. In her final interview she reflected on her multicultural group work experiences and realised that regardless the composition of the group she needed to lead it:

I figured I need to have the control also with the other Europeans (Gemma from Germany³)

Perhaps because she was the group leader, she was happy to rise to the new challenges each multicultural group presented.

5.3.1 The responsibilities of being a multicultural group leader

The role of group leader in a multicultural group differs from being the group leader of a mono-cultural group. The Home and European students discovered that it resulted in more work as they felt responsible for the editing and pooling together of group assessment tasks. For the Chinese students, not being a group leader was seen as providing a situation from which they might benefit. The discussion that follows suggests that being the group leader is not necessarily an indication of power.

In Eastern thinking, one of the strengths of the "ruler", the group leader, is through his/her "enlightened" position (Jullien, 1995, 49). In the case of the multicultural groups the Home and European group member demonstrated confidence in their language proficiency and understood the requirements of the task. Perhaps this is a reason why the Chinese members were content having them as the leader, particularly for those

multicultural groups which were group assessed. Gaining a good grade contributed to the group leader being viewed positively as she was viewed as being able to provide acceptable “rewards” (Jullien, 1995: 51) for her group.

As stated earlier it suited some of the Chinese participants when the role of group leader was assumed by the Home and European students. It might be argued that as the Chinese students believed the Home and European participants projected confidence due to their being familiar with English being spoken with a native speaker accent and their understanding of what was required to complete the task, a Home or European participant would be the obvious choice for group leader. Conversely, as the Chinese group members appeared less confident in their understanding of what they were expected to do to complete the set task and appeared apprehensive and reticent to participate within the group therefore, they would not make good group leaders. Chinese scholars, however, see a different picture.

According to Chinese thinking, in the greater scheme of things, the first multicultural group work experience revealed dispositions whose tendencies for the potential (*shi*) of the multicultural group work provided important information regarding their development and offered a dependable basis for success. For example, the diversity of cultures within the groups, the set tasks for the group work. Attending to these dispositions when the lesson is being prepared increases the affordance for students to confidently interact and learn from one another and to share their cultural related ideas, beliefs and experiences as they complete the task. Therefore, examining and analysing dispositions at their “embryonic” stage is vital because this is the stage in the process where “the fullness of actualization is already latent” (Jullien, 1995:223). However, by not being the group leader, the Chinese students may have exposed a very different strategy. Perhaps being the group leader was a disposition, which the Chinese student identified as not conducive to their individual potential which ultimately was to pass the assessment. Therefore, not being the group leader enabled them to simply be a member of the group, which they considered provided the better outcome and potential which was favourable to them. Accordingly, Chinese thinking believes that the influence you gain over other people is:

due solely to the fact that you know how to make the most of the on-going process: you rely on the determining factors [dispositions] that you have

managed to detect in the situation and leave them to play in your favour (Jullien, 2004:26).

Therefore in multicultural groups the Home and European students assumed the role of group leader but it was a position which sat uneasily on most of their shoulders. Normally, with the role of group leader would come position and power (Jullien, 1995) but applying *shi* to the situation of group leader in this context, it would appear it was the Chinese group members who were the winners by “knowing not to act” (Jullien, 2004:86) and not to assume the role of group leader when Home and European students were in their groups. The reason for this was that by manipulating the dispositions of each multicultural group, the Chinese students were able to gain from the situation by strategically choosing groups in which they knew someone who had received a good grade or was perceived to have a better level of written English would edit their writing or even re-write it for them. Nonetheless, considering the strategic choice of which group to be placed in by the Chinese students indicates an important characteristic of being a good ruler, which is to find someone else to do the work for which you reap the rewards. In the case of group assessment it is a good grade:

the art of a ruler lies simply by getting everyone else to contribute towards the maintenance of his own position – not by committing himself to the endeavour but by getting others to toil on his behalf (Jullien, 2004:49) .

In the multicultural group work context, the group leader replaces the ‘ruler’, thus one would assume h/she delegates the workload. In reality, the Home and European group leaders do a lot more of the work:

I learned a lot working with Chinese because I have to do all the work. It's so hard rewriting texts and telling everyone to do it again (Gemma from Germany¹)

I said to people [Chinese group members], ‘right if you could write that bit and if you could write that bit, great’ and then when it all came back to me I was like ‘oh my god, I’ve got two days to rework this’ (Susan from Stirling³)

The Chinese students were strategic in their choice of group members. They ensured the group consisted of members who could increase the potential of the situation (*shi*) by editing and in some cases rewriting the paperwork related to the task. The practitioners

are aware of the unequal contributions to group assessment and it is recognised as an area of concern which they acknowledge needs to be addressed.

we need to find ways of assessing fairly but when you have a group of five and you know three of the students are Chinese and you've got two Europeans, a lot of the work will be done by the Europeans (MT)

However, as the number of Chinese students on the programme is growing, the practitioner realises that, “the challenge is to find something that the group can all do a fair share of but then since the academic language they communicate in is English...” (MT). The practitioner simply left the remainder of the sentence unspoken and shrugged her shoulders indicating the other perceived challenge, language, would still be present as the Chinese students’ written work is not as comprehensible as the Home and Europeans, thus the possibility of an imbalance would remain.

5.3.2 The impact of using strategies and expressivity

The Chinese participants manipulated the dispositions they had identified and detected in the multicultural groups when the group leader was a Home or European student. The dispositions they addressed ‘upstream’ included the appropriate use of expressivity to match those of the group leader, for example, eye contact, laughing, using gestures: agreeing with the group leader, for example, nodding and saying ‘yeh, yeh, yeh’. Therefore, the power aspect of *shi* in this context lies with the Chinese students not with the Home or European ones. The Chinese students were more strategic in their participation within the multicultural groups because:

if I know enough about the relationship of forces between my opponent [Home and European group members] and myself, I can insist on not joining battle [participation in group discussions] until such time as I am certain that the potential of the situation operates completely in my favour (Jullien, 2004:43).

By using Chinese concepts to understand multicultural group work and the role of the group leader, it appears that although the Home and European students assumed the role and title of group leader, it was the Chinese students who subtly acquired the power because they were the ones who saw the potential [*shi*] of the situation. They strategically adapted and manipulated the dispositions of the multicultural groups work situation to work to their advantage. They were the ones who adapted to the existing and developing situation in which they found themselves placed: they were flexible. The Home and European students, however, remained rigid and treated every multicultural group work

experience in the same way. During the initial multicultural group work, once they discovered which features of expressivity enabled them to be understood, they tended to use the same ones throughout their programmes of study when Chinese students were in their group. The difference between the flexibility of the Chinese students and the rigidity of the Home and European ones is described by Lao-Tzu (in Henricks, 1991:108):

The softest, most pliable thing in the world [water] runs roughshod over the firmest thing [rock] in the world

The composition of the multicultural groups changed throughout their programmes of study and the analysis indicates that it was the Chinese students who demonstrated more flexibility and fluidity. As they changed groups and worked with different Home or European students, they adapted and adjusted their expressivity to match that used by the Home or European student who was in that group. The Home and European students, in contrast, adopted the same expressivity regardless of the composition of the multicultural groups. Overall, the Chinese students demonstrated more strategic interaction within their multicultural group work and were the students who manipulated the dispositions of the different contexts in which they were, in order to gain from the potential [*shi*] of the situation and by so doing, increased interaction within their groups.

5.4 Overview

Adopting an ancient Chinese way of thinking as a tool in the analysis of the data affords a different interpretation and understanding of the interaction within a multicultural group context. It permits insight into how postgraduate students gradually improve their multicultural group work experiences and the part their conscious use of strategy played in this. Their improved group work experiences increased the potential (*shi*) for greater interaction and participation within the multicultural groups being achieved. The analysis also highlighted the importance of the practitioner's role in multicultural group work and the fact that his/her voice has been missing from previous Western-based studies.

However, before moving to the next chapter, which will argue for re-thinking the relational perspective that re-dresses the silence with regard to the position of the practitioner, the outcomes from each round of interviews are summarised in Table 4 and indicate the emerging themes which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

<i>Interview</i>	<i>Aims</i>	<i>Emerging themes</i>
Round 1 Students	Awareness of own and others' features of verbal and non-verbal behaviour. Student's role and participation within multicultural groups Preferred nationality groups they would prefer in their group	Importance of role of practitioner to reduce emotional response and feelings of exclusion among participants Mixed reaction. Some participants prefer mixed nationalities; some prefer mono or culture with which they are familiar
Round 2 Students	Awareness of changes in own and others' features of expressivity. Awareness of features of expressivity which: a)enhanced or b) hindered group interaction Students role and participation within groups Preferred nationalities with which they would like to work	Strategies adopted by students' to their expressivity can enhance interaction. Chinese students appear to be more flexible in their use of expressivity. Chinese students starting to feel 'included'. Recognised and used enhancing features of expressivity. Less feelings of 'exclusion' General tendency to have multicultural group members
Round 3 Students	Reflection on their use and others' use of verbal and nonverbal behaviour within group work. Perceptions of changes to their and others roles and participation within group work Nationalities they would choose to work with in groups	Chinese students more flexible and adapt and adopt features of expressivity depending on nationality of the other group members More experiences of interaction and participation Chinese students more strategic in choice of nationalities with whom to work Tended to choose students who can enhance their grades
Practitioners	Their awareness of their use of verbal and non-verbal use during their teaching Their awareness of the students' verbal and non-verbal behaviour during group interactions How tutors increased interaction within multicultural groups.	Aware of using features of expressivity Awareness and interpretation based on their own use of expressivity Limited response to 'noticing' during group interactions and Interpret interaction from their own cultural perspective. Very limited evidence of reflexivity/reflectivity related to increasing group interaction Practitioners attempt to increase interaction by using their own experience of learning. Appear to treat all teaching contexts in the same manner: Western understanding of efficacy

Table 4: Summary and emerging themes from interviews

Part four: The implications

I expect that this detour through China will open up a perspective: the ability to question ourselves from the outside (Jullien, 2000:171).

As the analysis and interpretation of employing concepts of *shi* to the empirical data unfold, the role of the practitioner becomes increasingly apparent. Thus, the final chapters of this study use data from the initial multicultural group context to highlight differences in approach to teaching and learning between two hypothetical practitioners both of whom are UK educated and teacher trainer qualified. The difference in their approach is that one will employ *shi*-inflected thinking to his/her teaching and the other will not. Whilst cognisant that these are imaginary contexts, the heuristic intention is that their deliberate juxtaposition permits comparisons to be made between a *shi*-inflected and a non *shi*-inflected practitioner, respectively.

The ensuing discussion of the practitioners' sessions potentially affords new ways of thinking about critical reflexivity in education and also to thinking about *educational efficacy* as distinct from performativity discourse associated with effectiveness. Insight is also offered into how the inclusion of *shi*-inflected thinking affords a different discourse and allows the posing of different questions which, in turn, open up new opportunities particularly for practitioners working in multicultural contexts.

Chapter 6: The Practitioners and their Orientations

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter established that in the initial and subsequent multicultural group work experiences, the potential (*shi*) for meaningful intercultural communication exchanges, discussion and sharing of ideas was not always achieved. The discussion highlighted how aspects of *shi* can provide a different insight on the interactions among the students as they work within their multicultural groups. But how might these insights inform the practitioner's approach to teaching? Using the empirical data from this study, this question will be considered and will form part of this chapter before the discussion moves on to imagining the potentialities for the practitioner in putting to work concepts from a Chinese derived philosophical imaginary and by re-positioning him/herself imaginatively 'upstream'. However, the aim of this chapter is not to impose a framework of an external model as to what *ought* to be the educational goal, but to explore how a *shi*-inflected education might enlighten and enrich educational styles of thinking and practice.

6.2 The Expert or the Master?

The discussion in this section addresses research question 1: *How are multicultural encounters in education theorised?*

In the earlier discussion of *shi* and its relation to Chinese shadow boxing and calligraphy, it was mentioned that to become a Master in either area requires lengthy hours of practice. Thus individuals who want to become a Master, for example, in the art of calligraphy, are required to progress through a process of staged levels of proficiency and gained expertise before possibly advancing to achieve their potential (*shi*) as Master.

There are similarities between the process and stages of becoming a Master in the Art of Calligraphy as described and discussed by Jullien (1995, 2004) and the model of professional growth discussed by Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1980) and Flyvbjerg (2001: Ch. 2) with regards to education, particularly teaching. Dreyfus's and Dreyfus's (1980) model operates with five levels which Flyvbjerg (2001:10) names as: novice, advanced beginner, competent performer, proficient performer, expert but goes on to explain that, "[n]ot all people achieve the highest level in a given field" which means that it is not guaranteed that a calligrapher having practised for years will necessarily reach his/her

potential (*shi*) to become what some may refer to as an expert in calligraphy while others refer to as a Master of the Art of Calligraphy. The terms ‘expert’ and Master’ both include experience and for some the terms may be considered synonymous. However, there are subtle but important differences between them and it would therefore be a mistake to simply view the terms ‘expert’ and ‘Master’ as equivalent: “expert is a person who has extensive skill or knowledge in a particular field” whereas master is a person with “exceptional skill at a certain thing” as well as being “a workman or craftsman fully qualified to practice his [*sic*] trade and to train others in it” (Collins English Dictionary, 2019). While both terms require experience, a Master in this study will be defined as having the additional ability of not only being able to understand the process of learning about that process, but also of being able to explain it clearly to his/her apprentices. In other words, an expert forgets the issues s/he experienced while learning whereas a Master embraces and remembers the threshold concepts in the learning process. This corresponds to Meyer and Land’s (2005: 58) insight that practitioners typically forget the significance of threshold levels once they have successfully negotiated them:

Respondents within our study have pointed to the difficulty experienced by expert practitioners looking back across thresholds they have personally long since crossed and attempting to understand (from their own transformed perspective) the difficulties faced from (untransformed) student perspectives (Meyer and Land, 2003:5).

Therefore in terms of teaching, although a practitioner is an expert in his or her subject area when students have difficulty understanding concepts the expert teacher often fails to recognise what the issue is nor can s/he explain the point by breaking it down into manageable steps. In contrast, the teacher who has mastered the art of teaching has the ability to provide necessary and appropriate “scaffolding” (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976: 98) in order to ensure the students have understood the challenging point: the expert tends to talk *at* the students while the master talks *with* them. Thus, despite years of experience, not all teachers/practitioners can Master their Art in this sense.

The description and explanation by Dreyfus (in Flyvbjerg, 2001: 11-20) of the five levels of professional growth include use of terms like “rules” and “goals” and “context-independence” at the novice level to “context-dependent” at the expert level. The ultimate “goal” according to Dreyfus is to become an “expert” (Flyvbjerg, 2001:17), which he describes as a person who:

operates from a mature, holistic well-trying understanding, intuitively and without conscious deliberation. Intuitive understanding comes primarily from experiences on one's own body and is in this way one with the performer. Experts do not see problems as one thing and solutions as something else; they do not get anxious about the future while they act; they do not make plans (Flyvbjerg, 2001: 19-20).

In other words, to be an expert a person draws on past experiences, knowledge and skills in a particular area and tends not to be bound by rules. Becoming an expert in any professional field normally starts by learning context-independent rules which become less context independent the more a person learns and the more experience s/he gains. For example, in the field of Education, specifically teaching, the beginner teacher has to learn to make the transition from the "initial, rule-based levels in the learning process to the kind of prioritizing behaviour and overview which characterises competence" (Flyvbjerg, 2001:12). Thus by the time the teacher has become competent s/he has moved on from the level of advanced beginner teacher where s/he learned how to follow rules to plan and set aims and objectives for different stages in a lesson for a particular group of students to being able to continually evaluate the needs of the students and arrange and organise, for instance, well-staged and organised lesson plans. Lesson plans are important because, normally, when a teacher's lesson is being formally observed, for example by school inspectors or Director of Studies, there is an expectation that appropriate conventional lesson planning will be in place.

As no two teaching contexts are the same, being an expert teacher means s/he can rely on his/her understanding of the situation and be able to adapt his/her skills' set using past experiences and intuition in order to successfully manage the teaching *situation* in which s/he finds him/herself:

In normal, familiar situations, real experts do not solve problems and do not make decisions. They just do what "works." This does not mean that experts never think consciously, nor that they always do the right thing. When there is time, and when much is at stake, experts will also deliberate before they act (Flyvbjerg, 2001:17).

Nonetheless, unexpected situations can occur anywhere and at any time in the workplace, which in this case is the multicultural classroom, and for which there is no pre-prepared plan of action nor set of rules to which the "competent" and "proficient" (Flyvbjerg, 2001: 12-16) teacher can refer. The expert does not use rules. S/he recognises "thousands of cases directly, holistically and intuitively" on the basis of his/her (Flyvbjerg, 2001:20)

experience and draws on that knowledge to try to resolve the issues presented by the situation. In teaching, the situation might be a sudden power-cut and the lesson has been prepared on PowerPoint slides. At the early levels of professional growth, novices learn rules but they are context-independent. As the professional progresses through the levels, the understanding, knowledge and experience of using rules grow until the professional has assimilated them and can unconsciously work through situations intuitively and effortlessly without referring to any rules. S/he has attained the level of expert after many years of training and experience; however, this does not assume that s/he has mastered the art of teaching, which requires more than dealing with *situations*.

The thematics which appear to link being an expert to achieving *shi* are experience, intuition and context-dependence. Experience may come through years of continued practice as in calligraphy and shadow boxing; through the trial and error of trying out skills or from following rules and by building on what has been learned as in Dreyfus's model (Flyvbjerg, 2001: ch.2). Intuition is when:

we size up the situation and immediately know how to proceed: which goals to pursue, what to expect, how to respond. We are drawn to certain cues and not to others because of our situational awareness (Klein, 1999:35).

It is often something which we do instinctively but struggle to explain why we did it (Helm, 2010: 18-19). In his discussion of intuition, Klein (1999:152) argues that “our ability to see patterns gives us situation awareness which helps us recognise appropriate goals and relevant cues.” This appears to chime with Dreyfus' model of an expert (Flyvbjerg, 2001: Ch.2) particularly when Klein (1999: 152) continues to explain that it is necessary to be an expert before being able to identify typical patterns of a situation: novices are confused because “they have trouble forming expectancies.” Throughout his book, Klein (1999) provides numerous examples of instances which link a person's previous experience to intuition. Consequently, this suggests that classroom practitioners' experience, and learning from it, play a large part in their intuitive decision making. This is exemplified by a study by Wolff, Jarodzka and Boshuizenet (2017: 295) in which the difference between expert and novice teachers as they process “different types of problematic classroom events” is highlighted. In their study, Wolff et al., (2017: 295) show how expert teachers' experience affords them “elaborate practical knowledge

for making sense of the complexity of events unfolding in classrooms” whereas the less experienced novice teachers, “have limited, less elaborate knowledge, and attend to classroom events with less interconnectedness and coherency.”

Context-dependence means that no two situations are the same. A context where the circumstances are repeated does not mean the results are exactly the same every time it is repeated particularly if human beings are involved. There is always the possibility of something unexpected happening: human intervention or new factors coming into play. Accordingly, contexts cannot be fully determined in advance but it is possible to draw on experience of similar contexts to help inform, anticipate and perhaps resolve any issues which are presented by the situation (Klein, 1999:155).

On the surface, similarities exist between the terms “being an expert” and “achieving *shi*”, however, the main difference between Dreyfus and Dreyfus (in Flyvbjerg, 2001: Chapter two) and Jullien’s characterisation of *shi* (1995; 2004) is that while Dreyfus and Dreyfus refer to professional growth at a personal level, Jullien (1995: 2004) uses *shi* to discuss the outcome of an overall event. It could be argued that the link between the two terms is that the experience, intuition and context dependence of being an expert may be employed by the person identifying, analysing and examining the dispositions in order to manipulate the ones considered to produce the most potential (*shi*) for a positive and favourable outcome of the situation.

6.3 A double displacement

This section addresses research question 2: *What are the limitations of multicultural encounters in education with regard to how these might inform the practitioners’ practice with students?*

The purpose now is to identify whether *shi* can be applied to the field of education. However, as it is not the intention of this study to replace one type of framework with another. The context and data from *this* study will be used and will involve a double displacement: firstly analysis which is relationally attuned to *this* situation, *these* students, with *these* relational dynamics and secondly, imagining the potentialities of this for a practitioner but not from his/her present, conventional position but by repositioning him/her, imaginatively, ‘upstream’ (Jullien, 2004) and bestowing upon him/her *shi*-

inflected thinking. Upstream (Jullien, 2004) refers to the preparations a general, a politician, a calligrapher make before they engage in a particular event or activity. For the *shi*-inflected practitioner in this study, upstream involves the necessary considerations afforded by his/her understanding the concepts of *shi* and translating that understanding into a teaching and learning situation. Thus, the interest lies in discovering whether there are any differences in approach and outcomes to teaching when a practitioner adopts a different way of thinking about his/her practice. Therefore, to indicate the ways in which *shi*-inflected thinking can inform practitioners an illustrative example will be adopted using the context of the first input session from *this* study followed by a discussion on any differences that may emerge between the conventional practitioner and the *shi*-inflected one.

6.3.1 Illustrative examples

In order to draw out some of their differences in orientation and approach, this section contrasts two hypothetical practitioners who are labelled, respectively, as conventional and *shi*-inflected in their approach to teaching. The purpose here is heuristic: to draw out key differences in orientation between the two practitioners, even if, in practice, a more nuanced reading is desirable. Therefore, using Dreyfus and Dreyfus's (1980) model of professional growth, each practitioner's level will be assumed to be that of expert because it is recognised that at each stage of the teaching process, a practitioner's interpretation of *shi*-inflected thinking may differ depending on his/her level of experience and assumed professional growth.

The first of the two illustrative examples is 'upstream'. This is the term Jullien (2004) adopts when he discusses the factors and dispositions the General, the Calligrapher, the Politician, for example, need to consider before they enter battle, start painting, begin a campaign (Jullien, 1995). The term 'upstream' can be likened to what a conventional practitioner might call 'good practice'. Upstream refers to everything a practitioner needs to consider before the class begins namely, the preparation. For the *shi*-inflected practitioner, this stage enables him/her to, "adapt to circumstances in order to profit from them (rather than following an ideal model)" (Jullien, 2004: 26). This necessitates the *shi*-inflected practitioner identifying and manipulating the factors or dispositions (not people) s/he considers important for the potential of the up-coming input session to be achieved. In terms of *shi*, the efficacy and potential success of the input session is set in

motion at the upstream stage. During the input session, it is how well the upstream preparations unfold that determines their efficaciousness. For the conventional practitioner, the “ideal model” (Jullien, 2004:26) is the lesson plan and it is against its aims and objectives that the conventional practitioner assesses the outcomes of his/her input session.

Each of the practitioners has extensive experience of teaching postgraduate multicultural groups of students and adopts a flipped approach to teaching. A flipped approach (Gilboy, Heinerichs, ATC, Pazzaglia, 2015) involves making video tutorials before each input session which students are expected to watch before they come to class. The video tutorials tend to cover the theoretical aspects of the input session and allow the practitioner to maximise the students’ understanding of the concepts in class through the use of tasks which they work on in multicultural groups.

6.3.2 Practitioners’ ‘upstream’ strategies

The following ‘hypothetical’ illustrative examples outline how each practitioner plans and then delivers the same teaching session. The figure below allows comparisons to be made.

Conventional practitioner	<i>Shi</i> -informed practitioner
<p>Time would be spent preparing the video tutorial which students would view prior to the class. The tutorial would explain and discuss the theoretical aspects and specific terminology related to the concepts which would be covered in the face-to-face session. Once the video tutorial is produced, the students would be informed and advised to watch it as often as needed before the class.</p> <p>The PowerPoint (PPT) slides would ensure the terminology from the video tutorial is included and used in the short series of practitioner-led presentations. The group work tasks would be included on the PPTs. The tasks would be designed to enable the students to demonstrate their understanding of the theoretical concepts which would have been discussed and explained in the video tutorial.</p> <p>The breakdown of nationalities of the students would be noted in order to gauge the number of groups and whether it would be possible to maximise on the number of multi-cultural groups.</p>	<p>The practitioner would prepare a video tutorial which would explain and discuss the theoretical aspects and specific terminology related to the concepts which would be covered in the face-to-face session. Time would be spent ensuring simple vocabulary; uncomplicated sentence structures; small steps and clear instructions in the video tutorials as well as during the input face-to-face session were adopted.</p> <p>In addition, two further video tutorials would be prepared and made available to the students before the input session. The first video would provide an example of students working in multicultural groups in a UK setting. It would include a commentary and an explanation on 1) the roles of the group members, particularly that of the group leader and 2) raise awareness of the difference in body language each student might adopt within the multicultural group. The second video would provide examples of tasks students might be expected to address in their groups during the input session. The video commentary would explain the key words used in the tasks and would include similar tasks to the ones planned for the forthcoming session.</p> <p>Students would be allocated to groups to ensure at least two students of the same nationality or cultural background would be in each group.</p>

Figure 2: Preparations for teaching by a conventional practitioner and a shi-inflected practitioner

The objective of each practitioner is similar: to ensure the content of their input session is clear and accessible to their students, however, how each achieves this is different. The main approach of the conventional practitioner appears to be a “target-driven” one (Caruana, 2010:32), which is seen by his/her focus on ensuring *his/her* input is designed to be successfully conveyed to the cohort. One observes there is no consideration of the different learning styles or cultural ‘norms’ each student brings to the classroom. Despite having experience of working with multicultural groups, there remains an assumption on the part of the conventional practitioner that students share a common culture, understanding of group etiquette and level of English:

...I realised that a lot of us [academics] assumed because they [Chinese students] had been to university that they would know what university system was without actually exploring how different their university experience in the Far East to our students university experience... (MT)

This extract from the data appears to support Thom (2010) that conventional practitioners tend to assume that all students, regardless of where they come from, have a homogeneous cultural background and whose focus on group work and learning is “driven by the frantic pursuit of product without due consideration of process” (Jones, 2010: xix). There appears to be an assumption by the hypothetical conventional practitioner that his/her role is to deliver academic input and not to help in-host country students to acculturate into an unfamiliar academic environment because that role is undertaken by ‘others’. This practitioner may assume it is part of the international student orientation meeting, which many universities hold at the start of the academic year, without realising it is basically a social event. So, while these orientation meetings may welcome students from across the globe and provide them an opportunity to mix and celebrate cultural difference, the reality is that that seldom happens (Thom, 2010:163). Thus, as the conventional practitioner has misunderstood what constitutes international orientation meetings, s/he does not provide tutorials nor guidance on factors which are considered related to acculturation. Consequently, s/he misses opportunities to maximise and encourage interaction between host and in-host country group members.

In contrast, by adopting a different approach to thinking about teaching, the *shi*-inflected practitioner spends time ensuring *the students* are aware of what is expected of them as they work in multi-cultural groups. The practitioners are like gardeners: both want their seedlings to grow and yield fruit but where one simply makes a hole in the soil and puts in the plants, the other spends time preparing the soil by removing surrounding weeds and adding additional compost to the hole in order to give the seedlings support to flourish. After a period of growth, the plants yield fruit but the quality of the produce reflects the time spent on the preparing-for-planting stage. The gardener metaphor depicts the importance of preparation and in so doing highlights that while previous studies related to the lack of interaction among host and in-host country students have identified, debated and shared the issues experienced by the students, the role of the practitioner and how s/he specifically prepares for teaching multicultural classes has not afforded the same level of attention. There is mention in Leask’s study (2010: 9) on the important role a practitioner can play in ensuring that in-host country students have a voice in the class which one could argue is what the *shi*-inflected practitioner was attempting to address upstream by ensuring the relevant dispositions were in place (Julien, 2004) in the form of the additional video tutorials: one video tutorial highlights the process and expectations

of group members while the other explained the key terms. Most of the literature to date appears to focus on the “effect” of poor interaction and participation between host and in-host country students but does not seem to have explored, “the source of the effect, to which its “traces” point” (Jullien, 2004: 128). By identifying and manipulating the dispositions which the *shi*-inflected practitioner considered the ones which carried the greatest potential to increase participation of in-host country students and enable their voices to be heard, s/he attempts to increase the potential of the situation (*shi*) being achieved. The *shi*-inflected practitioner works upstream to prepare the terrain by removing as many obstacles and barriers as possible in order to increase the flow of ideas and interaction among the members of the multicultural groups. In this context, the ‘obstacles and barriers’ were the host and in-host country students’ assumptions that they all understood group work processes and that they all understood the key terms which would be presented.

One could argue that *shi*-inflected thinking affords a more strategic approach to lesson planning by identifying and working upon dispositions which, in turn, enable the construction of more scaffolding for the students. This took the form of providing additional video tutorials which were related to the processivity of the input session, thus, exemplifying group work while introducing key terms which would be repeated in the tasks. By including these additional video tutorials the *shi*-inflected practitioner strategically put into motion factors, which s/he had identified as having the potential to succeed and achieve *shi* because:

one can always defeat the enemy [the lack of participation in multicultural group work] if one starts manipulating before he does [before the multicultural group work session begins] (Jullien 2004:144).

One can see that by introducing a broader and more strategic way of thinking upstream and by removing as many obstacles as possible from the outset, the *shi*-inflected practitioner sets in motion the potential for successful interaction and participation among multicultural group members. The conventional practitioner, on the other hand, appears to assume there is a common understanding among the cohort of what multicultural group work entails. Thus, s/he does not prepare students for group work and seemingly ignores small decisions such as the format, expectations and focus of the tasks which can impact on the students’ experience of multicultural group work (Leask, 2010, 15-16). Thus, this practitioner inadvertently blocks the potential for any flow of ideas among group

members. One reading of this is that the conventional practitioner demonstrates a more limited way of thinking when preparing for teaching. Jin and Cortazzi (2017: 239-240), allude to this by arguing there is a growing “urgency to develop internationalisation” at policy and classroom level from which practitioners and students not only can “understand and appreciate different cultures of learning” but also enhance academics “learning and teaching repertoires”, which in turn should increase the learning of host and in-host students, alike. A practitioner’s understanding of efficacy and *shi* within teaching and learning would increase their repertoire. It may also address some of the “challenges of internationalisation” which test higher education practitioners’ “beliefs about their roles and their approaches towards the changing teaching-learning environments” (Korhonen and Weil, 2015: 198), which they face.

Adopting *shi*-inflected thinking into one’s practice indicates that the earlier one intervenes, upstream, the less one needs to act downstream; this would suggest that it is desirable that situations remain flexible and fluid at the upstream stage of a lesson since as the course of things becomes more definite it also becomes more challenging to manage (Jullien, 2004:18). In a teaching context, downstream refers to the actual teaching and is the follow-through from the preparation stage. The ideal transition is that if the potential of the situation has been accurately identified and managed upstream, progression to downstream should remain fluid and not “coagulate” due to an oversight upstream (Jullien, 2004:131).

6.3.2 Downstream

Downstream is the reality of the teaching situation as this unfolds enabling *shi*-inflected practitioners to assess and notice any oversights or issues so they may be considered in future upstream situations. This in turn adds to the practitioner’s experience. In a teaching situation the *shi*-inflected practitioner assesses the situation as it unfolds and, where possible, attempts are taken to limit any unexpected situations from developing further by responding intuitively and trying to resolve them. This is similar to the expert in Dreyfus’s model (Flyvbjerg, 2001) who averts unexpected events from escalating and brings them back on track. For example, if the practitioner notices a group discussion starting to deviate from the intended topic, s/he reacts quickly by asking re-directional questions, which refocus the discussion and bring it back to the topic. The downstream example will indicate whether the choices made in the practitioners’ ‘upstream’ stage

“induce the efficacy to operate” (Jullien, 1995:114) successfully and achieve their potential.

The example below demonstrates how the *shi*-inflected practitioner observes how his/her upstream preparations unfold during the teaching and notices how effective the preparations have been in ensuring the potential for success is achieved.

6.3.3 Practitioner’s ‘downstream’ practice

The following example sets out what each practitioner notices during his/her teaching session.

Conventional Practitioner	<i>Shi</i> -inflected practitioner
<p>In class, students would be asked to sit in mixed nationality groups. The practitioner would follow the prepared lesson plan. The practitioner would then lead off with a practitioner-led input stage after which the students would work in their groups to discuss and explore answers or solutions to the set task. As the students work in their groups the practitioner would monitor them by walking around the class listening to their discussions. If necessary the practitioner would intuitively ask in-depth questions in order to challenge the group member’s thinking or to keep them ‘on track’.</p> <p>The practitioner would recognise and register the voices from the groups as those of the Home and European students. This would be considered normal as previous experience of teaching multicultural groups of students would suggest that generally, international students take a while to speak up and participate in groups particularly at the start of a new academic year.</p> <p>At the end of the tasks each group would provide feedback. The practitioner would assume that the feedback on the given task would be a summary of a whole group discussion.</p> <p>If the students were able to incorporate appropriate terminology and provide evidence of understanding key concepts into the feedback, the practitioner would assume his/her objectives had been achieved. Most of the students understood the input they had received.</p>	<p>In class, the students would sit in their allocated groups. The practitioner would have identified the group leaders at the upstream stage and would explain to the students that this role would rotate for each session. For the first week, either a home or European student would have been nominated as group leader because previous experience of teaching multicultural groups of students would have indicated that it is the European and home students rather than the international ones who have the confidence to speak out in English to the whole cohort, initially, at least.</p> <p>The session would start with teacher-led input which would be followed by the first group task. The practitioner would walk around and monitor interaction within the group during the task and would notice whether all the group members were participating and interacting. S/he would be aware whether the ideas were shared and discussed by most of the group members or whether some group members were struggling to speak or be heard. The practitioner would have noticed which group members had been participating, their level of participation and how much the group appeared to cohere. S/he would notice when a group was struggling and appearing to find the task challenging or if they were drifting off task and would intuitively intervene and provide support in the form of questions which would help to guide the group in the right direction.</p> <p>At the end of group tasks the practitioner would be aware whether the feedback was representative of</p>

<p>At the end of the input session, the practitioner would reflect on the appropriateness of the lesson plan to the reality of the teaching.</p>	<p>the majority of the group or simply of one or two members.</p> <p>There would be awareness of how well the multicultural groups worked and interacted together and would include the practitioner being aware of the body language students used both within and across groups and whether it contributed to or hindered the interaction and participation within the group.</p> <p>By the end of the input session, the practitioner would reflect on whether the dispositions which were identified and set in motion upstream were successful. This analysis would feed into the considerations and manipulation of the dispositions for the following input session.</p>
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Figure 3: Conventional and shi-inflected practitioners' input session

Figure 3, indicates how the practitioners followed through on what they had prepared upstream. They are able to identify whether the reality of their teaching is in accord with their preparations. For example, the conventional practitioner used the PowerPoint slides and associated group tasks as the means to achieve the aims and objectives set out in the lesson plan. The *shi*-inflected practitioner, on the other hand, cleared as many obstacles as possible beforehand in order to provide the flow of ideas to be as smooth as possible. The success of the outcome is determined by how well the preparations have been carried out beforehand. Therefore, by comparing the different styles of thinking about teaching and learning, a different interpretation, understanding and perspective of efficacy are revealed:

In ancient Chinese strategic thought, the relation between means and end is never made explicit; it is replaced by notions of a set-up and its efficacy (Jullien, 1995: 37).

The tendency of the conventional practitioner is to ensure that by the end of the lesson the aims and objectives, which were set out in the lesson plan, are met, which might involve pushing 'things' to happen. For example, when the practitioners monitor the group work discussions to ensure the group members are discussing the set task, if either practitioner notices group discussions have deviated from the task or are in danger of drifting off topic, the practitioners refocus the students' interactions by asking pertinent

questions. This appears to be the limit of the conventional practitioner's intervention. In contrast, the *shi*-inflected practitioner additionally tries to identify why the students had wandered off topic and will use this information and any observations to inform and identify future dispositions for the next input session with this group of students. The difference can be understood by considering how two people encourage a sapling to grow: one person might try to pull the shoots (force it) while the other one might simply hoe, weed and turn the earth around the shoots to promote growth (the process). In teaching, the conventional practitioner wants to see the students interact and participate in group work but by forcing it to happen, but, as a result, the opposite might occur (Jullien, 2004: 151). The *shi*-inflected practitioner, on the other hand, does what s/he can to encourage interaction by being attentive and providing support upstream in order to encourage the students to gradually interact and participate naturally: s/he attends to the process.

The different styles of thinking see the emergence of a key difference in how each practitioner evaluates their teaching. On the one hand, the conventional practitioner assesses the input session in relation to the lesson plan and draws on cues such as students' appropriate use of terminology and understanding of concepts; indications which suggest to the conventional practitioner that the learning objectives have been achieved. On the other hand, the attention of the *shi*-inflected practitioner is focussed on the upstream conditions and whether they have been achieved. During the lesson, the *shi*-inflected practitioner's focus is on cumulatively ensuring these are in play so as to enhance the possibility of achievement, which is conceived in terms of all students' attaining understanding, participating and interacting in group work.

While both practitioners are aware of the learning threshold levels the students need to pass through, it could be argued that different orientations to practise present different opportunities to enhance the students' progression through those levels. A *shi*-inflected thinking style appears to afford a broader awareness of the characteristics of threshold concepts with one intention being to provide scaffolding in the form of video tutorials. The video tutorials are used to help to "free up [any] blocked spaces" or "epistemological obstacles" (Meyer and Land, 2005: 377) which some students experience as they undergo "conceptual transformations." These "transformations" are a necessary part of the learning process because they enable the students to integrate their understanding of the threshold concepts into their thinking (Land, Cousin, Meyer and Davies, 2005: 53).

However, while these transformations are necessary for progress, for certain students “such integration” may be worrisome because the students are, “letting go of earlier, comfortable positions and encountering less familiar and sometimes disconcerting territory” (Land et al, 2005: 54). In the case of postgraduate students this is their instinctive understanding of learning which is grounded in their past learning habits and is culture-related. So, in order to adjust and enhance their understanding of what it is to learn and to fit in with an unfamiliar learning environment, in-host country students in particular have to reposition their ‘norm’ which can prove to be disconcerting for them, initially.

6.3.4 Noticing and attentiveness

The downstream example highlights differences in the level of attentiveness each practitioner engages in before and during their input session. Focusing on the *shi*-inflected practitioner, it can soon be seen that this practitioner demonstrates more evidence of differentiated awareness, which implies more attentiveness to what occurs during the lesson, than the conventional practitioner. At the upstream stage, the *shi*-inflected practitioner identified student participation within group work as a disposition which s/he considered would enhance a feeling of belonging and inclusiveness for all students. The *shi*-inflected practitioner then addressed this by investing time upstream and in providing scaffolding in the form of additional video tutorials, so that all of the students knew and could understand what was expected of them during multicultural group work. Consequently, watching and understanding the video tutorials before the input session is fundamental to students achieving successful participation within their groups downstream.

At the downstream stage, the *shi*-inflected practitioner notices whether the groups cohere or whether one or two group members monopolise the discussions. Account is also taken of who is speaking, who is quiet, what kind of discussion is taking place within the group work and what kind of body language is being expressed. The conventional practitioner also monitors the groups but only appears to notice if a group discussion is ‘on task’. S/he does not appear to demonstrate the same level of detailed awareness or engagement as the *shi*-inflected practitioner shows. A reason for the difference perhaps might be because the focus for the conventional practitioner was limited to a pre-given representation of ‘success’ in the form of the objectives stated in the lesson plan.

The key to ‘noticing’ is what the practitioner does with the information. As previously mentioned, the *shi*-inflected practitioner incorporates salient points into the upstream (Jullien, 2004) stage before the next input session with the cohort. The *shi*-inflected practitioner’s level of attentiveness during the downstream stage is necessary because it enables and informs him/her whether the dispositions s/he identified and manipulated at the upstream stage were efficacious and achieved their potential, *shi*, which is the students’ interaction and participation within the multi-cultural groups work tasks. For a *shi*-inflected practitioner his/her engagement in reflexivity during the downstream stage is a necessary part of the whole *shi*-inflected thinking process and is related to efficacy. Therefore, the more engagement with reflexivity at the downstream stage, the more potential there is for the following upstream stage.

It is not clear how the conventional practitioner will react to any noticing because if this practitioner considers the input session a success, one assumes future input sessions will change little. If conventional practitioners view, “reflexivity as an unnecessary additional burden when teaching is already complex and demanding” (Hibbert, 2012:804), then it is understandable why there remains concern in the literature regarding a lack of interaction among host and in-host country students within multicultural group work. The illustrative example suggests that the practitioners are similar to that of fast moving jugglers who have to keep the plates, (here: presenting content, tasks, scaffolding, group dynamics), all spinning on sticks at the same time. However, it is the *shi*-inflected practitioner who appears quicker at noticing and reacting appropriately whenever a plate slows down so as to prevent it from breaking. The illustrative example indicates that the different levels of ‘noticing’ and ‘attentiveness’ between the practitioners is contributed to their different understanding of efficacy: the conventional practitioner’s focus is on aims and goals whilst the *shi*-inflected practitioner’s focus is on observing the unfolding of the identified dispositions.

6.4 The relational dynamics within this context

This section addresses research question 2a and 2b, respectively.

2a: *How cosmopolitan is the theorisation of multicultural encounters in education?*

By taking a closer look at the thinking related to *shi* it becomes possible to notice how dynamic in nature it is and how this might influence the strategies and approach to teaching. Insight is also gained into the contrast it provides in relation to conventional thinking about teaching, which appears to have stagnated (Volet and Ang, 1998; Osmond and Roed, 2010; Harrison and Peacock, 2010). “The nature of water is constant but its form is not” (Wang Xi in Jullien, 2004:179). This quote appears to summarise the relational dynamics within the context of this study. One reading is that while the nature of water is to travel downward its form is not constant due to the surrounding topography through which it passes. In other words, the water is fundamentally attuned to the environmental conditions and the various affordances this presents. Nonetheless, knowing and acknowledging this does not mean that the water will flow in a particular way and not another. It only recognises that any change in its form is connected with the context, thus if a change were to be desired, it would necessitate reading the situation, acknowledging the implications of any considered change and imagining which of the various possibilities would be desirable and how change would be brought about.

In higher education, multicultural group work is a regular feature of input sessions (Kelly, 2008; Wilson, Brickman and Brame, 2018), particularly with smaller postgraduate cohorts. However, the form of the multicultural group work changes depending on the composition of the group members. The main focus for the conventional practitioner was on the outcome of the multicultural group work, the product, not on the relational complex undercurrents within the group, the process. The growing feelings of disconcertment (Law and Lin, 2010) among the students as they worked in their multicultural groups were not apparent to this practitioner, particularly in the initial class where the potential for collaborative group work discussions (*shi*) was not achieved. The conventional practitioner could have increased the potentiality of *shi* being achieved by firstly not relying on and believing that years of teaching provided expertise and experience of being able to deal with all eventualities that may arise during the session. Secondly, relating assumptions and expectations to his/her cultural norm: group work, body language, and group dynamics. Thirdly, only attending to the end product: focussing on the aims of the lesson from the practitioner’s perspective rather than also focussing on the process: how the intended outcomes are achieved by the students. Using the empirical data from the practitioners exemplifies how past experience can influence their decisions:

From my experience as a language learner, I was thinking that the Chinese students just need a little bit more time for them to formulate a response so using group work and pair work to actually allow them to think about and rehearse those issues helps them (ET)

As working in pairs and groups had been successful in building up confidence for this practitioner when she was studying in a European, non-English speaking country, she used that experience and included pair and group work within the context of multicultural teaching. She remembered her own feelings of not being able to respond quickly enough to questions, not because she did not understand but because by the time she had formulated a response the conversation had moved on. By including pair and group work, this practitioner provided the time necessary that she felt the Chinese students needed in order to participate in the interactions

It is all about having to speak in English. My personal experience as a young person where we had no option but to speak in Hebrew worked. The first week was disconcerting but after than you just got on with it (MT)

This practitioner remembered how effective immersive teaching was for her when she had to learn Hebrew at the age of eleven. She remembered how fluent she and the others in her class were after only six months of having to speak Hebrew every day. Despite the difference in circumstances, this practitioner was convinced that being fluent in English would enable better participation within groups so she imposed a strict, English only rule when she was teaching multicultural groups of students. Each of the extracts shows how the practitioners drew on their own experience which influenced their practice: each adopted an approach which she considered would encourage interaction and participation within multicultural group work. There appears to be an assumption that regardless of differences in culture, age or context, and despite producing positive results, the practitioners' past learning experiences could be adopted smoothly into their teaching practice.

All input sessions are important but the initial session with members of multicultural groups working together for the first time appears to have highlighted the greatest number of issues for the group members, some of which had lasting effects. For example, initially, Ruth was in a group of mainly Chinese students where she had to explain everything to the other group members: the instructions for the task, the task, what they had to do. Like the other European and Home group leaders, she felt that she did all the work. However, it resulted in her intentionally choosing not to work with Chinese

students for the remainder of her programme of study. So in response to being asked which nationalities she would choose to be grouped with, Ruth from Romania² replied:

I've actually thought about it quite a lot. I think I would choose anybody but the Chinese students

The thinking and approach to teaching that the *shi*-inflected practitioner adopted might have lessened Ruth's developing such lasting negative feelings towards her Chinese peers. As the illustrative example showed, the *shi*-inflected practitioner would have ensured all dispositions/factors related to students' understanding the task and participating in the group work had been accurately identified and manipulated while in their infancy, "upstream" (Jullien, 2004:128), in order to maximise their potential (*shi*), downstream.

The difference in understanding efficacy and its influence on the practitioners and their teaching provides insight into how the conventional practitioner did not appear to have been as attuned to the situation as s/he could have been. Thus s/he may have inadvertently contributed to the water not flowing as well as it could have done due to the number of obstacles in its path. Therefore, by assuming too much shared cultural knowledge with the students, the conventional practitioner did not foresee the need to provide guidance for the students on the processivity involved while participating in and undertaking multicultural group work tasks. Thus, the collaborative aspect of the task was not successful because not all of the group members understood it. Consequently, not all of the group members learned from working on the task because while some may have found a way around the obstacles, others were still blocked by them:

if everybody keeps silence, and we don't know what we should do and what's going on and Hamish [Scottish student] will smile and eh say to us that , 'cheer up and say something' and give us a big smile and use his hands and give us a friendly atmosphere (Yana from Yunan¹)

Chinese students they don't know, they don't know how to talk in English so they may stay quiet, silence , but if there is a European member in our group and they will think, 'oh, why don't you talk' and they will feel, why we're a group and they will feel a little angry at this person (Sharon from Shanghai³)

2a: *How cosmopolitan is the theorisation of multicultural encounters in education?*

The initial multicultural group work made the group members unhappy and frustrated because they had neither understood what they had to do nor what was expected of them within the group. This was compounded by a lack of understanding and misinterpreting of one another's expressivity: their body language, not necessarily their "language" (Turner, 2009; Harrison and Peacock, 2010a; 2010b).

In our group I don't recognise if the Chinese students are upset or happy. I mean I'm sure they have facial expressions and gestures but maybe because they are so far away from my culture I'm not familiar with their gestures so it's kind of like another foreign language that I don't understand (Ruth from Romania¹)

if they [Chinese group members] show interest and do eye contact and stuff I try to get them participated more and ask for their opinion, ask for feedback but if they don't do this I just do my thing, tell them that's the way we do it (Gemma from Germany³).

The actuality of the situation is that because the dispositions necessary to facilitate understanding, participation and interaction within the group had not been considered as part of the conventional practitioner's thinking process, it caused an imbalance between group members who were familiar and understood what was expected in a UK context, namely, the home and European students and those who were unfamiliar with the context and did not, namely, the Chinese students. This, in turn, resulted in not only non-participation by some members but also in most group members feeling disgruntled and even outsiders.

There are group members they behave dominant. If you have some ideas they will not take you seriously, they may think that they are best. I feel upset and I will feel afraid of talking (Sharon from Shanghai¹).

it's so hard being the team leader, to tell them what to do and not getting feedback not getting opinion, just no reaction. I think it's so hard because it would be so much easier doing everything by myself (Gemma from Germany¹)

I think some native speakers eh they tend to... they don't like to talk to us, okay, when we don't know what the question is, what should we ask what should we talk, they tend to talk to the local people, not not us (Yana from Yunan¹)

In the context of this study, the conventional practitioner appears to have created a learning and teaching environment in which emotions among group members and across nationalities emerged. For some postgraduates, this had long-term effects and lasted for the duration of their programme of study, for example, Ruth from Romania³ whose negative experience of working with Chinese students in the first half of the autumn semester led her to avoid working with them despite her acknowledging she started to

understand, “*more about the Chinese students lack of response*” but, “*what I’ve learned about them has kind of made me try to avoid them.*”

The conventional practitioner appeared not to notice nor be aware of signs that the Chinese participants did not fully understand the instructions for the task or that the Home and European students struggled with their adopted role of group leader. These factors could have been compounded by the absence of a designated group leader and a general lack of common group work ‘etiquette’ or understanding of effectivity. Consequently, the conventional practitioner contributed to the potential (*shi*) of the situation not being realised because s/he only saw the wood (the task) not the trees (the process of completing the task). The conventional practitioner could have managed and prepared for the multicultural group work situation differently because:

The task of a good leader [practitioner] is to calculate in advance and with accuracy every factor, so that the it[group work] develops in a way as beneficial as possible (Jullien, 1995:26).

Thus, while the *shi*-inflected practitioner focussed on whether the dispositions, which had been identified upstream, unfolded in a favourable manner, the conventional practitioner drew on cues that suggested learning aims and objectives had been achieved in relation to the lesson plan. Although being aware that group interaction may differ from culture to culture (Montgomery, 2009) the conventional practitioner did not engage in explicitly setting out ground rules on the type of interaction expected among and between group members. Had this been considered and addressed in more detail, more students might have understood the task requirements and experienced a more positive outcome. Thus by identifying and manipulating dispositions associated with multicultural group work both “upstream” and “downstream” (Jullien, 2004:128), the conventional practitioner could have increased the potential of the situation (*shi*) and could have increased the opportunity of participation from all group members. Round stones cannot move on level ground, therefore, the more dispositions that are addressed, the steeper the slope becomes which enables the stones to move and roll down the slope. Even though some might move faster than others, they would all move in the same direction. The conventional practitioner, tended to be very goal-orientated and simply wanted to get the teaching point(s) across to the students. The long-term goal was for the students to be able to produce well-informed assignments in which the discipline specific terminology was used appropriately. All practitioners, want their students to do well in their assignments,

because not only is it a positive experience for the student but it can also provide feedback for the practitioner on the students' uptake from the input sessions.

6.5 *Shi* and reflectivity

The discussion in this section addresses research question 3: *Is there value in engaging with theories other than those informed by Western styles of thinking, in relation to informing multicultural encounters in education?*

The illustrative example suggests that *shi* enables the practitioner different ways of reading a situation. Where one relates to the signs which inform the practitioner's judgement, for example, how things are, the other points to the limitations of this, for example, how might the practitioner become more attuned to the situation in hand.

Reflecting on their practice involves practitioners looking back on their teaching and deciding who said what; who did what and considering how, when, where, and why things did or did not happen, whereas reflexivity, involves practitioners, "making aspects of the self strange" by trying to distance themselves from their beliefs and value systems and becoming more aware of their normal, everyday ways of "thinking and relating to others" (Bolton and Delderfield, 2018:10). The interviews from the practitioners suggest the contrary: each one appears to relate aspects of their beliefs and practice to their own language learning experiences: for the ET it was her experience of German and for the MT it was Hebrew.

Engaging in reflectivity as well as reflexivity may encourage practitioners to consider adding elements of a *shi*-inflected style of thinking into their practice and is a necessary aspect of efficacy and *shi*.

Reflexivity is finding strategies to question our own attitudes, thought processes, values, assumptions, prejudices and habitual actions, to strive to understand our complex roles in relation to others. To be reflexive is...becoming aware of the limits of our knowledge, of how our own behaviour plays into organisational practices and why such practices might marginalise groups or exclude individuals... Thus, we recognise we are active in shaping our surroundings, and begin critically to take circumstances and relationships into consideration rather than merely reacting [to them] (Bolton and Delderfield, 2018:10)

However, it would not be enough to simply engage in reflectivity and reflexivity of their lesson, the practitioner needs to address the various levels of 'noticing' either at the 'upstream', preparation stage for the next input session or, where appropriate, 'downstream' during the lesson. The inclusion of both reflexion and reflection into their

practice affords a better resource with regard to the practitioner's positionality and ways of imagining the educational purpose for multicultural group work, specifically, and education, generally. It provides the potential to highlight and acknowledge the roles of difference by opening up the practice of noticing and can be related to teaching and pedagogy by affording new ways of affecting practice, styles of thinking and educational embodied modes of attentiveness that can acknowledge intuitive readings.

The context of this study has been used to demonstrate the affordances as well as the differences in concepts and thought processes in the planning and teaching a lesson between a conventional practitioner and a *shi*-inflected one. Experience, intuition and context-dependence were earlier highlighted as being the common concepts between Flyvbjerg (2001) and Jullien (2004) and they are evident in the practices of each practitioner described above. Experience is drawn upon more overtly by the conventional practitioner than the *shi*-inflected one but where the conventional practitioner uses past experience to understand current contexts, the *shi*-inflected practitioner use past experience to learn from it and improve levels of teaching and learning success in future contexts. The practitioners' use of experience exemplifies a link to intuition:

intuition depends on the use of experience to recognise key patterns that indicate the dynamics of the situation. Because patterns can be subtle, people often cannot describe what they noticed, or how they judged a situation as typical or atypical (Klein, 1999:33)

In the classroom, practitioners make decisions all the time many of which appear to rely on intuition. When a decision which has a positive outcome is made, it is common to ask the practitioner how s/he knew what to do. Often the response is, 'I don't know, I just knew'. This appears to be a common reply when intuition has been employed (Klein, 1999: 33). The nuances noted between the practitioners' use of intuition provides permission for it to be acknowledged rather than dismissed as part of classroom decision making. However, because it is difficult to explain, intuition continues to get 'bad press' and is dismissed or ignored when practitioners discuss their professional practice. It is related to experience suggesting that the more experience a practitioner gains, the more intuitive s/he becomes which appears to be in tune with the level of expert as discussed by Flyvbjerg, (2001). As is to be expected, compared to novices, experts have more experience and knowledge on which they can draw when necessary; knowledge which

they have accumulated from experience gained over the years. This experience enables experts to see things that others on Dreyfus's model cannot, for example,

- Patterns that novices do not notice
- Anomalies-events that did not happen and other violations of expectancies
- The big picture (situation awareness)
- The way things work
- Opportunities and improvisations
- Events that either already happened (the past) or are going to happen (the future)
- Differences that are too small for novices to detect
- Their own limitations (Klein, 1999:152)

This accumulation of invisible 'noticing' contributes to the expert's intuitive decision making. It does not suggest, however, that experts do not make mistakes, they do, but they can learn from them. Although intuition continues to be a debateable topic (Klein, 1999; Helm, 2010), the context of this study indicates both practitioners intuitively used their experience to inform their decisions. Therefore, perhaps it is time to raise the level of intuition to 'discussable' within teaching and learning and by so doing ensuring it does not escape the demands to be critical.

6.6 *Shi*-inflected thinking in the current climate of Internationalisation

In addition to the previous discussion on reflexivity, this section address research question 4: *How might shi-inflected thinking assist practitioners' reflexivity when exploring their practices?*

The discussion on *shi* has mainly focussed on what affordances *shi*-inflected thinking may contribute to the field of Education with particular emphasis on practice in an idealised and imagined context. The purpose has been to show how an alternative way of thinking can enhance practice; however, the more a practitioner becomes immersed in the process, the more questions it raises about his/her own beliefs and concerns (Korhonen and Weil, 2015).

This research raises questions concerning the limitations Western academics place on their Home, European and International students to understand and adopt the same types of goal-orientated strategies and objectives that they use. Perhaps further attention could be given to other styles of thinking such as *shi* as a way to furthering understanding of

their own and others practice. There is a general assumption that students know what their Western practitioners mean and know what to do, but it is debateable how realistic this is, particularly with postgraduate students who come from China or other Confucian-influenced countries and who have never studied outside their own country. By assuming a Western perspective on how to think and approach academic study as the only way (Blaut, 1992), it would seem that Western academics can be characterised as colonial and limited. If higher education institutions expect their students to learn from one another and to fulfil their internationalisation strategic objective of producing global graduates and citizens, it could be argued that academics need to open their minds, their thinking and their practices and explore difference. Although his warning relates to culture, by placing ‘academic’ in front of ‘culture’ Jullien (2014:142) delivers the same thought-provoking warning to academia, “a[n] [academic] culture which would become *the* [academic] culture, in the singular,...is already a dead [academic] culture.”

The implications of the above analysis can also be used to critique current policy imperatives within higher education that might be seen as promoting a limited understanding of educational efficacy, for example, the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), which is a UK government developed framework to complement the established Research Excellence Framework (REF) The goal of the government is to replicate the “steering role” of the REF through the TEF for the teaching mission of institutes because when “something is measured it becomes important”(Gunn, 2018: 134). In addition and similar to the REF, the TEF will include financial “incentives for excellent teaching” for institutions (Gunn, 2018:134).

The core goal of the TEF is “to raise the quality and status of teaching in higher education institutions” (Hubble, Foster and Bolton, 2016: 9) with “excellence” being measured through a “series of proxy metrics” which include student satisfaction, employability and learning gain (Neary, 2016: 691). The metrics for the TEF continue to be criticised as being unreliable measures of the quality of teaching and learning in HE (Holroyd and Saul, 2016; Gourley and Stevenson, 2017; Gunn, 2018). However, as the TEF is at the early stages of its implementation, it is expected that the coming years will see the addition of new metrics (Gunn, 2018).

The discourse surrounding the TEF appears to epitomise and represent a Western goal-orientated and strategic form of thinking. As with the REF, which has had an important

effect on institutional behaviour and the nature of academic work, and through “hard-wired” inducements, the government would like TEF to reproduce this “steering role” for the teaching mission (Gunn, 2018:140). However, as the TEF carries incentives to enact change within institutions the risks are great. Measuring something requires simplifying it which means care needs to be taken when attaching high stake consequences to the measurement. Klemencic and Ashwin (2015:319) warn that a focus on institutional performance can lead to the valuing of what is measurable rather than measuring what is valuable. Dixon and Pilkington (2017: 393) warn against the “terrors of performativity” and raise the difficulties of defining excellence or reducing it to quantifiable and generic measures, which they argue should be viewed as nuanced and contextualised. It could be argued that the TEF could increase the pressure on academics to perform successfully for the TEF. With its ‘tick-box’ performance measurements, the TEF appears to reinforce practitioners’ focus on achieving the goals set out on their lesson plans.

Although in its early stages, the TEF appears to exemplify the characteristics of theorising, planning, goal-oriented targets which Jullien (2004:131) describes when he compares Western styles of thinking to those of *shi* which are fluid, strategic and flexible and stem from the “Chinese logic of processivity” from which “a concept of efficacy” is produced. Thus:

rather than constructing an ideal Form that we [in the West] then project on to things, we could try to detect the factors whose configuration is favorable [sic] to the task at hand; instead of setting up a goal for our actions, we [in the West] could allow ourselves to be carried along by the propensity of things [*shi*] (Jullien, 2004:16).

So instead of driving a plan forward and forcefully making it work through individual actions, Westerners could alter their means-to-an-end way of thinking and behaving and “go with the flow” (Jullien, 1995:40). This is better understood when Jullien (2004) uses military analogies. In the West military opportunities are normally determined by means of calculations based on a number of suppositions, for example, the collection of as much data as possible or deliberating over a number of hypotheses before selecting the one that seems the most probable to succeed. These decisions are based on “the understanding of the psychological, strategic, and the political principles involved, and also a most precise assessment of the situation” (Jullien, 2004:68). A Chinese general, on the other hand, does not make any suppositions, does not form any hypotheses and does not make any attempt to calculate what is probable. Rather, his/her skill is employed in discovering

and locating the slightest tendency that might be developed before it has begun and which is conducted secretly:

to orient the uninterrupted course of things and so before they [the detected tendencies] have had time to emerge and manifest their effects, he [*sic*] will be in a position to foresee where they may head (Jullien, 2004:69)

In UK higher education institutions, the TEF is intended to become as important and influential as the REF (Gunn, 2018). It has, however, the Western credentials and the potential to reinforce the particular way of thinking to which Jullien refers and was discussed previously. Currently, the TEF appears to encourage a focus on goals and personal achievements. It could be argued that over time it becomes the recognised ‘norm’ and approach to teaching within HE: a silent transformation (Jullien, 2011). In Chinese thought, ‘transformation’ is perceived as being global, progressive, situated over a period of time and results from the interrelatedness of factors, therefore:

Since ‘everything’ within it transforms itself, it is never sufficiently differentiated to be perceptible. We do not see the wheat ripen but we do notice its results: when it is ripe and should be cut (Jullien, 2011: 8).

If the TEF contributes to a silent transformation in Education, where the nature of teaching is conceived as being one of “subject-agent” with its “wants”, “aims” and “goals”, the Chinese approach “displays no other ambition than to ‘transform’ just as nature does” which is achieved by the strategist transforming the “relation of forces in such a way as to cause it to swing silently to his advantage within duration” (Jullien, 2011:9). Therefore, rather than tutors wanting to meet the performance indicators of excellence in teaching, the *shi*-inflected tutor is content with gradually transforming the behaviour of his/her students in silence knowing that the eventual impact it makes enhances the students’ overall learning experience.

In the current climate of internationalisation and its impact on transforming teaching and learning, it would appear timely if academics were to contemplate broadening their thinking styles and approach to teaching (Ryan, 2013). Higher education institutions and departments in the UK are under increasing pressure to increase and diversify the number of nationalities within their undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Institutions have a common aim within their Internationalisation policies, which is to produce students who are global citizens. This is challenging for many academics, particularly for those who only teach Home and European students and who have a single, Western

mind-set. For discerning academics, now might be the time to consider being less colonial and limited in their approach to academia and more open to other styles of thinking. *Shi*-inflected thinking affords this opportunity.

Chapter 7: Emerging Themes and Final Thoughts

7.1 Emerging Themes and Implications

Three central themes emerge from the different orientations provided by the worked examples in the previous chapter affords: educational efficacy, professional critical reflexivity and educational theory. The implications each one affords for innovative professional practice will be discussed in the following paragraphs. The same structure will be adopted for each of them:

First, how each theme tends to be understood and interpreted in the West. When reference is made to the conventional practitioner, it will be supported by extracts taken from the practitioner's interviews.

Second, discussion will focus on how the particular topic is considered and tends to be understood in the East and finally,

Third, how the difference in orientation influences and impacts on the non *shi*-inflected practitioner's practice.

This will be followed by a consideration of the implications arising from the study. This will include the predictable as well as the unpredictable. Future implications for practice will also be discussed. Finally, the concluding section will demonstrate how each of the points the study argued for is addressed.

7.2 Educational Efficacy: where it sits in existing literature

The previous chapter presented and discussed the hypothetical illustrations which compared the conventional practitioner and the *shi*-inflected one as they taught the same lesson to the same students. While not attempting to find a solution for the lack of interaction between host and in-host country students, the context afforded an opportunity to re-think Western styles of thinking about Education generally and for professional practice specifically.

As highlighted in Chapter two, to date, the literature on the topic of multicultural group work interaction mostly tended to adopt a Western cultural-based theory of education or

a learning-style theory (Kelly, 2009; Straker, 2016) in order to analyse and interpret the data. While some studies (Zhao and Coombs, 2012) focus on comparing Western learning theory and Confucian principles in the attempt to increase academics' awareness of international students backgrounds, it nevertheless encourages practitioners to adopt theories of intercultural communication to assist them in understanding the students' background and experience. Other studies (such as Montgomery, 2009) indicate that while a more positive attitude towards multicultural group work appears to be emerging, interaction within multicultural groups remains an issue. Whilst the focus of studies on interaction within intercultural communication encounters tend to remain with the students, some recent studies are emerging which give a voice-to-the individual which may include the practitioner by "incorporating a dialectic view" of intercultural communicative competence which may offer a way to "extend the rather static, individual-centered focus of previous research on competence and also lead to a less western, ethnocentric bias" (Martin and Nakayama, 2015: 18). Nonetheless, the practitioner's 'voice' tends to focus on sharing how they adopted or adapted their pedagogy to meet the needs of the range of cultural learning styles presented by each cohort of host and in-host country students. So, even though a limited number of studies have begun to include the voice of the practitioner they tend to remain situated within Western sociocultural theories (Kelly, 2009; Mittelmeier et al., 2018), and are at the level of pedagogic advice. This appears to suggest the effectivity of the advice is context-independent and this differs from the *context-dependent reality of efficacy* which is discussed in this study.

7.2.1 Educational efficacy

Effectiveness is discussed by Jullien, (2004) within his discussion of efficacy. He explains that ancient Chinese thought inferred that "an effect" should not be measured by what we can see, as it "is of minimal importance" (Jullien, 2004:104): simply focussing on the end result of an effect often leads to the emergence of other issues. For instance, the illustrative example shows (see 6.3.3) that when the conventional practitioner received feedback at the end of the group task, and s/he heard the group representative adopt and appropriately use the terminology, that the whole group understood the terminology. Therefore, whilst the conventional practitioner considered the group work effective, s/he was not aware that the 'effect' of the group work experience led to other issues such as feelings of exclusion and anxiety among some of the group members. The

ancient Chinese sages, on the other hand, consider how the reality of the effect came about as being of more importance because they:

make use of reality with cunning – not so much to deal with others with cunning, which we Westerners have always regarded as the acme of cleverness..., but rather to *deal with the situation with cunning*, relying on the logic of its unfolding (Jullien, 2004:105 original italics).

The point Jullien (2004:105) makes is that in order to allow the effect of a situation to come about, it should not be forced. For example, when an urn is empty it can stand upright but as soon as it is full, it tips over. The urn can be held upright (by force) while it is being filled but as soon as the hold is released, it tips over. Logically, therefore, it is better to stop filling the urn before it is full so that the balance is maintained and there is no cause for it to overturn. This indicates, therefore, that:

when an effect is pushed to the limit, strained, or forced, it passes beyond reality's threshold of tolerance and can no longer be integrated and so undoes itself (Jullien, 2004:106).

It is not efficacious. So, in order for an effect to be successful, a person, the practitioner in this study, must be careful not to add any personal or affective elements when s/he is trying to ensure an outcome is effective because s/he influences the outcome thus it does not unfold naturally. There should be no visible evidence of any force being added to emphasize an effect (Jullien, 2004:106). An example of “added force” could be a practitioner claiming credit for the positive outcome of the situation. For example, rather than the successful outcome being the focus, the focus centres on the person who helped to achieve the success. Consequently, attention is drawn to the fact that the successful outcome did not unfold ‘naturally’, but was ‘forced’. From the illustrative example, the added force is the practitioner’s noticing *his/her* reality of the group work, not the *reality* of it. According to the ancient Chinese, applying any kind of ‘force’ implies the practitioner has adopted a position of ownership which they advise should be avoided since a more appropriate position would be to enable “the effect to belong to the world that brought it into existence” (Jullien, 2004: 107). Consequently, for a *shi*-inflected practitioner, an ‘effect’ should appear as being an inevitable, natural consequence of a situation; efficacy of the situation reflects the skill in which the practitioner accurately identified and manoeuvred the dispositions. In the first multicultural group work setting, examples of the dispositions the *shi*-inflected practitioner identified are, terminology and specific vocabulary related to the concepts and examples of multicultural group

interactions (see 6.3.2), which s/he provided video tutorials for the students to watch before the class.

7.2.2 Efficacy: the practitioners

As indicated in the previous chapter, the orientation of each practitioner informs how efficacious s/he considers his/her input session to be. For the conventional practitioner, the effectiveness of the input focus is what s/he sees and hears. How the effectiveness of the input session is determined by this practitioner depends on whether s/he hears the students appropriately using and adopting terminology from the input and also whether feedback on their group task provides evidence of understanding the key concepts. Therefore, by monitoring the group work and listening to feedback from the multicultural group work tasks the conventional practitioner is afforded the opportunity to measure how efficacious his/her input session had been. The effectiveness of the conventional practitioner's input session is determined on the accumulation of feedback which s/he accrues as s/he monitors the students during their group work. For instance, the student's level of engagement in their groups; their understanding of the key concepts in their tasks and finally listening to the appropriacy of their use of the key terms in the feedback each group provides at the end of the group work tasks. The overall efficacy of the conventional practitioner's input session is measured against the aims and objectives which had been set out in the lesson plan. For this practitioner efficacy is a product.

For the *shi*-inflected practitioner, efficacy is a process which is set in motion at the upstream stage of the input session. This practitioner deals with "*the situation with cunning*" (Jullien, 2004: 105, original italics), by identifying, possibly altering and preparing all the key factors which are considered to have the potential for a successful outcome (*shi*). Once the dispositions, such as, lack of understanding the key terminology and specific vocabulary related to the concepts and unfamiliarity with group 'etiquette', are prepared upstream, the practitioner observes how they unfold downstream, s/he, "does not impose effects but allows them to impose themselves" (Jullien, 2004: 57). Thus efficacy is determined downstream *with the level of success depending on how well the practitioner identified and prepared the dispositions at the upstream stage*. Efficacy for the *shi*-inflected practitioner is linked to whether the potential (*shi*) of the situation is achieved and this relies upon the quality of the practitioners' initial preparation and the skill with which s/he launches a given activity.

In Chinese thinking, the link between efficacy and *shi* is strong. Whether the situation achieves its potential (*shi*), in other words, how effective it is, is set in motion long before the situation begins. Therefore, referring back to the image of the urn, “an effect comes not when it overflows, but when it begins to happen” (Jullien, 2004:108); it is a “gradual change” in the same way that “‘troubled water’, by becoming still,’ ‘gradually becomes clear.’” For the *shi*-inflected practitioner, the potential of the situation, its efficaciousness, is determined by the accurate identification of the dispositions and the application of the strategies at the upstream stage.

One of the key concepts associated with *shi* is strategy and it could be argued that both practitioners’ adopted strategy albeit in different ways. Moreover, while their rationale for using strategies differed so, too, did their intended outcomes. The conventional practitioner used strategies to ensure the aims and objectives in the lesson plan related to the tasks for the multicultural group work. The effect of this was measured against the practitioner’s set of pre-arranged goals and ideals and was tangible: the students’ use of terminology and their ability to evidence their understanding of key concepts. On the other hand, the *shi*-inflected practitioner’s use of strategies was focussed on increasing the interaction within the multicultural groups to ensure the students understood and were able to participate in the group work tasks. For the *shi*-inflected practitioner, the inclusion, interaction and participation of as many students as possible during the group tasks ensured the potential (*shi*) of the situation was achieved: it was efficacious.

It is argued that adopting a *shi*-inflected style of thinking into his/her practice affords greater awareness of promoting self-efficacy among his/her students by enabling all of the students to experience belonging and feelings of success:

Establishing opportunities that are easy to access and allow for students to experience success are likely to develop and enhance students' academic self-efficacy (Komarraju and Nadler, 2013:71).

Over recent years there has been growing interest in efficacy and achievement in education. Self-efficacy (Komarraju and Nadler, 2013), for example, examines how educators can provide scaffolding which helps their students to believe in their own abilities. One way practitioners can achieve this is by providing opportunities for their students to experience success thus enabling them to know what success feels like. Therefore, by providing different forms of strategies, for example scaffolding,

practitioners can provide opportunities which encourage students to develop greater self-efficacy, which studies have shown are associated with high academic achievement (Komarraju and Nadler, 2013). However, there is a tendency among conventional practitioners to adopt context-independent strategies, whereas for *shi*-inflected practitioners their strategies are context-dependent. This indicates that by applying a Chinese orientation to thinking about their practice, practitioners approach each teaching context anew rather than adopting a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach.

As stated previously, efficacy in Chinese thinking is linked to the upstream and downstream stages in the teaching process. Thus, a key difference to emerge from the different orientations to efficacy is how the practitioners responded to the downstream stage and how effective they perceived their session to be. The conventional practitioner provided scaffolding (strategies) in the form of the video tutorials which the students watched before the class. Feedback during the session suggested that the students were able to use the terminology appropriately and had understood the concepts, even though this impression was derived from the Home and European students. Nonetheless, for the conventional practitioner, the preparation and input session are considered successful and effective. The tendency for this practitioner, then, would be not to change anything for the following session with the same students: the upstream stage would remain the same as would the structure of the downstream stage.

For the *shi*-inflected practitioner, on the other hand, efficacy was achieved because the dispositions were accurately identified and manipulated upstream which resulted in most group members interacting and participating in the group work: Home, European and Chinese. These group members demonstrated they could use terminology appropriately and provide evidence of understanding the concepts. Despite this, the *shi*-inflected practitioner does not assume that because the upstream stage appears to produce efficacious results downstream, the same strategies and dispositions will be effective for the following input session even though it is with the same students. For the *shi*-inflected practitioner, no two situations are the same. Therefore, as every situation is different, requires the same level of detailed attention upstream if the potential (*shi*) of the situation in the following session is to be achieved. The upstream stage for the *shi*-inflected practitioner is always informed by the unfolding of events at the downstream stage. This ensures each situation is considered anew. The *shi*-inflected practitioner, therefore, uses his/her engagement with noticing and reflexivity during the downstream stage of the

session to inform the following upstream stage so as to maximise the potential (*shi*) being achieved. Efficacy for the *shi*-inflected practitioner means that nothing is assumed; because *shi* was achieved in a previous session it does not mean it will be achieved again. By always identifying and analysing the dispositions for every teaching situation, the *shi*-inflected practitioner not only considers the needs of all the students but also increases feelings of inclusion among the cohort.

The difference between the non-*shi* inflected and the *shi*-inflected practitioners' orientation to efficacy is succinctly summarised by Jullien, (2004: 117):

For something to be realised in an effective fashion, it must come about as an effect. It is always through a process (which transforms the situation) not through a goal that leads (directly) to action, one achieves an effect, a result.

An Eastern style of thinking potentially affords new ways of thinking about educational efficacy as distinct from performativity discourse associated with effectiveness and goal-oriented thinking. Therefore, rather than the focus simply being on an end result, the focus now becomes *how the result is achieved*. In general *shi*-inflected thinking affords a different style of thinking and discourse that allows the posing of different questions. In general educational terms, when practitioners are being observed and assessed by HM inspectors, normal practice is to check the practitioners' set goals against the activities the practitioner applies in the classroom. The greater the degree of alignment between goals and observed practice, the more effective the practitioner is deemed to be. Performativity is set against goals. The difference an orientation towards *shi*-inflected thinking affords can be seen in the contrast with conventional understanding of 'good' practice, which is taken to be a check-list against the set goals of the practitioner. For practitioners working in multicultural contexts, as the illustrative examples suggest, *shi*-inflected thinking may afford more opportunities for inclusivity and better learning opportunities for all students:

The qualities peculiar to efficiency stem from the fluidity and continuity of a process: efficiency open up efficacy to an aptitude that has no need of the concrete in order to operate (Jullien, 2004:132)

There is a need for practitioners to realise that they create and are the flow within this efficacious process. Thus Chinese understanding and its relationship to efficacy not only affords a different reframing away from the performativity, effectiveness and goals which

currently govern education but in so doing potentially enriches and enhances the profession.

7.3 Critical Reflexivity

The difference in approach and understanding of efficacy between the conventional and the *shi*-inflected practitioner is closely related to the level of attentiveness that each practitioner brings to the downstream stage of the session. Therefore, how a practitioner engages with reflectivity and reflexivity in light of ancient Chinese thinking will be discussed. This is preceded, however, by a brief discussion on the growing awareness and promotion of reflexivity within practice in higher education.

This relationship between *shi* and reflexivity appears to be timely. New forms of international governance have led to greater emphasis on performance and productivity data within higher education institutions (Ganly, 2018). With change unfolding at an extraordinary speed, its impact is being felt across diverse aspects and disciplines of society. As such, higher education is currently in a “transformative period” which has necessitated senior management to re-assess and change “the game in order to survive and achieve long-term competitive advantage” (Ganly, 2018:715). The recent formalising of the Teaching Excellence Framework is seen as addressing the imbalance in status between teaching and research in higher education. It is being promoted as being the teaching equivalent of the REF within higher education (Wild and Berger, 2016: 311).

The TEF, one could argue, has emerged in response to growing concerns related to among other things, the “governmental demands for the increased accountability of Universities in terms of student satisfaction and perceived ‘value for money’” (Wild and Berger, 2016: 311; Gunn, 2018). Thus, focus is on practitioners and the level and provision of teaching within higher education. This discussion appears to have triggered renewed interest in reflectivity and reflexivity among academics (Hibbert, 2012; Cunliffe, 2016; Ganly 2018).

In the West, reflective practice is recognised as a “central tenet” in the teaching and learning process because it “encapsulates the complex, analytical and inquiring nature of teaching” (Harford and MacRuairc, 2008:1885). Thus to be reflective involves a practitioner looking back on his/her input session and questioning the “goals and the

values that guide his or her work, the context in which he or she teaches” and examining “his or her assumptions” (Jay and Johnson, 2002:76). Reflexivity, on the other hand, requires practitioners to ask different types of questions about their practice, more challenging ones, for example, questioning what they, and others, “might take for granted” (Cunliffe, 2016:741). In other words, reflexive practitioners should not only examine their own assumptions, decisions and habitual actions in relation to others but they should also be aware of how these “ways of being are culturally determined” (Bolton and Delderfield, 2018: 10). Therefore, reflectivity and reflexivity inform different aspects of a practitioner’s practice and have the potential to improve the quality of his/her practice. With the formalising of TEF and a growing number of higher education institutions implementing it, practitioners are being encouraged to engage in activities which will enhance their practice and the student experience.

In a Western context, practitioners who engage in reflexivity, not reflex interaction (Cunliffe, 2016), question aspects of their practice which they might unconsciously and habitually be unaware of so as to surface their basic assumptions about their practice. In practical terms this means:

examining critically the assumptions underlying our actions, the impact of those actions and from a broader perspective, what passes as good...practice (Cunliffe, 2004: 407).

The unease and unsettling that practitioners often associate with critical reflexivity (Cunliffe, 2016) is in part due to the depth of questioning required. Engaging in reflexivity means the practitioners need to be open and honest about their practice as they face any unspoken assumptions which may unconsciously influence their actions and interactions,

[c]ritically reflexive practitioners therefore question the ways in which they act and develop knowledge about their actions” (Cunliffe, 2004: 414).

In other words, whilst engagement with critical reflexivity enables practitioners to underscore their ideologies and tacit assumptions, it does not necessarily transfer into their day-to-day practice. Thus, if the potential for reflective and reflexive teaching is to be achieved, it is necessary for teacher educators to teach and foster critical reflexivity and reflection among prospective teachers by ensuring they, as teacher educators, have a

sound understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of critical reflexivity and critical reflection (Liu, 2015:137).

Engaging in critical reflexivity and reflectivity is considered ‘good practice’ in teaching, however, details of whether it should be included in the TEF have not yet been decided: there continues to be much debate on what constitutes ‘excellence’ within the TEF and how it can be measured (Land and Gordon, 2015; Neary, 2016; Gunn, 2018). Currently, the TEF has three components within its teaching excellence policy: Teaching Quality, which includes providing evidence of teaching which encourages student engagement; Learning Environment, which includes opportunities for peer-to-peer interaction and Student Outcomes and Learning Gain, which include evidence of lifelong learning skills and attributes which allow graduates to positively contribute to society, the economy and the environment (Gunn, 2018: 137). The level the TEF operates at and the metrics it makes use of would develop over time. At the time of writing, the TEF is “institution-wide only, undergraduate only and solely makes use of existing metrics” with it extending to include postgraduates after 2019 (Gunn, 2018:136). The overall aim of the TEF is to provide a framework to ensure the student-as-consumer (Neary, 2016; Gunn, 2018) is satisfied through receiving a quality experience which paid attention to their needs. To achieve this would require teachers to engage in reflective practice (Gunn, 2018; Land and Gordon, 2016).

7.3.1 *Shi* and reflexivity

The illustrative example in the previous chapter suggests that the conventional and *shi*-inflected practitioners have different levels of engagement with reflectivity and reflexivity. At the downstream stage of the session, the conventional practitioner monitored the class and where necessary re-directed discussion in the group work tasks. This appears to be the extent of his/her engagement with reflexivity during the session. On the other hand, reflectivity at the end of the teaching session is where the conventional practitioner looked back on the input session and judged its effectiveness against the goals set out on the lesson plan. It was his/her reflections which informed the upstream stage of the following session. The imaginary context of the illustrative example indicates that the conventional practitioner would adopt the same downstream procedures for the future sessions. So, while the only change would be to the content of the video tutorial which would reflect the input for the following session, no additional videos would be provided and the structure of the downstream stage would remain unchanged. In order to compare

the hypothetical illustrative example with a real teaching context, extracts from interview data from the practitioners will be used to support the imaginary actions of the conventional practitioner.

The following extracts are taken from the practitioners who have experience of teaching multicultural groups of students. Each practitioner is talking about what she ‘noticed’ during the class and how she followed it up. The first extract describes how this practitioner (MT) misinterpreted the head nodding by the Chinese students to mean they had understood what she had asked the class to do before the next session. Her extract shows how she adopted both reflective and reflective skills as well as her previous teaching experience to address the issue for the subsequent input sessions:

So many times you leave class and you go away thinking that it was good, the class understood, they [Chinese students] were nodding, and then you get the emails and the visits to the office saying well, ‘what exactly do we have to do?’ So I use worksheets now and just having a sentence or two explaining what they have to do just kicks it off and makes the seminar a much more valuable experience (MT)

This ‘conventional’ practitioner resolved the issue she described but it is unknown how many times this had happened before she introduced worksheets. She explained that she had successfully used worksheets with a similar group of students whom she had taught in a similar context but at another university. The extract presupposes the practitioner continued to use worksheets with this group of students for the remainder of their academic year. The practitioner’s actions, however, indicates that regardless of her past experience being context-dependent, she transferred and applied it so as to address the issue she had identified in a different context, thus making it context-independent (Jullien, 1995; Flyvbjerg, 2001). She, therefore, believed that what works in one context will work in another.

The second extract is from the other conventional practitioner (ET) and it is her response to having been asked whether groups which comprise mainly Chinese members, speak in Mandarin or English. The extract shows what the practitioner ‘notices’ during the downstream stage of her session and how she attempts to resolve it during the class:

I tended to make English the rule and walked round the tables a lot during [the class] so they were using English but they tended to dry up because I think they felt silly talking to each other and sometimes it was difficult depending on the sort of composition of the larger group to try and make sure there was always [a native English speaking student] at the table (ET).

By being attentive as she walks around the room, the practitioner suggests that while the mono-cultural Chinese groups start by using English, they revert to Mandarin as the lesson progresses. The practitioner reflects on her own past experience of being in a similar situation and used it to rationalise why she really did not mind the students' reverting to Mandarin. The practitioner indicates that when she sets up group work, she tries to include at least one native English speaking group member in each group but that it is not always possible.

However, rather than engaging in reflexive practice, what the hypothetical and real teachers' extracts show is that during the downstream stage of their lessons they engage in reflex interaction. "Reflex interaction" is the practitioners' response to an 'event' which occurs during their teaching and is often handled in an intuitive and unconscious way which is based on them drawing on their experience, "intuition and habitual actions" (Cunliffe, 2004: 412). It could be argued that many practitioners believe they are engaging with reflexivity when in reality it is reflex interaction, which Jullien (1995, 2004) argues is an example of an intervention, for example, the gardener pulling the sapling to encourage it to grow. If they had been engaging with critical reflexivity, it would have required them to ask more in-depth questions and would require them to question their:

assumptions and taken-for-granted actions, thinking about where/who [they] are and where/who [they] would like to be, challenging [their] conceptions of reality, and exploring new possibilities (Cunliffe, 2004: 411).

Critical reflexivity at a personal level and from a western perspective is often perceived by practitioners as something that takes them out of their comfort zone (Cunliffe, 2004). Therefore, whilst a Western explanation of what it is to be reflexive necessitates practitioners to be considerate and respectful of difference, it is also about them asking questions about their assumptions and their practice; it is not about them, 'owning up' to what they consider are any "contaminating effects" to their practice (Cousin, 2013: 4).

The main focus of engagement with reflexive practice is for the practitioners to question their assumptions and beliefs but not to expect the process to provide definite answers:

[it] highlights the need to engage in critical questioning and deeper debate around taken-for-granted issues that have potential moral and ethical implications (Cunliffe,2016:745).

Cunliffe (2016) presents an established Western view of reflexivity with which none of the practitioners appears to engage: neither the MT, nor the ET, nor the hypothetical conventional practitioners. The action of the practitioners appears to display characteristics of reflex interaction (Cunliffe, 2004) as their response to an event that they noticed during their teaching session appears to be reactive rather than proactive. There is also the suggestion that while it provides a temporary solution, it may be at the expense of practitioners not realising that there may be a deeper issue of which they are unaware. The application of reflex interaction, which is considered a strategy, appears to highlight the difference in approach to noticing between Western and *shi*-inflected practitioners and how they respond to their ‘noticing’:

What Western strategy merely notes in passing, Chinese thinkers try to interpret and use as food for thought (Jullien, 2004:20).

The difference between the conventional and *shi*-inflected practitioners’ level of noticing and attentiveness during the downstream stage of the lesson is apparent. Bringing a Chinese way of thinking to Western habits of practice, introduces a way of thinking which prioritises different things and highlights how important the practitioner is within this relational space. It brings out difference in their positionality: a *shi*-inflected practitioner is attuned to the different bodies, different perspectives, different standpoints which are present in this space in a dynamic way. The *shi*-inflected practitioner does this by being attentive to the forms of expression which are present because those forms of expression are themselves reflections and contribute to the potential (*shi*) being achieved.

The diagram below shows how integral reflexivity is to *shi*-inflected practice. The attentiveness required by the practitioner at the downstream stage, insofar that it is critical, ethical and experimental, indicates inclusivity and consideration of the student experience. The downstream stage requires the practitioner to be aware of how the

dispositions at the upstream stage evolve and whether they have been accurately assessed by the practitioner: successful assessment and manipulation determines the efficacy of the situation and whether *shi* has been achieved. Thus the process is cyclical and starts with upstream which informs the unfolding at the downstream stage. Both upstream and downstream stages inform the efficacious stage.

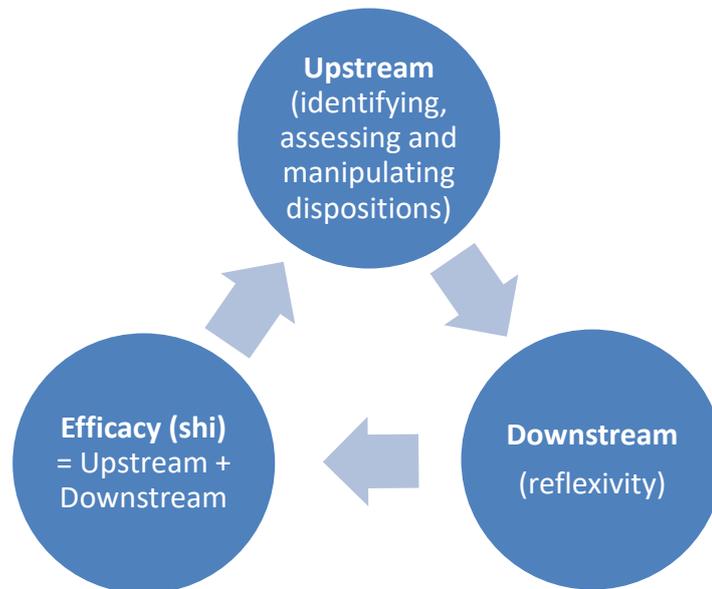


Figure 4: The upstream, downstream, efficacy process.

The initial upstream stage in the process occurs well in advance of the actual teaching and is the point where the *shi*-inflected practitioner identifies and analyses the factors which have the potential of the (teaching) situation (*shi*) being achieved. At this stage, the practitioner decides what s/he needs to prepare, change or adapt in order to set in motion the most efficient and natural way in which the outcome is advantageous and potential (*shi*) is achieved. In Chinese thinking, the outcome should emerge naturally from the unfolding of the process so the strategy is always a matter of knowing how to “impinge” upon the process upstream in such a way that an effect will then tend to unfold as it passes through a process that is “pre-conditional” and achieves its “envisioned” potential in an indirect manner (Jullien, 2004:121).

The initial, upstream, stage in the diagram leads into the downstream stage which is where the accuracy and strategic skill of the practitioner are determined. During the downstream stage, the *shi*-inflected practitioner notices how efficaciously the upstream part of the process unfolds. This requires a high level of attentiveness and ‘noticing’. For example,

in the multicultural group work tasks in which students use terminology, which students appear to understand the concepts, which students participate within the group, which groups cohere and which groups do not, and why. The attentiveness to this level of detail at the downstream stage informs and enables the *shi*-inflected practitioner to notice how efficacious his/her upstream strategies had been and to evaluate the extent to which *shi* has been achieved. This attention to detail through ‘noticing’ then informs and becomes part of the strategy employed in the following upstream stage before the next input session. However, the experience that the *shi*-inflected practitioner accrues through his/her engagement in the process of reflexivity is not used to replicate the manipulation of the dispositions for every situation s/he encounters but is used to enable him/her to more accurately identify the dispositions and know when to act and when not to act. In his/her assessment of the dispositions, the practitioner can decide not to take any action: “do nothing, and let nothing be left undone” (Jullien, 2004:85). In Chinese thinking, choosing not to take any action does not mean that the outcome will be ineffective; rather, it is knowing not to act that is considered the most appropriate strategy in order to bring about a favourable outcome. So, as there is “nothing left undone”, the possibility that the future outcome “might be limited or incomplete” is eliminated and “success” is guaranteed (Jullien, 2004:86). The experience the *shi*-inflected practitioner gains as s/he engages in the upstream, downstream process not only affords insight into knowing when to act and when not to, it also increases his/her overall strategic skill. While Sun Tzu is addressing Generals in a warfare context, it is also pertinent to *shi*-inflected practice and appears to summarise and succinctly explain how the practitioners’ experience of using strategies adds to his/her overall skill in assessing the potential of a situation:

Do not repeat the tactics which have gained you one victory, but let your methods be regulated by the infinite variety of circumstances (Sun Tzu in Mondschein, 2016:15).

The upstream, downstream, efficacy process adopted by the *shi*-inflected practitioner is undertaken for each teaching session, regardless whether the practitioner is teaching the same group of students or not. Thus, the *shi*-inflected practitioner uses what s/he notices during the downstream stage of the lesson to then inform his/her strategic knowledge for the following upstream stage: it becomes part of the whole process. The *shi*-inflected practitioner uses his/her experience and skill at the upstream stage to demonstrate that his/her, “quality of decision is like the well-timed swoop of a falcon” (Sun Tzu in Mondschein, 2016:97).

By adopting a different style of thinking and bringing a different orientation to teaching and learning, affords a broader discussion. A Chinese orientation to thinking about practice enables practitioners who are specifically engaged in multicultural encounters to be attuned to the different forms of expression which may enable them to provide more harmonised learning contexts and can lead to or might even be woven towards educational outcomes which are productive for all. A Chinese style of thinking affords an inclusive component into practice and works towards a more inclusive educational outcome for practitioners working with complex and differentiated multicultural groups. *Shi*-inflected reflexivity is directly related to practice, and links teaching to practice.

In higher education, nowadays, the introduction of the Teaching for Excellence Framework is intended to grant teaching a more equal status with research within the academy. However, with it has come a growing focus on how teaching within the academy can be improved, hence how practitioners can enhance their practice. Reflexivity in general, appears to be being promoted as a way in which this can be addressed (Hibbert, 2012; Cousin, 2013, Cunliffe, 2016). However, it could be argued that the implementation of TEF has the potential to reinforce Western goal-oriented thinking with its focus on efficiency and performativity but it could equally afford a move away from Western theoretical framing and draw upon other resources (Jullien, 2000).

7.4 Educational Theory

In educational research, case studies are often used as they are considered the most appropriate method to understand and interpret human interaction and/or behaviour. However, in spite of its popularity, a case study approach's inability to offer generalisations appears to be the main concern against this form of research being adopted as "an instrument of serious inquiry" (Thomas, 2010:576). Generalisation is a central tenet within the natural sciences and from it comes induction. In other words, if "X happens regularly in certain conditions", it is therefore inferred that X will happen again under the same conditions (Thomas, 2011a: 211). The nature of social science makes these kinds of generalisations impossible because the focus of attention involves people, who are unpredictable and what happens in one context cannot be inferred to happen again under the same conditions in another. Thus:

the assumption of theoretical validation from inductive inference implies a

firmness to the structure and reliability of theory that is unachievable in the inquiries of social science (Thomas, 2011a: 213).

Nonetheless, in defending social science and case studies, authors such as Flyvbjerg (2001) and Thomas, (2010) have returned to the origins of the debate between Plato and Aristotle which was briefly discussed in Chapter 4. They comment that:

[t]he Aristotelian question of balancing instrumental rationality with value-rationality is forcing its way back to the foreground (Flyvbjerg, 2001:53).

Therefore, in support of redressing the imbalance, these writers have focused their arguments on the case study method where they argue for “abduction not induction, phronesis not theory” (Thomas 2010: 575). Thomas argues that in case study:

Because of both the contingency of social life and the necessary limitations on the kind of quantity of confirmatory evidence that can be disclosed, theory, in any kind of technical sense, is unattainable (Thomas, 2011a:213).

Thomas (2010, 2011a; 2011b) and his contemporaries argue phronesis as an alternative to technical theory. Thus, in the context of the case study, Aristotle’s notion of phronesis is about practical knowledge, a recognition of the provisional and the tentative in interpretation “with a twist of judgement squeezed into the mix” (Thomas, 2010: 214). It is also context-dependent because context is fundamental to understanding what social science is and what it can be (Flyvbjerg, 2001; Thomas, 2011). Therefore, whilst Thomas (2010) and Flyvbjerg’s (2001) understanding and use of phronesis differs slightly from Jullien’s (2004), commonalities exist between them: they are context-dependent; they evoke an openness to different orientations to thinking about education and educational theory.

The application of a Chinese style of thinking in this study has shown how a different orientation to educational theory can influence educational research specifically with regard to case study. Adopting a *shi*-inflected approach has shown that in an educational context, *shi*-inflected thinking allows a different discourse when discussing educational theories: one which affords alternatives to means-to-an-end goals and effectivity. Jullien (2000) discusses the potential resource for thinking that the mobilisation of a different set of ideas and concepts affords; this thesis has put this to work in relation to education sites where different cultures meet, which has not been done before.

7.5 Revisiting Implications from the study

The implications centred around the different understanding of efficacy and reflexivity and how the influence of Western focus on models and goals (Jullien, 1995; 2004) not only instantiates a different orientation towards reality but also on efficacy and reflexivity. The following discussion will focus on the implications this study has for the practitioner, but then lead on to include how this might eventually impact on future Literature in the field of interaction within multicultural group work. In Chapter 6, it was proposed that the experience, intuition and context dependence nature of being and expertise may be employed by the *shi*-inflected practitioner as s/he identified, analysed and examined dispositions in order to manipulate them to ensure a positive outcome: that *shi* is achieved. The discussions within this study appear to confirm that experience, intuition and context dependence are employed by the *shi*-inflected practitioner and are used to identify, assess and manipulate the dispositions of the situation, ‘upstream’. Context dependence appears to weave its way through the chapters and seems to suggest a stronger link than anticipated between a person being considered an expert (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1980) and *shi* being achieved. With regards to practitioners, it implies that each teaching situation should be considered unique and, as already mentioned, because something works in one context, it should not be assumed it will work again in the same situation (Jullien, 2004).

This study indicates that the inclusion of a Chinese orientation to practice enables a different approach to achieving desirable educational effects, and that an understanding of *shi*-inflected aspects allows a more strategic approach to theorising internationalisation within higher education. Whilst, the Internationalisation policy ‘document’ (British Council, 2010) remains open to interpretation, for those engaged in multicultural encounters within higher education, *shi*-inflected thinking permits another way of entering that discourse and reframing it. Internationalisation is acknowledged as one element, albeit a significant one within general educational policy; however, an orientation towards this policy might afford different ways of thinking and discussing education policy in general, particularly surrounding the discourse of performativity and notions of effectivity.

7.5.1 Returning to the Literature

As Internationalisation has become a part of universities worldwide, higher education classrooms have been seen as providing the space for collaboration between students from

different countries. The common way to encourage collaboration between diverse peers is through group work. Interest in studying the interaction between host and in-host country students as they work together in multicultural groups continues and remains the focus of studies ranging from language and culture to friendship, integration and social tensions (Jones 2010; Mittelmeier et al, 2018). The main areas which have recently been highlighted as standing out and that have been identified as being “potentially problematic [are] language and communication, attitudes and engagement, and issues associated with the composition of the group members” (Spencer-Oatey and Dauber, 2017: 220). The theories associated with these studies range from sociocultural theories of learning, which offer an understanding of participation in terms of its relationship to learning to activity theory as a way of modelling participation (Straker, 2016: 300). The theories and analysis of the topic are westernised with the main focus being the students. However, by introducing and adopting a different orientation to the topic of multicultural group work, the role of the practitioner became paramount to the discussion, yet his/her voice has tended to have been missing in studies related to interaction within multicultural groups.

Applying a non, theory-based approach to the topic area, whilst maintaining focus on the interaction, or lack thereof, among students, led to ‘noticing’ the importance of the role of the practitioner, yet the practitioner’s voice appeared to be missing in the studies discussed in Chapter 2. Whilst previous studies might have included advice or experience from practitioners (Mittelmeier et al., 2018), there is no practitioners’ voice on what scaffolding they had provided before the students’ multicultural group encounter. This is important because teaching and learning involves both practitioners and students not just the students. In the previous studies, which are discussed in Chapter 2, the inclusion of the practitioner’s voice would perhaps have indicated whether s/he could have enhanced or hindered the interaction by knowing what scaffolding had been provided beforehand and what preparation the practitioner had provided in order to enhance interaction.

The literature reflects an understanding of “reality” associated with Western thinking which Jullien (2004: 4) questions and comments that it has “resulted in the theory-practice relation, [being] so common that we barely question it.” Moving away from a theory-based study a different way of thinking and orientation to the topic becomes possible. *Shi*-inflected thinking affords the practitioner a voice and potentially retains a balance between teaching and learning. This study has shown how the upstream stage of the *shi*-

inflected practitioner's practice focuses on inclusivity and the students' experience. These are areas of interest which are growing rapidly within higher education, not only because of the competition nationally and internationally to secure and maintain International student numbers but also with the introduction of the TEF (Wild and Berger, 2016).

7.5.2 What *shi*-inflected thinking means for the practitioner

Introducing a Chinese style of thinking to existing practitioner's practice enables an alternative approach to how they think about teaching and learning. Rather than the current focus on the end product and the tick-box culture it encourages, the application of *shi*-inflected thinking in this study indicates that it affords and establishes closer links between teaching and learning, which perhaps have been growing apart, and is an example of one of the silent transformations which Jullien (2011) talks about. Deploying such resources for thinking, the potential exists, therefore, for conventional practitioners to reframe their thinking towards a Chinese orientation of 'process' with regard their teaching and learning rather than simply focussing on the 'product'. It would, however,

Learn how to make the most of the tendency at work in the course of things; allow the setup represented by the situation simply to develop according to its tendency (Jullien: 1995: 198)

By engaging in 'learning' about reflexivity and its importance in the process between upstream and downstream, the conventional practitioners' engagement with reflexivity affords a different level of attentiveness to which they are perhaps accustomed during their input sessions. Therefore, as the 'process' of teaching and learning moves forward, new orientations of thinking about practice enhances teaching and learning for both the practitioner and the student. Consequently, the implications *shi*-inflected thinking has for practitioner's practice in the field also suggests that it might afford a different focus of discussion on the topic of interaction within multicultural group work from what appears in existing literature to include the voice of the practitioner. Chinese traditional thinking is different, but it allows a "noticing" between Chinese and Western thought and "effectively opens other possibilities" (Jullien, 2014: 147).

7.6 Returning to the research questions

This study has shown that current practice could be improved in multicultural education and supports Kimmel and Volet (2012) findings that students' perception of multicultural group work is positively or negatively experienced depending on the level of support provided by the tutor. Including *shi* as a resource-inflected approach to teaching and learning not only enhances practitioner's pedagogy but also meets "the needs of international students" while enabling "the academic progress of HE in the West" (Jin and Cortazzi, 2017: 240).

The overarching aim of this project is to explore the following question:

How effective are current approaches to multicultural education as they relate to the practices of tutors?

In order to address this question, the findings for the four research questions need to be discussed. Therefore, a brief summary of the key findings will be presented under each of the research questions and, where appropriate, reference will be made to relevant literature.

Research question 1: *How are multicultural encounters in education theorised?*

Multicultural encounters in higher education are interpreted from an inherently Western ethnocentric perspective (Marginson and Sawir, 2011). However, whilst there is a growing awareness for a need to move away from a solely Western perspective (Jin and Cortazzi, 2017; Holliday, 2017), currently, it remains steeped in a Western understanding and interpretation of efficacy. This involves a focus on theory and practice and a means-to-an-end approach to multicultural encounters. For practitioners this relates to outcomes being stated and related to lesson plans and check-box procedures. The findings from this project indicate that studies which adopt Western interpretations of efficacy and reality, whilst increasing understanding of the issues which interfere with interaction between and among host and in-host country students, has provided very little insight into how these issues can be addressed. Applying *shi* as a tool to analyse the data, highlights the need for the voice of the practitioner to be present in studies related to multicultural encounters. This is seen in findings from the students, which indicate how much the actions of a tutor can increase the potential for multicultural interactions to be successful from the start of a programme of study and increase feelings of inclusion. Therefore, the inclusion of a different orientation to thinking about teaching and working in multicultural

interactions can provide additional insights for all involved in such encounters, namely students and tutors.

Research question 2: *What are the limitations of current theorisations of multicultural encounters in education, with regard to how these might inform the tutors' practices with students?*

To date studies which are associated with multicultural encounters in education have tended to be from a Western perspective in both design and interpretation. This has involved Western understanding of efficacy and reality in which the focus is on the product rather than the process. The hypothetical teaching context as well as the literature highlight how practitioners' engagement with reflexivity and reflectivity tends to be the 'ideal' rather than the 'norm' (Cunliffe, 2016; Cousin, 2013). This can reinforce a focus on the product in teaching and learning rather than the process. It also encourages practitioners to assume that each teaching context is the same. However, this project has shown that by adopting a *shi*-inflected orientation to their practice, practitioners have to engage in reflexivity. Its importance in the process between upstream and downstream affords a different level of attentiveness than that to which practitioners are perhaps accustomed during their input sessions. Consequently, the implications *shi*-inflected thinking has for a practitioner's practice in the field is that it provides the practitioner a presence, which is lacking in existing literature. This is achieved through a different focus of discussion, that of interaction, within multicultural group work. This project shows that while Chinese traditional thinking is different, it allows a "noticing" between Chinese and Western thought and "effectively opens other possibilities" (Jullien, 2014: 147). By developing a different understanding of efficacy and reality, this moves from a focus on product to one of process.

Research question 2a: *How cosmopolitan is the theorisation of multicultural encounters in education?*

The literature discussed earlier in this project indicates that currently a vast majority of theorisation of multicultural encounters remains Western. Little appears to have changed since Gudykunst (2002) raised awareness of the need for theories to be developed by scholars from non-Western countries. There is also evidence to suggest that employability is becoming more linked with internationalisation (De Wit et al., 2015) due to its potential to foster "intercultural awareness" skills that employers are looking for. This is because

employers perceive graduates, who have such skills, contribute to “team working, communication and reduction in workplace conflicts” (Spencer-Oatey and Dauber, 2019:10). The response to meeting the needs of employers worldwide for HEIs is to produce global citizens (Spencer-Oatey and Dauber, 2015). In doing so, there appears to be a move (Holliday, 2017) away from a singular Western perspective towards encouraging an awareness of other cultural alternatives which may enhance a practitioner’s repertoire (Jin and Cortazzi, 2017). This study demonstrates how a non-Western perspective of multicultural encounters provides insight into how many of the issues associated with a lack of interaction within multicultural encounters can be countered by including the voice of the practitioner in studies related to multicultural encounters. Accordingly, this project has shown that introducing a Chinese orientation to thinking is a way of exploring how to interrupt, challenge and value the difference between cultures as a means of thinking.

Research question 2b: How inclusive is current theorising of multicultural encounters in education with regard to teachers and students?

Current literature related to intercultural interactions within higher education has mainly focused on the students. As employers seek graduates who not only have “technical /discipline specific knowledge” as well as “skills that enable them to work effectively in international contexts” (Spencer-Oatey and Dauber, 2019:218), higher education institutions are more aware than before of a need to produce global citizens, who are able to communicate competently with people from different cultures (Koester and Lustig, 2015). Thus, the focus of studies has mostly been on identifying reasons why there continues to be a lack of interaction among and between host and in-host students to the exclusion, in much of the literature, of the practitioner. The findings of this study indicate that by applying ancient Chinese thinking as a tool to analyse the data, the close relationship between ‘upstream’ and ‘downstream’; reflexivity and reflectivity for a practitioner, necessitates his/her voice to be included in studies related to multicultural encounters. Adopting *shi* in the analysis of the data, highlights how it is the strategic actions of the practitioner that can determine the perceived success of multicultural encounters.

Research question 3: Is there value in engaging with theories other than those informed by Western styles of thinking, in relation to informing multicultural encounters in education?

Jullien (1995, 2004) uses concepts of *shi* as a resource for thinking. This study has demonstrated that by adopting and applying these concepts as a tool for analysis a different orientation to thinking and approach to practice is afforded. It has highlighted the importance of the practitioner's voice in multicultural encounters; a voice which has been largely missing in the current literature. The findings indicate how practitioners can enhance multicultural group encounters by treating each teaching context as unique. Their role is highlighted because it is his/her actions which provide the flow, the potential (*shi*), being achieved in such encounters. Hence, their focus is on the process rather than the product of teaching and learning and as the practitioner's understanding of efficacy grows, the student's experience of multicultural encounters improves. The findings from this study indicate there is value in engaging with theories other than those informed by Western styles of thinking. *Shi* provides a different orientation to practice and affords a move away from a focus on plans and goals, to a more inclusive and involved manner of thinking for all involved in multicultural encounters.

Research question 4: *How might shi-inflected thinking assist tutors' reflexivity when exploring their practices?*

A different orientation afforded by *shi*-inflected thinking in terms of thinking and practice is that reflexivity becomes part of practice and not an optional 'extra' for practitioners. Reflexivity in terms of *shi* requires practitioners to be more attentive and attuned to what is happening during their practice as the 'unfolding' (Jullien, 2004) of their upstream manoeuvres informs how efficacious the downstream stage in the process is: it informs their practice and necessitates engagement with reflexivity and reflectivity: not reflex interaction (Cunliffe, 2016). The more skilled practitioners become, the more they realise how important context is to decision making, which is a characteristic of being an expert (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1980) and or a Master (Jullien, 1995, 2004) in their field. This project highlights how *shi*-inflected thinking requires practitioners to consider every teaching session as unique. The manipulation of dispositions is context dependent with no two situations being the same, thus, engagement in reflexivity becomes a necessary part of a practitioner's practice.

7.7 The way forward

Introducing a new orientation to the field of education has shown how it can influence practice among tutors and appears to be one which is inclusive for those involved in multicultural interactions. *Shi*-inflected thinking affords an opportunity to work towards a more inclusive educational outcome for complex and differentiated multicultural groups. Chinese traditions thinking is a matter of interpretation for those who engage with it. However, the affordances it allows are not restricted to practitioners, they can also be extended to those engaged in research as it enables a different discourse to be introduced and a different understanding of effectivity. Consequently, the inclusion of a different discourse may eventually have implications for educational policy.

7.8 Conclusion

This study has argued that *shi* can be applied to the field of Education and in particular, teaching and learning. *Shi*-inflected thinking provides a very different perspective on what is considered the norm among Western non-*shi*-inflected practitioners and, as such, allows a different orientation to thinking about their practice. Traditional Chinese thinking is about fluidity, orientation and movement: processivity in its broadest sense. The following description of what the Chinese consider to be a good educator outlines how the practitioner can help his/her students pursue their own abilities:

He [sic] leads the students without forcing them, pushes them forwards without constraining them, opens the path without leading them to its end so that their spirits remain calm and at ease and they understand by themselves (Jullien, 2000:200).

The Chinese understanding of what it is to be a ‘good educator’ might seem similar to Western approaches to teaching and learning. However, the manner in which practice is implemented differs. Chinese practice embraces the process and the fluidity their understanding of reality affords, whereas the Western practitioner tends to favour the end product and the achieving of goals that their reality affords. In Chinese thought it is the skilful use and understanding of strategy that enables *shi* to be achieved. The skill and application of these strategies are not restricted to the General, but also to a politician, a painter, a boxer and a practitioner. The successful outcome of upstream manoeuvres determines whether *shi* is achieved or not. However as *shi* is always associated with, and attached to, its initial strategic disposition, it enables thought to be focussed on the process

from the perspective of how to use the strategies. Therefore, as Jullien (1995: 260) highlights, “[s]ince the principles of dynamism are fundamentally the same across reality”, *shi* can serve the practitioner, the general, the painter, the writer, the politician equally well because:

Reality always presents itself as a particular situation that results from a particular disposition of circumstances that is, in turn, inclined to produce a particular *effect*

Therefore, it is up to the person, in whatever context s/he finds him/herself, to ensure s/he exploits and benefits from the potentiality (*shi*) of the situation. *Shi*-inflected thinking, therefore, can be applied in many contexts within education.

Overall, this study has been concerned with processivity, the change, the outcomes, and with what happens as a consequence of students and practitioners coming together in a particular space in punctuated moments through time at the most general of levels. *Shi*-inflected thinking provides resources for a different way of thinking about those rationalities and interactions and has allowed that orientation to travel in a more educational direction.

China presents a case study through which to contemplate Western thought from the outside – and, in this way, to bring us out of our atavism (Jullien, 2000: 9).

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Appendix A: Interview schedule for tutors

1. *Background information:*

- What is your understanding of verbal and non-verbal strategies within communication?
 - Can you give examples of verbal and non-verbal behaviour?
- Are you aware of using features of verbal and non-verbal behaviour, in general?
 - Which ones?
- Have you ever lived outside of the UK? Where?
- Did you have experience of teaching students from different nationalities before working at the university?
 - In the UK?
 - Outside the UK?
 - What nationalities?
- In your teaching are you aware of using features of verbal and non-verbal behaviour?
 - Do the features change depending on the nationality of the students you are teaching? For example?
 - Are you aware of students' use of verbal and non-verbal behaviour? Which ones?
 - In your experience, do students from different nationalities use the same or different features of verbal and non-verbal behaviour? Can you provide an example?

2. *Teaching: Interaction among multicultural groups of student*

- What nationalities do you have in your class?
- Do the students from different nationalities interact with each other?
- If necessary, how did you increase interaction among group members?
- If there are mono-cultural groups, how do you prevent them from speaking in their L1?

3. *Teaching: Group Work*

- How are students grouped?
 - Who decides which groups the students are in?
 - Do students remain in the same groups throughout the module?
 - Are the students group assessed?
- Does the inclusion of verbal and non-verbal behaviour enhance or interfere with group interaction? An example?
- What do you think contributes to good group interaction compared to not so good multicultural group interaction:
 - Group dynamics and how they work together?
 - Is there a group leader?
 - Do you nominate the group leader?
 - In multicultural groups, what nationality does the group leader tend to be?

4. *Teaching: Noticing in class*

- During multicultural group work, were you aware of particular nationalities dominating group discussions?
 - Which nationalities?
- Have you noticed verbal and non-verbal strategies being used in the multicultural groups?
 - By all nationalities?
- Did you notice any changes in verbal and non-verbal behaviour among the cohort over the academic year?
 - Were you aware of aspects of verbal and non-verbal features being misunderstood and interfering with interaction among group members? An example?

5. *Reflection on teaching: By the end of the programme: General noticing*

- Are you aware of and changes in the level of integration among nationalities by the end of their programme of study? What are you aware of?
 - Student's choice of group
 - Same nationality? Different nationality?
 - Interaction with tutor?
- What do you consider is the main cause of lack of interaction among multicultural group members?

Appendix B: Example of student transcript

File: Susan (1) October 13.

Place: Conducted in xxx, xxxx

I: OK. xxxx, thank you very much for coming in. Your name won't appear on this, it'll be Student three, four, or whatever. Once I've done the transcription, I'll send it to you, to see if you agree with what has been said. You know, if you're OK with that.

S7: Yeah, no, you're fine there, no, I...

I: and obviously you, you can withdraw at any time, you know. First of all, I'd like to thank you very much again, and ask you a wee bit of background information, about yourself. So this is all background information, and the rest of it's going on to ..

S7: OK. That's fine

I: Just different aspects, em, can you tell me where you grew up?

S7: All over the place! I was born in Scotland, and then em we moved down to different places in England and then we moved to Stirling when I was fourteen, not exact one place, I've kind of grown up all over the place.[laughs]

I: So where did you go to school?

S7: Em, yeah, I went to two different primary schools, and two different high schools.

I: Right, OK, and what about university?

S7: I went to the University of XXX.

I: OK. Eh... did you live here, and did you live close to the university? Or did you...

S7: Yeah, yes, I had a number of different flats, I stayed in halls the first year, then the flats with friends.

I: OK. And can I ask, how many brothers and sisters do you have?

S7: That's split as well! [laughs] two brothers and a sister.

I: Are they a lot older, or younger than you?

S7: Younger. I'm the oldest everything. [laughs]

I: OK. Ah, let's think about holidays. Where did you go on holiday?

- S7: Em...Spain is the biggest destination, definitely. I've been to Greece once or twice, but Spain is...
- I: But mainly Europe?
- S7: Yes, mainly Europe, yes
- I: Yes. And even with travelling, is that where you've been? Have you travelled further than that?
- S7: No, I personally haven't done any university travelling, em, no as I say Spain is really the only place, yes...
- I: OK. So, em, actually looking at your experience of other nationalities in Scotland, [yes] you know, em, do you socialise or, you know, with different nationalities?
- S7: I do now, on the Masters programme we actually went on a celebratory night out, on Friday, me choked with the cold like this. [laugh] But em, so yeah, that's the, that's obviously a big, a larger mix of, of the Asian community and, and Indians and, really a lot, a lot more now than I have ever experienced before.
- I: So, when you were studying, you know, did you have any thoughts or feelings or expectations before you started to sort of studying with different nationalities?
- S7: Em, I think I was a bit apprehensive, I did think "Oh I don't. you know, 'cos I was thinking - at xxx University, well in my course I did sociology, em, and, I don't know if it was the university or if it was that particular course, it was very much just Scottish and English people, so that, you know, I hadn't really, I hadn't really learnt to you know all the different communication that you might need or, em, see I was quite scared, I thought "Oh No" so yeah
- I: OK. So, em, so that was it. And did you have any moments ever of, you know, em, experiencing panic or anything, you know, when you've been studying with students, em, from different nationalities or, you're anxious and, but..
- S7: Yeah, no, I went to my work (coughs), oh dear! when the work started, em, I thought it was quite good because, em, I became the leader, and I thought right, I'll get this done, so everybody had their own task and their own roll, em, but as soon as the work started to come in, so if I said oh would you mind possibly drawing me a table and if you put that in that column and that in that column, and then if you could send it to me and as soon as their work started to come in, I realised that I had to edit quite a lot or they didn't fully understand what I meant, so I think that's when the panic set in, because I felt, I felt very organised...
- I: Yes

- S7: and then as soon as the actual evidence started to built up, I thought you really more time than you've ever needed before, to make sure everybody understands, everybody's comfortable, and then I felt terrible because, you know, to, to try and get across in a nice way that that wasn't really what I was looking for or, em, to have to kind of say that's really good, but could you change that bit, em, and that bit, and that bit as well, so, I think yeah, the panic started as soon as the writing started.
- I: Started
- S7: I think, but the communication was, seemed OK...
- I: Yes
- S7: Everybody was understanding, I think...
- I: When you were speaking and everything
- S7: Yeah, everybody seemed to be all positive and yes, I understand and yes, I'll get that to you tomorrow or...so that part was fine, I think, just the actual, the writing.
- I: And of course, if this is going to, if you're going to be graded on this, this is going to affect your bid, so you really feel you're, you're more responsible
- S7: Yeah. [laughs] Very responsible, yeah
- I: OK. Let's think about, now, since we've been talking about you being anxious and everything, things that you do to relax. I mean, what kind of films do you like?
- S7: Em, em romantic comedies, I think. Em I do watch a lot of, I'm not really into em films so much, but with others I went to see Madagascar 3, I'm one of those people I quite like children's films, [slight laugh] em, and more watch comedy series, like older ones like Blackadder, Fawlty Towers, so I think if I'm stressed I'll put on something I know I'll chuckle at, because I'll, that'll relax me. I also go to the gym quite a lot, and when I stayed in xxx I used to horse-ride once a week, so that was brilliant when, you know, because you need to obviously concentrate when you're on a big animal so that, especially during my dissertation last year, horse-riding once a week was that release, I could just get on, and you had to just concentrate on that.
- I: And what about music?
- S7: Em. lots of different kinds. I think mostly, em, stuff that I'd hear out in like clubs or bars, I think that reminds me of, relax and out with friends and things.
- I: So, you've obviously joined the gym here. Have you joined any other clubs outside the university?

- S7: Em, not, not so far, no. I think, em, I intended to but I think what's, once the workload started I thought the gym like every other day will suffice because I can't fit in (laughs)
- I: OK.. And, em, if I were to, well I'm going to ask you, I mean, how do you see yourself? Can you describe yourself?
- S7: In what sort of way?[laughs]
- I: Just how do you see, if you were to describe yourself to people, 'cos I'm going to, how do your friends see you, but how do you see yourself? How do you think you come across to your, to the outside world?
- S7: I think I'm very smiley. I think, I don't know if that's because I've, I've moved all those schools, I've always kind of been that new girl and I had to conform myself into making lots of new friends so I think, you know, I'm definitely one of those people, you know like when you walk down the corridor and somebody, kind of, maybe nods or says Hi, I'm the person that, I've never met you before, and I say Oh Hi, [laughs] em, no, I think I'm very friendly, em, and I think I've been made to feel very clever, I think, because I've been working in all these groups, I think they look to you a lot to, so now I see myself as being very intelligent, em (laughter) and...
- I: So how you think, how do your friends see you?
- S7: They think I'm hilarious. [smiles broadly] Em, that's probably my, my one quality. I'm one of these people that I'll say something, then somebody will go 'Oh you're so funny'. Em, I think, I think I've definitely used that, I think as a way of coping at university, I think if I ever feel stressed or panicked, I do just make a joke, so we went to the em team-building, em, place in Blue Sky, em, and the team was just oh it's terrible and nobody was understanding and we were like limited for time, and everybody was looking to me to sort it out, and I've never been a leader before, and, em, we had to write down all these rules of the teams, all these social rules, so what was important to everybody, so em you know they wanted good leadership, they wanted somebody to motivate them and then the second one was to be on time, time management and it got to number 3 and I thought 'this is terrible' so I was like 'Be happy!', [laugh] that was my number 3, be happy. Now whatever happens, it'll be fine, so that got us a few good laughs, and we had to get up and tell the other groups, so they obviously saw on my face [smiling broadly] 'Be Happy' in your team, whatever happens. So, Yeah, funny and again probably just friendly and, yeah, that's personal.
- I: That's fine. Yes. Thank you. Right, I'm moving on to my, sort of, research questions now, em, and my own thing. Em. I'm going to be talking about verbal and non-verbal, you know, [yes] gesture strategies and things like this. Can you tell me what is your understanding of verbal and non-verbal?

- S7: Em. Verbal to me would be the way, the way I'm speaking, so tone of voice. How quickly I'm speaking, what I'm saying, em, and a non-verbal would be like body language, or...
- I: Yes
- S7: ...my gestures, or ...
- I: That's fantastic. It's just to make sure, you know. Are you aware of using any verbal and non-verbal and, you know, socially or in class?
- S7: eh Me, personally?
- I: You personally, yes. This is about you now.
- S7: Em, I think, I've been told I go very high-pitched, I think that's, that's when I'm not 100% sure of what I'm saying. I think I start to go up, so I'll, em, we got asked the other day, well when we first started our course, em, we got asked em to tell the class one thing we knew about marketing, and em obviously my main degree isn't in marketing, em, but I remember doing it at school, so I went "four P's" [very shrill] [laughs] and my voice just totally went out and, you know, xxx was like 'yes, four P's', but I didn't say it like a normal person, em, I think I do hand gestures like that, a lot, kind of...[gesturing rolling hands]
- I: Rolling? You're rolling your hands.
- S7: Do you know what I mean? I think..and I think I, when I roll my hands I kind of do it at the same pace as how I'm speaking, that I'm saying 'Do you understand?' [speaking slowly and rolling hands slowly], it'll be slow, then if I'm going 'so you see what I'm saying?' [speaking quickly and rolling hand quickly], it's, I'm aware of those two things, the high-pitched and the rolling of the hands.
- I: Good. What about the facial expressions?
- S7: Em. I think I'm very ... I've noticed I'm very much like my mum, so I lived away from my mum, obviously for four years, when I was at university, and em recently just moved back home, and it's like looking at myself in a mirror, so...but I think it's just that 'cos I do what she used to do to me, so when she sits and listens to me, her eyes are very wide open and there's a lot of, it's kind of like a smile, and a lots of this...[nodding head]
- I: Nodding...
- S7: I think I do a lot of that, a lot of nodding, and the wide eyes, and I'm smiling, I like people to know that I'm taking in what they're saying and that they'd be Happy! Em, [laughs] 'cos yeah, I think, I think that's important, 'cos then they think they feel more comfortable to keep speaking, 'cos it looks like you're enjoying what they're saying, so I think she's always done that to me.

- I: So are you aware of other people, em, using you know em gestures and verbal and non-verbal?
- S7: Em, can non-verbal be lack of...?
- I: Yes
- S7: ...body language? Er...
- I: Yes
- S7: There's a few Chinese, others, four, yes, it's me and four Chinese people and, and we're very very aware of the. because I think I'm quite a non-verbal person, I think I do do the rolling of the hands, the big wide eyes, the nodding, I'm very energetic I think when I speak to people. I think that's just to get some sort of engagement, em, but they're very, you know, they're very respectful, and they sit and they'll nod, just a little bit, so like my nodding's very kind of Churchill nodding dog, [smiling] 'I'm really taking in what you're saying', whereas their's is a lot more short nods, and stop, then short nods and stop. Em, and, yes, it's just, it's just that, it's nothing really varying, their facial expression are very blank.
- I: There's no smile or anything?
- S7: No smiling, unless I cracked a joke, that, I think, that's also why I think people think I'm even funnier at this university, [smiles] because I crack jokes because I want to see some sort of facial expression so, you know, when I...so we're all writing out these rules, again, and em you know it got to be, you know, so we're writing all this, communication, and I just said 'Be happy', 'cos that's how I was feeling, but I could have put it in a different way, I could have said, you know, 'Let's be positive', but, I said 'Be happy', and it was so nice to see them all 'Oh, that's hilarious!', em, so yeah, I probably crack more jokes these days. (coughing).
- I: And how does it make, how did it make you feel just going back to this initial, you know, when you're sitting and you weren't getting any reaction, how did it make you feel?
- S7: Em. I, well I got used to it over time, but initially...
- I: Yes
- S7: Initially, it was very very frustrating, I think, I think I don't know, we're so used to getting .and I don't know if that's because, you know, that's how our culture is so.
- I: Yes

- S7: If I'm very smiley and energetic, it rubs off on the other person, you almost self-consciously mimic the other person, so I think, I think I was expecting a jolly response and, and I had to also prompt them as well, so it was like 'Do you understand?', and then they'd be like 'Yes, yes, yes, we understand', but they wouldn't, you, you were looking for some sort of, you didn't feel like they were fully engaging, almost, because you had to kind of ask them a question for them to say something back. So yeah, initially it was very, don't know, I kind of..I think that's why again I made more jokes, because I thought maybe I'm not coming across in the right way, maybe they're...
- I: So you started to doubt yourself a wee bit
- S7: Yeah, I kind of thought 'Oh', usually smiley faces and energetic hand movements work, I thought 'Oh', so I started to think well maybe I need to tone it down, then, you know, again
- I: Did you tone it down, or did you tend to exaggerate more?
- S7: I exaggerate more! More jokes, more hand gestures, the rolling of the hands got bigger, [laughs] I feel. I feel there was a lot of this, [rolling hands] and, it kind of helped I think, but yeah, I did initially think 'Oh, turn up? Turn down. Do I, is it my tone of voice?' I thought maybe I am too high-pitched, and, you know, maybe I'm coming across a bit loony, so maybe I need to be a bit more serious. But I think I then learnt, and then I just learned that it was, it was more just they are, they are listening, just in a completely different way.
- I: And what are you like now? I mean, this is sort of almost a month in.
- S7: Yes, just finished
- I: What are, do you, are you still working with the same group, the same people, or different groups
- S7: Well, we've just finished that assignment, so I've, the next two coming up I'm in completely different groups...
- I: Yes, OK
- S7: One group is another, just me and I think it might be 3 Chinese girls, and then my other group is em more mixed, I think I got another, another girl from Stirling and then I think maybe a German, and then two Chinese, so they're a bit more mixed up, em, so...
- I: So do you think at the beginning, with the group you've just finished with, did you change? Did they change? Did you see any difference?
- S7: Em. Let me Think. I think, I think I definitely changed in that I understood, especially after the first few culture lectures they had, I think I learned to just accept that, you know, I think, I think for a period of time I was, I thought they maybe needed to come out of their shell, so I was waiting for, I thought

'well, I'll keep being energetic, I'll keep doing what I'm doing, and then maybe they'll respond', after a very short period of time I realised that was not, not going to happen so, em, yes, I think I just learned to accept, or find new ways of doing things so, em, I don't know, like for example I would try and be a bit more democratic, and be like 'So what does everybody want to do?', you know, you know, 'Are you creative, are you better at this, are you better at that?', I wasn't really getting a response so I then had to change the way that, you know, I don't know if it was..probably was it a mixture of kind of tone of voice and hand gestures, em, so I just had to be like 'Right, so I'm going to give you this, and you've got 5 minutes to do it, and then come back to me', but they responded better to that than me being a bit more...so I think maybe a mixtures of cultures, and they saw me as this leader figure, that they were waiting for a, for somebody to tell them what to do, then they were responsive, whereas if you tried to be 'Oh we're all..', you know, 'we're all equal here', they didn't really respond to that, I think they preferred to have a dominant figure, and they didn't want to do anything until I'd specifically said 'Do this'.

I: And what about, did you notice any, did they start to mirror you with, by using hand gestures when they were speaking English, or smile more, you know, by the end of your time with them?

S7: em Well, there was one particular Chinese girl who was a great help to me, she was kind of like my second leader in command, well, that's what I entitled her, she was loving that, em, because she spoke the best English so, when I explained to the group in English and they all kind of did their non-responsive nods, or no nodding, just looking at me, em, and then I did my 'Do you all understand?', and they'd all go 'Yes yes yes', and then I'd say 'Oh, Sophia, could you maybe explain that to the group in Mandarin?', and then it was so different, how they, so she, she, yes, she would do Mandarin and they all, they all kind of became slightly more energetic, and then she'd... she'd then say back to me in English, how she'd explained it, she might have explained it in a different way from me, so yes, I think when she explained to me what she'd just said in Mandarin, she was very smiley and she kept laughing, like, I think that's because she's so used to me, saying 'So what are they saying?', [laughing] you know, what happened there, and she would be like 'Oh well, we said this, and Oh', so yes, I think she was the only person that mirrored me back, I think or, em yeah, they laughed at me a lot, but I think that's what I wanted, actually - laughter is what makes the world go round...well, my world.

I: So when they were speaking English, they didn't smile or use more gestures then? You know, apart from that one student?

S7: No, I think they were fully...fully concentrating on just listening, but it was so different when they spoke in their own language.

I: OK

S7: That's what I noticed in my group, anyway.

- I: No. And that's just what I'm looking for, which is great. And do you feel there are any, can you think of any instances where verbal and non-verbal, em, you know, particular verbal and non-verbal strategies they had, contributed to a successful outcome?
- S7: Em. I've had to do a lot of pointing – not at people, [laughs] but usually I would just, you know, if I was working with a group of like Europeans, I would say 'So, as you can see, you know, point 1, you know, I would just be doing my rolling my hands or...you know, I don't know what that would be called, em, some sort of tree, tree yes.[rolling hands and making a shape with hands] Em. And I would just kind of, I wouldn't do a lot of touching, say we were looking at a poster or reading a book or something, I wouldn't do it, but I think I needed to do a lot of...
- I: Yes
- S7: Yes, indicating and pointing and saying this and this and can you do this and, and then you know if they had been asked to do a group task, not necessarily their assignments, the things in Blue Sky, as I'm reading out the instructions, they've often, often asked me to do that, could you read them out nice and slowly, I point, so I'll point at what I'm reading, and then I'll point out the next one, and then, so they're kind of listening and following, as I said. Em...
- I: So that has contributed to, you feel, to a more successful outcome?
- S7: Yeah, I think 'cos, I think before they would say yes, yes, yes, we understand, and then you know I'd ask them 5 minutes later 'Oh, so what are you doing?', and they would have completely, right, when I started to point and indicate what I wanted them to do, or what was to be done, when I then asked 'Oh, how are you getting on?', there was a lot more understanding. Em, I think I just, I didn't change at all, except for the exaggerating, but I think, I think they did enjoy the laughing, or they did kind of, I don't know I changed in any way, except the pointing. It was just a lot of me being energetic, big gestures. But I think it worked, I think, so they...
- I: So with them not contributing, you know, did you feel that was, you know, that hindered, that prevented maybe a task from being fulfilled? If they were just sitting there, not doing anything., you know, facially or giving you any...I suppose what you've been saying is lack of indication that they're understanding and participation can maybe negatively affect, initially, negatively affect you know the outcome, you know, a good outcome. It's taken you, you know, you picked up on that quickly, and you actually resolved the situation by pointing and realising that you have to do more to make them understand that just sitting there just by nodding doesn't mean to say that they fully understand.
- S7: Yeah. You had to ask their opinion, so I think em where I've done previous group work before they just, like European people, em, or not even European but just English and Scottish people, like on my course at xxx, I didn't

experience any other cultures. And we'd very much bounce off one another, so you'd say something and then somebody would say 'Oh yes, sure, but you know I was thinking this, or I've read this article by this person, and whereas I suddenly got put in the position where I'd become a leader of this group, never done marketing before in my life, and I had to, you know, so you were given instructions, and all these people who had done business degrees, marketing degrees, and I was looking for some sort of degree of, you know, so I'd say 'right, so I understand it this way', but I was waiting for somebody to say 'well, actually I've done marketing before, and the marketing strategy is..'

I: Yes

S7: Yes, but it was very much me having to say 'What do you think?', or you know, am I on the right track, is that...so it was very, so I think I had to learn to get them to participate very quickly, 'cos I realised I was a one-man band.

I: And how did this make you feel initially?

S7: Oh, I was terrified, I had no ...

I: Did you feel slightly angry at all? Or ..

S7: Oh yes, no I was very very angry. [laughs] Em, I think I've had, I've learned, I've definitely learned over the past month that you know you just have to get on with it or, you know, adapt.

I: Sink or swim.

S7: Yes. At the start I felt, I felt very hard done by, as my mum would say. I felt very, you know, this is not fair, how can I..you know, not, not necessarily 'Oh, I have to work with these people', I, I just wanted someone to bounce off or somebody that actually knew what they were doing, to help me along, but it was, I felt very solo, and, you know, at first, before I realised it was like a respectful thing or they preferred you to ask for their opinion, and things, you know, I was like 'Oh for goodness sake, somebody say something!', [in a louder voice] you know,, it was very, 'Ohhhh',[pulling at hair] especially on that team-building thing, we were given two hours, we had to come up with an advert, a poster, you know, and it was, I just, I never felt more angry in my life, you know, we got given this big sheet of paper and this A4 bit of paper with instructions, and I read it all to them and there was just silence, and I, and I, I was so 'Ohhh, I'm going to explode!', [raising voice while saying this] [laughs] and I could see all the other groups, all the other groups were just, I mean, that's definitely I learned from that experience, as in I just looked across the room at the other 5 groups, and obviously they had a mix, well everybody else seemed to have a buddy, like a European buddy, so there was an Irish guy with a German guy with Chinese people, so they were totally just getting on it and doing, and I just, I just remember sitting there thinking 'Right', I knew, that's why I went into my 'Be Happy' mode and I just got on with it but, yeah, when I read out to them I said 'So, what does everybody

think?', like how will we do this, em, 'cos we had to pull out a city for the Olympics 2020 and I said 'So what city will we do?' - silence, and I could just feel my blood boil, I thought 'Oh I can't do this myself', [laughs] it was, yeah, anger was definitely an emotion that I've probably felt more than being upset or anxious, I think it was the anger of...

I: And do you think this has affected your studies, or is it just making you just work twice as hard?

S7: Em, yeah, I think it's just made me work twice as hard. Like, I usually, em, I wouldn't say I was completely last minute check, but I, you know, say something was due at 12 o'clock, it would be done, printed and handed in by half past 11, 11, em but with both assignments, that was a group assignment and a personal one, I had them in two days early because I just had to..

I: Yes

S7: you know it was All these bits and bobs were coming from everywhere, and I could only use small chunks of them or what they said, I just had to completely...so I think, yeah, it's definitely changed the way I, I possibly deal with it though, you know for a period of time I was this hard-done-by, I've got a terrible group, you know, nobody communicating with me, and even somebody else from another group came up to me in this Blue Sky and said 'Are you OK?. You look really disappointed, and you look really angry', and then I realised 'Oh dear', like that I'm obviously coming across disappointed [laughs] and angry, so, you know, things like that...I think so initially, I think I'm also somebody, I'm very honest, so you know if I'm having a terrible time I can't help but let everybody know about it. All in my face, my body language, so yeah definitely,[smiling] I must have been sat round this table and we had this task to do, and I can just imagine myself, I'm sure there's a picture, 'cos xxx was going round taking pictures of everybody, and I am sat like this, [making a fed up face with shoulders down] like 'someone shoot me now', like...

I: Bereft almost!

S7: Whereas as the pictures go on, you can see me just kind of just saying 'Right, you'd best...

I: Get on with it.

S7: You know, I have to do it, it's not a option, I can't say 'Bye, guys', so, em...

I: That's great. Finally, the last thing - thinking about all this, and I'm just thinking back of initially, [right] right at the beginning, 'cos I know people change, you know, and you've changed, and you're more aware now but, initially, [okay] with your experiences, if you could have gone into the room and you had people to sit with, who would you normally, who would you have gone towards, had you not had to sit in a particular group, if it was, if it were free to choose?

S7: Very, very stereotypical, [smiling broadly] that's terrible but, em, yeah, I, I, well, when we first went into the class, I think everybody just sat, unless you had friends previously, you just sat wherever, but as soon as, you know, the class, you know, the first few days when you started to come out of the class and everybody kind of started to socialise, I then made two friends from Stirling, we just sat together and that's terrible, I think everybody looks for familiarity, especially in a new setting, so yes, still, that's how we act initially but that's still the case today, if I can sit anywhere that's where I sit...

I: Your comfort zone.

S7: Yes.

I: Yes, yes, yes. Well that's great, that's all I'm looking for just now.

[INTERVIEW ENDS]

Susan is animated when she speaks. She can speak quickly when she gets excited. She uses her face, hands, shoulders, tone of voice, laughter

Appendix C: Example of Students' Raw Data

APPENDIX ()									
Raw Data									
Susan									
Kinesics (0/0)	✓	Gesture (0/0)	✓	Paralinguistics (0/0)	✓	Proxemics (2/0)	✓	Chronemics (silence) (0/0)	✓
Interview One		Interview One		Interview One		Interview One		Interview One	
Nodding	✓✓	Rolling hands	✓✓	High pitched voice	✓			Silence	✓
Smiling	✓✓	Big gestures	✓	Face of voice	✓			Did not get a response	✓
Eyes Wide Open	✓	Interview Two		Reading slowly	✓			Me having to say	✓
Looks like I'm enjoying what they're saying	✓	Hand gestures	✓	Interview Two				Nobody communicating with me	✓
Eye contact	✓	No hand movements with n.s.	✓	Laughing	✓				
Interview Two		Clasping hands	✓	Lets be happy	✓				
Facial expression	✓	Jestures to explain	✓	Yes, yes, yes	✓				
Interview Three		Interview Three		Ask a question to get a response	✓				
Nodding - Chinese	✓			More vocal	✓				
Facial expression (blank)	✓			Questions	✓				
No smile	✓			Giggle	✓				
See some facial expression	✓			Louder	✓				
Lack of facial expression	✓			Interview Three					
Expecting a jolly response	✓								
Gemma									
Kinesics (0/0)	✓	Gesture (0/0)	✓	Paralinguistics (0/0)	✓	Proxemics (2/0)	✓	Chronemics (silence) (0/0)	✓
Interview One		Interview One		Interview One		Interview One		Interview One	
Looks at face	✓	Asian's don't use hands	✓	Ehm	✓		✓	Not get feedback, just no reaction	✓
Shows me with some facial expression	✓	Interview Two		So hard to follow	✓	Interview Two		Still not doing it	✓
No facial expression	✓	Asian's don't use hands	✓	Strong accent	✓	Come close to you	✓	Hard without feedback	✓
Interview Two		Interview Three		Interview Two		Sat really close, almost touching	✓	Still does not get a reaction	✓
Nodding	✓✓	Hand gestures	✓	Yeah, alright	✓	You're in my space	✓	Interview Two	
Eyes	✓✓✓✓	Didn't use hands	✓	Uh uh	✓			No, it's wrong	✓
Smiling	✓✓✓			Speaks slower	✓			Interview Three	
Expresses with her face	✓			To be honest	✓				
Not to frown	✓✓			Voice does not go up and down	✓				
Interview Three				Oh my God	✓				
Eye contact	✓✓✓			Laughing	✓				
Facial expression	✓✓✓			Interview Three					
Nodding	✓✓✓			A bit more like "yes, I got it"	✓				
His face didn't fit what he was saying	✓			I know, ah ha	✓				
				Mumbles	✓✓				
				Not taking care to slow down	✓				

Appendix D: Example of student profile

(Summary of Interview 1; black; Interview 2; orange; Interview 3, green)

Susan from Stirling, Scotland

Before she started her postgraduate studies she was a bit apprehensive and scared because she had no experience of studying with any other nationality other than students from the UK so she felt “quite scared”.

Language:

Her awareness of her own use of verbal and non-verbal

She’s aware that when she’s not sure of what she’s saying her voice becomes high-pitched. [paralinguistics] She also rolls her hands at the same pace as how she’s speaking [kinesics]. She is aware of nodding, smiling and using wide open eyes. [kinesics] She does this because she likes people to know that she “is taking in what they’re saying and that they’d feel more comfortable to keep speaking because it looks like I’m enjoying what they’re saying”

She feels she is very much a non-verbal person and “I’m very energetic when I speak to people. I think that’s to get some sort of engagement”.

She was aware of using more pointing to indicate what they had to do and to and as she was reading out instructions which they “often asked me to do ‘could you read them out nice and slowly’ so I’ll point at what I’m reading then point out the next one” . She felt this contributed to a more successful outcome because when she “asked them how are you getting on? There was a lot more understanding”. She felt she hadn’t changed except for the exaggerating and the pointing. [kinesics] “it was just a lot of me being energetic, big gestures but I think it worked”

She believed “the hand gestures and the verbal like smiling and laughing or saying ‘lets be happy’ usually comes from a frustration and was me trying to exaggerate what I was saying”. [kinesics and paralinguistics]

She did not use as many hand gestures when she worked with the other native speakers, “my hands were firmly under the desk or I sit clasping my hands. It was mainly eye contact and nodding so I knew what I’d said had gone in and they would know obviously because I’d do the same thing.” She noticed that the Japanese and Indian members of one of her groups had good eye contact and they nodded [kinesics] when she asked them a question so she felt she did not have to change the way she spoke.

She was more aware of using gestures in the groups where she was the only one using any kind of verbal or non-verbal expressions. She explained that she did not notice

gestures because when she is speaking to someone “I look for a reaction like a smile or a laugh so I’m not necessarily looking for hands”. [kinesics and paralinguistics] She was aware of using gestures to help her explain something to someone whereas when she is speaking to friends she uses them as an extension of her ‘story’ and uses them to fidget. [kinesics; different uses]

She realised that her facial expressions and hand gestures [kinesics] work together whether she is comfortable or when she is angry.

Her awareness of others’ use of verbal and non-verbal

The Chinese members of her group are very respectful and “sit and they’ll nod, just a little bit so like my nodding is very kind of Churchill nodding dog, whereas theirs is a lot more short nods and stop then short nods and stop and their facial expression is very blank”. [kinesics] They do not smile unless she tells a joke, “I crack jokes because I want to see some sort of facial expression” [paralinguistic leading to kinesics] and that is why she feels she had started to tell more jokes. [reasons for using paralinguistics]

Initially, she found their lack of facial expression or reaction [lack of kinesics] to anything very frustrating. She was used to her happy energetic style rubbing off on the other person so she “was expecting a jolly response”. When she asked them whether they understood “they’d be like ‘yes, yes, yes we understand’ but they wouldn’t, you didn’t feel they were fully engaging because you had to ask them a question for them to say something back. I think that’s why I made more jokes because I thought maybe I’m not coming across in the right way.” This resulted in her starting to doubt herself because her normal style of interacting with people did not appear to be working so she started to think that she needed “to tone it down” but she ended up exaggerating more “more jokes, more hand gestures and the rolling of the hands got bigger”. [paralinguistic and kinesics] She questioned herself and how she was acting and what the other members of the group thought but then she decided “it was more just they are listening just in a completely different way”

When the Chinese members of the group were listening to her they were concentrating and did not use any facial expressions [lack of kinesics] whereas it was very different when they spoke in Mandarin

In the group with other native speakers she was aware of not changing the way she spoke or use so many hand gestures.

In the second all-Chinese group, she felt they used a lot more head nods [kinesics] and were a lot more vocal [paralinguistic] than the first group. Because they were nodding as she spoke, she felt “they were taking in what I said”. She preferred that they were vocal, “if they didn’t understand me so even though the girl kept saying every five

minutes 'I don't understand' that was better than asking her to do something and then her saying 'what have we been talking about'""

She was aware that the Japanese and Indian members of her group would nod and maintain eye contact but they did not tend to use gestures. [Kinesics]

During presentations, she noticed the Chinese and Japanese students in her class memorised what they were going to say and they all stood straight with their hand by their sides as they delivered their presentation and did not look at their audience. The native speaker, in contrast, used her hands, maintained eye contact with the audience and smiled. [kinesics] The non-native speakers were serious and looked scared and anxious whereas the native speaker tended to engage with the audience.

She believes that making people laugh [paralinguistics] during group work helps everyone to relax and can encourage quieter members to participate. She felt that the non-native members appeared to look at their phones a lot of the time, and it was not to consult a dictionary, that that adversely affected group work and discussions. It contributes to the lack of reaction when you speak to them: the blank faces [kinesics] and the silence [chronemics]

Group work:

Interaction within the group

When her studies started she settled into the role of leader of her group and felt it was okay. For a period of time she felt she just needed the Chinese group members to come out of their shell but then she realised that was not going to happen so she tried to find other ways of doing things. She tried to be a bit more democratic and asking the group what each one wanted to do "are you better at this, are you better at that?" but still did not get a response so she then started to change the tone of her voice and hand gestures [paralinguistics and kinesics] and started to tell them what to do which produced a better response, "they saw me as this leader figure that they were waiting for to tell them what to do then they were responsive whereas if you tried to be 'oh we're all equal here' they didn't really respond to that. I think they preferred a dominant figure and they didn't want to do anything until I'd specifically said 'do this'""

There was one Chinese female, Gail from Guangdong, who was a great help to her, "she was like my second leader in command. She spoke the best English and explained what I wanted them to do in Mandarin. She "was very smiley and she kept laughing because she was so used to me saying 'so what're they saying' and she'd say, 'oh well, we said this'. She was the only group member that mirrored me back. I think that's what I wanted, laughter – laughter makes the world go round, well, my world" [kinesics and paralinguistics]

She had been used to working with native speakers from the UK during her first degree and was used to “bouncing ideas off one another whereas I suddenly was in the position where I’d become a leader of a group, never done marketing before in my life and I had to give instructions and all these people who had done business degrees, marketing degrees, and I was looking for someone to say ‘well actually I’ve done marketing before and the strategy is...’ but it was very much me having to say ‘what do you think? or ‘am I on the right track’ so I had to learn to get them to participate very quickly because I realised I was a one-man band” Initially, this terrified her and she was angry “I was very, very, angry”

At the start she felt “very hard done by” and felt she “just wanted someone to bounce off or somebody that actually knew what they were doing, to help me along but I felt very solo and at first before I realised it was a respectful thing I was like ‘oh for goodness sake somebody say something’. It was very ‘ohhhh!’” On one of the projects, they groups had been given a time limit to design a poster, an advert, “I never felt more angry in my life. We got given this A4 bit of paper with instructions and I read it all to them and there was silence and I was so ‘oh I’m going to explode!’”. She had noticed that the other groups were getting on with the task but in the other groups there were at least one other non-Chinese member, for example, an Irish and a German and Chinese. She was the only one not to “have a buddy, like a European buddy” . The silence [chronemics] she experienced when she’d asked ‘so what city shall we do?’ made her “blood boil and I thought ‘oh I can’t do this myself”. Therefore at that point anger was the emotion she felt more than upset or anxiety.

She felt she had to work twice as hard because as her group members were giving her their work, she felt she could only use part of it so she had to completely change it. She went through a period of feeling sorry for herself feeling she “had a terrible group, nobody communicating with me”. It was at this point someone from another group approached her and asked if she was all right and had said “Are you okay? You look really disappointed and you look really angry, [kinesics] and then I realised ‘oh dear’ I’m obviously coming over like disappointed and angry. I’m somebody that shows how I’m feeling, all my face, my body language definitely I must have been sat round this table looking like someone shoot me now”. It was at this point that “I went into my Be Happy mode and I just got on with it”.

She was a lot happier being in a group with other native speakers because she knew the work would be shared as it was a group project whereas before she had felt it was a “me project”. She was more positive about working in this group because she knew that if she did not understand aspects of the work, she could ask one of the native speakers “whereas before I just got that sinking feeling of if I don’t know nobody’s going to know” .

In her second all-Chinese group, they would work together to edit the report that Susan had written but one of the girls was not able to verbally tell her what she did not like and could not explain it clearly “I was trying to keep calm because I think she was getting a bit upset that I didn’t understand what she was saying so she sat at the computer next to us and did it herself she changed it”. [kinesics]

In one of the last groups she worked in there were Taiwanese girls who were “very giggly”. [Paralinguistics] Although they did not use their hands they nodded. When they were asked if they understood or if they were asked to do something “they were very, very head shaky [kinesics] whereas I would just shake my head up and down once, they continuously nodded their head”. She found it easier to speak and work with them. They reacted rather than give a small head nod and silence [kinesics and chronemics] which is what she had experienced with the Chinese students. However, “ even though you thought they have got it and they were louder as well, [paralinguistic] I assumed they knew what to do but that maybe didn’t work out as well they were still quite difficult to work with in general just the language barrier but it did seem a lot easier to talk to them or to ask them to do things”

During the second semester they had to do a psychometric test where they were put into four colours: earth green, sunshine yellow, cool blue and fiery red. The Taiwanese female who had challenged Susan was a ‘fiery red’ which meant they tended to be the leaders and tell everyone how it’s going to be done. Susan found the psychometric test “quite useful so I understood more why she was that way because she was turned red so you kind of got it a bit more”

Role within the group

In her first group, she was the only non-Chinese member of it. She became the leader had thought because everyone had their own task and their own role to do that the group project would quickly be finished and everything was fine. However, when their work started to come in she realised that she had to edit quite a lot or they hadn’t fully understood what she had meant so she started to panic. She soon realised that she would need more time to make sure everyone understood what they had to do and were comfortable with it. She “felt terrible because to try and get across in a nice way that it wasn’t what I was looking for or to say that’s good but could you change that bit and that bit as well, I think panic started as soon as the writing started”

She had felt that everyone had understood because they had replied, “‘I’ll get that to you tomorrow’, so that part was fine, just the actual writing”. She felt responsible for the whole thing because it was being assessed.

In her second group she worked with other native speakers from the UK so she felt there was no obvious group leader. When she worked with Chinese or Indians she felt

they wanted her, as a native speaker, to be the leader. “I think they think you’ll know exactly what to do because you know this is where we’re from so we’ll get more of a gist”

Comparing two different groups where she had been the only non-Chinese she felt one group “were just quiet and really quite timid and scared of what we were meant to do whereas two of the members of the other group had big characters so it was a lot easier to communicate so I felt more supported”. The group where she felt supported the most was the one which had other native speakers. “it was a lot easier to talk to them than the previous groups”. However the fact that there was no definite leader raised some issues for Susan, “there wasn’t any confrontation but you did feel an almost fight. There couldn’t be a leader because everyone was too much of a character so I did think this is good but maybe I quite liked being a leader so I suppose you either need the support or you just go it alone and be the leader”.

Her experience of the first all Chinese group helped her a great deal in the second all-Chinese group, “I was much more prepared for that but again they were a lot more vocal so I didn’t have to stress so much . I did actually get more of a response”. She had one female in this group who had a problem understanding “but I was ready for it, I used all my hand gestures and smiles and all that”. Again she had another Chinese female in her group who would help out by explaining in Mandarin if the gestures were not successful. [Paralinguistic and kinestics] She felt she had a better all-round relationship with this second group with all-Chinese members although she still had to rewrite some of their English.

In the group where there were other native speakers, one of the other girls from Stirling took the lead “we didn’t ever agree that she was the leader but she was very dominant and she assumed the role which almost made it worse. “I felt strange. I think I’d got used to being in charge so to come back a little bit and just act as a team I guess like share the work rather than kind of share it and I do it sort of thing”. As a group they were more organised especially when it came to editing their work. They would all sit as a group and read through their work and “if anybody had issues with grammar or felt there could have been an extra references in there or something else, we’d do it together. It was good”.

In the second group she felt it was important to agree on who the leader would be from the beginning “so there were no arguments or everybody knew what was happening so I did ask them all does anybody want to be the leader and they all said ‘you’ but I knew that would happen and I was ready for it and I kind of wanted them to say me”. She explained that if one of the Chinese members of the group had wanted to be the leader, she would have given it a go. She admitted that “I quite like that they said me because then I knew how to deal with it”. She wrote down a lot more with this group so that everyone knew exactly what she they had to do.

In the group with the native speakers, someone else adopted this role that “I think it irritated me a little bit because I was so used to doing it”. She felt she “did almost slack a bit more because somebody else was kind of taking the hold”. She explained that the two native girls had worked in the same groups and “they’ve got that we team thing going on but they didn’t really adapt when they got into our group so they continued on with that so one was like ‘right, I’m going to sort the formatting’, the other was like ‘I’m going to proof-read’ and I was like well what am I doing?” Because the other native speakers had always worked together they did not know how to “fit me into their...how they deal with working with International students”. Susan felt she did not learn as much in that group project as she had done in the groups where she was the only native speaker, the leader. “ my grade wasn’t as high as in the other two groups because there I think I went that extra mile to make sure I completely understood what we were doing whereas this one I thought ‘it’s okay I don’t understand but my group will help me out’ whereas before it was like my group are not going to help out so I just had to get on with it and learn myself”.

In the group with the Taiwanese students, she adopted the role of co-leader with the other native speaker straight away. She and the other native speaker decided between themselves who was doing what. The choice depended on who would be the better person doing a particular task. They would meet up after the whole group had met to clarify what had been discussed and decided. They both rewrote parts of what the others had written but in the end “it was just the two of us and we sat and read and changed it together”.

In her last group she was aware of adopting the strategy of going round the table telling everyone what you had done, “that was the only way to get them to talk otherwise they still see us as the leaders and we’re almost there to tell them what things”. She noticed that when someone was speaking, the others were reacting with “big head nods or laughter”. [kinesics and paralinguistics] However, although she felt it was a much better group atmosphere , she was aware that there was still “very much silent listening and if you asked them anything they always agreed with you still”.

[chronemics]

She believed that it might be “a culture thing” because as she is the native speaker and is perceived as the leader they should not disagree with me. The exception was a Taiwanese female in her final group who was “fantastic at stats she was better than me and was the only girl that I have ever experienced that not from here who so vocal” she went on to explain that the Taiwanese girl disagreed with Susan about a suggestion she had made, “I was so excited that that was the first time in this entire year where somebody from another nationality has said ‘no, no. no’ to me and I was like ‘keep it coming’ I couldn’t believe it. I was like ‘yes!’”

The nationalities in her ideal group

If she were free to choose where she could sit and with whom she would choose two friends from Stirling. She felt “everyone looks for familiarity especially in a new setting”, a comfort zone.

After she had worked in groups with a different nationality mix, she would choose to have a group with mixed nationality. She would like two people from the UK and two others “I don’t think I’d like the group to be completely UK”. She would like another person from the UK to support her and “definitely a mix but more international people but just one other person that I could speak very comfortably to and know that if I had an issue at least if they didn’t know they’d be able to ‘we’ll be able to find out this way rather than ‘oh I don’t know’ and then just a blank face...you find out yourself kind of thing”’. [kinesics]

She would like to have at least one other European. She liked the leadership role and “liked working with Chinese and Taiwanese and Thai girls because it provided her the opportunity to be a leader which she feels helped her learn more. So a mix of nationalities. She was aware of a group which comprised members from Ireland, England, Germany and Norway whose English was good but she had heard that there had been a lot of conflict “whereas it’s not really been conflict in my group it’s more just been frustration. However it was quite nice to know you’ve got ownership over it whereas in the other group if there’s too many big personalities it would probably be quite difficult”. So as long as she had one other native speaker to work with she would be content. She realised that in her final group having one other native speaker “it was a lot easier to be happy, smiley because I had someone to bounce off”.

The nationality group she learned the most from

She felt she learned the most from the final group she was in, where there was only one other native speaker. She was not sure of the stats content but because it was just her and the other native speaker and the other nationalities, she had to understand overall because she had to organise the presentation. “whereas that one opportunity I got with working with two other native speakers, an Indian and a Japanese, although they were very chatty people I didn’t feel as though I needed to know it inside out”. Although she found being the only native speaker in a group very stressful, she felt she had learned a lot

Notes:

Her first group included Gail from Guangdong. Susan is extremely animated when she speaks. She can speak when she gets excited. She uses her face, hands, tone of voice and laughter when she’s speaking. She was unaware of using a lot of hand gestures and ‘uhuh’s, ‘em’s’, ‘er’s’ as she was speaking to me