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Teaching English as a Foreign Language in China: A Narrative Inquiry of Expatriate Teachers' Experiences

Lisa McLeod-Chambless

ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN CHINA: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY OF EXPATRIATE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES, by LISA L. MCLEOD-CHAMBLESS, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy, in the College of Education & Human Development, Georgia State University.

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TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN CHINA: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY OF EXPATRIATE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES

by

LISA MCLEOD-CHAMBLESS

Under the Direction of Dr. Gertrude Tinker Sachs

ABSTRACT

In the late 19th century, China's education policies and curricula began to change in response to global economic issues. The addition of English language courses opened opportunities for expatriate teachers in China. Expatriate teachers are widely perceived as linguistic experts regardless of their qualifications and experiences. However, differences between the expatriate teachers' cultures of learning and the local cultures of learning call attention to the challenges of cross-cultural education in local school settings. This narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2012) explored the expatriate teachers' approaches to cross-cultural teaching, connections to local culture, and observations on school-based practices as they navigated their new environments in China. A conceptual framework based on Vygotsky's genetic domains was used to analyze the expatriates' experiences. Data included discussions with expatriate teachers about their educational backgrounds, their previous cross-cultural teaching experiences, and their reflections on navigating the tensions of teaching in China. Excerpts from the researcher's journals describing the tensions she encountered teaching in a local secondary school and adapting to a new cultural environment were used as triggers for the discussions. The findings indicated that connections to local culture, teacher education, and cross-cultural experiences contributed to the teachers' approaches to teaching. Additionally, knowledge of the students' L1 and previous experiences teaching English as a foreign language facilitated their ability to adapt to their new environments. This study contributes to understanding the complexity of teaching English as a foreign language when the teacher and students have different cultural backgrounds. Awareness of the need to nurture intercultural competence can inform the curricula and practices of teacher education programs as well as the development of professional learning programs and school learning policies. Furthermore, the teachers' contributions can be useful to school administrators in developing teacher recruitment strategies, hiring practices, and new-teacher orientation programs.

KEY WORDS: EFL; ELT; CBLT; culture of learning; cross-cultural teaching; expatriate teachers; narrative inquiry

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DEDICATION

To my students in China,

Their commitment to learning inspired me to become a better teacher. Their acceptance of our differences and willingness to communicate were invaluable to my learning about building bridges in the classroom and in life.

To Iain McLeod,

I am grateful for our journey, your presence grounded me as we navigated our experiences in China.

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GLOSSARY

Approaches to teaching - how teachers plan, organize, and implement practices based on their personal understanding of the context.

Audiolingualism - a language teaching method that emphasizes oral production, pattern skills, and conditioning through repetition (Brown & Lee, 2015, p. 628).

Content-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) - "an approach to teaching where students are learning academic content in a language that they are still learning" (Lightbown, 2014, p. 177).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) - "an approach to language teaching methodology that emphasizes authenticity, interaction, student-centered learning, task-based activities, and communication for real-world, meaningful purposes" (Brown & Lee, p. 629).

Direct Method (DM) - "a language method popular in the early twentieth century that emphasized direct target language use, oral communication skills, and inductive grammar. without recourse to translation from first language" (Brown & Lee, p. 631).

English as a foreign language (EFL) - language learned in a context where students do not typically hear the new language outside of the classroom (Lightbown).

English as a second language (ESL) - language learned in a context where the language is used in the local community; students need to use the language in their daily lives, education, and employment (Lightbown).

English Language Teaching (ELT) - a generic description referring to the teaching of English to speakers of other languages in diverse parts of the world, in various settings, without connection to any one set of specific circumstances (Murphy, Byrd, & Unders, 2001).

English Medium Instruction (EMI) - English is used to teach the content, whether it is language or educational content. Using the target language as the medium of instruction increase the students' exposure to the language. The approach to teaching should support students understanding of meaning through the use of visual information and non-verbal communication (Dearden, 2015).

Foreign teacher - expatriate employed as a teacher of Chinese national students.

Grammar Translation Method (GTM) - a language teaching method in which the central focus is on grammatical rules, paradigms, and vocabulary memorization as the basis for translating from one language to another (Brown & Lee, p. 632).

Intensive Reading Method (IRM) - "a kind of teaching method in which the English text materials are dealt with in over-meticulous detail and a sentence-by-sentence way"

L1 - refers to the language or languages that learners first acquired at home (Lightbown)

L2 - refers to the language or languages learned subsequent to L1 (Lightbown)

Local teacher - Chinese national employed as a teacher of Chinese national students.

Native-Speaking English Teacher (NET) - the term "native-speaker" is widely debated. According to Luk & Lin (2016), "it has become generally acknowledged that 'nativeness' in a language can be assessed based on expertise, psychological allegiance, social affiliation, and confidence."

Task-Based Learning (TBL) - language learning is based around the completion of a task and the language studied is determined by what happens as the students complete it (Frost).

Teaching practices - teaching strategies, classroom management, and assessment.

Values - values are the things that are important to us, they motivate u

1 INTRODUCTION

Teaching abroad can be a challenging and intimidating experience. In China, my limited understanding of the culture added to the intensity of the challenge. During this time my journals were far more than a repository of observations. My journal was my confidant, a safe place to share my fears, vent my frustrations, and reflect on my experiences. The process of recording and reflecting on my experiences was a catalyst for my professional and personal growth throughout my time in China; and, those journals are a cornerstone of my research.

> I am starting to feel the fear. The giddy excitement of embarking on this adventure is still accessible but now the fear is encroaching on the energy. I tried pushing it away, at first, but there is no use in denying it. (L. McLeod-Chambless, personal communication, May 12, 2014)

In 2014, when I learned of an opportunity to teach social studies in an international program in China, I felt called to work with these students that were planning to attend college in the United States (U.S.). I wondered what distinguished them from other Chinese students, what compelled them to move over 7,000 miles away from home to study? My connections to China, and a longstanding desire to develop a deeper understanding of the rest of the world by living abroad were also part of my motivation for going to teach in China. I envisioned being immersed in the culture as a two-year learning experience for my family that would afford us a broader and more global perspective on the world.

My exposure to Chinese culture began early in my childhood. My father and his brother worked and traveled in Hong Kong and mainland China and they shared stories and photographs of the places they visited. My personal experience began as a chaperone of a group of middle school students traveling in Beijing. My colleagues and I spent our days guiding 38 students

through the city. We climbed stairs to the top of The Great Wall and were guided by a local historian through magnificent historical sites such as the Forbidden City and the Summer Palace. In the evenings my colleagues, my son, and I acquainted ourselves with local culture. On the second evening we wandered through a *hutong* (traditional Chinese neighborhood) and entered a local tea shop to rest our tired feet. As the proprietor (Alice is her English name) served the tea we learned about Chinese tea culture from her. We returned to the shop each evening to absorb more of the experience and talk with Alice and her daughter. By the end of the week my son and I had developed a bond with them that continues to this day. The trip sparked my interest in the country and its' blend of traditions and modernization in a matrix of imperial structures, high rise buildings, and hutongs.

Five years later, my previous experiences with Chinese culture sparked my curiosity about living and working there when I learned about an opportunity as a teacher/researcher in a university partnership with a public high school. The stated purpose of the program was to facilitate the Chinese students' transition to an American university by providing an educational experience incorporating the student-centered teaching and learning strategies that are widely used in the United States (U.S.). During the interview for the position, I was told that the Chinese students would need to develop critical thinking skills and that they would be reticent to participate in class discussion. My concern about not being able to speak Mandarin was dismissed and I was told that it was preferable that I not communicate with the students in their first language. The complexity of this endeavor was not entirely clear to me until my son and I moved to Guangzhou three months later and I started to work.

The challenges presented by cultural differences were entangled in many aspects of my professional life. We were distinguished as the *expatriate* teachers in the context of the

international and the general education programs in the school. (Note: teachers from countries where English is the official language i.e. Great Britain, United States, Canada, and Australia are typically referred to as Native English-speaker teachers (NETs); however, due to the controversy around defining "native" speakers of a language, *expatriate* teacher will be used.) Relationships with our colleagues and administrators were complicated by the divergence of the curricula and approach to teaching of the international program from the traditional structure of the school. Even though the international program had four courses taught in English by expatriate teachers and four courses taught in Mandarin by local teachers, interactions between the expatriate and local teachers were minimal. The separation was partially due to the language barrier. However, I felt sensitive to other distinctions between the two groups. Practices and policies of the government and within schools institutionalized the privilege of English-speaking teachers from foreign countries. Our office, designated with a *Foreign Teachers* sign, was so large that we only occupied half of the space. At the same time the offices of the local teachers were relatively crowded. The expatriate teachers had an assistant, a luxury I would never dream of in the U.S., to interpret and provide support for our professional and personal lives. As a teacher of social studies and English with a master's degree in education, I was certified as a foreign expert by the Chinese Ministry of Education. My salary was substantially higher than my Chinese colleagues and I was provided an apartment on campus while the local teachers were responsible for their own housing. As a teacher with 10 years of experience in the U.S., my instructional practices were exemplified and delegations of educators from other provinces and countries came to observe my classes. The international program's classroom activities and participation in school events were frequently used as photo opportunities for promoting the school programs. This elevated status was bestowed on the expatriate teachers because we were certified educators

from an English-speaking country, educated in American universities, and had two or more years of teaching experience. However, these qualifications were not necessarily indicators of competence in teaching English in a foreign country.

> Bob (pseudonym, science teacher) started the meeting by discussing that damn vocabulary test (he has been using the same assessment for one and a half months) and Alex (student) still cannot give the definitions for five words. I asked if he had tried talking with Alex to see if he understands the meanings of the words to see if he understands them. He said he has not checked for understanding but he knows that Alex cannot tell him. (L. McLeod-Chambless, personal communication, October 27, 2016)

Contrary to what I was told before moving to China, I was not going to be able to teach these students using the same strategies that I used to teach my students in the U.S.. Due to the vastly different context of the program, my approach to teaching was not completely transferable. I had to adapt and develop an approach that would be applicable to the local context. Additionally, I was not formally trained as a teacher of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). As a result, I constructed an approach to teaching by drawing upon my previous experiences with English as a Second Language (ESL) and with students that read below grade level; reading literature on teaching English and Chinese culture; building relationships with local Chinese people; exploring local culture; and learning through interactions with my students.

An example of drawing on my previous experiences and adapting those strategies for the local context was my approach to teaching vocabulary for my content area, social studies. Beginning in primary school, Chinese students are taught to learn language through memorization, recitation, and repetitive practice (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996). At the beginning of the

semester, I found that the students could easily memorize the definitions of new words but were not mastering the vocabulary. After several months of trial and error, I developed an approach that incorporated aspects of local language learning with strategies that I employed with my students in the U.S. for building background knowledge (Marzano, 2004). I constructed a new approach during my first semester of teaching in the program as I observed how various activities worked (or did not work) with the students. At the beginning, some students resisted the new way of teaching and learning vocabulary. I viewed their negative reactions as signs that the approach may need to be adjusted, and I regularly asked the students for feedback to guide my instruction. Often, those interactions with students were sources of learning about how I could improve my teaching. And, while some of the feedback about the new approach to learning vocabulary was negative, the results were positive overall. One student found learning vocabulary noteworthy enough to memorialize the experience in the international class yearbook; this passage, written by a student that I taught for two years, conveys his experience with learning vocabulary,

> I remember the World History class weren't my favorite class when I was senior 1, even a little bit dislike. Because I am not good at arts subjects, I cannot recite a lot of things in written language. Especially they are in English now, more difficult to me. However, long time passed, it became a kind of custom to me, and I did it better and better, forgot all of the unhappy. Til a school term gone, other two subjects changed, I just found what a perfect thing that a same teacher teaching it is! The vocabulary cards are the best way for us to learn complex words, several days later, you will have some quizzes or games to help our memory. Thanks for your teaching. (Jack, 2017).

I was on a steep learning curve in my first year as I worked to adapt to the new learning environment and navigate local culture. I found that connecting to the local culture eased the transition. My son and I developed relationships with some local people, and my son quickly learned the language and established friendships with students on the campus where we lived. Ultimately, the cycle of stress around facing new and challenging situations, the behaviors that I developed to adapt to the circumstances, and the growth that resulted were catalysts for my personal and professional development.

The first year of teaching and living in China was difficult and exhausting but the second year went so well that I decided to extend my contract for a third year. Most of the teachers working in the international program chose to leave after their first year. The journey of each teacher was unique in that a variety of life experiences shaped their previous *approaches to teaching* yet our individual experiences teaching in China were similar in many respects because we taught the same students in the context of the international program. As I observed the variety of ways that teachers coped with the stress and challenge of their circumstances, I began to wonder about the factors that influenced their teaching in China. What were their thinking processes as they considered how to teach these students in this program? Why were some of the teachers able to adapt and teach the students in ways that were meaningful and relevant while others were not? Was their ability to adapt related to their life experiences? Or, was it related to their beliefs and perceptions of the local school context or the community?

This study investigates expatriate teachers' experiences learning to navigate content-based language teaching (CBLT) in mainland China. *Content-based language teaching* is **"**an approach to teaching where students are learning academic content in a language that they are still learning" (Lightbown, 2014, p. 177). Moreover, using a sociocultural lens, the research

focuses on is the intersection of: the sociohistorical context of English Language teaching (ELT) in China; the teachers' beliefs and approaches to teaching; and the tensions that they experienced as teachers in China. (ELT will be used to refer to the broad context of English teaching in China including the spectrum of teaching methods, in various contexts, employed by Chinese teachers as well as teachers from foreign countries).

Problem Statement

> The students seemed to have hit a plateau with her pronunciation. The use of Mandarin in the classroom is a problem and it seems to be more frequent now. I have stopped admonishing them (as Adam suggested) because I feel uncomfortable asserting authority to impose the use of English and prohibiting them from using their first language. Today I asked them to teach me a phrase in Mandarin to get class started. I think it is important for the students to know that I am trying to learn the language. I am hoping that crossing this cultural boundary will show the students that I'm interested in understanding their lives. Maybe my flexibility with using Mandarin in the classroom will relieve some tension around language. (L. McLeod-Chambless, personal communication, March 6, 2015).

Controversy around teaching English in China began when merchants and Christian missionaries pursued access to China's resources during the Qing Dynasty (Adamson, 2004) and it continues to be a controversial topic today. The origins of English education are connected to Western imperialism. Chinese merchants and traders were forced to do business with people from English-speaking countries when they gained access to several of China's port cities after the Opium Wars and the Treaty of Nanjing. As a result, government officials viewed the teaching and learning of English as critical to gaining access to knowledge that would enhance China's ability to cope with Western powers (Zhang, 2007). These circumstances marked the

beginning of English language education in China. The continuing relationship between economic advancement and English language education is evident in the development of curricula in China. Furthermore, ELT in China has been influenced by pedagogies developed in countries where English is the majority language. Additionally, a shortage of local English language teachers created opportunities for expatriate English language teachers. The differences between the Chinese culture of learning and the cultures of learning in countries exporting support for ELT calls attention to the challenges of cross-cultural education in local school settings.

Background

This overview of the historical development of ELT in China provides a broad sociocultural context for the investigation. The context is presented in three threads: historical development of ELT in China; progression of methods of teaching English in China; and the current conditions of ELT in China.

Historical development of ELT in China. Changes in English language education in China can be traced through the progression of historical events. This background serves as a framework for the changes in the structure of the nation's education system, the changing roles of the Communist Party, and how English is taught in classrooms.

The later Qing dynasty (1759-1911). In 1759 the Chinese government designated the port of Guangzhou as the primary port for international trade in order to "preserve cultural integrity while engaging in international trade" (Adamson, 2004, p. 22). Foreigners lived under several restrictions in Guangzhou: they were required to reside on Shamian Island; interactions with Chinese people had to be supervised by government-approved agents; and they were not allowed to purchase Chinese books or learn Chinese. As a result of these constraints, trade was conducted in English (Adamson). After the Opium Wars, China's status declined due to the country's defeat

and several internal conflicts (Ebrey, 2010; Rao, 2013). Great Britain and other foreign countries seized territories in China and the country was opened to foreign influences, primarily through trade but also through Christian missionaries. The development of trade relationships with Western countries during this time signaled the introduction of economic factors influencing English language education in China. With the country in decline, the reforms of the "Self-Strengthening Movement" sought to revitalize the country by adapting Western technologies (especially military) to their needs under the slogan "Learn the superior technology of the barbarian in order to control him" (Snyder & West, 1997, p. 166). To provide training to the Chinese people, missionaries from Great Britain and America established schools and the missionaries' lack of competence in the local language contributed to the predominance of English as the medium of instruction. Furthermore, many of these missionaries were of the mindset that the Chinese people were "barbaric" and needed to be "civilized" (Rao, 2013, p. 35). These foreign language, military-technical schools marked the beginnings of foreign-language medium instruction in China. Increased international trade furthered the demand for the use of English. Furthermore, English afforded access to Western science and technology, and facilitated progress of China's international diplomacy. The high level of communication required for conducting transactions cleared the way for the introduction of new teaching methods within foreign language instruction in the school system. English language education was added to the curricula of secondary and tertiary institutions to convey scientific knowledge (Adamson).

The republican era (1912-1949). After the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty the Republic of China was founded in 1912. During this period, the leadership of China sought to modernize the country by "learning from the industrialized world" (Adamson, 2004, p. 29). Studying abroad (particularly in the U.S.) and following the U.S. model of education gained popularity. Sun Yat-

sen, provisional President of the Republic of China, was a major proponent of learning from industrialized countries as a means for strengthening and protecting China (Adamson).

The People's Republic of China (1949-1976). This historical period is defined by the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 and the rise to power of the Communist Party. Characterized by a highly centralized education system focused on nation building, the education system was tightly controlled by the Communist government. During this period of time, the primary objectives for education were: to reduce illiteracy; provide education for all people; and to ensure that citizens understood the party-state's policies and political discourse (Ngok, 2007). Meanwhile, economic development was also a concern. Initially, the Soviet Union was particularly influential in the support of China's efforts toward economic development through technological and industrial advances. Since both countries shared an ambivalence toward Western nations, English was viewed as being useful for economic purposes but had lower official status than the Russian language (Adamson, 2004). This primary positioning of Russian in China's foreign language curriculum was indicative of the political climate of the period and contrasted with the dominance of English in the previous historical period.

In addition to the linkage between the use of English and national development, socio-political forces such as the goal of unification and a need to transmit political messages influenced education policy. The People's Education Press (PEP), the curriculum development and publication unit in the Ministry of Education in Beijing, was responsible for curriculum materials and textbooks; however, due to the perception that PEP lacked experience, higher education institutions were commissioned to create the instructional materials without the involvement of teachers in their development. During this era, the role of the PEP was limited to

ensuring the "redness" of teaching materials (Adamson, 2004). As a result, the content became increasingly political and teaching methods were subject to Soviet influence. Eventually, the course content was so heavily geared toward political goals (e.g. the use of political tracts about Communist Party leaders) that it became detrimental to the teaching and learning of language. Due to the involvement of competing interest groups efforts to develop the English language curriculum lacked coherence. Ultimately, this approach was abandoned when teachers objected due to concerns about the relevance of teaching materials and the pedagogy (Adamson).

The pragmatism of the PRC's first phase of curriculum development continued during the second phase (1961-1966). However, while the construction of the national economy continued to be an influential factor in the growth of English language education, the quality of education became more of a concern. The shift toward the focus on quality of instruction came with a depoliticization of education due to backlash against the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) and the failure of messages in political campaigns. While the presence of political content continued, the PEP began to develop content with input from academicians and feedback from teachers; through this process, the materials became more balanced. As a more open attitude toward countries with English-speaking populations began to develop, the status of ELT was elevated, and curriculum development was less politicized allowing for the introduction of new pedagogical practices. While the education system continued to be highly centralized, the structure became more pluralistic with the use of an increasing body of research available to inform the development of curriculum and materials. Furthermore, there was more of an inclination to look for ideas outside of China and USSR and an increased consideration for the opinions of English language teachers. These developments led to a broader selection of

teaching resources that went beyond reading and incorporated listening, speaking, and writing (Adamson, 2004).

Much of the progress made in phase 2 came to a standstill during the next phase, the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). The Cultural Revolution's political climate of anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism spurred heightened tension around ELT. With intellectuals being targeted there were grave consequences for the educational system; ELT in schools was discontinued, and the PEP was closed in 1967 (Adamson, 2004). Furthermore, responsibility for teaching and materials shifted to local collectives. Around 1972, Communist Party Chairman Mao Zedong, and Premier Zhou Enlai connected the capacity for English language with the development of the country, and, the teaching of English language was resurrected. The development of syllabi and resources continued at the local level.

China since 1976. New policies targeted for the economic and political advancement of the country emerged rapidly after Mao's death when Deng Xiaoping (Chairman of the Chinese People's Consultative Conference) led China through economic reforms. In 1978 state controls over production and consumption were relaxed and China was opened to the Western world (Ebrey, 2010). Recognizing that education and economic development are inextricably linked, Deng advocated for reforms that depoliticized education policy shifting the focus from political messages to economic development. This shift from a centralized educational policy and the provision of access to Western pedagogical influences led to marketization of education in China. The central government redefined its role in education. Education policy was remodeled without abandoning commitment to socialism while embracing the free market philosophy of the global economy. This practical stance led to a new approach to education, introducing the idea of education as an individualistic endeavor for advancement and as an avenue to social mobility

(Wang, 2012). The government's shift towards a new agenda for education policy also meant that new stakeholders were introduced to the process. The role of local authorities was expanded and, with the depoliticization of the curriculum, non-state agents were authorized to provide education contributing to the marketization of education (Ngok, 2007).

Economic, rather than political, goals were now driving education policy. Deng's "Four Modernizations" (agriculture, industry, science and technology, and defense) required technical knowledge and promoted cross-cultural understanding as a means for economic development. These new policies and the marketization of educational services brought unprecedented involvement of external entities. After the Cultural Revolution, the role of the PEP expanded to tailoring foreign ideas to traditional Chinese educational experiences to maintain a curriculum that would suit Chinese teachers and students. Major innovations in education, implemented over a seven-year period, were more complex in terms of process and product than the approaches that were previously employed (Adamson, 2004). Additional reforms in 1999 and 2001 were designed in response to the development of information technology and economic globalization. These new curricula were also a response to China's rapid social, political, and economic development, and reflected the recognition of the need to prepare students for future employment. In 2003, a revised curriculum redefined the role of English language education. The mission was twofold with focuses on student advancement and development of the country. For students, the goal became proficiency in English for academic purposes or career development. Furthermore, the promotion of affective development and cross-cultural awareness would support the advancement of the country (Wang & Chen, 2012).

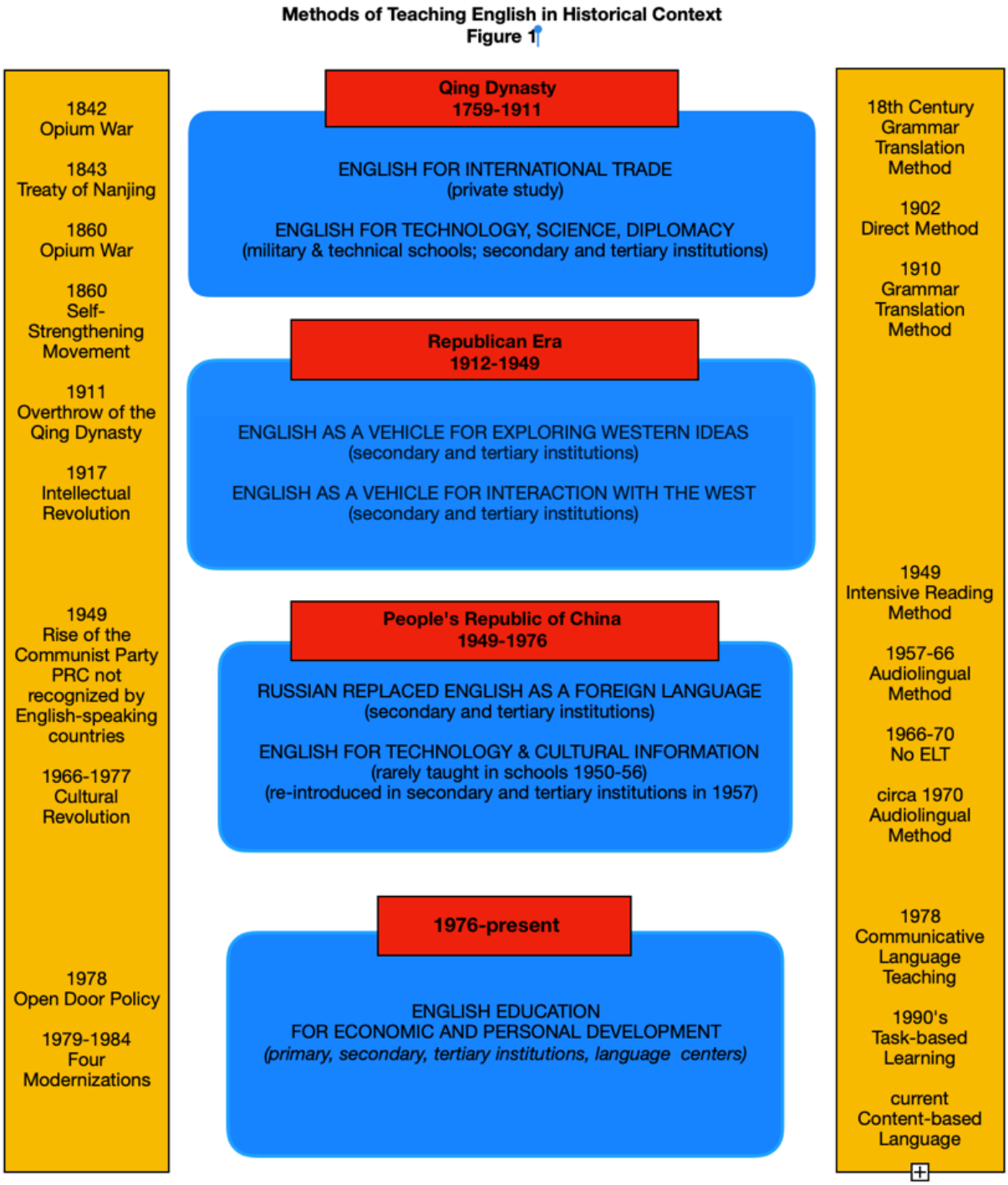
Along with the historical development of the economic and political factors, approaches to ELT changed during these periods of time. These changes are presented in the following section on progression of teaching methods.

Progression of methods of teaching English in China.

Figure 1 illustrates the changes in the methods used for teaching English together with the previously described periods of historical development of the country. The diagram illustrates how the methods for teaching foreign languages (English and Russian) changed over time. The relationships between historical events and the economic and political contexts for ELT are also represented.

Qing dynasty (1759-1911). The use of English as a medium of instruction for non-academic purposes, specifically trade, has been traced to circa 1850 (Rao, 2013) and, according to Adamson (2004), the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) was employed circa 1700. GTM is an approach involving little or no verbal communication; students learned rules of grammar and memorized vocabulary to translate text from English to Mandarin. When English was recognized as a tool necessary for interaction with Western countries and exploration of Western ideas, a different approach, the Direct Method (DM) for teaching language was employed. DM is an approach, taught using the target language exclusively, that focuses on speaking and listening of the language that is directly related to experiences and daily interactions. However, the local teachers' training in DM and lack of fluency in English was inadequate and they reverted to the GTM as the primary mode of instruction (Rao).

Figure 1: Methods of Teaching English in Historical Context



Republican era (1912-1949). This period is characterized by increased interest in Western ideas and the utility of English as a vehicle for gaining knowledge. Local teachers employed GTM, rather than the DM used by expatriate teachers, due to their lack of proficiency in English (Hu, 2005b). At the same time, study abroad became a means for acquiring English as well as gaining knowledge and understanding of Western ideas (Adamson, 2004).

People's Republic of China (1949-1976). The approach to teaching foreign language changed when the PRC was established in 1949. Under the governance of the Communist Party, a highly centralized education system was focused on nation building. The system's primary objectives were reducing illiteracy and providing education for all people to ensure that they understood the party-state's policies and political discourse (Ngok, 2007). During this time, the USSR was particularly influential. Between 1949 and 1964, Russian and the Intensive Reading Method (IRM) dominated foreign language teaching on the secondary level (Hu, 2005b; Zhang, 2012). IRM focused on the reading of texts with goals and tasks directed toward learning specific information. According to Hu, the status of ELT was once again elevated circa 1960 for political and economic reasons. China's relationship with the Soviet Union was weakened, and the value of English in gaining access to scientific and technological information needed for national development was recognized. During the Cultural Revolution the teaching of foreign languages diminished. Initially, all foreign languages were prohibited; foreign books were banned; ELT was removed from secondary curricula; and higher education institutions did not admit new students to foreign language and teacher education programs. However, once again, the economic necessity of the English language influenced education policy and, in 1972, ELT was reinserted in the curricula. Furthermore, efforts to improve ELT brought the addition of the *audiolingual* approach. *Audiolingualism* is a language teaching method that emphasized oral

production, pattern skills, and conditioning through repetition (Brown & Lee, p. 628). However, this attempt to improve pedagogical practices was not supported with teacher training to assist the implementation (Hu).

People's Republic of China (1976-present). Deng Xiaopeng's Four Modernizations, adopted to stimulate economic growth, required technical knowledge and promoted cross-cultural understanding as a means for economic development. English language education was emphasized in the efforts toward economic development and modernization. Furthermore, curriculum changes geared toward preparing students for future employment were initiated in support of these efforts. New education policies included the involvement of university faculty in curriculum development (Adamson, 2004); bringing expatriate teachers to China to teach English, and allowing Chinese students to study abroad (Ebrey, 2010). The contributions of these new participants facilitated a blending of pedagogical approaches including the introduction of *Communicative Language Teaching* (CLT) focusing on learning language for communication using activities requiring interaction (Adamson, 2004; Rao, 2013).

The chronological progression demonstrates how the status of English language and ELT in China are related to a quest for knowledge and economic advancement. Cultural and political factors were significant influences as well. The need for English language began with international trade relationships in the 1700's, and the economic development and international relationships continue to be motivation for the teaching and learning of English language.

Current conditions of ELT in China. The growing popularity of ELT in China reflects the country's shift toward internationalization/globalization. The increasing demand for English language learning has fueled the investment of individual and national resources in ELT (Huang, 2018). ELT is considered vital to the nation's economic development; and, for individuals,

proficiency in English can lead to opportunities for advancement (Hu, 2005). Courses in English are now required by the Ministry of Education at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Furthermore, the emphasis on communicative competence and student-centered pedagogy presents challenges for schools and teachers (Rao, 2013). Many local and provincial governments have established English immersion programs and enrollment in these programs is increasing. The Canadian immersion model has been considered to be one of the most successful and has been widely adopted in China (Song & Chen, 2011). In this model, content-based language teaching (CBLT), students learn history, science, and other subjects in lessons at the same time that they learn a language. There are a number of reasons why CBLT may be preferred over a second or foreign language being taught as a single subject in isolation from other courses. Research indicated the successes of CBLT programs in North America. However, the culture of learning in mainland China is an important consideration that appears to be underemphasized. In the local school contexts where expatriate EFL teachers are employed for the implementation of CBLT programs, the cultural differences of the students and the teachers plays a critical role in teaching and learning (Ouyang, 2000a; Rao & Yuan, 2016; Rao, 2010).

Content-based language teaching. The recognition of the value in teaching language across the curriculum grew out of a study commissioned by the British government in 1975. The study examined the teaching of English in Great Britain and North America. The most significant finding of the study was that language instruction in schools should occur in all subjects. A number of studies extended this research, and the cross-curricular focus resulted in developments in teacher training and materials as well as a number of publications on strategies for secondary and post-secondary teaching (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989). British and North American educators moved to offer English-speaking students access to the full range of

educational activities in which language and content are inextricably woven together. This *language across the curriculum movement* impacted the theory and practice of second language instruction and influenced the development of CBLT programs in Europe and North America. The integration of teaching academic content and language has been extensively researched in North American settings (Brinton, et al.,1989; Genesee, 1994; Snow, Met, & Genesee, 1989). Snow, et al. discussed the advantages of CBLT as being the capacity to develop advanced language proficiency and the students' full engagement in usage of the language. Lightbown (2014) found this approach to be an efficient method with the potential for promoting advanced language proficiency, this "two for one approach" expanded students' exposure to the language without taking time away from content instruction (Ch. 1). Furthermore, Swain's (2001) research found that the teaching and learning of language were more effective and students' motivation was increased when the content was relevant and meaningful to the learner. According to Brinton, et al. (1989), CBLT was an effective model of instruction for students in kindergarten through adolescence. However, the successes of immersion programs (content-based instruction in a foreign language for students with the same first language) had been almost exclusively with language majority students, therefore its principal application was foreign language instruction in North America. While studies conducted in Western settings indicated the success of CBLT models in Western cultures, the applicability of transferring such approaches for teaching language and content in educational settings in China and Hong Kong should be considered in the contexts of their particular histories, politics, and cultures.

Content-based language teaching in China. CBLT has been more firmly established in Hong Kong whereas in mainland secondary schools it is an emerging approach to instruction. Some studies that measured student achievement in CBLT programs in China and Hong Kong

indicated student success in learning language and content (Cheng, 2012; Kong, 2014; Kong, 2015). However, there were a number of concerns about the imposition of pedagogical practices developed in Western cultures without consideration for local educational practices (Luk & Lin, 2006; Ouyang, 2000a).

A limited number of studies, written in English, identifying the significance of local context to program evaluation have been conducted in China. Hoare's (2010) study of CBLT programs in mainland China examined the influence of context on a CBLT language course in China. According to Hoare, very few studies addressed how schools and teachers interact with the context to enhance student learning in the implementation of ELT approaches. Hoare examined the implementation of CBLT in three schools in mainland China to identify how contextual factors may have impacted the success of the program from a CBLT perspective and, at the same time, been a" legitimate response to the local educational context" (p. 69). Interviews with teachers and principals revealed differing perspectives on the objectives of the project. Overall, community stakeholders viewed the improvement of student's English as the primary objective for the project. However, teachers indicated a focus on CBLT as a means for enhancing an inadequate curriculum while principals focused on the competitive advantage that higher proficiency levels would give their schools. The findings of the study indicated the influences of these different perspectives were significant. Although the schools supported the project and provided additional funding, curriculum development and professional development for teachers were inadequate. Hoare concluded, "As it is unimportant to the schools what content is used as long as it provides access to English, the curriculum has been left entirely in the hands of the teachers" (p. 75). Additionally, national policy constraints and lack of provincial support for the project created challenges for curriculum planning due to limits on the academic content and

language of instruction. The content taught in CBLT project was also limited by inadequate instructional materials and teachers' content knowledge. Although the scope of the study is limited, Hoare's analysis demonstrates ambiguities related to contextual influences on the implementation of CBLT in mainland China.

Increase in English language education. Since China's modernization program in the 1970's, the utility of English language has positioned the teaching of English as a high priority in education. The expansion of English language education to primary school curriculum and the growing number of Chinese students enrolled in colleges and universities resulted in a shortage of qualified English teachers. In reaction to the increasing demand for English teachers, schools in China were recruiting expatriate teachers to fill the vacancies (Rao & Yuan, 2016). Furthermore, the presence of companies such as Disney English, Wall Street English, English First, and Cambridge English indicate that the commercial market for English language instruction is robust. According to a recent report published in *China Daily*, "40 percent of Chinese children now start learning English before school age" (Zhou, 2019).

While specific, verifiable data on English language instruction by non-state agents is not available in English, the data on Chinese students attending college in the U.S. can be used as one measure of demand for English education in China. Between the 1999/2000 school year and the 2017/2018 school year, 2,586,398 students from China have come to study in the USA. In the 2017/2018 school year, there were 350,755 students from China attending tertiary institutions in the USA (Open Doors, 2018) and in 2016, there were 33,275 students from China attending high schools in the USA (Morrison, 2017). According to the U.S. Department of Commerce last year Chinese students in U.S. colleges and universities contributed $12.55 billion to the U.S. economy (Open Doors).

Privileging of expatriate English teachers. Historically, teachers from English-speaking countries have been positioned as expert teachers and recent literature supports this phenomenon. According to Phillipson (2016), native English speakers were preferred as English language teachers worldwide. Rao and Yuan (2016) maintained that expatriate teachers were viewed as superior because of their native English speaker status with the benefits of employing them being: linguistic strengths, cultural familiarity, and pedagogical strengths. According to their review of literature, Rao and Yuan concluded: (1) their linguistic competence was considered to be an advantage that overrode all other factors in teaching and learning; (2) they were viewed by students in China as "authentic, walking, breathing resources about English culture" (p. 13) because they were born and grew up in English-speaking environments; (3) their familiarity with advanced methods and techniques for teaching language led to a more relaxed, lively teaching environment. Furthermore, their use of games, debates, and visual aids increased the Chinese students' motivation to learn. As a result of the prevalence of these views, expatriate academicians and expatriate teachers of English were often hired by universities because they were viewed as having the ability to enrich the quality of teaching and learning programs (Bodycott & Walker, 2000). During the time that I taught in China, I learned that it was common practice that expatriate teachers were hired because English was their first language in spite of their not meeting the government criteria for a teacher work permit. Additionally, expatriate teachers enjoyed an elevated status, however, as of 2020 there was surprisingly little research about their approaches to teaching Chinese students in secondary and primary schools. Luk and Lin (2006) presented an updated perspective of ELT, deconstructing native speakerism and reevaluating the roles of native and non-native English teachers in Hong Kong. However, English played a different role in the history of Hong Kong and the context for such research in

in mainland China was vastly different. A search for literature on English teaching and learning in mainland China secondary schools identified gaps in current research on the experiences of expatriate teachers as well on student's perspective on their instruction. Some expatriate teachers working in China documented their experiences (Hessler, 2001; Oatey, 1990; Schoenhals,1993; Werbel, 2013) and there are a limited number of investigations by scholars from mainland China (Jeon & Lee, 2006; Leigh, 2019; Ouyang, 2000a; Rao & Yuan). These works indicate a number of challenges faced by expatriate teachers of English in China with lack of cultural competence being the primary concern.

Content of the Investigation

The popularity of expatriate teachers providing English language education in mainland China, and the need for information on their instructional practices are compelling reasons for further study. This study investigates expatriate teachers' experiences as they approach CBLT in mainland China. The study incorporates: the cultural-historical context of English language education in China; the teachers' educational backgrounds, cross-cultural experiences, and knowledge and understanding of Chinese culture; and, the teachers' experiences navigating the tensions of EFL instruction in China. A summary of the historical development of ELT in China and the review of literature on EFL instruction in China explicate the broader context for the expatriate teachers' experiences. Narrative inquiry was used to interpret my discussions with the participating teachers about their life experiences prior to teaching in China as well as their experiences in the local contexts for their teaching in China. By working collaboratively to construct our narratives, I developed an understanding of the teachers lived experiences. Building relationships with the teachers and reflecting on our collective experiences were a learning process that resulted in new insights into EFL teaching in China.

Theoretical Framework

The framework for this study integrates theoretical principles of the sociocultural and critical approaches to consider the EFL teachers experiences. The perspectives of Cortazzi and Jin (1996), Luk and Lin (2006), and Ouyang (2000b) established the influences of the social, historical, political, and cultural contexts and provided a solid foundation for further investigation of the current state of ELT in mainland China. According to Cortazzi and Jin the culture of learning is grounded in the traditions of the education system, local community, and socio-economic conditions of a society. Further, in the language classroom where teachers and students with different cultural backgrounds more than one culture of learning may be an influence. These differences create gaps, that are often not apparent, between the expectations of teachers and the students. These differences in approaches to education that are grounded in cultural backgrounds can create tensions for teachers (Luk and Lin), and these tensions are the focus of this study.

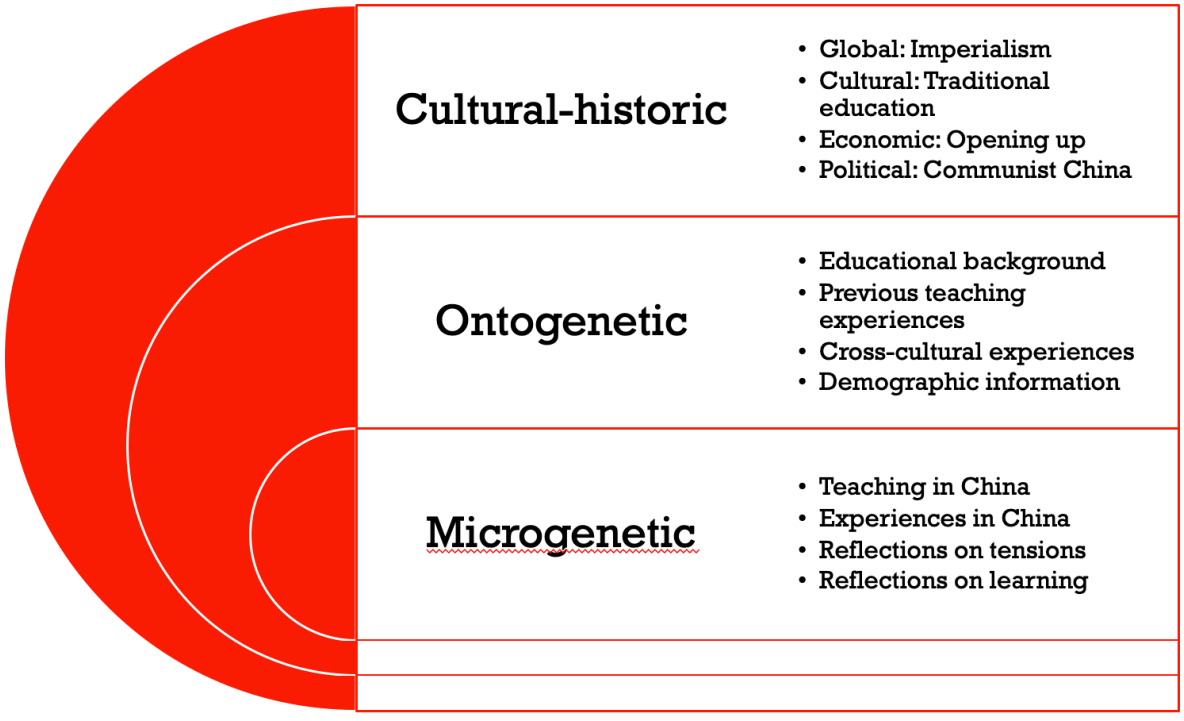
The sociocultural approach.

The sociocultural perspective on teaching considers the thinking and actions of teachers within the social, cultural, and historical contexts of language teaching (Cross, 2010). Cross advocated for language teacher research that goes beyond description to look at the "why" behind teachers' thinking about their practices. In his analysis of research on language teacher cognition, Cross noted the importance of teachers' previous experiences in relation to their current thinking and behavior. This indicated that research should also consider how the past was instrumental in current thinking and processes. Cross presents a conceptual framework, based on Vygotsky's theory of genetic analysis to research language teachers' beliefs, values, and approaches to teaching. The sociocultural theoretical domains of genetic analysis are: the *cultural-historic* focuses on the social, cultural, and historic development; the *ontogenetic* focuses on the development of the individual; and the *microgenetic*

focuses on “the momentary instances of concrete, practical activity that subjects engage in with the world around them” (p. 439

This study employed these sociocultural domains to examine teachers’ reflections on their experiences in the contexts of: China's historical development; the teachers’ life experiences; and their experiences as EFL teachers in the local school setting in order to understand their approaches to teaching. Furthermore, the tensions experienced by the teachers were explored to consider their origins and learn how they were resolved.

Figure 2
Sociocultural Theoretical Domains for Contextual Analysis (adapted from Cole & Engstrom, 1993)



The critical approach. Luk and Lin (2006) employed a cross-cultural model in their research of classroom interactions in Hong Kong. Their model integrates sociocultural and

critical theoretical approaches and discourse analysis. Luk and Lin recognized the importance of the positions of schools in the broader context of communities. They assert that classroom interactions reflect and are determined by the sociopolitical contexts for the local school settings. In Hong Kong, the context was shaped by historical and political issues that created a socioeconomic divide between native English-speaking foreigners and local people. Therefore, Luk and Lin suggested that the differences would be reflected in the classroom interactions of expatriate teachers, local teachers, and their students. They found that, for both expatriate teachers and local teachers, school contexts, beliefs about teaching, and academic and professional history influenced their teaching. In his investigation of ELT reform in China, Ouyang (2000a) examined the "puzzling contradiction" (Abstract) in the hiring of teachers from English-speaking countries as foreign experts. The foreign experts were hired to implement strategies incorporating interactive, inquiry-based, independent learning, and, at the same time, their efforts were "criticized and denied" by their students, the administrators, and their local colleagues (Abstract). Because the hiring of expatriate EFL teachers due to their linguistic expertise continues to be questioned, this study considered the teachers' experiences in the context of the local schools where they taught in order to understand their thinking about their approaches to teaching.

Purpose of the Study

This study analyzed the beliefs, values, and approaches to teaching of expatriate EFL teachers as they learned to navigate their experiences in China. By exploring tensions experienced by EFL teachers this study seeks to understand: the teachers' beliefs and values; their life experiences; and their approaches to teaching their students in China by addressing the following questions:

- What are the beliefs, values, and approaches to teaching of expatriate English as a foreign language teachers in China?
- How did the expatriate teachers navigate the tensions that they experienced as English as a foreign language teachers in China?

Significance of the study. While several studies regarding the need for improved teacher education and professional development for Chinese teachers of English have been conducted, a dearth of studies on expatriate teachers in China indicates that the topic has not been given the consideration that it deserves. This study investigates the educational backgrounds, cross-cultural experiences, and experiences of expatriate EFL teachers in mainland China and highlights the importance of understanding teachers' experiences to the field of language teaching research.

> Adam (academic officer) shared that he is not in agreement with American teachers' vocabulary strategies "whether they come from those articles that you read or not, that is just not how Chinese students learn". There was also mention of hiring "local" (Chinese) teachers because of the hassle of hiring teachers from USA and the fact that the American teachers don't know how to teach the Chinese students because we don't know what they're (the students) used to doing in the classroom. (L. McLeod-Chambless, personal correspondence, February 29, 2016)

The expatriate teachers' lack of understanding of traditional education practices in China and their inability to meet the needs of their Chinese students as a result of cultural differences have been identified as obstacles for their teaching (Ouyang, 2000a; Rao & Yuan, 2016; Rao, 2010). Additionally, some studies that evidence the influence of contextual factors in the implementation of CBLT programs also observe challenges related to the involvement of

expatriate teachers and program administrators due to their lack of familiarity with local practices (Hoare, 2010; Luk & Lin, 2006; Qiang & Kang, 2011; Yin, Lee, & Wang, 2014). Developing context-appropriate approaches to CBLT poses further complications that require pedagogical skills that facilitate learning content and language. According to Halliday (2016), students may have problems learning the academic language required in schools, and teachers need to understand those linguistic demands in order to support student learning. For example, as Kong (2014) explains, the integration of content and language learning at the late-primary and secondary levels is "increasingly complex and abstract and the language use is correspondingly more complex and specialized" (Abstract). Studies of the integration of content and language teaching in Hong Kong and mainland China found that in-depth content knowledge and training in language teaching facilitated student engagement and the integration of content and language learning (Kong & Hoare, 2011; Kong, 2015). This study augments research on expatriate EFL teachers experiences in China. Specifically, the study contributes to the following areas: (1) exploring the lived experiences of expatriate EFL teachers in China; and, (2) understanding the tensions experienced by the expatriate teachers in the context of the local cultures of learning.

The findings of this study have the potential for contributing to knowledge and understanding that can inform teacher preparation programs and expatriate teachers' practices. The study can also contribute to understanding the current social commentary on expatriate teachers in China, and the ways in which context influences CBLT programs. Furthermore, implications can be drawn for teacher education programs in preparing preservice teachers as well as orientation programs for international teaching experiences. Finally, the findings may inform administrators and educational leaders in developing teacher recruitment practices,

professional development plans, school learning policies, and curriculum. The teachers' contributions can also be useful to school administrators for purposes of developing teacher recruitment strategies, hiring practices, and new-teacher orientation programs.

Delimitations and Assumptions

Delimitations.

- **The time of the study:** March 2020 through August 2020.
- **Location of the study:** The study was conducted virtually from Hong Kong and the United States with teachers in tier-one cities in China and is applicable to major economic centers.
- **Participants in the study:** Expatriate teachers of academic content and English, at the secondary level, meeting the criteria for a work permit established by local government.
- **Selected aspects of the problem:** Cultural dissonances experienced by expatriate EFL teachers; the tensions experienced by expatriate EFL teachers within local contexts for CBLT programs.
- **Literature:** Literature and documents used for the study:
    - Were written in English, documents written in Mandarin were not included.
    - Were limited to mainland China and Hong Kong.
    - Covered the time period beginning in the mid-nineteenth century.
- **Terms:** LETs and NETs are used when those are the terms used by the researchers otherwise teachers are referred to as expatriate teachers and local teachers.

Assumptions.

- Expatriate teachers are bringing in pedagogical practices developed in Western countries.
- Participants in this study answered the interview questions openly and honestly.
- Studies cited in Chapter 2 largely used participants that met the current criteria for teaching English in China.
- Programs studied in Chapter 2 were not CBLT unless specifically stated.
- Context of studies in Chapter 2 was major economic centers unless otherwise stated.

2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The global context of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in China includes the interrelationships of historical, political, social, cultural, and economic realms. This complex context extends to the local level in the socially constructed contexts of schools and classrooms. Furthermore, the expatriate teachers' approach to EFL teaching in the context of a Chinese culture of learning is shaped by their life experiences, particularly their educational experiences, and is based on beliefs that are different from those of their students. These differences create tensions and dissonances to be navigated by the teachers as they learn to navigate EFL teaching in China.

Zhang's discussion of foreign language education policy in China explained the importance of English education, "English is treated as a most important foreign language in China and it has been taught in most Chinese public schools and has accompanied each Chinese student daily" (2012, p. 5). The growing number of students learning English in China highlighted the demand for English teachers (Hulbert, 2007; Yang, 2001). Findings of several studies indicated a lack of resources (teachers and professional development) as an obstacle to providing quality instruction EFL instruction (Hu, 2010; Hu, 2005; Qiang & Kang, 2011; Rao, 2013; Wu, 2001). The employment of teachers from countries with English speaking populations

had been a way to meet this need for teachers (Rao & Yuan, 2016). However, research on expatriate teachers in China was limited and some studies questioned the practice of hiring teachers based on their status as native speakers, and other studies indicated problems and challenges attributed to cultural differences and lack of experience (Jeon & Lee, 2006; Jiang, 2001; Ling, 2009; Ouyang, 2000b; Rao & Yuan; Shi, 2009; Yin, Lee, & Wang, 2014).

As I began my graduate research assistantship and prepared for teaching in China, the dearth of literature available to teachers in my situation led me to explore research about teaching and learning in Chinese public high schools. Eventually my search extended to the broader political and social contexts that shape the current education system as a way to acquire knowledge on education in China. I learned a number of interrelated factors; economic, political, and social, played a role in the development of ELT in China. I also became aware of the power and politics of ELT on a global level. Later, I identified some in-depth accounts of expatriate teachers' experiences in China. These texts provided connections to my experiences and helped me to understand some of the challenges of being a foreign teacher in China (Hessler, 2001; Ouyang, 2000b; Schoenhauls, 1993).

To provide background and context for the study, the literature review is organized by levels of context progressing from the broad sociocultural context to literature that specifically focuses on expatriate teachers in China. Finally, studies on language teachers' beliefs and teaching practices are discussed.

To provide background and context for the study, the first section reviews books and journal articles authored by Chinese and western scholars to establish the multifaceted aspects of the sociocultural context for this research. This literature includes the chronology of ELT in China in the context of global and internal economic and political factors. This chronology also

demonstrates the relationship between English and economic development and opportunity in economic centers in China. This topic will be explored through a discussion of the impact linguistic imperialism had on ELT; specifically, the hiring of expatriate teachers that are distinguished as native English-speaking teachers (NETs). The second section, Language, Learning, and Culture incorporates linguistic and sociocultural perspectives of language teaching and learning to demonstrate the interconnectedness of language, learning, and culture. Most of the studies in this section focused on the importance of culture to language teaching and cross-cultural interactions in ELT. The third section, ELT in China, addresses a range of topics. These studies examined issues related to curriculum reform such as: the challenges of implementing the English language curriculum; analyses of English language education policies, and; critiques of the implementation of the policies. This section also reviews literature on expatriate teachers in China addressing challenges to effective teaching presented by cultural differences between them and their students. Finally, literature on language teachers' beliefs is reviewed.

Sociocultural Context

A review of the literature on teaching English in China reveals tensions within the broader sociocultural context that span from the mid-19th century through the early 21st century. Several authors connected modern concerns and questions about teaching English in China to the influences of the political, cultural, and socioeconomic aspects of the global context (Adamson, 2004; Chen, 2014; Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Gu, 2006; Hu, 2005; Hu, 2010; Liu & Chunxia, 2005; Luk & Lin, 2006; Ngok, 2007; Ouyang, 2000a; Qiang & Kang, 2011; Rao, 2013; Tsui & Ng, 2010; Wu, 2001). This section begins with the historical development of ELT in China. Chapter 1 provided a detailed overview of this same topic, therefore, a brief summary of the period between the Opium Wars and reforms implemented after the death of Mao Zedong is offered with the focus being more recent developments beginning with the Opening of China in 1978.

Next, a discussion of linguistic imperialism and its' connection to the elevated status of native-English speakers as language teachers is presented. Then, the risks and challenges associated with employing expatriate teachers is presented. The section concludes with an interpretation of the literature that demonstrates the importance of culture to language teaching.

Historical development. The progression of English language education in China is closely related to the historical development of China. The controversy around teaching of English in China began when foreign merchants and missionaries pursued access to China's resources during the Qing Dynasty and has continued to be a controversial topic (Adamson, 2004). The role of the English language in Chinese culture changed in concert with political, social, and cultural phenomena; and, together with those changes, the development and administration of the English language curriculum evolved. Between 1976 and 2020, China's education reform progressed along with the rapid social, political, and economic development of the country. The changes in curriculum, particularly English language education, reflected a recognition of the demands of globalization that began with the opening of China in 1977.

In 1977, Deng Xiaopeng's Four Modernizations (agriculture, industry, science and technology, and defense) were adopted to stimulate economic growth. This economic policy promoted the acquisition of technical knowledge and encouraged cross-cultural understanding as a means for economic development. New policies targeted for the economic and political advancement of the country emerged rapidly, state controls over production and consumption were relaxed and China was opened to the Western world (Ebrey, 2010). Recognizing that education and economic development were inextricably linked, Deng advocated for reforms that depoliticized education policy and implemented strategies that would accelerate China's modernization. This shift from a centralized educational policy and the introduction of pedagogical

practices influenced by teaching practices widely use in Western countries led to the marketization of education in China (Ngok, 2007).

The effects of changes in educational policy had further implications. While Dengist reforms "triggered holistic changes" (Ouyang, 2000b, p. 1) and shifted priorities for education, traditional Chinese education (prior to the modern period beginning in 1912) was closely aligned with Confucian culture which prioritized education as a tool for nation building that could provide stability (Gu, 2006). The traditional approach to education emphasized outcomes and teacher-centered pedagogical practices emphasized rote learning and recitation (Gu, 2006). Under the new policies, teacher-centered instruction and rote learning were replaced with student-centered learning and creativity (Ouyang). As a result, expectations of the relational dynamic between teachers and students began to change (Liu & Chunxia, 2005).

In the early 1980's additional policy changes further supported the aims of education reform through the involvement of university faculty in curriculum development and bringing expatriate teachers to China to teach English (Adamson, 2004; Ebrey, 2010). Additionally, the new curriculum promoted students' affective development and cross-cultural awareness. The outcomes of these changes to curriculum and instruction are discussed in the literature review.

Status of English language teaching. English was characterized as the language of modernity and progress (de Jong, 2011), and the connection between economic development and English language policy in China was observed by a number of authors (Adamson, 2004; Ebrey, 2010; Gu, 2006; Ngok, 2007; Ouyang, 2000b). Policy reforms were directed toward prioritizing ELT as a means for the development of the country, and proficiency in English was perceived as tool for personal advancement (Chen, 2014; Luk & Lin, 2006; Ouyang, 2000a). Luk and Lin's discussion of ELT in postcolonial Hong Kong emphasized the view of English as the preferred

language for international business. The high status of English was evidenced by initiatives, sponsored by local businessmen, recruiting NETs to improve the English proficiency of local students. The high status of English was also reinforced through the influence of Western, English-speaking countries over the teaching of English. This was demonstrated as dominant theories and practices of teaching English as a second or foreign language, developed in institutions of higher education, were assumed to be applicable across contexts in other parts of the world (de Jong; Phillipson, 2016). To this point, in post-colonial Hong Kong and mainland China, NETs were positioned in universities and schools as agents of change that would raise the standard of the level of English being taught, and students viewed them as a positive influence because of their native speaker status and different approaches to teaching (Luk & Lin, 2006; Ouyang, 2000).

Opportunities and challenges**.** The high status of English was manifest in the belief that proficiency maximized opportunities for success. Luk and Lin (2006) and Ouyang (2000a) documented personal experiences with teaching and learning English in Hong Kong and mainland China respectively.

Luk (Luk & Lin, 2006) told of her realization, as an English language learner in Hong Kong, that a degree in English was far more valuable to her future development than a major in Chinese. She further explained interactions with her instructors as important affordances of cross-cultural English language education that provided many opportunities. In her university studies, Luk exchanged information and shared her views with a university lecturer from Great Britain. As they talked about cultural differences, she recognized that knowing a foreign language broadened her capacity for communication. Furthermore, she realized her language skills enabled her to "explain the intricacies of my own culture to a foreigner" (2006, p. 3).

As a child, Lin (Luk & Lin, 2006) lived in a community with very few linguistic resources for using English. She told that, although they did not know English, her parents were acutely aware of the importance of English proficiency to the success of their children. Lin also disclosed her experiences learning English shaped her identity and described English as a resource she used to explore herself. For Lin, English was as a tool for expanding her world by developing friendships that crossed cultural and geographic boundaries.

Both Luk and Lin (2006) acknowledged the value of their cross-cultural experiences in learning English and noted that such experiences were not typical in schools in Hong Kong. At the same time, they expressed their confidence in the abilities of local Chinese-English bilingual teachers. In particular, they noted, that local teachers were sensitive to the challenges that their students faced, and, their shared first language was also a resource. The experiences of Luk and Lin influenced their view that the complexity of the context for ELT presented a situation that cannot be evaluated as "good" or "bad" (2006, p. 2), rather, they viewed the local teachers, NETs, and their students as unique resources for learning.

Ouyang (2000a) studied the challenges faced by a local EFL teacher called Cheng. A popular teacher in her rural middle school, Cheng was granted the opportunity to attend a two-year program at a prestigious foreign language school in China. One of the main objectives of the program, aimed at improving the quality of ELT in rural areas, was to introduce the local teachers to new ELT theory and practices, communicative language teaching (CLT), and student-centered pedagogy (Ouyang). However, when Cheng and the other teachers in the program returned to their schools, they were surprised to find that their updated approaches to teaching English were not well received. Cheng discovered that her experience at the university, which required a fundamental shift in her teaching philosophy, resulted in her alienation from her teaching

community. At the same time, her newfound language teaching skills afforded her an opportunity to open a private tutoring center and provided her with additional income. Many other graduates of the program had experiences similar to Cheng's and ultimately left their rural communities. They also discovered the marketability of their language teaching skills and moved on to more profitable positions in foreign companies or higher paying teaching positions in coastal cities (Ouyang).

The experiences of Lin, Luk, and Cheng (Luk & Lin, 2006; Ouyang, 2000a) illustrated the significance of English language to their personal and professional growth in the sociocultural context of Hong Kong and mainland China. As English language learners, they represented one aspect of the complex context for English teaching.

As the medium of instruction, English dominated the education system in Hong Kong until 1987 and continued to be the primary language for conducting international business as of 2020. In the context of Hong Kong, the preference for native speakers and the advantages of English proficiency were clear. In mainland China, English had not dominated education and business to the extent that it had in Hong Kong, however the importance of English is increasing.

These studies connect to the current study of expatriate EFL teachers in China in three ways. First, the influence of sociocultural context is evident. Luk, Lin, and Ouyang (Luk & Lin, 2006; Ouyang, 2000a) considered the influence of the political, social, and economic aspects of ELT. For example, Ouyang explained the relationship between China's economic development and the introduction of new pedagogies to the English language curricula. The introduction of curricula aimed to modernize China and facilitate interculturalism through the expansion of ELT also elevated the status of English as a means for personal development. The demand for ELT that began to increase as a result of the economic reforms introduced by Deng has continued as has the

hiring and recruiting of expatriate teachers. Luk and Lin described the political influences as well as pressures from the business community in Hong Kong on ELT. Since it was established as a British colony in 1843, English was the official language of Hong Kong and the roots of ELT have been ubiquitous. Second, cultural differences between expatriate teachers and the students and the local teachers were found to be a complicating factor that adversely affected the expatriates teaching. Such cultural differences and their role in the expatriate teachers' beliefs and approaches to teaching are a primary consideration in this study. Lastly, the experiences of Luk, Lin, and Cheng were examples of the influence of ELT on the personal development of the researchers and the teacher. This study explores how personal experiences influenced the expatriate teachers' beliefs, values, and approaches to teaching in the context of cross-cultural ELT. The next section discusses cross-cultural ELT, the privileging of native speakers, and the debate around native English-speakers as teachers to provide additional sociohistorical context for the study.

Cross-cultural English language teaching. Hu (2008) observed that although bilingual education has been identified as a recent innovation in China, foreign languages have been used as a medium of instruction since the second half of the 19th century. Hu's analysis of 121 articles, located through an online search of "the largest database of academic periodical publications in Chinese" (2008, p. 196), scrutinized studies on bilingual education and concluded the rationales and claims supporting bilingual education in China were misleading. Furthermore, he questioned the expansion of ELT as a means "to facilitate China's modernization and interface with the world" (p. 196). Hu asserted that Chinese academic discourse has facilitated linguistic imperialism by positioning the role of English language as essential to personal and national development.

Phillipson (2016) critiqued a study, commissioned by the British Council, of NETs performance in six Asian countries. The purpose of his study was to evaluate the role of NETs in

Asian school systems and examine British involvement in supporting ELT in these settings. The report includes a study of NETs directed at recording teaching practices and indicators of intercultural sensitivity. However, Phillipson noted the researchers' characterization of English as the primary language of science, diplomacy, and commerce as biased. Additionally, the report concluded that NETs were the preferred teachers of English around the world. At the same time, the report failed to critique the NETs monolingual approach to teaching. Phillipson observed how the report was evidence that Local English teachers (LETs) were perceived as needing help from NETs and established an unequal relationship that disempowered NETs.

Hu (2008) and Phillipson (2016) questioned the appropriateness of implementing ELT pedagogies in China and Asia respectively. Hu's analysis concluded that enthusiasm for implementing CBLT models developed in Europe and North America was unwarranted; moreover, CBLT programs served an elite population of students inferring that the programs are not an avenue for meeting the nation's goals for economic and personal development. Phillipson concluded that sending unqualified NETs to teach in education systems where they are not familiar with the language, culture, and pedagogical practices was a disservice to the countries that hosted them. Similarly, this study of expatriate teachers uses a critical approach to address concerns about adopting pedagogical practices from Western countries and employing expatriate teachers. In the next section, an overview of works that identified benefits and drawbacks of NETs in China is presented.

The privileging of native English speakers. Students were often partial to expatriate teachers because they perceived them as having superior language skills and in-depth understanding of the cultures of English-speaking countries. (Luk & Lin, 2006; Phillipson, 2016; Rao & Yuan, 2016). According to the literature, native speakers were preferred because they were viewed as good

linguistic role models. Additionally, NETs were granted expert status by the Chinese government and have been imported by Chinese universities as trainers of local teachers because of their familiarity with pedagogical practices developed in Western countries (Luk & Lin; Ouyang, 2000). Luk and Lin asserted that the privileging of NETs served to maintain the status of the English language and the supremacy of native speakers as teachers. The privileges and high status of NETs were attributed to *linguistic imperialism.* Phillipson (2013) explained linguistic imperialism as the policies and practices that established and perpetuated the dominance English as a global language. The dominance of English as an international language had been critiqued by scholars around the world and the privileging of NETs was a major controversy (Hu, 2008; Phillipson, 2016).

Native speaker debate in China. Rao and Yuan's (2016) review of literature weighed the advantages and disadvantages of NETs as EFL teachers in China, their three organizing categories (linguistic, cultural, and, pedagogical) frame the discussion of pedagogical challenges.

Linguistic. Superior linguistic competence has been frequently cited as a significant advantage of NETs (Luk & Lin, 2006; Rao & Yuan, 2016). Expatriate teachers were viewed as linguistic resources with the ability to model spoken English, and, their pronunciation and intonation were imitated by their students (Luk & Lin; Rao, 2010). Furthermore, the opportunity for authentic communication with NETs was seen as beneficial for students and their presence in schools was favored because it gave the students more opportunities to speak English (Luk & Lin). While the NETs linguistic abilities were seen as a tremendous asset, their lack of language teaching experience was seen as problematic (Rao & Yuan). Luk and Lin found that NETs had difficulties answering questions about sociolinguist and cultural aspects of the language because they lacked cultural competence and confidence in their ability to teach (Luk & Lin). Additionally, NETs with limited or no understanding of their students' first language could be insensitive to their linguistic

problems. Moreover, it was often difficult for students to adapt to the target language as the language of instruction without support in their first language (Ma, 2012; Luk & Lin; Rao & Yuan).

Cultural. In addition to the authenticity of their pronunciation and intonation, NETs were believed to have a more well-developed ability to use idiomatic language and colloquial expressions. In addition, expatriate teachers are perceived as having a better understanding of the nuances of language usage than LETs because they acquired language and culture as an integrated experience (Luk & Lin, 2006; Rao & Yuan, 2016). The awareness of their own cultures and related knowledge of NETs were also regarded as important advantages in the teaching of English. They acted as a cultural resource that assisted students in understanding Western culture, traditions, history, and people. This advantage was especially important in learning to read English texts because NETs provided background knowledge about the texts (Rao & Yuan). The cultural backgrounds of NETs carried significant weight in China (Luk & Lin; Ouyang, 2000a). However, student surveys and classroom observations indicated that their teaching styles often conflicted with the local cultures of learning (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Rao & Yuan; Luk & Lin; Ma, 2012). NETs often fell short in structuring their courses to meet the needs of the students due to their lack of understanding of the education system, particularly when it came to the importance of exam scores (Ma; Ouyang). The attitudes of NETs were often perceived as too casual and even lazy (Ma; Ouyang). Finally, communication between NETs and local students, local teachers, and administrators was problematic due to their lack of cultural competence and inability to speak the local language. These cultural differences often caused misunderstandings that led to the NETs feeling isolated and ostracized (Maley,1990; Ouyang). Many of the problems with NETs attributed to cultural differences are discussed in general terms here. A more in-depth analysis is presented in the section on language, learning, and culture.

***Pedagogy*.** Several studies indicated classes taught by NETs were perceived as having a comfortable, friendly relaxed atmosphere (Rao & Yuan, 2016; Luk & Lin, 2006). Studies by Rao (2010) and Ma (2012) found expatriate teachers employed a variety of language teaching methods; the methods helped to make the learning environment a lively place; students enjoyed the NETs creative approach to teaching; and, they found the activities interesting. Finally, Rao (2006) found that the motivation of the students in his study was increased by the NETs use of visual materials and multimedia equipment. Luk (2001) reported similar findings in a study of secondary students in Hong Kong; motivation was increased by the teaching of NETs particularly for students in places where English was not commonly used outside of the school setting. On the other hand, according to Ma, there was little evidence that NETs were better English teachers than LETs. Surveys and interviews of tertiary and secondary students revealed students enjoyed NETs relaxed teaching styles and interactive practices but at the same time were concerned that they were not learning (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Ouyang, 2000b). Ouyang's survey of students' complaints found that they did not find the NETs to be effective teachers because their exam scores were lower than students taught by LETs.

These studies of ELT in China identified ambiguities in the employment of NETs based on their native speaker status. The findings indicated a need for a close look at what qualifies expatriate teachers of English in China. In this study, the relationship between life experiences, beliefs, values, and practices of expatriate teachers and the local context for their teaching is examined to determine how they approach cross-cultural teaching.

Tracing the development of ELT throughout the changing historic, economic, social, and political conditions in China shows how these factors shaped the current context for ELT. Identifying these influences underpins the importance of understanding the local context for

language teaching. The next section shows the relationship between language development and sociocultural context. This discussion of language development progresses from early language development to language learning in school, and then moves to cultural influences on the development of learning environments.

Language, Learning, and Culture

Linguistic and sociocultural perspectives on language development recognized that social interaction and context are primary influences on language learning (Halladay, 2016; Borg, 2003). The sociocultural context of schools, cultural experiences of teachers, and cultural experiences of the students are factors in language learning. This section outlines the interrelationship of language learning and culture, thus providing a lens for understanding the contextual influences on teachers' beliefs, values, and approaches to teaching.

Language development. A linguistic interpretation of learning posits, because it involved language, all learning was linguistic activity (Halladay, 2016). Halladay's work on early language development was similar to the sociocultural perspective that learning occurs through interactions situated in the contexts of home and local community. His discussion of language development explained that children begin to learn language to communicate around the age of 6- 9 months. In the initial stage of language development children create a protolanguage through interactions with adults around them. The protolanguage is unique to the child and those with whom he/she interacts and is the basis for creating meaning. According to Halladay (2016), the first thing a child learned was that language was the way of interpreting and controlling the world around her/him. In other words, language had two metafunctions, or organizing concepts, ideational and interpersonal, ideational being the use of language as a way of thinking about the environment, and interpersonal being language as a way of acting.

Cultures of learning. School environments were products of cultural traditions of the communities and societies in which they are located, as well as being situated in broader sociocultural settings (Cross, 2010; McKay and Wong, 1996; Ouyang, 2000; Pennycook, 2009). Cortazzi and Jin's (1996) research of primary school classrooms in China illustrated their ideological model establishing the influence of culture on schools and classrooms. They explained *culture of learning* as "behavior in language classrooms is set within taken-for granted

frameworks of expectations, attitudes, values and beliefs about what constitutes good learning, about how to teach or learn…" (p. 1). A number of researchers discussed context and the influence cultural factors had on teaching and learning language. Halladay (2016) and Cortazzi and Jin examined children's early developmental stages and the learning about learning that began prior to children entering school. Luk and Lin (2006) observed cross-cultural interactions of students and teachers at the secondary level to understand the relationships between sociocultural context and language teaching and learning. Ouyang and Rao (2006) evaluated the influence of Chinese culture and sociopolitical factors on language teaching and learning at the tertiary level.

In his linguistic interpretation of how children learn about learning, Halladay (2016) provided an in-depth explanation that focused on language as a tool for learning how to learn. As children entered school, bringing their personal experiences of learning with them, they were faced with a new context for learning and needed to adapt to an environment where teaching practices, shaped by cultural knowledge and scholarly traditions, required understanding of academic language. New demands were placed on students as they acquired domain-specific language and learned new ways of learning (Halladay, 1994). These challenges highlighted the importance of teachers understanding what their students could do with language as they began school (Halladay). Cortazzi and Jin (1996) also emphasized the importance of teachers' understanding their students' backgrounds. Using descriptions of classroom observations, they illustrated their assertion that culture has a long-lasting influence on teaching and learning in schools. Their study of expatriate EFL teachers and their students at a university in China examined the teachers and students' beliefs about what defines good students and good teaching respectively. Analysis of the responses evidenced the differences between the Chinese culture of

learning and the Western approaches to language learning; the findings indicated that, because they lacked understanding of their students' culture of learning, the expatriate teachers had a deficit view of their Chinese students. Given the significance of the culture of learning, they proposed incorporating cultural ways of learning in teaching language rather than using language as a tool for teaching culture (Cortazzi & Jin)

Luk and Lin's (2006) studies of cross-cultural interactions in ELT demonstrated the interrelatedness of language development, teaching and learning, and culture. Their research model situated interactions between target language experts (TLE) and target language learners (TLL) in the context of the school and the broader sociocultural context. Luk and Lin interviewed and observed NETs, LETs, and their students in Hong Kong to determine the factors that caused difficulties between teachers and students in a foreign language classroom. The findings of the study revealed multiple factors complicated classroom interactions; differing desires, ideologies, and agendas attributed to generational differences, familiarity with local culture, and lack of understanding of institutional requirements contributed to the difficulties.

Ouyang (2000a) examined the complexity of implementing new English teaching practices in alignment with government policies designed to stimulate economic growth. In his ethnographic study of a local English teacher, he chronicled the teachers' experiences learning and applying an innovative approach, CLT, to ELT in her rural hometown in mainland China. The teacher and her cohorts found that CLT was not embraced by the local community. The student-centered, interactive approach of CLT conflicted with the traditional method of foreign language teaching, and her expertise was not acknowledged by her institution.

These studies indicated both expatriate and local teachers faced challenges implementing pedagogical practices developed in Western countries in schools in Hong Kong and mainland

China. The findings of these studies demonstrated how sociocultural context influences ELT. Differences in cultural backgrounds of teachers and their students were an adverse condition that received attention in the USA among policy makers and practitioners. The need for teachers to implement culturally relevant pedagogies was widely supported (Gay, 1993; Gay, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Haddix & Price-Dennis (2013) established the importance of congruence between pedagogies and students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds. However, research on such cultural differences in classrooms in China was limited and is further addressed in the section on ELT in China.

ELT in China

The literature base on ELT in China primarily addressed policies and practices. These studies looked at policy implementation, pedagogy, and teacher education. While some of the studies focused exclusively on pedagogy, many of them related context to the topic. This section is organized into two categories; (1) studies involving local teachers, and (2) studies involving expatriate teachers. Table 1 shows that 20 of the 31 studies involved local teachers, 6 involved expatriate teachers, and 5 involved both expatriate and local teachers.

Table 1 Studies of English Language Teaching in China

Type	**Author(s)**	**Level**	**Location**	**Teachers**
CBLT	Cheng, 2012	Primary	Mainland China	Local
EFL	Cortazzi & Jin, 1996	Primary/Tertiary	Mainland China	Expatriate/Local
CBLT	Hoare, 2010	Secondary	Mainland China	Local
EFL	Hu, 2005	Tertiary	Singapore (students from Mainland China	Local
EFL	Jiang, 2001	Tertiary	Mainland China	Expatriate

EFL	Kang & Cheng, 2014	Secondary	Mainland China	Local
CBLT	Kang & Cheng,, 2011a	Secondary	Mainland China	Local
CBLT	Kong & Hoare, 2011a	Secondary	Mainland China	Local
CBLT	Kong & Hoare, 2011b	Secondary	Mainland China/Hong Kong	Local
CBLT	Kong, 2008	Secondary	Hong Kong	Local
CBLT	Kong, 2009	Secondary	Mainland China/Hong Kong	Local
CBLT	Kong, 2014	Secondary	Hong Kong	Local
EFL	Lee, 2013	Teacher Education	Hong Kong	Local
CBLT	Liang, 2011	Primary	Mainland China	Local
CBLT	Lin, 2013	Secondary	Hong Kong	Local
EFL	Ling, 2009	Tertiary	Mainland China	Expatriate
EFL	Ling, 2017	Tertiary	Mainland China	Expatriate
EFL	Liu & Jackson, 2008	Tertiary	Mainland China	Expatriate
CBLT	Luk & Lin, 2006	Secondary	Hong Kong	Expatriate/Local
CBLT	Ma, 2012	Secondary	Hong Kong	Expatriate/Local
EFL	Ouyang, 2000a	Teacher Education	Mainland China	Local
EFL	Ouyang, 2000b	Tertiary	Mainland China	Local
CBLT	Qiang & Kang, 2011	Secondary	Mainland China	Local
EFL	Stanley, 2019	Tertiary	Mainland China	Expatriate
CBLT	Song & Cheng, 2011	Primary	Mainland China	Local
EFL	Spaulding, et al., 2009	Primary	Mainland China	Expatriate
CBLT	Tinker Sachs, et al., 1994	Teacher Education	Hong Kong	Local

Not stated	Tsui & Law, 2007	Teacher Education	Hong Kong	Local
EFL	Tsui & Ng, 2010	Secondary	Hong Kong	Local
EFL	Zhang & Liu, 2014	Secondary	Mainland China	Local
EFL	Zhang & Watkins, 2007	Tertiary	Mainland China	Expatriate/Local
EFL	Zhao & Coombs, 2012	Tertiary	Mainland China	Expatriate/Local

Local teachers. Research involving LETs is categorized into three areas: (1) policies and programs, (2) student-centered pedagogical practices and, (3) teacher education. Most of this research involved local English teachers and challenges to the implementation of the English language curriculum, e.g. the adoption of new teaching methods, lack of training professional development for local teachers; and, limited resources.

Policies and programs. Literature on the implementation of ELT in mainland China presented findings from a number of studies of English immersion programs. Hu (2005) examined ELT in the broader context of the development and implementation of national education policy and curriculum. Qiang and Kang (2011) and Cheng (2012) evaluated the adoption of North American immersion models to English immersion programs in China. Qiang and Kang focused on the process of implementing the immersion model in China. Cheng compared standardized test scores of students in an immersion program to the scores of students learning English in a traditional program.

Hu (2005) identified two major problems with secondary ELT in China: (1) an ongoing shortage of local EFL teachers and (2) a lack of adequate teacher education. Through an explanation of Deng's modernization initiative and the subsequent focus on improving English education, Hu provided context for these issues. In addition, Hu connected the problems of lack

of quantity and inadequate quality of English language teachers with the nation's ability to meet the government's goals.

Two studies examined primary schools' adoption of a North American immersion model through the China-Canada-United States English immersion (CCUEI) project. Cheng (2012) described the model used in this program as Chinese-English bilingual education programs or CBLT. Cheng's studies measured outcomes using standardized tests in English language, Chinese language, and math. The results showed immersion students did better than non-immersion students on the English language assessment. However, there were no significant difference in Chinese language and math. Qiang and Kang's (2011) analyses of the implementation process evaluated the CCUEI program using an educational transfer framework to examine the development of education policy adopted from another country. Qiang and Kang's findings indicated that the transfer of the program (from a foreign country to China) failed in the implementation stage. The failure of the program was attributed to a lack of teaching materials and insufficient teacher training. According to Qiang and Kang, the success of programs depended on school leadership, management, and the teachers' comprehensive understanding of the program. They suggested further research to concentrate on the most effective ways of teaching English. They also recommended developing an in-service teacher training program to improve teaching methods to meet the needs of Chinese learners. Cheng's findings also indicated a positive relationship among teacher quality and learning outcomes, supporting the recommendation for improving the local teachers' English proficiency and the need for additional in-service teacher training.

Some studies on CBLT in China examined the integration of subject and language teaching in primary and secondary schools. These studies involved local teachers and their

approaches to student-centered pedagogy in science and history courses. The findings indicated that teaching language through content-focused activities provided engaging learning activities, particularly when challenging academic content was used (Kong, 2015; Kong, 2014; Kong, 2009; Kong & Hoare, 2011). Kong's (2009, 2014) studies of collaboration between local content-trained and language-trained teachers found that connecting content and language learning objectives improved student writing and supported student learning in *late immersion* classes. In *late immersion* models the students are introduced to CBLT in late-primary or early-secondary school. This approach differs from other types of CBLT that focus on teaching language through content; in late immersion programs the content is mandatory, and the concepts are abstract and complex, requiring a high level of second language literacy (Kong, 2015; Lightbown, 2014).

Teacher education in China. Several studies emphasized the importance of teacher preparation and the need for training that adequately prepared local EFL teachers for implementing the English language curriculum (Hu, 2005; Qiang & Kang, 2011; Rao, 2013; Wu, 2001). Wu made clear the challenges for EFL teaching, at all levels of education, in China due to an increased demand for English language learning. Hu's analysis of English language education policies provided an extensive discussion of the challenges inherent in the confluence of the expansion of English language education, a growing student population, and a shortage of teachers. Hu observed that pre-service teacher education programs lacked qualified faculty and the curricula did not had not adequately prepare EFL teachers. Qiang and Kang observed that implementation of an English immersion program required selective hiring and professional development (English language proficiency and immersion pedagogies). Rao sheds light on the

challenges faced by local EFL teachers in “reconciling modern technologies with the traditional ways of teaching in China” (p. 38).

Song and Chen (2011) investigated the backgrounds, instructional contexts, professional development, and perceptions of 47 teachers from three primary English immersion programs. The English Language Immersion Teachers' Questionnaire was administered using closed and open-ended questions (the keywords were translated and defined in Chinese) to measure the following: personal information; instructional context; professional development and perceptions of English immersion. The teachers in Song and Chen’s study felt that ongoing professional development and teaching materials were needed to improve the program. Moreover, the teachers’ responses indicated that the greatest challenges were their lack of proficiency in English and the balance of English and content learning. Even though the small sample size may have limited the generalizability of the study, the results were worthy of consideration given that the findings were congruent with English language education policy analyses (Hu, Qiang & Kang)

In her study of EFL writing teacher education, Lee (2010) explained the need writing teacher courses in teacher education programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels in Hong Kong. Further, research on EFL writing teachers knowledge about how to teach and about how students learn is minimal. This study explored four EFL writing teachers’ perspectives on their learning in a teacher-education program and whether writing teacher education promotes teacher learning. The findings were not generalizable given the limited scope of the study, however they suggested that writing teacher education supported EFL teachers’ development. Lee concluded writing teacher education is relevant in the context of EFL teaching in Hong Kong and the findings of the study suggest factors to facilitate learning in writing teacher education programs.

Lee recommended supporting teacher learning through critical reflection and providing opportunities for action research during in-service teacher education. According to Lee, these approaches facilitated teacher learning by raising awareness of the context for their teaching and provided opportunities for them to discuss challenges and coping strategies in their learning communities.

Expatriate teachers in China. The economic and social reforms of the early 1980's relied on strengthening international relationships and increasing access to modern technologies as a means to developing China's economy. National leaders recognized the centrality of education to these efforts and, as a result, education policies were reformed to improve the quality of education for Chinese students. One of the more significant aspects of reform was the changes to the English language curriculum. The introduction of new pedagogical practices to English language education and the expansion of compulsory education led to an increase in demand for local and expatriate EFL teachers (Ebrey, 2010). This section addresses the hiring of expatriate English teachers: policies, hiring practices, and cross-cultural interactions between expatriate teachers, their students, and local teachers. This section leads to the final section on teachers' beliefs and practices which provides a framework for the study.

Policies and hiring practices. The only official guidelines, regulations or laws regulating salary, benefits, or teacher qualifications (written in English) appeared in the Guide for Foreign Experts Working in China, published in 1994, 1999, and 2002 by the State Bureau of Foreign Experts (Qiang & Wolff, 2003 as cited by Jeon & Lee, 2000). An online search (in English) for information about foreign teachers on China's Ministry of Education website did not produce documents or information on hiring policies nor statistics on the expatriate teachers working (or having worked) in China (en.moe.gov.cn/). However, a few studies that addressed

hiring expatriate teachers and the risks and challenges associated with employing expatriate teachers provided some insight on the current situation.

According to Jeon and Lee (2006), China recruited 100,000 Foreign Experts (FE) to teach EFL. Another study, published in 2018, also estimated that 100,000 English teachers were needed in China (Farrell, 2018). A study on hiring teachers for English training centers (as distinguished from primary and secondary schools) was conducted through a survey of 55 applicants for positions in the city Hefei in the Anhui province of China. The study examined the factors that were considered in the hiring of the foreign English teachers in Hefei. The researchers found that national policy outlining criteria for hiring foreign English teachers for training centers had not yet been implemented at the local level. In the absence of a set policy, training centers made their own decisions about criteria for teacher qualifications. Of the 55 applicants surveyed, 72.7% were hired by a local recruiter. The results showed that level of education, years of experience, and skin color (white) were the most significant variables in the hiring decisions of the recruiters. The authors recommended that applicants should be required to demonstrate their competencies during the application process. Some studies noted the absence of research (available in English) on the qualifications of foreign teachers (Iddrisu et al; Jeon & Lee; Rao & Yuan, 2016; Rao, 2006). In 2014, the *China Daily* (an English-language newspaper published by the publicity department of the Communist Party of China) reported the requirements for language teachers in Beijing would be changed from two years of teaching experience to five years, and that the change could be adopted nationwide. “Some foreigners teach English only because they can speak it and have no idea of teaching methods”, according to an anonymous source in the Beijing Human Resources and Social Security Bureau (Zheng & Zhang, 2014). In 2017, *People’s Daily Online* reported foreign teachers lack of qualification as a

problem. “They are not certified in an internationally recognized English teaching and testing program, but still got jobs due to the sheer demand for native-English speakers” (Du, Ed., 2017). Rao and Yuan provided a more in-depth analysis of the topic in their analysis of the benefits and problems associated with employing NETs. [The benefits and problems stated by Rao and Yuan were discussed under **Native speaker debate.**] The authors also suggested ways to resolve the problems with NETs that were discussed in their study. First, they suggested providing pre-service training to educate the foreign teachers on local teaching practices and provide background on the school, their students, and the parents’ expectations. Second, they suggested adopting a team-teaching approach (foreign and local teachers) drawing on the strengths of NETs (which are the relative weaknesses of the LETs) and the LETs (which are the relative weaknesses of the NETs).

Stanley’s (2013) ethnographic research on the experiences of expatriate teachers in a Shanghai university explores: (1) whether short-courses were sufficient training for the teachers; and, (2) their identity construction in the context of their teaching. Stanley seeks to understand the problems associated with hiring teachers with little or no qualifications using the teachers’ perspective as a lens. Stanley posited, “minimally trained Westerners” who are hired as foreign language experts may not only lack the capacity for ELT, they may also be teaching their students unintended lessons about foreign Others,

> the university context in which this research was conducted is far from being a site of intercultural bridge building. Instead, the employment of foreign teachers there appears to reinforce existing stereotypes, prejudices, and barriers to understanding among teachers and students alike (p. 3).

Furthermore, Stanley (2013) argued that the expatriate teachers elevated status positioned them as Others and contributed to their inability to integrate into the local school context. According to Stanley, cultural differences should be addressed in teacher training programs to improve the expatriate teachers' ability to teach their Chinese students. Additionally, expatriate teachers and local teachers working as co-teachers can develop intercultural competence of the teachers and students.

Cross-cultural teaching. Kramsch (1998) defined cross-cultural and intercultural interaction as communication between people from different ethnicities, genders, and social classes. Awareness of differences was beneficial in cross-cultural teaching and learning (Gay, 1993; Gay, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995), while at the same time beliefs about differences should not be predetermined. According to Ling, "Since no pedagogical leanings or approaches can inherently be fixed to a group it is dangerous to assume certain rules and norms that determine how individual expatriates teach or Chinese students learn" (2017, p. 5). Some studies examined differences in pedagogical approaches, and some studies focused more on the relationships between foreign teachers, their students, and local colleagues. Each of the studies reviewed indicated the importance of employing culturally appropriate pedagogies in spite of the recent trend toward the use of approaches that are characterized as Western.

According to a three-year study of four secondary schools in Guangzhou, school leaders encountered significant challenges implementing curriculum reform. Conflict between traditional influences and the new pedagogic style was the source of these challenges. The authors questioned importing policies from cultures with different economic, political, and cultural conditions (Yin et al, 2014). Likewise, Zhang and Watkins (2007) raised concerns over English language education with the increasing number of foreign teachers coming to China to teach English. The authors of

the studies in this section were in agreement that there was a need to examine assumptions and consider contextual characteristics of Western educational concepts before adopting them (Yin et al; Zhao & Coombs, 2001; Zhang & Watkins). Furthermore, Tsui & Ng (2010) stated that uncritical adoption of teaching practices without consideration of the students' previous learning experiences, making the local culture of learning irrelevant, had negative consequences that led to pedagogical failure.

Zhang and Watkins (2007) argued that impressions of teaching activities are context dependent. Furthermore, just as it was important to examine various contextual and cultural influences, multiple perspectives of foreign teachers, local teachers, and students should also have been taken into account when assessing approaches to teaching. Several authors concurred that there were differing expectations for teaching and multiple views on what constituted good English teaching in China (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Ling, 2014; Zhang & Watkins; Zhao & Coombs, 2001).

Several studies identified sources of tension between foreign teachers and their students or colleagues (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Jiang, 2001; Ouyang, 2000a; Rao & Yuan, 2013). These authors also reported that the NETs' lack of understanding of the Chinese education system often led to problems with their classroom teaching. For example, a study by Rao and Yuan found that NETs were unaware of the expectations for teacher behavior and that "students were astonished by some NETs casual behavior in the classroom" (2013, p. 15). Ouyang (2000a) identified the disparate views and expectations about what was considered to be good teaching as a factor contributing to the isolation of the foreign teachers. Jiang labeled these where expectations were not congruent with actual behavior as "culture bumps" or "confused

encounters" and explained that when this occurred the students were usually judged as behaving badly (2001, p. 382).

Zhang and Watkins emphasized the importance of student perspective and examined the views of Chinese students, Chinese teachers, and expatriate teachers about the essential qualities of a good tertiary EFL teacher. They found that each group had a different perspective. Chinese teachers thought that their "personal knowledge base and subject knowledge as EFL teachers" was most important (2007, p. 787). However, Chinese students held traditional beliefs and were concerned about "their teachers' appearance, manners, personalities, and attitudes towards students" (p. 787). Western teachers emphasized: adaptability; being a good team worker; and getting along well with colleagues. Furthermore, Western teachers expressed a need for more support from local teachers, complained that they had very little opportunity to communicate with local teachers, and expressed a desire for good relationships with Chinese colleagues. According to Ling (2017), a traditional view of what constituted good teaching remains strong. A number of studies on cross-cultural teaching and learning in China stated the importance of cultural awareness in the classroom (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Jiang, 2001; Luk & Lin, 2006; Rao & Yuan, 2016; Spalding, Wang, & Butcher, 2009; Tsui & Ng, 2010; Zhao & Coombs, 2001). Notwithstanding the recognition that culture was vital to the implementation of pedagogy, the research on expatriate teachers in China was minimal given the number of students in China learning English at all levels of education, public and private, as well as in independent language centers.

The studies in this section addressed multiple areas within ELT research; the findings and conclusions illustrated challenges for ELT in China. Analyses of English language education policy implemented from 1977 to 2003 provided background on the historical development of

ELT in China. Theses analyses contributed to this study by providing context for ELT in China that facilitated understanding of impetus for expanding English language education and explained the reasons behind current pedagogical challenges. Additionally, evaluative studies of the implementation of an immersion program developed in North America in a local context provided insights on the risks and challenges of importing approaches to language education. The context for this study is also immersion programs based on models developed in North America; however, the focus of this study is expatriate teachers while the teachers in these studies were local. Studies on late-immersion programs demonstrated the demands placed on teachers in developing plans for CBLT courses. The findings underscored the importance of the capacity for language teaching in addition to content knowledge. The teachers in the current study also face challenges of CBLT. However, the local teachers', presumably, had some level of shared cultural understanding with their students. While some studies illuminated the importance of teacher qualifications others addressed the need for the development of existing pre-service and in-service education programs. In the majority of these studies, findings and conclusions were directed at local teachers' needs for improved English language proficiency and extending pedagogical practices. The focus on the local teachers is understandable given that number of expatriate teachers is relatively small. At the same time, expatriate teachers are given elevated status and far less attention was given to this area of ELT research. Specific information on hiring policies and practices was limited, however articles published by Chinese media indicated concerns about expatriate teachers' qualifications for teaching English. The absence of literature on the topic and concerns expressed in the media support the need for further understanding of expatriate teachers' practices. Studies of cross-cultural teaching in China examined tensions related to cultural differences between expatriate teachers, their students, and their Chinese

colleagues. These studies primarily focused on tensions created as result of the expatriate teachers that lack understanding of the context for their teaching and their students. These tensions exemplify concerns raised by the current study which is aimed at the tensions experienced by expatriate teachers to develop understanding their approaches to teaching. The next section reviews research on language teachers' beliefs and practices.

Language Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

This section analyzes studies that examined the role of sociocultural contexts in language teachers' cognition and practices. First, an overview of the literature on teacher cognition is presented. Second, literature on teacher cognition in China is discussed. Finally, the conclusion of the review discusses themes in the literature and summarizes the findings.

Language teacher research. Several researchers identified relationships between teachers' learning experiences, the context of their teaching, their cognition, and their teaching practices (Borg, 2003; Cross, 2010; Crookes, 2015). Borg refers to the "unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching – what teachers know, believe, and think" as teacher cognition (2003, p. 81). (This study considers teachers' *beliefs* similarly and did not use the term *teacher cognition* because cognition is also considered to be a biological process that occurs within the brain.) These studies helped develop insight on the influences of contextual factors on teachers' beliefs, values, and approaches to teaching.

Borg's analysis of 64 studies of ESL/EFL teachers conducted from 1976 to 2002 addressed the relationship between teacher cognition and teacher learning and/or classroom practice. Borg (2003) found that there is evidence that teachers' experiences as learners have a lasting influence throughout their careers. Evidence also suggests that professional learning has the potential for shaping trainees' beliefs, however programs that ignore the trainees' prior beliefs may be less influential. Finally, research showed that "teacher cognitions and practices

are mutually informing"; and, context plays "an important role in determining the extent to which teachers are able to implement instruction congruent with their cognitions" (2003. p. 81). Borg recommended further research on: (1) how prior learning and professional experiences influence teachers' practices and cognitions; (2) the power of contextual influences on teachers' instructional decisions; and, (3) how teachers' cognitions and practices change as their teaching experience increases (2003, p. 98).

Crookes' (2015) discussion of early research on teacher cognition indicated a focus on the thought processes of expert teachers. According to his analysis of studies of language teacher cognition, teacher problem solving and moment-to-moment decision making in the classroom were the main topics for research in the field. In his analysis, Crookes suggested expanding beyond a focus on thought processes and moving toward employing a critical perspective. Crookes argued that, because language teaching is a cultural, social, and political act (Friere & Macedo, 1987), it is also important to understand what informed teachers' practices.

Cross (2010) connected language teacher cognition and teaching practices with the sociocultural contexts of their teaching. Cross identified teachers as "thinking, historical, social, and culturally constituted subjects" (2010, p. 438) and analyzed data on teachers' broader life experiences to understand their practices. For example, a case study of a foreign language teacher in Australia found the teachers' experiences as a language learner and the local school context shaped his cognition on his role as a teacher. Cross used his conclusions about language teachers' perceptions of their roles to illustrate the value of a sociocultural framework to research language teacher cognition.

The relationships between teacher cognition, their practices, and the context of their teaching were a central theme in the literature on language teacher cognition. The complexity of

these relationships in the current study required specificity on the areas of focus. There are multiple layers of the *context* for the teaching studied herein that are classified in two categories. The *sociohistorical context* includes the historical development of ELT in China with the political, economic, cultural, and social influences on the global and national levels. The *local school context*, a product of the broader sociohistorical context, includes the school, the curriculum and policies, communication about pedagogical practices, and the formal and informal networks of parents, faculty, staff, and students.

The following passages are provided to illustrate the relationship between a teacher's beliefs and approaches to teaching:

> Indian Removal primary source activity: I distributed Document A and facilitated a whole group discussion of what we already know about Andrew Jackson. When I moved on and asked the students to predict what he would say in his speech, they did not seem to understand the question. I called on Bobby and he attempted to answer but made a facial expression that told me he was confused. I reiterated that Andrew Jackson was a man that ignored the Supreme Court and that this was very serious - I equated it with me ignoring Principal Huang if he came in and told me to do something. Then I asked Bobby what people who are breaking the rules do - he said they will try to explain why it is ok. When I told them to read the speech and answer the questions, I suggested that they read the questions first. I considered sharing my highlighted version of the document because I was concerned that they might not be able to complete the activity independently. I circulated to observe students working and read their responses. I shared my copy of the document with highlights of key sentences and phrases with Anthony because he did not

have answers to any of the questions written on his paper. (L. McLeod-Chambless, journal entry, March 16, 2015).

Conference with teacher: Cindy explained that she decided not to teach the students the critical lens theories because they told her that they already know it. Rather than teach it to them, she has the students teaching lessons on the theories to the class because she wanted them to see that they didn't know (the theories). I asked her to tell me more about that. She said that when the students told her that they already learned it, she talked with each student to see what they knew. Then she assigned each of them a theory and told them to give a presentation about it. She added that when they gave their presentations they saw what they needed to learn. (L. McLeod-Chambless, journal entry, December 14, 2015)

Research on language teacher cognition in China. Studies in the area of teacher education in China attempted to determine EFL teachers' perspectives on their roles and their capacity to meet the objectives of the curriculum. A few studies considered the broader context for ELT e.g. globalization (Tsui & Law, 2007) and curriculum reform (Zhang & Liu, 2014). Tsui and Law studied a model for pre-service teacher education using a cross-community lesson study to help student teachers develop their teaching practices. The study revealed how, in a cross-community context, novice and experienced teachers' differing views led to their negotiating new meaning for the process of a lesson study. Zhang and Liu's study on teachers' beliefs about curriculum reform examined the influences of traditional Chinese cultural and educational values on teachers' implementation of the current curriculum. Their findings indicated the teachers' cognition held both constructivist and traditional views without internal conflict. The researchers concluded this blending of "western-based theories" with traditional Chinese values reflected the

teachers' flexibility and emphasized the "contextual nature of teachers' beliefs" (p. 200). Some studies aimed to understand EFL teacher cognition through reflective practices. Kang and Cheng (2014) explored novice teacher learning through classroom experiences. This study of how the reflective practices of the teacher influenced the teachers' thinking and classroom practices found changes that teachers made to their classroom practices could be attributed to their classroom experiences and their reflections on those experiences. Lee's (2010) study of EFL writing teachers tracked the development of their identities during a professional development course. At the beginning of the course, the teachers saw themselves as teachers of vocabulary and grammar. As they gained new knowledge and skills, they began to think of themselves as facilitators of students' writing development. Although some of the studies considered the influences of the broader context of language teaching and others were more focused on the classroom practices, these studies contributed to a better understanding of influences on the teachers' approaches to teaching.

Teacher cognition research provided insights on language teaching through inquiry on the relationships between teachers' thinking about their teaching, their classroom practices, and the contexts of their teaching. While some language teacher cognition studies in China have explored various aspects of local teachers' cognition in classrooms and teacher education programs, one study was conducted with expatriate student teachers working in a summer camp with Chinese students (Spalding, et al., 2009). While the study was limited in scope and duration, it addressed aspects of cross-cultural teaching that had the potential to inform an area that had received relatively little attention. The authors and the student teachers explored and reflected on how the context, particularly the cultural mismatch between teachers and students, influenced perceptions of teaching and learning and of their students. Although the researchers assumed that

the teacher with more years of classroom experience and graduate-level coursework would be better prepared for teaching in China than the pre-service teacher they found that the reasons for their participation in the program may have been more influential on their approach to teaching. The preservice teacher anticipated her experiences in the summer program would be an opportunity to learn more about herself as a teacher. Her reflections revealed that she valued her Chinese co-teacher as a cultural resource and she "learned to learn from her students" (p. 6). Her approach to teaching was culturally responsive; the materials were relevant, she maintained high expectations for the students, and, she used cooperative learning and mixed-ability grouping.

The research on language teacher cognition established the influence of context on teacher cognition and their practices, and this study examines the influence of the sociocultural context of CBLT programs in China on expatriate teachers' cognition and practices. Studies in China examined EFL teachers' cognition in teacher education programs. The relationship between the teachers' cognition and their practices was evident in three different contexts. One study considers cultural differences between expatriate teachers and their Chinese students, and one study considers differences between two communities of teachers. Each of the studies indicated that teachers' experiences shaped their cognition and their practice, moreover their reflection provided insights to this process.

Conclusion

My experiences teaching English in China impressed upon me the powerful influence of sociocultural contexts on my work; along with that realization came the awareness of the interconnections between my understanding of these contexts, my adaptation to the circumstances, and my ability to meet the needs of my students. These conditions determined the direction of my research. This literature review describes the multifaceted influences of sociocultural context, from the global level to the local level, on ELT in China. This information

is key to the understanding of the complexities of ELT, particularly for expatriate teachers. According to the literature, expatriate teachers faced many challenges related to cultural differences (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Luk & Lin, 2006; Ouyang, 2000). Understanding these challenges through data collected on local students and local teachers provides partial information on the subject; the expatriate teachers' perspective on these challenges will contribute to a more complete understanding of issues related to expatriate teachers in China. This study of expatriate teachers seeks to understand how they navigated the tensions experienced in the context of their EFL teaching. Some key themes weave through the literature. Contextual influences, particularly economic development, and tensions are the broad overarching themes discussed in conclusion.

Contextual influences. The contextual influences are framed on global, national, and local (school) levels. Language is one aspect of Western colonialism that has a continued influence in the context of globalization. Phillipson argued that linguistic imperialism was not only an economic issue, "rather is it a deliberate expansion of English in education systems" (2016, p. 88). ELT became important in China around the time of the Opium Wars. The desire to improve the capacity for developing and understanding technology and science available in Western countries along with aspirations in international diplomacy facilitated the use of English as a medium of instruction in China. Years later, the English language gained status as a tool for nation building and economic development when Deng Xiaoping introduced his economic reforms. Deng emphasized English language learning as a necessity in the context of opening up; the capacity for using English could elevate China's participation in world trade and, be advantageous to students in the development of intercultural understanding. Educational reforms were implemented at this time to provide opportunities for students to learn English. The reforms

expanded the English language curriculum by expanding the scope and introducing new pedagogical approaches. These reforms also enabled the involvement of non-governmental entities to develop teaching materials, allowed Chinese students to study abroad, and facilitated the recruitment of teachers from countries where the primary language was English. Additional reforms, introduced in 2003, aimed to provide the English language skills of Chinese students by prioritizing the English language curriculum. According to Wang and Chen (2012), this curriculum characterized English language education as having dual roles; promoting student development and contributing to the development of the country. This revision to the curriculum was designed to develop students' English listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills to prepare them for further study or career development. Changes in the national curriculum have presented exceptional challenges for local English teachers, many of whom have been influenced by the traditional teacher-centered approach to instruction. In the context of school environments that are shaped by local culture, teachers are faced with the challenge of implementing new pedagogies i.e. task-based language teaching, cooperative learning, and inquiry-based learning in large classes (fifty students) without the benefit of professional development or training (Rao, 2013; Yin, et al., 2014).

Several studies highlighted the importance of local context in ELT (Cummins, 1988; Hoare, 2010; Hu, 2005; Tsui & Ng, 2010). Cortazzi and Jin's (1996) culture of learning offered a comprehensive explanation of the sociocultural influences on the local culture of learning. They also described how expatriate teachers formed misconceptions about Chinese teaching and learning without the benefit of understanding the sociocultural context of a local school. Some studies considered the local context as an important factor in teaching and learning and also examined how teachers and students with different cultural backgrounds thought differently

about classroom practices. Pedagogical differences that were connected to cultural differences have been examined in these studies. The results of these studies indicated that expatriate teachers lacked understanding of the local context as well as of their students (Cortazzi & Jin; Luk & Lin, 2006; Ouyang, 2000). The expatriate teachers' lack of understanding often led to misunderstandings where students were judged as misbehaving (Jiang, 2001; McLeod-Chambless, 2018); ineffective teaching (Ouyang); stereotyping (Tsui & Ng); and lack of student interest (Ling, 2009). Furthermore, expatriate teachers may not have recognized their students and local teachers as valuable cultural resources (Luk & Lin).

Tensions. The literature indicated that the context of ELT has inherent tensions. To begin, the centrality of English language to increased economic opportunities creates a conflict within Chinese culture whereas the ability to adapt to Western ways of communicating becomes necessary for development and personal advancement. This phenomenon can be traced to the decline of China after the Opium Wars. When foreign countries encroached on China's resources, China's "Self-Strengthening Movement" was employed to revitalize the country by learning English to adopt Western technologies in order to "Learn the superior technology of the barbarian in order to control him" (Snyder & West, *eds.*, 1997, p. 166). The teaching of English to gain access to trade and Western technologies was a departure from traditional Chinese culture that continued through the opening of China in 1978. Reforms that required the implementation of pedagogies that countered traditional Chinese culture have been another source of tension. Ouyang (2000) observes, "The traditional methods of education are at odds with and to a large extent contradict the general social reform ethos set in motion by Deng Xiaopeng's Four Modernizations and Open Door Policy since 1978" (p. 399). Some of the educational reforms designed to accelerate the nation's development, such as: the introduction of

CLT; employment of expatriate English teachers as foreign experts; and the expansion of the ELT, presented challenges for educators charged with implementing the policy changes in education today. More specifically, the findings of studies in this review found tensions in educational contexts related to the privileging of native speakers as expert teachers of English. To this point, foreign academics and native speakers are often hired because of their linguistic ability and their capacity to enrich the quality of teaching and learning programs (Bodycott & Walker, 2000). However, the literature indicated problems that provide reason to question this practice including, but not limited to, lack of familiarity with the Chinese educational system; little understanding of Chinese cultural values; and insufficient knowledge of Chinese students' interests.

The challenges of ELT and implementation of the English language curriculum were made clear in the literature. However, literature on teacher cognition related to these challenges was limited, particularly for foreign teachers. Given that the findings of studies on expatriate English teachers bring to light problems and challenges that have not yet been addressed, there is a clear gap in research that examines how foreign English teachers approach their teaching in local contexts.

3 METHODOLOGY

Narratives can be used to transform our experiences into stories. The stories we create and how we share them with others represent who we are. Sharing stories is a social act. We share our experiences in ways that engage our audiences because we believe there is a reason for them to listen. By inviting our audience to participate in the telling of the story we integrate new perspectives, and we create new meaning as a result of their participation. Not long after my son and I moved back to the U.S. my family began to use this question, "Have I mentioned that I

have been teaching in China for three years?" as code that represented the narrative of our experiences living and working in China. I was enthusiastic in engaging my peers, friends, and family members in discussions of my experiences. The stories were interesting descriptions of my life in China but they were far more than entertainment for my friends and family. I relived my experiences as I told the stories; sharing and discussing those experiences with others often revealed new understandings of how learning to live and teach in China contributed to who I am today. My son and my husband had their stories, too. Each family member lived and portrayed his story in ways that represented himself. Each story was distinct yet entwined in our family narrative nested within broader contexts. As a result, I chose to make my story part of my research to explore the interrelationship of multiple layers of stories. Just as my family's narrative represents a collection of interconnected stories, my story will be connected with the stories of other expatriate EFL teachers in China as a way of learning more about our experiences in the broader context.

As a teacher, I learned to recognize the value of lived experience as an important source of knowledge. As I wrote and reflected on my experiences in China, I learned about EFL teaching and I learned about myself. In addition, I gained knowledge and understanding about intercultural relationships. In my position as a white, middle-aged, teacher, and researcher on the campus of a local high school I was a cultural outsider. As an expatriate born and educated in an English-speaking environment, I was also a linguistic outsider. Being the parent of an adolescent son set me aside from my expatriate colleagues, however it provided opportunities for connecting with students on the campus and insights into the world of my students.

Narrative inquiry begins with the researcher's autobiographical inquiry (Clandinin, 2013). Considering my early life experiences, parenting and teaching in a large urban school district, I recognized how these experiences and the contexts for my teaching shaped me and influenced my approach to teaching. Reflecting on my experiences as a novice EFL teacher in China, I realized how my perspective shifted. Adapting to living and teaching on the campus of a public high school in a tier one city in south China reshaped my identity. Viewing my students and the culture of learning through the lens of new knowledge and understanding facilitated changes in my approach to teaching. This way of *thinking relationally* about our stories "as a set of complex relationships among knowledge, contexts, and identities" is part of narrative thinking (Clandinin, p. 21). While telling the participants' stories, the researcher thinks narratively about their own experiences. Thinking narratively about these experiences provides a new perspective, and the researcher retells the stories with an understanding that was shaped by what they have learned (Clandinin). Creating a story that develops understanding of how the teachers' life experiences have shaped them professionally and connects their thinking about adapting to their new cultural environments will reveal the relationships between sociocultural contexts and their approaches to teaching (Cross, 2010)

Narrative inquiry attends to how we are shaped by experiences, constructing narratives is a means for understanding our lived experiences and the experiences of others. Although our personal histories are unique, we are connected by our shared experience as expatriate EFL teachers in China. Our stories about EFL teaching in China include the life experiences that shaped us, before and during our time in China, within the broader sociocultural influences on our environments (Clandinin, 2013). Therefore, this study uses narrative inquiry to explore and

understand the beliefs and approaches to teaching of expatriate EFL teachers as they learned to navigate their experiences in China.

Narrative inquiry relies on collaboration and experiential learning. In this study, I shared excerpts from my journals to develop a connection with the participants. The journal excerpts also served as triggers for conversations about teaching EFL in China. Sharing our lived experiences and co-constructing the narrative accounts shaped our understanding of those experiences from a new perspective (Clandinin, 2013). Narrative inquiry is also "an exploration of cultural, familial, linguistic, and institutional narratives within which individuals' experiences were and are constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted" (Clandinin, p. 17). The experiences of expatriate EFL teachers in China have the potential for reshaping their existing beliefs and values. Furthermore, teaching in a new culture of learning shaped by the culture, politics, and history of China may contribute to their approaches to teaching. As outsiders, expatriate teachers are learning to navigate new spaces; as a result, teachers experience many dilemmas and tensions. This narrative inquiry will provide insights into how teachers navigate these experiences through telling the teachers' stories, attending to their interconnectedness, and considering their responses to the tensions of EFL teaching in China (Clandinin). Specifically, this inquiry will address the following questions:

- What are the beliefs, values, and approaches to teaching of expatriate secondary teachers of English as a foreign language in China?
- How did the expatriate teachers navigate the tensions that they experienced as English as a foreign language teachers in China?

Design of the Study

The design of the study employs narrative inquiry to provide insights on the interrelationship of context, the teachers' life experiences, and their experiences as EFL teachers in China. Sociocultural theory was a lens for the analysis of: descriptions of the sociocultural context for ELT in China; information about the teachers' backgrounds; and, the teachers' lived experiences in China. The inquiry process included: constructing a sociohistorical account of ELT in China; selecting excerpts from my journals as triggers for conversations with the participants; conversations with the participants about their life experiences and responses to the journal excerpts; creating texts that reflected the lived experiences of the participants; analysis of my conversations with the teachers; reflections on my learning through the research process. A schedule of the study follows:

Table 2 Schedule for the study

Dates	Action(s)	Document
03.06-26	1. Posted participant recruitment flyer on WeChat moments. 2. Sent follow-up messages to respondents. Attached consent form. 3. Scheduled first meetings.	1. Appendix A 2. Appendix B
03.25-06.02	1. Collected signed consent forms. 2. Conversation #1 with participants. 3. Provided participants with trigger document. 4. Scheduled conversation #2. 5. Transcribed conversation #1.	1. Appendix B 2. Appendix C 3. Appendix D
04.01-06.02	1. Conversation #2 with participants. 2. Verified transcripts of audio recordings. 3. Provided participants with trigger document. 4. Scheduled conversation #3. 5. Transcribed conversation #2.	1. Appendix E 2. n/a 3. Appendix F
05.04-07.02	1. Conversation #3 with participants.	1. Appendix E

	2. Verified transcripts of audio recordings. 3. Scheduled final meetings. 4. Transcribed conversation #3.	
06.04 – 07.01	1. Verified transcripts of audio recordings. 2. Conversation #4 with participants. 3. Coded conversation #1 4. Began writing narratives.	1. Appendix G
07.02-10	1. Revised definitions for codes to make them more descriptive. 2. Coded conversation #2 3. Transcribed and verified audio recordings.	
07.11-07.17	1. Coded conversation #3 2. Sent drafts of narratives to participants 3. Began analysis of responses to trigger documents.	
07.18-24	1. Completed analysis of responses to trigger documents. 2. Revised participant narratives.	
07.25-31	1. Compared my coding with the coding of two colleagues. 2. Completed participant narratives.	
08.08-07	1. Completed cross-analysis of trigger #1 responses. 2. Analyzed coding comparisons.	
08.08-14	1. Completed cross-analysis of trigger #2 responses. 2. Sorted tensions/codes by participant. 3. Recorded preliminary findings.	
08.15-21	1. Created a concept map for beliefs associated with tensions. 2. Began to write Chapter 4.	
08.22-31	1. Completed Chapter 4. 2. Completed reflection on learning. 3. Completed Chapter 5.	

Sociocultural theoretical domains. From the sociocultural theoretical perspective, individual activity is understood through its relationship to the broader social context. Research of language teachers' beliefs, values, and approaches to teaching indicated the influence of contextual factors and the importance of understanding the complexities and contexts for teacher learning. (Borg, 2003; Cross, 2010; and Crookes, 2015). According to Crookes, in order to understand the complexities of teaching in this context, it is necessary to examine teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and values to understand why expatriate teachers are employing a particular approaches. Cross suggested a conceptual framework that "recognizes the social, practical, and contextual dimension" of teachers' thinking about their teaching (p. 434). Cross asserts that developing this understanding of teachers and their practices requires analysis that also seeks to understand the genesis of the relationship between: the context for their teaching; their beliefs and values; and, their approaches to teaching. Cross employed Vygotsky's genetic theory as an analytical framework for studying the impact of context on language teachers' practices. Using Cross' approach this study will consider three sociocultural theoretical domains of genetic analysis (Cole & Engestrom, 1993):

- Cultural-historic. Socially organized activities change along with the historical development of society. Historical development is reflected in human cognitive development (Scribner, 1989). This domain considers the broader social context of teachers' beliefs, values, and approaches to teaching.
- Ontogenetic. Focuses on an individual's development throughout their lifetime.
- Microgenetic. Focuses on an individual's development through interaction within a social context.

This framework is centered on the sociocultural origins of teachers' beliefs, values, and approaches to teaching; accordingly, the analysis will consider: (1) the broader cultural-historical context of ELT in China; (2) the participants' life experiences; and, (3) the participants' beliefs, values, and approaches to teaching.

Narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience, and it is also a research methodology (Clandinin & Caine, 2012). Clandinin's (2013) groundbreaking work with narrative inquiry built on Dewey's experiential learning theory to think about teacher knowledge as "knowledge that was personal, practical, shaped by, and expressed in practice" (p. 9). Narrative inquiry tells a story of lived experiences in the contexts that shape them as a way of developing an understanding of a phenomenon (Clandinin). The relationship of the researcher and the participants is central to the inquiry process. Their connections are facilitated by shared experiences. Living, telling, reliving, and retelling of stories becomes a learning experience for the participants and researcher that provides insights to understanding teacher knowledge and change in teacher knowledge (Clandinin). Field texts and research texts represent the knowledge that is co-constructed by the researcher and participant through the inquiry process.

Conducting narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is a form of qualitative research aimed at understanding a phenomenon through the collecting of information and the telling of stories. The inquiry process is a learning experience as the researcher interprets the stories as a way of understanding the phenomenon being studied. Important considerations for conducting narrative inquiry are: (1) thinking narratively; (2) justifications and purposes; and, (3) the researcher/participant relationship (Clandinin, 2013). Narrative inquiry is a fluid process, rather

than a set of steps or procedures, that entails designing the study, field experiences, composing field texts, and composing research texts (Clandinin).

Designing the study. To begin, the researcher identifies an area of interest or a concern to explore as the basis for the research puzzle. From the inception of the research design the researcher considers her position in the process as the interpreter of her own lived experiences as well as the experiences of the participants in the study. In designing the study, the researcher thinks through the justifications and purpose for the study. Clandinin describes three ways in which the study should be justified:

> …personally, in terms of why this narrative inquiry matters to us as individuals; practically, in terms of what differences this research might make to practice; and socially or theoretically, in terms of what differences this research might make to theoretical understandings or to making situations more just (2013, p. 35).

Finally, the researcher adopts a narrative view of the phenomenon being studied from the outset. Taking a narrative view is to *think with stories* about the topic, the lived experiences of the inquirer, and the participants in a three-dimensional space that attends to three commonplaces: *temporality, sociality,* and *place. Temporality* refers to the timeframe that situates the events, objects, and people within the past, present, and future. *Sociality* refers to contexts of the social contexts of the phenomenon and the social contexts that shape and are shaped by the researcher and participants. *Place* is the space within physical boundaries and how it shapes the researcher and participants.

Field experiences. Through their autobiographical narrative inquiry the researcher begins to conceive the study and imagine being in relationship with the participants. Because *the field*

is a relational space negotiated between researcher and participants, there are many possibilities for defining that space. Being in the field, the space where the study takes place, can take a variety of forms. The researcher may live alongside the participants, become a participant observer in a school or classroom, or spend time with participants in their communities and homes. The inquirer is intentional in developing relationships with the participants and becomes part of the story. In this *relational methodology*, the researcher and participants work collaboratively to discuss their experiences and co-construct texts by making connections between their identities, their knowledge, and the contexts of the phenomenon (Clandinin, 2013).

Composing field texts. The researcher/participant relationship in the field is essential to the co-construction of the texts. The *field texts*, i.e. transcripts of interviews or conversations, journals, field notes, letters, and photographs, represent the lived experiences of the researcher and participants.

Composing research texts. Moving from field texts to research texts is the analysis phase of the study. Throughout this process, the texts are composed with attention to situating the participants story within the three-dimensional space of temporality, sociality, and place. First, the field texts are read, with the research puzzle in mind, attending to tensions and identifying connections to the research puzzle. Clandinin (2013) describes experiencing tensions in her work at a school as, "…a deep sense of conflict or bumping up between and among stories that I was living and those I was learning to live in and outside of school" (p. 71).

The appropriate method of analysis is determined by the design of the study, the inquiry genre, and the data collected. When designing the study, the researcher does not know what will emerge from the data. Therefore, during the transition from field texts to research texts, Kim (2016, p. 187) suggests "flirting" with the data to determine which method of analysis to use.

> "Flirting with the data is an attempt to analyze and interpret the research data to exploit the idea of surprise and curiosity… it creates a space for us where we can discover ways to reach and negotiate our research aims with data; it encourages us to make time to embrace less familiar possibilities; and it is a way of cultivating ideas for finding yet another story" (Kim, p. 188).

Narrative inquiry is a methodology guided by the researcher/participant relationship. This relationship is the genesis of the narrative, and together they construct the stories of their lived experiences. The researcher internalizes the information about the experiences then composes research texts that situate the experiences in the contexts of temporal space, social conditions, and place as they interpret the stories. The representations of the interpretations make meaning of the lived experiences as a way to develop understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Participants. The participants were expatriate teachers of Chinese national students in a tier one city in mainland China. (Tier one cities are classified by: the GDP is over $300 billion; directly controlled by the central government; population exceeds 15 million. http://chinacitytiersmultimedia.scmp.com). The criteria for participating in the study were: (1) a bachelor's degree; (2) two years of teaching experience after college; (3) a teaching certification or TEFL certificate;(4) currently teaching academic content and English; and (5) teaching students in grades 7-12. Criteria one, two, and three are the Chinese government's work-related requirements for a work permit to teach and live in China. Criterion four distinguishes teachers of academic content and English because CBLT is the focus of the study. At the secondary level, CBLT is more complex and deals with more abstract concepts, and, requires in-depth content knowledge as well as language teacher training to be effective (Kong & Hoare, 2011; Kong,

2009; Lightbown, 2014). Demographic data were collected from the applicants and three teachers were selected to participate in the study.

Data Collection

Researcher's journals. As I embarked on my move to China, I began to journal about my thoughts and experiences. For me, personal journals have been a safe place to share my internal processing, descriptions of events, secrets to be kept, personal struggles, and strong emotions. Journaling gives me space to say what's was on my mind without consequences or fear of judgement. Writing is cathartic and therapeutic, and keeping a journal has been a learning tool for me. In graduate school I learned to appreciate the value of reflective writing to my approach to teaching. By looking back on the teaching and learning in my classroom, I learned through those experiences (Schulman, 1987). Reflective writing helped me to become a better teacher. As I revisited my missteps, I considered how my perceptions of my students influenced my approach to teaching, I recognized how my practices did or did not facilitate learning in my classroom (Valli, 1997). Through critical reflection on my professional and inner lives I shaped and re-shaped my perspectives (Kitchenham, 2008).

I began to keep journals of my experiences when I decided to accept the position in June 2014 and my journaling continued through October 2017. As I prepared to move to China in August 2014, I made notes about: the transition; coursework on intercultural communication; instructional planning; professional learning experiences; logistics of moving; and reflections on the experiences. When I arrived in China, I was fascinated by my new environment and the journal entries mainly described observations on my surroundings and interactions with people. When I began to teach, and the realities of living abroad hit me, the journals became more of a

place to write about things that I did not understand and the challenges I was facing. I recorded information about my teaching and the students' learning but the purpose for the journals was more personal than academic. They were a repository for my reactions to my lived experiences; I wrote about cultural differences, frustrations, and interactions with the students and my colleagues. While I was aware that the information could become a resource for my academic writing, I did not write for that audience – journaling was my way of processing my emotions, coping with challenges, and learning how to become a teacher in a new learning environment. The entries were unstructured, I did not write every day, and, my reflections were not always focused on one topic. My relationships with my students and colleagues took priority over my position as a researcher. There were times when I omitted details because topics were too sensitive to put in writing, such as when the students shared deeply personal information and my local friends made political comments that I felt should not be recorded. I also tried to be sensitive to the boundaries set by the school and my employer so some information remains private. Often, details were not immediately recorded so my memory was not complete. Upon returning to the U.S. in July 2017 I began to read my journals from the beginning, I noted I broad themes in the margins: intercultural communication; tensions, and topics that I recognized (at times retrospectively) as powerful or relevant to my experiences. The entries were a touchstone for my personal growth and a resource for my academic writing. However, I questioned their academic value because the entries were inconsistent and often deeply personal. I was reluctant to use the journals for my dissertation research; ultimately, I found value in the stream-of-consciousness aspect of my writing,

Journal entries as triggers. Selecting the entries as triggers for my conversations with the expatriate teachers was an iterative process. Relevance to the purpose of the study was the

primary filter. Whether the content would serve as a connection in my relationship with the participants was also a consideration. There were several challenges in selecting the triggers. Some entries were detailed, lengthy descriptions and others were vague and brief. The ideal length for excerpts was considered and reconsidered, and I concluded that longer was not necessarily better. A single sentence or thought could trigger a response. The events were not neatly organized in chronological order; descriptions were often incomplete, and some pages were missing. Deciding what to share was an emotionally charged process; some of my reflections revealed deeply personal struggles, reliving them as I decided how to retell my story was difficult at times and joyful at others. In deciding what to explore in my conversations with the teachers, I tried to attend to topics that we could be comfortable discussing and to identify themes that I found relevant to learning to teach in China. To be thorough, I created a spreadsheet that chronologically organized the digital files for the journals. Then, I read the journals again and recorded descriptions of the content on the spreadsheet. After I finished the spreadsheet I modified the initial list of categories to include:

1. Tensions;
2. Challenges;
3. Local context;
4. Cultural experiences;
5. Preparing for China;
6. Relationships with local people;
7. Acculturation;
8. Identity;
9. Homesickness.

Most entries were identified as tensions. Many fit multiple categories: for example, a relationship with a local person can also be considered a cultural experience. Passages noted as "tensions" were coded red, and I reviewed those descriptions and noted recurring topics or events. A number of my entries were about being homesick or feeling depressed, and I

eliminated those entries because I felt that were too sensitive or personal to share. Next, I reviewed the content of the remaining entries and made a list of themes. Table 2 explains and gives examples for each theme.

Table 3 Journal entry themes, explanations, and examples

Theme	Explanation	Examples
Living in the teacher dormitory.	The expat teachers lived on campus in the teacher dormitory. The expat teachers paid only for utilities but the local teachers paid rent and utilities. The building was newly constructed. The units were clean and in good condition, however housing in China can be quite different from a typical apartment unit in the United States. Some of the single expat teachers were very unhappy because their one-room units were equivalent to the students' dorm rooms. We all had problems adapting to our new living arrangement for a variety of reasons but eventually learned to adapt to the differences.	• Journal topic: n/a • "The shopping is a real challenge without a kitchen to cook in. I bought some rice noodles in anticipation of having a kitchen soon. I thought I would enjoy not having to cook but it doesn't feel like a home." • "We received a message that the water in the dormitory will be turned off in 48 hours. No showers or toilets for three days…scrambling to find a place to stay."
Dissonance	The expat teachers did not have a handbook or document to explain the school rules and policies, this information was communicated verbally or with WeChat messages. The rules and policies were not followed and/or enforced consistently; and exceptions were made in some circumstances. The challenges related to communication and confusion around rules/policies were ongoing. As outsiders, the expat teachers were often frustrated because we were accustomed to a	• Journal topic #4 • There was a rule against having food in the classroom. "Alice (local teacher) brought a large bottle of Coke into the classroom, set it on the teacher desk, and told the students they could have some anytime they want it." • Teachers were assigned to supervise evening study; often the teacher was not in the classroom so students slept or played music videoes on the smartboard.

Theme	Explanation	Examples
	different level of institutional and interpersonal communication in the schools where we worked in the U.S.	• "[Two students] came to me yesterday to ask if, on my recommendation, they had permission to miss school to study for the TOEFL"
Interactions with expat teachers.	The expat teachers shared an office so we saw each other on a daily basis. We also interacted outside of school; at times we made trips to the supermarket, went to dinner, or traveled together. Most of our daily communication was within our group and with our students. The expat teachers and the students in the international program were, in effect, segregated from the general school population. Learning to work as a team in the context of the program was a learning experience for me as I dealt with conflicts and developed understanding of my colleagues perspectives.	• Journal topics #1, #3, #7 • "[expat teacher] is angry because she was told that she cannot take a week off for Christmas…I told her to maintain her professionalism but she says it's different here because they don't play by the same rules…" • "[expat teacher] said, [male student] is 'talking like a little girl' and I asked him what he meant by that – he said that [the student] sounds 'weak and afraid'"
Communication with Chinese colleagues	Our classrooms and office were located on the 5th floor apart from the general student population and their teachers. The language barrier prevented us from communicating with many of the local teachers and administrators. The international program liaison and the head teachers for the international classes were bilingual and our points of contact with the school; we also had a bilingual program assistant to support us. We were acquainted with a few of the local teachers but our interactions were limited.	• Journal topics #5, #1, #7, #8 • "WeChat first; use email for bigger issues." •"More problems during evening study with students using technology. Alice (local teacher) says she is confused about the rules, Janice (expat teacher) says that she heard this from Alice before." •"[expat teacher] came into my classroom yesterday, the way he was storming across the platform felt like he was trying to mark his territory….he told me that I didn't need to worry about teaching the parts of speech, he said it loudly enough that

Theme	Explanation	Examples
		all of the students could hear him"
Instruction/pedagogy	Developing an approach to teaching was difficult but addressing the challenges was a learning experience that could be rewarding. Classroom instruction could also be difficult; for example, our access to the internet was limited and there were few texts in English.	•Journal topics #1, #3, #5, #7, #8, #9, #10. •"iCivics website is blocked, can't access Dr. Seuss goes to war" •"When I checked for understanding I found that they were starting to understand the concept, then I asked them to show me the evidence in the text then walked them through the steps for identifying the source and incorporating it into their sentences." •"The students don't understand what the expat teachers expect of them when we say they should "read and review" the materials."
Use of L1	Opinions on whether the students' L1 should be used in ELT differ; some teachers find it helpful while others insist on the exclusive use of English.	• Journal topics #9, #10 • Andy (academic officer) suggests a banner "English Only" in our classrooms. • "the students agreed to pay a fine of 1 rmb for speaking Chinese in the classroom"
Lack of teaching experience	Most of the expat English teachers that I worked with lack experience teaching academic content in EFL settings, and many of them had little or no teaching experience.	•Journal topic #3 •"he is a physics teacher but he hasn't had a physics course since high school" •"students have very low English levels and the teachers are really struggling with how to teach them"
Adaptation	Living in a new culture was exciting and, at the same time,	• Journal topics #6, #2, #1, #10

Theme	Explanation	Examples
	learning to navigate unfamiliar territory was challenging. Our lack of familiarity with Chinese culture and the resulting difficulties we faced were often stressful.	• "Thinking about [my teenage son] how difficult it is, in terms of developmental stages, to be in a cultural environment where you are the outsider…it takes _____ the ability to take a beating psychologically/emotionally." • "A first! [my teemage son]caught us a cab to the airport…"

Next, I reviewed the spreadsheet and considered which stories were most powerful to me and which related to the research topic. Concerns about living on campus were eliminated because they were highly subjective, and, it felt disrespectful to give attention to complaints about housing when the expatriate teachers were privileged with larger apartments at no expense. As I decided on specific entries to use in the trigger documents, my first decision was to include the entry about the military training that took place in school because it was such a powerful learning experience. As I watched the incoming students go through a week of military training under the direction of People's Liberation Army (PLA) solders I was surprised by what appeared to be harsh treatment. The students spent a week marching, drilling, and standing at attention in the heat and humidity of South China. However, I witnessed the comradery that had developed between the students and their PLA trainers at the talent show on the final evening of the military training. As a result, my perspective of the training shifted, and I realized that there were going to be many things that I would not understand. Second, I considered the importance of our relationships with local people, so I searched for an entry to represent that topic and decided on an excerpt about our relationship with my son's Mandarin tutor who eventually became a dear friend. After choosing those two as excerpts for the trigger documents, I reviewed the spread

sheet for entries that noted tensions and selected entries about topics related to the categories in my revised list (Clandinin, 2013). Descriptions of the entries and my thought process in their selection follows:

1. Military training during my first week on campus: this was a powerful learning experience for me; I realized that I was applying my lens to a situation and my perspective shifted as a result of what I experienced (Theme: Adaptation).
2. Friendships: Relationships with local people were key to my learning about Chinese culture. In addition to the cultural exchange, spending time with my Chinese colleagues was a source of comfort in an unfamiliar environment that could be daunting at times (Theme: Adaptation).
3. Inexperienced language/content teachers: Lack of preparation and professional training have been identified as a problem with expatriate teachers, and so I chose a passage where my colleagues are discussing their challenges and lack of experience (Themes: lack of teaching experience; instruction/pedagogy; interactions with expatriate teachers).
4. Dissonance: I was often confused by situations where actions and behaviors of the students and my Chinese colleagues directly conflicted with the school policies, procedures, and rules. For example, rehearsals and practices for school-wide competitions preempted class meetings. The expatriate teachers would often learn that their classes were cancelled with no advance notice (Theme: Dissonance – rules/policies).
5. Curriculum: It was difficult to discern the appropriateness of course content. Some topics, such as Tibet, were not to be discussed. And, I did not presume to

have enough knowledge to try and teach Chinese history . However, there were times when I inadvertently included documents or content that may have been perceived as politically sensitive although it was never directly stated as such. (Themes: instruction/pedagogy; communication with Chinese colleagues) **Note: I eventually decided to eliminate this due to the political sensitivity of the topic.**

6. Local culture: “Ordinary” tasks that I performed easily in the U.S. could be incredibly challenging; by navigating these tasks on a regular basis over an extended period of time I observed people and my surroundings and learned about the culture. These types of experiences were a large part of my adaptation to local living. (Theme: Adaptation).
7. Approaches to teaching: I wanted to include this particular expatriate teacher because of his unique style. His approach did not fit the stereotype of an expatriate teacher (relaxed demeanor, unstructured lessons, fun learning activities). He was demanding, rigid and even harsh at times. The students often complained about him but they really cared about his opinion and wanted to meet his expectations. (Themes: communication with Chinese colleagues; interactions with expatriate teachers; instruction/pedagogy)
8. Culture of learning: Getting students to complete homework could be a challenge that was perplexing to expatriate teachers. In my third year of teaching in the program, a conversation with the local program assistant shed light on why the students did not finish their work in the evening study sessions. The answer was remarkably simple yet it had been overlooked by most of the expatriate teachers. (Themes: communication with Chinese colleagues, instruction/pedagogy)

9. English only: The use of students' L1 in the classroom was forbidden by the academic officer. Personally, I found that it could be useful and felt uncomfortable monitoring the students' use of their L1, so I didn't enforce the "English only" rule. Since this is a broader issue in language teaching, I want to explore the experiences of other expatriate teachers. (Themes: use of L1; communication with Chinese colleagues; interactions with expatriate teachers)
10. Speaking Mandarin: During my interview for the job, I was told that it wasn't necessary for me to speak Mandarin. In fact, my interviewers said it was best if I could not use the students' L1 because I should not be using it in the classroom. I wanted to learn the language and took lessons, but my time and energy were limited and so was my Mandarin. I learned enough to begin to understand how some of the students' mistakes using English were connected to Mandarin. When my son began to speak well enough to converse with local people, I noticed a shift in how we were received. Many of the teachers that I worked with tried to learn and had varying levels of success. I only knew one expatriate teacher proficient enough to converse with the students. Because of the connection between language and culture I want to know more about teachers' experiences with language learning. (Themes: Adaptation; use of L1; instruction/pedagogy)

Once I selected the passages, I revised and edited them while being careful not to modify the content so that they were authentic representations of my experiences. After I wrote separate drafts for each excerpt, I thought about how to create the two documents that would be the triggers for my conversations with the teachers. I looked for commonalities across the excerpts

and found that five are primarily about instructional practices and five are related to adaptation and culture. I checked the lengths of the passages to make sure that they were balanced.

Teacher interviews. Teachers' life experiences shaped their perspectives and contributed to their approaches to teaching (Borg, 2003). Further, teachers' experiences in their classrooms were considered: their perceptions of the students; their interactions with the students; and their pedagogical practices were shaped by the conceptual system of the culture in which they occur (Lantolf & Poehner, 2014). The conversations with the participants provided information on their life experiences and insights on how they navigated their experiences as EFL teachers in China. During my initial conversations I tried to learn about the participants educational backgrounds and cross-cultural experiences they had before moving to China. In my conversations with the participants about the trigger documents I developed some understanding of their experiences in China and their approaches to teaching. The conversations were recorded and transcribed, and then the transcripts were sent to the participants for verification.

As I began my conversations with the participants, I shared some of my experiences as an expatriate teacher in China to establish a connection and build rapport (Borg, 2015). I tried to be aware of the perceived imbalances of power in the researcher/participant relationship (Canh & Maley, 2012; Roulston, 2010). I described some of the challenges that I faced as a novice EFL teacher in Guangzhou, and how my interest in how expatriate teachers learn to teach led to this project. I also emphasized that my intent was to learn about their experiences and that I would not be evaluating or assessing them in any way (Canh & Maley).

Interview protocols. I met with each participant to: (1) have a conversation about their background, their previous teaching experiences, and their experience in China; (2) discussed

their thoughts and responses to the trigger documents; and (3) have a final conversation with the participant about what they learned from the process. The meetings took place on Zoom, rather than face-to-face because of the restrictions due to the Covid-19 virus. The conversations were recorded on my iPhone. Transcripts of the audio recordings were reviewed by participants, prior to data analysis, to clarify ambiguities and verify accuracy. The interviews were based on a set of topics connected to the research questions and short, open-ended, questions were posed (Appendix C). The meetings with participants were approached as conversations, rather than reading through a list of questions. In some cases, I contacted the participants with follow-up questions to obtain additional information (Roulston, 2010). This flexible approach provided freedom for the participant to control the direction of the conversation to encourage them to talk openly about the topic of discussion and any other information that they found relevant. This approach also created opportunities for me to further explore their responses (Borg, 2015; Roulston).

At the end of the first interview, I sent the participants a digital copy of the first set of excerpts (Appendix D), explained the purpose and protocols for our next conversation, and set a time for our next meeting. I also sent an email to confirm the date and time for the meeting. At the end of the second meeting, we scheduled the time and date for our third meeting. I sent an email with a digital copy of the second set of excerpts (Appendix F) and confirmed the date and time for our meeting. The conversations about the trigger documents were guided by prompts (Appendix E) and probing questions to encourage in-depth, reflective responses. In the final meeting, I asked the participants to reflect on their participation in the process (Appendix G). During these conversations I was careful not to lead the participants' responses by sharing my opinions or perceptions.

Data Analysis

Table 4 shows how the design of the study connects the methods of data collection to the theoretical perspectives. A mini-analysis of my own data, revealed more information about my beliefs and values than it revealed about my approach to teaching. Based on the analysis, I anticipated that data about the cultural-historic domain would be minimal. Furthermore, I expected that the teachers' responses would indicate they have experienced cultural dissonance.

Table 4 Connecting Data and Theoretical Framework

Method of Data Collection	Description of Questions	Purpose	Theoretical Perspective
Potential participants responses to recruitment flyer	Participants' demographic information (age, gender, birthplace, education level, years of teaching experience, length of time in China)	To collect background information on the participants' backgrounds; select a diverse group of participants.	Ontogenetic
Interview 1	Participants' educational experiences: aspects of their educations that prepared them for CBLT in China.	To have the participants think about how their education may have provided experiences that have influenced them personally and/or professionally. To provide insights into how their educational experiences did or did not prepare them for their experiences in China.	
	Participant cross-cultural experiences: previous	To have the participants think about how their experience(s)	Ontogenetic; Narrative inquiry

	experiences living or working abroad.	with other cultures has influenced them personally and/or professionally. To provide insights into how their previous cross-cultural experiences did or did not prepare them for their experiences in China.	
	Participants' teaching experiences: reasons for becoming a teacher; understanding their students' learning needs; previous teaching experiences.	To have the participants reflect on what influences them as teachers and connect their current approach to teacher training or other experiences already mentioned.	Ontogenetic; Narrative inquiry
	Current experiences living in China: their understanding of Chinese culture and history; challenges they have faced; positive experiences; engagement with local culture and people; influences on their thinking about their students.	To determine how context has influenced the participants' thinking and practices by; (1) gaining a sense of the participant's understanding of the context for their teaching; (2) understanding their experiences with the culture; (3) learning about what shapes their perceptions of their students. To provide insights into the tensions that they experienced and how they navigated them.	Cultural-historic; Microgenetic; Narrative inquiry
	Current experiences teaching in China: How they experience being teachers in the local school setting; influences on their approach to CBLT.	To discern how the participants' perceptions of how aspects of the local school context influenced their approach to CBLT.	Microgenetic, Cultural-historic; Narrative inquiry

Interviews 2 & 3		To develop understanding of the teacher's perspectives on what is important to their teaching. To note events related to topics discussed in the literature review: cultural differences; references to culture; IB/CNC curriculum; pedagogy (especially student-centered/teacher-centered and L1 usage); tensions (between what is expected/what actually happens/the teacher's thinking).	Ontogenetic; Microgenetic; Narrative inquiry
Final Meeting	Reflection on their participation in the process.	To determine what the participants learned through the inquiry process.	Microgenetic; Narrative inquiry

Approaching the data. According to Clandinin (2013), research texts are composed in the midst of the telling and retelling the stories of the participants and the researcher, the form of the text is shaped by those experiences and there is no one way of creating the texts. Throughout the analysis phase, I was attentive to the ways that the participants' life experiences, their approach to teaching, and the context of their teaching were related to the tensions that were experienced.

Participant narratives. Constructing the narratives was an iterative process. I began by constructing a chart of the participants' demographic data. I then reviewed the interview transcripts for discussion of tensions and comments that represented their values. Next, I reviewed the interviews using the cultural-historic, ontogenetic, and microgenetic domains to organize information for each participant. Finally, I identified a theme, unique to each

participant, that connected their experiences. The narratives tell the stories of the teachers experiences by beginning with their educational background and cross-cultural experiences prior to moving to China (ontogenetic domain). Next, the stories shift to their experiences in China with an emphasis on the context for their teaching (microgenetic domain). Finally, I incorporated their discussions on what they believe are the most important aspects of teaching and their thoughts on what is required to be a successful teacher in China. I then shared the first draft of the narratives with each of the participants for his/her review and feedback. Later, I requested additional information to clarify and supplement their stories. The first version of the narratives included some participant quotes. Ultimately, I decided to revise the narratives to tell the story by using more quotes so that their stories were told using more of their voice and less of mine. The final versions of the narratives were again reviewed by the participants.

After completing the initial drafts of the narratives, I coded the transcripts of our discussions of the trigger documents. The third step was to compare the participants' responses for each excerpt in the trigger documents and then reflect on the similarities and differences, then I then compared their responses to my reflections on my experiences. During this process I noticed that there were some complexities that could not be so easily explained and these will be discussed in Chapter 4. I approached the data with the research questions in mind in the fourth step. I read the transcripts of the conversations about the trigger documents and recorded: the tensions that they discussed; the dissonances that they experienced; and the beliefs and values expressed in connection with their discussion of tensions. Next, I created a concept map to compare the commonalities amongst the participants responses. In Chapter 4, detailed descriptions of the data collection and analysis are presented along with the results.

Quality and Relational Ethics

What makes a good narrative inquiry? A good narrative inquiry attends to the relational aspects of the methodology. The researcher's relationship with the participants is an essential part of learning about the phenomenon; their shared experiences are the catalyst for telling the stories that play a part in creating a narrative that fosters growth and facilitates understanding of the phenomenon. Clandinin and Caine (2012) described twelve touchstones of narrative inquiry:

- *Relational responsibilities* – The researcher pays close attention to their relationships with participants and create a collaborative space for living, telling, reliving, and retelling stories. Developing this relationship in a meaningful way requires self-awareness, reflection, and a willingness to communicate openly. Relationship ethics go beyond institutional requirements. Researchers have a long-term commitment to the lives of the participants; they should consider how they listen and respond to participants, respect their stories, and learn from them. Additionally, the researcher makes certain that the research text reflects the experiences in ways that resonate with the participant.
- *In the midst* – Being in the midst of the experience means the researcher situates herself within the study throughout the process. In the design of the study, the researcher places herself (imaginatively) in the lives of potential participants allowing them to attend to "the imagined temporality, sociality, and places of participants' lives" (p. 170). Further, the researcher considers their personal justifications for the study in the context of their life experiences. The researcher should understand themselves and their position in the study. It is important for the researcher to be aware of who they are in the context of the phenomenon and what they bring to the

study. Without this understanding, the researcher will not be conscious of how they attend to the experiences of the participants.

- *Narrative beginnings* – Inquiry begins with the researcher's own stories and they continue to explore and reflect on their experiences during and after the study. In writing their narrative beginnings the inquirer turns to the three-dimensional space of temporality, sociality, and place. This means that the inquirer looks to their past life experiences, thinks about the places where those experiences occurred, and takes notice of the social and political contexts of the experiences.
- *Negotiating entry into the field* – The field is the relational space negotiated by the researcher and participants. When the inquiry begins with the telling of stories, the most common methods are conversations or interviews. Artifacts may also be used to trigger the telling of stories.
- *Negotiation of relationships* **–** The negotiation of relationships is an ongoing process that begins when the researcher enters the field. Since the researcher/participant relationship is central to the inquiry, many aspects (e.g. purpose, transitions, intentions, and texts) are negotiated. Inquirers are also mindful of the participants' needs.
- *Moving from field to field text* – Artifacts collected in the field provide information about the participant's experiences, the researcher works collaboratively with participants to convert the information into field texts the tell their stories. Giving voice to the participants results in a more meaningful representation of the lived experiences. As the researcher attends to their relationship with the participant they

develop empathy which helps them to understand their lived experiences and contributes to creating the text.

- *Moving from field texts to interim and final research texts* - Reading the field text is the beginning of the data analysis. The research texts are developed as the researcher situates the stories in the three-dimensional space of temporality, sociality, and place and looks for connections to the research puzzle.
- *Representing narratives of experience in ways that show temporality, sociality and place* - This helps the researcher understand the participant's experiences in terms of time, context, and space.
- *Relational response communities* - The text is viewed from an interdisciplinary perspective and fellow researchers provide critical feedback to help the researchers to understand the research texts in multiple, critical ways.
- *Justifications: personal, practical, and social* - From the inception of the study, the researcher considers the "so what" and "who cares" to justify their work. The justifications are used as lenses for the researcher's experiences in the field and become part of data interpretation. The researcher uses the lenses to create meaning from the stories they construct with the participants.
- *Attentive to multiple audiences* - The researchers want to provide insightful perspectives that can be helpful or of interest to a particular population of readers, researchers in and outside of the field, and even to a broader audience.
- *Commitment to understanding lives in motion* - Considering the changing nature of participants stories creates openings to make broader connections with different,

multiple stories with shared experiences to "recompose and restory our experiences in new ways" (p. 176).

Relational ethics. For Clandinin and Caine (2012) quality narrative inquiry involves methodological and relational commitments. The researcher and participant relationship is central to the inquiry process, therefore the relational and methodological are entwined. Throughout this inquiry process the researcher and participants work collaboratively to interpret their lived experiences in the telling and retelling of their stories. In narrative inquiry, the researcher/participant relationship becomes personal as they spend time together and develop connections through shared experiences. This relationship is a special kind of commitment and requires "openness, mutual vulnerability, reciprocity, and care" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 200). Because participants allow the researcher to access their lives, they are obligated to conduct their work with a high level of responsibility to the relationship. This relational responsibility goes beyond the requirements of the institution (Clandinin & Caine).

Developing relationships with the participants was an integral part of the study. Establishing personal connections with the participants was essential to collecting the data. This was somewhat challenging because the participants and researcher had no prior relationship, and this was exacerbated by the challenges created by Covid-19. I intended to meet in person with the participants at locations and times that were convenient for them. Instead, our meetings were held on Zoom and WeChat calls, while one of the participants had returned to the US and the other two remained in China. During data collection, I was located first in Hong Kong and then in the US. At times, my location was in a different time zone from the participant; in those cases I scheduled the meetings at their convenience.

I tried to set a casual, conversational tone for our meetings. I began the conversations with a casual greeting and we talked briefly about daily life, weather, and work-related events. Our discussions were a learning process and I communicated the value of learning through sharing our stories. For the first meeting, my attire was business casual, while for subsequent meetings I dressed more casually based on the participants' attire at our first meeting to avoid presenting an authoritative image. The conversations were recorded with a digital device so that I did not have to take notes, and I used the interview questions to guide the conversation rather than reading them sequentially from the paper to help the participant feel more comfortable. I tried to listen closely, without interrupting, and remained attentive to the participant as they spoke to demonstrate my respect for their story. I was careful with my responses to avoid appearing to be judgmental. Finally, the participants verified the transcripts of the conversations and participated in constructing the narratives.

Ethical issues. Professional ethical norms were followed as demonstrated in the Belmont Report via the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research (1978) and as monitored by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Georgia State University. No harm was done to participants at any time throughout this study. IRB guidelines were followed to ensure that all participants understood that their participation in this study was strictly voluntary and that they could choose to withdraw from the study at any time. In addition, pseudonyms were used for the participants to ensure privacy. All information was stored in a locked fire-proof safe and on password-protected computers.

Throughout the process, protection against potential ethical breaches was a priority. The participants were given transcripts of the interviews, along with disclosure of the preliminary

interpretations of the data to help determine whether the results are plausible. Assumptions were documented throughout the study in analytic memos.

4 DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This section explains my process for approaching the information that I collected through my conversations with the participants and my personal experiences as a teacher and researcher. I begin with describing the process of developing the texts: field texts; interim texts; and, research texts (these are explained on page 101). The next section presents the research texts: the participant narratives and my responses to provide context for the analysis of the interim texts. Next, I present my reflections on the interim texts: participants' responses to the trigger documents and the cross analysis of the responses. The following section presents a discussion of the themes identified in the narratives and the complexities within the participants' responses. Finally, I present a reflection on my learning.

From Field Texts to Research Texts

In narrative inquiry, moving from field text to research text, is the analysis process. Research texts are developed as the researcher situates the stories in the three-dimensional space of temporality, sociality, and place and looks for connections to the research puzzle (Clandinin, 2013). *Temporality* refers to the timeframe that situates the events, objects, and people within the past, present, and future. *Sociality* refers to contexts of the social contexts of the phenomena and the social contexts that shape and are shaped by the researcher and participants. *Place* is the space within physical boundaries and how it shapes the researcher and participants.

The analysis was an iterative process and I revisited the field and interim texts several times. The process and results are presented in three categories: field texts; interim texts; and research texts. Table 5 shows the specific texts used in each category.

Table 5 Types of texts used by category

Field Texts	Excerpts from my journals used in the trigger documents; transcripts of conversations with participants; charts to show comparison of trigger responses; my research journal.
Interim Texts	Table of participants' demographic information; draft narratives of the participants experiences; wall charts on tensions; concept map of beliefs and values; a spreadsheet summarizing the coding of the transcripts; reflections on comparisons of trigger responses; preliminary findings based on analysis of trigger responses.
Research Texts	Narratives; findings; my reflections on learning.

Field texts. The field texts consisted of my journal excerpts; transcripts of my conversations with the participants; and, the notes and reflections in my researcher journal. This was the process for coding the transcripts of my conversations with the participants:

1. Reviewed transcripts of for Interview 1: I made notes on themes; highlighted tensions and values; and, highlighted demographic information.
2. Created and defined coding categories using themes from my initial review.
3. Coded transcripts of Interview 1.
4. Coded transcripts of Interview 2; created summary tables (Table 6)
5. Reviewed and reflected on coding; noted emerging themes.
6. Revised definitions of coding categories to make them more descriptive (Table 7).
7. Revisited coding of Interview 2.
8. Coded transcripts of Interview 3.
9. Compared samples of coded transcripts with two critical friends to check for agreement in application of the codes.

Table 6 Summary table template

Trigger	Participant response	Researcher comments

Table 7 Codes and definitions

Code	Definitions
AC	Acculturation: Expat teachers' learning process of social, psychological, and cultural change as they acquire new cultural practices and adjust to their new cultural environment in China.
BK	Background knowledge: Understanding of: the history and culture of China; ELT in China; Mandarin language; lived experiences as language teachers; lived experiences with people of Chinese heritage prior to coming to China.
CC	Cross-cultural experience: Interactions with and spending time together with local Chinese people, learning about the culture by experiencing it, comparing it to their lived experiences, and reflecting on what they have learned from these experiences.
ED	Education: University coursework; teacher training programs; TESOL/TEFL/language teacher certification programs; local school on-boarding or orientation; professional development.
ID	Identity: Expat teachers' professional identity; ways in which they think and talk about themselves and how their self-perception are manifested in their daily lives.
LC	Local context: Immediate physical and social environments; institutional structure; school policies and practices; social norms for the learning environment.
PC	Preparation for China: Physical, social, and educational activities engaged in by expat teachers in anticipation of their moves to China.
RL	Relationships with local people: Ways in which expat teachers connect with local people; how they interact, behave toward each other, and feel about each other.
TP	Teaching practices: How the participant approaches ELT in China; views on ELT; student/teacher interactions; relationship building with colleagues, parents, and students; types of classroom activities; instructional strategies; student engagement; providing feedback; classroom management; learning materials; use of technology.

Interim texts. Information from the field texts was used to create the interim texts. The interim texts included: comparisons of trigger responses (Table 8 and Figure 3); a table of participants' demographic information; a concept map (Figure 4); and preliminary findings.

My process for analyzing the information from the participants' responses to the trigger documents:

1. Read excerpts and participants' responses.
2. Used tables to identify tensions and compare responses (Table 8).
3. Created wall charts using information from tables (Figure 3).
    i. Recorded tensions; identified beliefs and values associated with the tensions in participant responses; and compared participants' and researchers experiences.
    ii. Identified connections between researcher's and participants' responses.
    iii. Noted dissonances associated with the tensions.
4. Reflected on wall charts and tables for comparing responses to identify patterns and recorded my observations.
5. Concept map (Figure 4):
    i. Read the transcripts of interviews 2 and 3 with the research questions in mind.
    ii. Recorded tensions discussed by each participant.
    iii. Recorded beliefs and values expressed in connection with participants' discussion of tensions.
    iv. Recorded themes associated with tensions.
    v. Noted dissonances that participants experienced.
6. Noted preliminary findings from themes (below).

Table 8 Trigger response comparison template

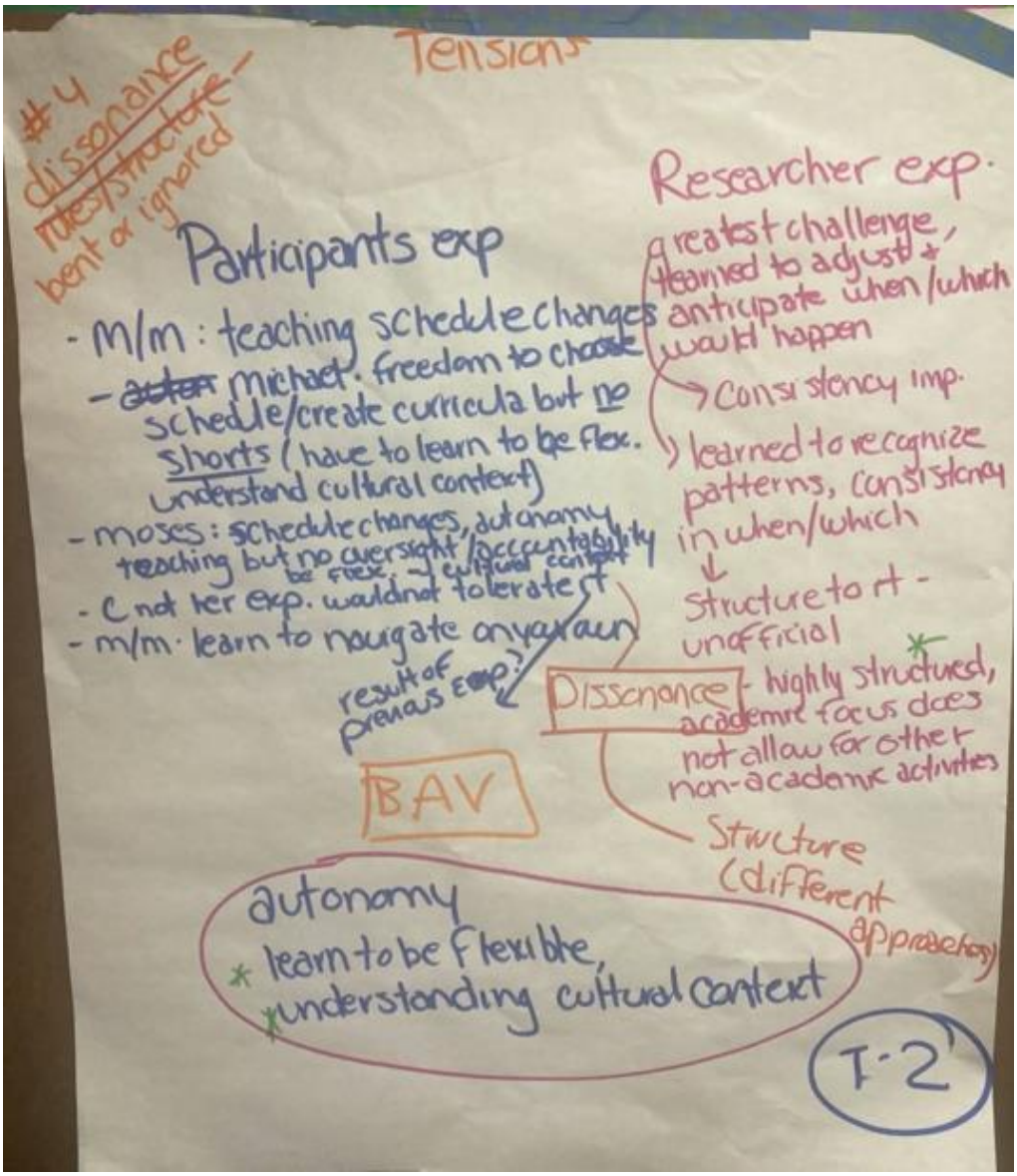
I used this template to record and compare the responses to the trigger documents. The description summarized each excerpt. I reviewed the transcripts of the interviews and noted each of the participant's responses to the excerpt. I also reflected on my response to each trigger. I then reviewed the responses and compared the responses of the participants, and then I compared my responses to the participants' responses.

Description	**Michael**	**Moses**	**Claire**	**Participant comparison**	**Lisa**	**Researcher comparison**

Figure 3 Example of wall chart

I created the wall charts as visual representations of the responses to each trigger; I used these charts as tools for reflection. Using the response comparison charts (Table 8) as a guide, I revisited the transcripts of the interviews and read their comments. I made notes on the participants' experiences, then I made notes on my experiences. As I worked each day I used the charts as references and reflected on our experiences. Next, I added the beliefs and values that I thought were reflected in their responses. As I wrote my findings, I used the charts to reflect on and record dissonances that we experienced.

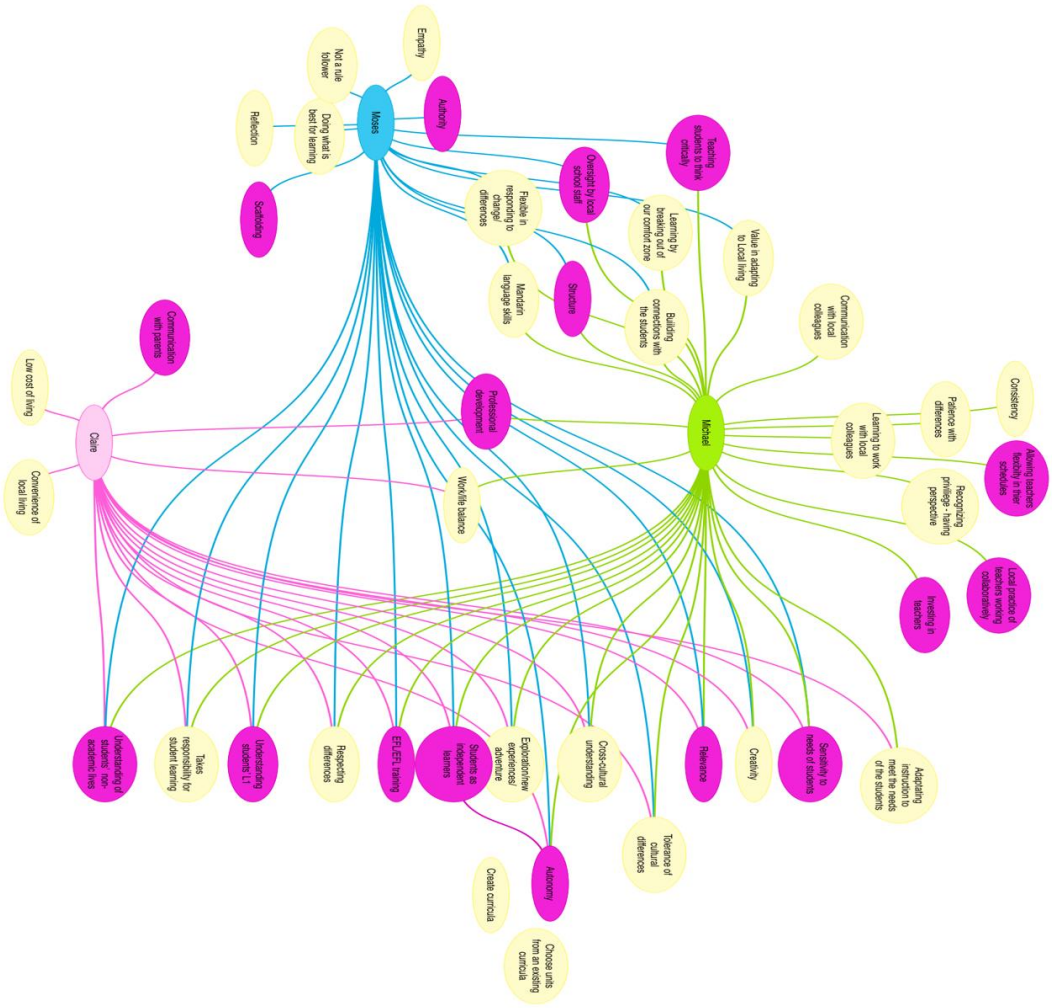
Figure 3 Wall chart



Concept map. I created the concept map as a visual representation of the beliefs and values revealed in my conversations with the participants. I reviewed the transcripts of our conversations and noted the beliefs and values for each participant. The concept map organized their responses by coding categories. The participants responses indicated a number (14) of similarities in their beliefs and values associated with the following coding categories: acculturation; teaching practices, and cross-cultural understanding. The responses of two of the

participants (Michael and Moses) showed several (8) similarities in their beliefs and values associated with: local context, teaching practices, and background knowledge.

Figure 4 Concept map



Research Texts

Using the genetic framework for the analysis provides a perspective that connects the teachers' thinking and doing with the social and cultural contexts of their teaching (Cross, 2010). I employed this method as a means for going beyond descriptive accounts and exploring why and how the teachers navigated living and teaching in their new cultural environments. These texts include: the participant's narratives and my responses.

Participant Narratives

I began constructing the narratives by creating outlines using the participants' demographic information. I organized the stories of their lives using the genetic domains of the theoretical framework. The narratives focused on: (1) the participants' development through their life experiences and educational backgrounds in Interview 1; and, (2) their experiences in the context of their teaching in China in Interviews 2 and 3. Then, I considered their responses to our conversation, Interview 1, about what is most important to them about teaching and what it takes to be a successful EFL teacher in China. After I completed the rough draft of their narratives, I contacted the participants for additional information and completed the narrative. I then sent the narratives to each participant and asked them to make additions and corrections as needed. The narratives are presented below; in my response to each narrative I share my reflections on my relationships with each participant.

This section includes the narratives for each participant and my reflections on what I have learned throughout the inquiry process. Searching for and finding the participants was a learning experience in itself. When I began this study I was living in Beijing and originally intended to recruit teachers from a network of expatriate teachers there. My plans changed when I, and many other teachers in China, found myself outside of the country and unable to return due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With limited access to that network of teachers I had to recruit from a different pool of participants. Fortunately, one of my fellow doctoral students connected me with

an online group through TESOL International. I was surprised to find that a number of people responded to my recruitment flyer to express interest in my study. As a result, the participants are varied in age, gender, and backgrounds. Additionally, there is a range of experiences amongst us. In the following section I will tell each participant narrative followed by my response.

Claire

Claire (pseudonym) is a female, Caucasian, in her late 40's, was born in the U.S., and has been teaching English in China for three years. After graduating from college in northern California with a B.A. in English Literature and a minor in Journalism, Claire worked in non-profit organizations for several years before she decided to become a teacher. She has worked as an EFL teacher in Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe, only her pre-service teaching experiences were in the U.S.. Claire's prior teaching experiences have been her compass for navigating living and teaching in China.

Education and previous cross-cultural experiences. Within a month of receiving her teaching license, Claire went into the Peace Corps and was assigned to a country in Southeast Asia for two years. Peace Corps volunteers in the Education Sector "work with their host communities to improve English language proficiency and teaching" (peacecorp.gov). After serving in the Peace Corp, Claire remained in the country and continued to work as an English teacher, however, she found that her teaching license did not prepare her for "real, professional, out of the Peace Corps teaching" (Claire, 2020, Interview 1). This was Claire's first experience living and working abroad. Her cross-cultural experience extended beyond her teaching experiences. She was totally immersed in the local culture, lived with a local host family, and constantly interacted with teachers, colleagues, and other local people. With 6 months left in her service, she was transferred to a different site due to local political unrest. There Claire

connected with a group of artists and other local people and they became close friends. Toward the end of her four-year experience, she met and eventually married a local man and their child was born there. Her close relationships with local people were not long-term connections, she attributes this to a contrast in values and priorities. Local people were more focused on the basics of survival with less time for some of the other activities that Claire enjoys. Her desire to learn more about teaching English led to her family moving to the United States where she could further her education and prepare for working abroad in the future.

They spent the next ten years in the western United States where Claire worked in student affairs at a large public university. While working at the university she was a part-time student in a TEFL-TESOL Master's program. She really liked the program and worked extensively with one of the professors to learn about teaching reading, vocabulary, and grammar. Because she was not a classroom teacher, she sought out opportunities to do work related to her program of study. Those experiences ranged from teaching poetry units at local schools to teaching English for Special Purposes (ESP) to immigrant parents of students in the local school district. Upon completion of the program, she received an English language fellowship from the U.S. State Department.

While Claire and her family were stationed in Eastern Europe for two years they lived in two countries. In her first position as an English language fellow, Claire worked in a university and traveled around the region. She provided in-service teacher training, teacher observations, teacher feedback, and preparation courses for certification renewal exams. Her position was also associated a with U.S. Embassy and she worked with Regional English Language Officers (RELO) to promote English language programming and cultural events for people who were

interested in American English. When the fellowship commenced, they moved to a second country where she worked briefly as an English language teacher at School #1 (pseudonym).

In both places, Claire developed close relationships with local people that became long-lasting friendships.

> Country #1: There were very few Americans/foreigners here. I met some local teachers that I am still friends with today. One of my good local friends was a yoga teacher and we spent regular time together. It was kind of strange living in Eastern Europe because I didn't initially stand out due to my looks like I did in Asia. No one could tell that I wasn't local. I interacted with a lot of students, teachers, professors, but mostly education/university/school related people and some local people who were US Embassy staff. The biggest issue was the language. Most people didn't speak English so I was limited to the English fluent people.
>
> Country #2: I met some locals through the Buddhist Center I attended. I met a number of good friends from there including a guy who introduced me to a local folk dancing group (which I joined regularly)…, I also worked at a bilingual school and met a few local teachers... I found a Kundalini (not very popular yoga practice) teacher that I would practice with and a Reiki practitioner there. I found other yoga groups and there were many meditation groups. (Claire, personal correspondence, July 27, 2020)

However, School #1 was not well-managed and she and her family were unhappy there. So, she decided to leave at the end of the first term of the school year. They then returned to the United States for six months and Claire received a position at School #2 (pseudonym) an international school in China.

Claire's previous experiences as an EFL teacher guided her decision about going to teach at School #2. Working at School #1 under inadequate leadership showed her the importance of having a strong administrative team, well-developed policies, and plenty of teacher support. School #2 in China was not at all like the previous school. School #2 is part of a strong network, has well-developed policies, a curriculum staff, and extensive support for new teachers. In making her decision about accepting the position she also considered the local culture and compared the lifestyle in a Tier 1 city in China to her previous experiences.

> I think professionally I always weigh what is the school like and the administration and how do they manage their school and the policies and all those kind of technical things like support for teachers and – especially because we were coming from a really bad school that offered no support, wasn't helpful, unprofessional. And then culturally I guess I would compare it to being how difficult or easy it is to live in a place because of language issues or transportation, right? The people are people nice and friendly or not interested in helping or whatever? …China was very pleasing to me because it was so hard to live in Country #1 and that was our first time living abroad…Although the people were very kind there…once you are friends with someone, they'll do anything for you. But just in general people on the street, it was very depressing…And the Russian was very difficult. There was almost no English anywhere, like, none. I would ask five people, "Do you speak English?" until I could find one person who said, "A little bit" (Claire, 2020, Interview 1, Lines 286-300).At School #2 Claire taught Intensive English to primary students for two years and now teaches English Literature on the secondary level. Claire appreciates the varied aspects of teaching; and, she believes that teaching requires a deep understanding of pedagogy, creativity, and analytical skills. She speaks

enthusiastically about opportunities to participate in professional development. She was introduced to William Glasser's teaching model through her involvement in a professional learning community (PLC). Claire is now trained and certified in Glasser's Choice Theory/Reality Therapy.

Experiences in China. The school (School #2) where Claire was working is an international school. Most of the students are of Chinese heritage but they hold passports from Hong Kong, Australia, and Canada. Some students are from South Korea. Also, while the school staff is mainly American, there are a few teachers from Canada and Australia. There is one teacher from Korea who teaches Korean language and some teachers who are Chinese locals who teach Mandarin. The students are not taking courses from the Chinese national curriculum. The curriculum is a combination of the International Baccalaureate curriculum and Advanced Placement courses for the secondary school students. Claire clearly embraces her life in China,

> I love not having a car. And taking public transportation that's so cheap and convenient. We all have bicycles so we bike… so that's great. I think it's very economical. Things seem way more reasonable there than here in the U.S.. Our school provides housing which is great. We have a beautiful view of the bay and the bridge. And we see this beautiful developed marina right in front of us. It's amazing. It's so beautiful. Transportation's fine. The school is good. I like for the most part, teachers, and our administration, and the Chinese people seem nice, friendly, and kind of quirky… everything seems-- our area's so convenient. (2020, Interview 1, Lines 399-408)

Claire believes that living and teaching abroad requires open-mindedness,

> … just being open minded. I mean really practicing that because I think when I see people getting upset, foreigners or American, getting upset in China or complaining about

> things, then I think, "Wow, you are a guest in this country and it's not what you expected because you want the culture to do this, but this isn't your culture and this isn't how they would behave." (Claire, 2020, Interview 1, Lines 514-519)

Her observations about the students, their parents, and her colleagues were never judgmental, and she seems to approach her relationships with tolerance and awareness. When she shared with me that she is Buddhist and spends a lot of her time on meditation and reading Buddhist-related texts, I immediately recognized the congruence between my sense of her as person, what I learned about her approach to life, and Buddhist philosophy. Claire places a high value on professionalism and is clearly committed to her work as an English language educator. She learned from her first experience teaching EFL that a regular teaching certification was not adequate preparation for the challenges of teaching abroad. As a result, she devoted a number of years to furthering her education and seeking ways to expand her capacity for teaching. Her family's commitment to living and working abroad is reflected in their engagement in local culture. Reflection is an important aspect of her identity. Her approach to her work as an EFL teacher working abroad has been guided by her reflective practices and passion for learning.

My response to Claire's narrative. Claire was recruited for the study through a TESOL International discussion board, and I was relieved that I would have a female for the study. Although our life experiences prior to China were quite different, I felt an instant connection to her because we are both middle-aged women and have teenage sons. I was very curious to learn about her experiences in China because I wondered whether she had shared some of the struggles that I had gone through. She was very interested in my work and spent time preparing for our interviews by reflecting on the trigger documents in advance and making notes for our conversations. I was fascinated by her pathway to teaching EFL in China. She taught in two

vastly different regions of the world, she married a local man after her time in the Peace Corps in Southeast Asia, and she taught in Eastern Europe where she was relatively isolated because of the language barrier. Her experiences guided her decision to teach at an international school in China, she had a clear vision of the type of learning environment that would work for her and her family. As a result, she was content with her working and living conditions. Also, she did not seem to have the same struggles that I did adapting to living in China in spite of her inability to speak Mandarin. Claire's lifestyle in China was quite different from mine largely because she worked at an international school. The school leader is also an expatriate and Claire lived in a private apartment in a section of the city that has plenty of amenities. Also, I would describe Claire as being more "well-rounded" than I was during the three years that I was teaching there. She talked about the many hobbies that she enjoyed; her husband and son are also part of the international school community. On the other hand, I was working 60-70 hours a week and parenting solo while my husband remained in the U.S.. My connections to the culture were different than Claire's, living on the school campus in a relatively isolated section of the city meant that we lived the lifestyle of the local people. Also, I had a number of close relationships with local people and we traveled extensively with the benefit of my son's Mandarin language skills. Even though our experiences were different we formed a connection around our passion for teaching and learning. We always began our conversations by talking about her current situation as she taught remotely from the U.S. due to COVID. I have wondered how different my experience would have been if I had known and worked with Claire in China, I felt that we would work well together. Working together on this project we have created a bond, and I believe that our relationship will continue to grow. We plan to meet again, in person, upon my return to China.

Michael

Michael (pseudonym) is a male, Caucasian, in his late 20's, born in the U.S., and has been teaching English in China for 3 years. Although Michael grew up in "white suburbia" (Michael, 2020, Interview 1, Line 319) in the midwestern United States, he had close ties to Southeastern Asian culture.

> Well, also my brother is half Japanese. He had the same dad, from my dad's first marriage. His mom is Japanese. We've been really close. My brother is eight years older than me. We had been close with his mom's side of the family. We actually would spend New Year's Eve every year as kids at his grandparents house and make sushi and it was pretty different from white, suburbia culture (Michael, 2020, Interview 1, Lines 314-319).

Growing up in a state with a large Hmong population, he also had many cross-cultural experiences with friends of Hmong heritage. Michael chose to attend a small liberal arts college for its' one-year study abroad program. He majored in East Asian history and studied at a university in a country in East Asia for a year. Before this study abroad experience, Michael had some awareness of other cultures and some background knowledge about East Asian history and politics. As a study abroad student, and then later as an EFL teacher living in China, Michael learned by experiencing local culture in addition to his formal education.

Education and previous cross-cultural experiences. Michael became cognizant of the power of international education when he was a student in an M.A. program.

> I knew I wanted to go to Asia and this gave me a program where I was actually a student at the university instead of doing a cohort with only international students. Country 1 university (pseudonym) actually has whole English degree programs, they offer 30 to 40 degrees in English only. So it's local students. So that was the attraction to me and I just

> saw the power of like international education and meeting people from around the world and hearing new ideas. That whole experience helped. I was in the Teach English club my first semester while there. I had 10 local students and you could do role playing situations at a restaurant together or play a sport together. Very basic stuff. And then second semester I actually helped with another international friend. It was a pre-departure program and it was for local students who were planning to go to the U.S. specifically the following year to go abroad. We had about 30 or so students they would come each time but we would talk about different themes of like things you should be aware of in the US and I would prepare for it. (Michael, 2020, Interview 1, Lines 324-338)

Michael also traveled to another country in Asia during that year,

> I was planning to go to eight different countries and I got to the first country (pseudonym) and I ended up being there for five weeks and I just fell in love with it. It's the most beautiful place on earth. And the culture, and the food, the sights, the landscape, the history. Yeah it was amazing experience. Very privileged to have gotten that. And it really shapes everything that I've gone into. I think for me it really shaped me in that…to stop being so selfish and understand perspective a lot more. And definitely how valuable it is to learn in different ways and be challenged in different ways that you're not used to, so breaking that comfort zone. (Michael, 2020, Interview 1, Lines 347-351)

His new perspective guided him as he moved on to graduate school and then moved to China. After graduating with a B.A. in Southeast Asian History, he matriculated at a large public university in California and received a M.S. in International Education and an ESL teacher certification. The hybrid program was a 14-week intensive study program and a teaching practicum in China. Michael chose the program that was geared specifically toward China

because of his growing fascination with the country. Additionally, Michael felt that teaching China would give him more flexibility in future career opportunities.

Experiences in China. During his practicum, Michael taught Oral English, Western Culture, and College Readiness, in a Tier 1 city. He explained the support he received during his first teaching experience,

> My program is tailored very specifically to China…and they did a good job with it. So it's only with schools that they've worked with in the past that are very foreign friendly that help get you situated…the school itself usually will have like their foreign advisor that does the visas for you at the school. But then our Master's program also had at least two people in every city that were administrative assistants that helped out with that too. So, they give you a lot of safety nets when you're there because most of us it was our first time in China. (Michael, 2020, Interview 1, Lines 71-80)

Michael had complete autonomy to set his teaching schedule and write the curricula for his courses, plan his lessons, and design learning activities. Although the cohort of teachers in the program were located in a variety of locations in China they communicated frequently to share ideas and met regularly as a group for professional development. Michael thoroughly enjoyed writing curriculum, he continues to pursue this interest, and he felt that the program prepared him as well as one can be prepared. However, when it came down to being "in a Chinese classroom and you have 60 students looking at you, that's a completely different story" (Michael, 2020, Interview 1, Line 117-118). Michael believes that understanding the previous educational experiences of his students is critical to EFL teaching in China. Moreover, he thinks that expatriate teachers should recognize the vast difference between their personal teaching and learning experiences and those of their students. Michael used his knowledge to blend different

teaching methodologies to scaffold his instruction so that he could introduce his students to discussion-based and project-based learning.

Michael faced an additional challenge in that his time was split between teaching at the secondary and university levels. His course at the university was an elective. Most of the students had low levels of English and would probably not use English in their professional lives after they graduated. Michael believes that one of the most important things about teaching is providing students with skills that can be transferred to real world situations so he decided to design curricula and learning activities where students could learn by interacting. He felt that teaching them academic English would be impractical and wanted to give them something that could be useful to them later in life. He used role playing and games to engage the students and tried to create a learning environment that was not stressful so that they would feel comfortable talking.

Michael felt that the M.A. program provided a good amount of support; he found that interacting with his cohort during the practicum to be particularly beneficial. He also believes that the coursework on creating curricula was a significant advantage, “The only reason as a new teacher that I didn’t drown is because I had my master's class where we were learning how to write curricula” (Michael, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 231-233). While Michael was relatively well-prepared for teaching in China, he strongly believes that teachers truly learn about teaching through their classroom experiences. He noted that there are certain aspects of teacher education programs that cannot adequately prepare pre-service teachers and notes that he learned to work with different types of learners after he became a classroom teacher. Michael said that it took time for him and his students to get used to each other. Michael describes himself as a talkative, outgoing person that uses a student-centered approach to teaching, but his students were

accustomed to teachers using lectures for instruction. One of the ways that Michael bridged the gap between himself and the students was having his students write a reflection or question that they had for him at the end of each class. In the next class he would answer their questions. The students loved that and started asking more questions, it was easier for them to write questions that they may have been too nervous to ask him directly or in front of other people. Michael felt like this helped his students open up and become more comfortable with him and with using English.

Michael emphasized the importance of learning to be flexible when teaching in China. He explained that, during his first semester, he began with a very structured curriculum. He had written clear objectives and had a clear timeframe for the students' learning goals but within two months he realized that his plan would not work. He found that one of the challenges was the unannounced or last-minute schedule changes. Further, he felt that his class was not a high priority from the school's perspective. He adapted by using a less structured approach and determined the topics for learning on a weekly basis.

Michael had a light teaching schedule, 8 hours per week, which enabled him to pursue other interests. Studying Mandarin and exploring the local culture were an important aspect of his adaptation, and he learned about the lives of his students outside of school. He also worked for a private learning company writing a curriculum for college readiness. Those experiences prepared him for next steps in his career. After he completed the M.A. program, he became an EFL teacher in a prestigious international program at a large public high school, School #3 (pseudonym).

The students at School #3 are different from students in most public high schools in China because they do not take the gao kao (college entrance exam) because they matriculate at

universities in the U.S., Europe, or the United Kingdom. Michael teaches a course on college readiness to 10th and 11th grade students. In his course he focuses on skills that students need in university i.e. strategic reading, academic writing, research, and presentation skills.

Through his academic coursework and life experiences Michael has accumulated a skill set that equips him well for living and working in China. Although this tall, blue-eyed, young man stands out in a crowd of local Chinese people, he has adjusted well to his lifestyle in China. His knowledge of Mandarin and awareness of his students' lives outside of the classroom are invaluable to his ability to create curricula that are relevant; and, his adaptation to local culture and cross-cultural perspective have facilitated his ability to teach EFL students.

My response to Michael's narrative. Michael was the only participant that I have met in person. I met him through a network of educators in China, and I had an opportunity to talk with him several times before the interviews for the study. When I first met Michael and learned that he could speak Mandarin I was impressed and curious about his story. When I told him that I was a doctoral student working on my prospectus, he wanted to know more because he is planning to pursue a Ph.D. in the near future. Michael is very talkative and had plenty to share about his experiences in China. His demeanor and openness made it easy to approach our conversations. We began our discussions in the early stages of the COVID outbreak while each of us was quarantined in separate parts of China. Because Michael studied the history of Southeast Asia and Mandarin language, he had a deeper understanding of the socio-historic context of ELT in China than the other participants. He was the only participant that brought the privileging of expatriate teachers into our conversation, he was also keenly aware of the tensions between local teachers and expatriate teachers.

My experience as an EFL teacher was different from Michael's because he was in a Master's program specifically designed for teaching EFL in China. I was impressed with his level of knowledge and his interest in preparing his students for their futures. Michael was also the only teacher that expressed his feelings of being an outsider. When he told me a story about how he disrupted evening study in the library of the university where he studied abroad, I had a vivid image of this 6' tall, blue-eyed expatriate standing awkwardly after dropping his backpack and attracting the attention of the students who were all silently studying. I remembered many times when I felt the discomfort of being the only "white face" at an event and drawing attention. I also remembered that my son, who is also tall and blue-eyed attracted the adoration of complete strangers on many occasions because of his appearance. Michael worked in a public school setting and our stories were similar in many ways. We were both sensitive to the elevated, yet unearned, status of being a foreign expert and talked about how we dealt with the discomfort that we felt about it. After our quarantines, I returned to the U.S. and Michael remained in China. At the beginning of our third interview he shared the happy news that he married his long-time girlfriend and was visiting her family in its hometown. He was exuberant in his joy and hopefulness for the future. It was a touching moment that still makes me tear up when I think of it now. In spite of the differences in our ages and backgrounds, we developed a connection around our shared experiences and will continue to be in touch in the future.

Moses

Moses (pseudonym) is a male, of Chinese heritage, in his late 30's, born in the U.S, and has been teaching English in China for three years. He attended a university in the southeastern United States and earned a B.S. in Human and Organizational Development. After he graduated college, he taught for one year in Southeast Asia then returned to the United States and earned a

Masters in Theology (Th. M.) and a TESOL certificate. Next, he studied Mandarin in China for two years. Then he returned to the United States where he completed a M.A. TESOL program. He then came back to China and worked as an EFL teacher at the secondary and tertiary levels. Moses' love for learning encompasses academic studies and his interest in human development on personal and professional levels. The understandings that Moses developed through these pursuits, his Mandarin language skills, and his deeply personal connections to China have guided his journey as an EFL teacher.

Education and previous cross-cultural experiences. Moses is a fifth generation Chinese American who grew up in the northwestern region of the United States. He explained his upbringing,

> My parents, they don't-- my mom speaks Cantonese, but they both don't speak Mandarin. And so in some ways, they're Chinese. My dad grows winter melon and bitter melon. It's kind of like some of the foods-- I don't know, they kept some of that stuff. But other things, they're very American (Moses, 2020, Interview 1, Lines 137-141).

> I guess my knowledge probably came more from growing up in a kind of Chinese American church. We would celebrate Chinese New Year and just being in that kind of context, it taught me more kind of how Chinese interact socially. Chinese cultural values. Calling people like uncle or auntie or reciprocity, politeness (Lines 165-170).

Upon his graduation from high school, he traveled to a country in Southeast Asia with a group from the church to gain a better understanding of his culture. His experience there had a profound influence on him. He explained, “that really shifted the direction of my life looking back and opened me up culturally to this whole Chinese side of myself that I had been ignoring”

(Moses, 2020, Interview 1, Lines 125-126). So, after college graduation he returned to China for a year.

His first year of teaching and living abroad was a formative time for Moses. As a first-year teacher, he discovered his appreciation for life on a middle school campus that was full of energy and remembered the friendliness and curiosity of the students fondly. Teaching oral English to 10th and 12th grade students he recognized the value of learning about the culture and language from his students, "I loved being on a campus, full of life, getting to interact with curious, friendly students all day, and learning about their culture and language even as I shared mine." (Moses, August 10, 2020, personal correspondence)

Moses then returned to the United States and matriculated in a program for a Masters of Theology (Th.M.). He pursued this degree to develop a "deeper understanding of life's deepest philosophical questions of existence and meaning" (Moses, 2020, personal correspondence). He believed that his studies would facilitate his personal growth and equip him to guide others in their journey to determine what really matters in life. Moses believed that this academically rigorous program that required research, academic writing, and learning Biblical Hebrew and Koine Greek cultivated his abilities as a teacher. During this period, Moses enjoyed working as a youth worker. He gained understanding of their psychology and development by teaching and communicating with youth. Moses found that these experiences benefited him when he became a classroom teacher.

Experiences in China. Moses' experiences in Southeast Asia compelled him to re-connect with the Chinese part of his identity. He moved to China in 2013 to work with youth but did not know the language so he studied Mandarin for two years. He was working in program at his church, an English language café, when he met the woman that would become his wife,

Shelley (pseudonym). On the day they met, Moses knew that she would be the woman he would marry.

> …we started dating, and then her parents invited me over for Chinese New Year. And so that was my kind of first experience in the kind of Chinese countryside. And they live in a small mountain town… And I kind of just did everything wrong that I didn't mean to do. I brought a ton of gifts for them, but I brought kind of the wrong gifts… I thought her mom really liked me and her dad too, because they're very hospitable… and so. they actually asked us to break up when I was there. Yeah, because of our age difference - I'm nine years older - and then our cultural difference. And at that point, too, I didn't speak Chinese. I didn't have a job. I get it. I understand. And then their daughter is just a sophomore in college, so. And then the third reason was-- and then they don't speak English so it was hard for us to communicate at that point. Their daughter was the first one to leave the province for their family and go to Beijing and have a full scholarship. And they had kind of big dreams for her, and I wasn't part of that dream. So that in itself was a big cultural experience for me. So, we actually did break up sort of for a month or two. And as I realized that she was very kind of set in her mind-- and we had some really good friends that supported us…and who kind of helped give her perspective about how from our point of view, her parents' reasons made sense, but we'd say they weren't biblical; they were cultural. And so even though her parents are Christians... when it came down to something so personal like that, their cultural values really took over, which is understandable. We all have those deep-seated cultural values. But at the same time, we felt like we're not called to live by cultural values but by biblical values. And so

> it was hard for her to balance. We were trying respect her parents. But then also, there was nothing wrong between us. (Moses, 2020, Interview 4, Lines 171-192)

The couple was able to see the situation from her parents' point of view but at the same time felt they were "not called to live by cultural values but by biblical values" (Moses, 2020, Interview 4, Line 190). Moses explained, that as his Chinese improved and he got a job; and, Shelley continued to be successful in school, her parents accepted their relationship. Now, the couple's annual visits to her hometown continue to be a source of learning for Moses. They are expecting their first child in November.

When Moses and Shelley returned to the United States in 2017 to be married, he also earned a Master's in TESOL. For the practicum in this program he taught at a high school in a large immigrant community with a diverse student population. Moses taught an ESL class with two other teachers. His students came from Mexico, and countries in Africa, Asia, and South America. And they had a wide range of English language skills. He described the diversity as "eye-opening" (Moses, 2020, Interview 1, Line 135) in contrast to the classes he teaches in China where his students have a shared cultural heritage. After earning his M.A. in TESOL, Moses returned to China and began to teach. He wanted to work at a public school in order to see what life is like for mainstream Chinese youth. Moses taught: conversational English to 7th and 8th grade students; and Psychology and Life Skills to 11th grade students at a school in a Tier 1 city. He found his study of Mandarin helped in the classroom. He could use his students' L1 when he needed to communicate concepts and knowing their L1 also enabled him to relate to them on a deeper level.

> I guess it depends on the level of the students and for me I like to use a little Chinese in the classroom. I think there's pros and cons with it. I think the pros are that it creates

> some camaraderie with students. To kind of to make jokes and to kind of build a little rapport with students and on, also use it for teaching purposes. (Moses, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 202-206)

Moses' experiences in cross-cultural learning range from academic to personal to professional. He viewed his knowledge of Mandarin as foundational to his approach to EFL teaching. Also, because his wife was a product of the Chinese education system, she has been a valuable resource for him; he attributed much of his understanding of language and culture to his relationship with her.

My response to Moses' narrative. Moses was recruited for the study through a TESOL International discussion board. When I noticed that his family name is one that is common in China I was curious about how his experiences would compare to the other participants. During our first interview, Moses told me that he is a 5th generation Chinese-American and he felt that his relationship with his parents was influenced more by American culture than Chinese culture. I remember being relieved when he shared that with me because I was not sure how to approach the topic of his cultural background and his openness helped me feel comfortable with inquiring about cultural differences. I was interested in how his first experiences in China inspired him to learn more about his cultural heritage. As we talked more about his background, I learned that his experiences with cultural differences were similar to the other expatriate EFL teachers. Moses clearly has a passion for working with youth, and I really enjoyed hearing his stories about the ways he connects with students outside of the classroom. I laughed when he told me about taking some students visiting from Australia to a local restaurant where they tried a dish made from pigs brains, as I could relate to his enthusiasm for creating learning experiences for middle-school students that would be engaging and appealing to kids in that age group. I also

connected with his description of what he loves about teaching. As he talked about enjoying the energy that he feels when he walks onto the school campus, I was reminded of how much I loved walking from the teacher dorm to the classroom buildings and hearing the chatter of students as they headed to class.

During interviews 2 and 3, Moses was very structured in his approach as he responded to the trigger documents. He read the excerpts aloud and then shared his response. This was different from the other participants because our conversations did not go on tangents like my conversations with the other participants. However, during interview 4 our discussion became very personal as he talked about his relationship with his wife and how learning to navigate cultural differences with her family had been profound learning experiences for him. I was very moved by his disclosure because he felt comfortable in sharing something so personal. And, knowing that the couple was expecting a child soon it was heartwarming to think about the bond between them. At the end of the interview I asked Moses if he had any questions for me. And, to my surprise, he asked me to tell him about myself. He wanted to know, "Can I ask, are you married, do you have kids?" I was happy to share my experience with him. I told him the story of how my son and I had moved to Southeast China so that I could teach while my husband remained in the U.S.. I described our life on the high school campus and my son's experiences learning Mandarin. I proudly told him how local people were impressed with his pronunciation and that he was now continuing his education in the U.S. and would attend a university in the Pacific Northwest in the Fall. Coincidentally, the university is very close to the city where Moses was born so we talked about how exciting it would be for my son. I appreciated Moses' inquiry, I felt more connected to him after we shared some of our personal stories with each other and I look forward to talking more with him in the future.

Reflections on Interim Texts

This section explicates my approach to interpreting our conversations about the trigger documents. For each document, I provide the context followed by the text of the triggers. Next, I share the participants' individual responses. In the following sections the cross-analysis and my reflections are presented. These sections are followed by a discussion of differences in our responses and a summary.

Trigger document 1 context. I chose these excerpts as triggers because use of the students' L1 (Chinese) in the classroom and the expatriates teachers' ability to meet the needs of their students were frequently noted in my journals. In the program where I worked, there were many tensions related to the use of the students' L1. The academic director was a Chinese national who was educated and taught in the U.S. for most of his adult life. He was adamant about having an "English only" learning environment. However, each of the expatriate teachers used their own approach and some were able to communicate in the students' L1. I did not restrict the students from using their L1 for two reasons: (1) students supporting each other through the use of their L1 facilitated learning, and; (2) I felt that exerting power over my students by suppressing their language usage would be detrimental to my relationships with them. Learning how to teach in my new environment was a daily challenge for me because of my lack of professional training in second language teaching and learning and I found that developing relationships with the students and local people increased my understanding of the students' learning needs. The teachers' responses to the triggers that follow indicated their sensitivity to the needs of their students and awareness of EFL strategies.

The theme for these triggers was teaching practices: homework assignments, scaffolding, use of students' L1 in the classroom, teacher preparation, and local school context.

> *From my journal #7* - Brant (Algebra 1, Physics, Calculus teacher) just came into the office during the break between classes and told me that he threatened the Sr. 2 students because their homework is not up to his standard. Brant has high expectations for the students but he doesn't provide the scaffolding to get them there. He says that they are make careless errors because they are used to getting A's in spite of their errors… He assigned them a 500-word essay on "Why 1 + 1 = 2". The students are complaining about the amount of homework that Brant assigns. The ELA teacher is also complaining because the students are spending most of their time on Brant's homework. Tonight, Andy (academic officer) told me that each teacher can give up to 1.5 hours per night. I pointed out that evening study period is only 3 hours long and they have 4 courses taught by expatriate teachers. His response was that the students need to learn to study faster. At our team meeting yesterday I brought up the homework issue. Brant says he has lightened the load and seemed open to how much work he is assigning. He also approached me after the meeting to ask me about scaffolding the essay on "Why 1 + 1 = 2" Brant said he had a meeting with Scott (Sr. 2 student) last night and learned three things: (1) Scott does not like him; (2) he does not like the course; (3) his refusal to participate in class is his way of protesting. Andy came into the office and told Brant, "We have a problem. You need to give the students an example of what you want when you tell them that their work is not up to your standards." Brant responded, "But they know how to do this, they just don't do it." Andy replied, "I know but you still have to do it." Shelley (program assistant) told Brant that the parents want to know what can be done to help their

children. Brant told her that they need to work harder and that they need to improve their *English.*

From my journal #9 - The ELA teacher announced that the Sr. 2 students now have a "self-imposed" rule, they agreed to pay a fine of 1 RMB for speaking Chinese. (ELA teacher, "I guess it comes from me giving them a hard time and telling them that the Sr. 1 students are better English speakers).

From my journal # 10 - Today I went into the Sr. 2 classroom to get a map during Physics class. Brant (teacher) was speaking in Chinese to the students!

From my journal #3 - AB High School students have very low English levels and the teachers are really struggling with how to teach them. Lillian, the physics teacher, has no background in education. Most of the teachers, with the exception of the math teacher, Jack, don't have the years of classroom experience that could help them to figure it out. Jack asked me why the parents don't do something about the teachers' inability to meet the needs of the students, my guess is that they aren't aware of the program's internal problems. Sam, an ELA teacher, said that he has thought about breaking his contract because he is so frustrated but it would cost him $1000… Side conversation with Lillian: She is spending a lot of time teaching basic English structure in her math and physics courses. She also worries about what will happen when the students get to the U.S. – I shared with her that I felt that same intense anxiety during my first year.

From my journal #8 - The Sr. 1 students and their parents are complaining about the workload in the WeChat group. When Michael (program assistant) told me about the complaints he observed that the students are not accustomed to the way the expatriate teachers assign homework. He explained that the Chinese teachers' assignments are clear

to the students because they have a booklet that includes the content and the assignment so the students understand what is expected of them. The students don't understand what the expatriate teachers expect of them when we say they should "read and review" the materials.

Participants' responses to trigger 1 document.

Claire. Claire's responses to my journal entries in Trigger 1 revealed her professional knowledge and her beliefs about ESL/EFL pedagogy. Also, her responses reflected differences in her experiences at the international school and the public schools where the other participants worked.

Homework. Claire explained how the local school context determined the amount of time that students spent on homework. Students frequently complained about having a lot of homework but their workload was not as heavy as what is assigned in the Chinese public schools. The school did not have a policy about the amount or type of homework to assign, nonetheless the students' International Baccalaureate (IB) and Advanced Placement (AP) coursework required them to work outside of class time. Her insight into the needs of ELL students was evident in her response, as she observed that the assignments may be more time consuming for students because of their limited language proficiency. Her response also demonstrated that her beliefs about instruction and the developmental needs of the students influenced her approach to teaching. Claire's approach was focused on students' mastery of the curriculum and she clearly believed that homework was not essential to meeting this goal. She expressed strong opposition to overburdening students with homework, and she supported students' need to relax and unwind after school. She valued students having time to reflect, listen to music, and spend time with their families. As a result, the work she assigned could be finished

during class and the students read novels independently for homework. When she learned that the parents of her students had differing views on the amount of homework assigned she provided optional assignments.

Use of students' L1. The school's philosophy emphasized ELT in all courses and Claire established the expectation that her students use only English in her class. However, she supported students' use of their L1 in school outside of class to interact. She felt that it would be wrong to fine the students or restrict them from using their first language at school.

Local context for teaching. Claire felt that my journal entries about the teachers struggling to teach students with low levels of proficiency in English indicated that there may have been a problem with school leadership, and that there may be a disconnect between practices and the school's goals. She offered several suggestions for addressing the problems presented in my journal entries. Claire observed that the leadership could reevaluate admission standards to determine whether the students were a good fit for their program. She also felt that hiring practices may not be congruent with the school's mission. Claire felt that professional development for the teachers, and policies that establish classroom practices and establish learning goals could address the teachers' concerns. These responses demonstrated her learning through her previous experiences, teacher education program, and professional learning communities.

Michael. Michael's responses to these journal entries revealed his focus on building relationships with students and his interest in the culture. His knowledge of educational policies in China influenced his perspective on problems experienced by expatriate teachers.

Homework. Michael observed that student complaints about homework overload were common in China. He said teachers should not take things personally when students do not

engage in their courses because it causes friction with the students. Michael's response focused on building relationships with students rather than the amount or type of homework to assign. He predicted that Brant's (physics teacher) approach to motivating the students would not be effective because he was taking their resistance personally and pushing the students too hard. Michael felt that building relationships with students by showing them respect and recognizing their need to be independent was a more effective way to engage them in learning.

Use of students' L1. Michael was clear in his belief in the benefits of using the students' L1 in the classroom. He said that it should not be relied on but he found that speaking Mandarin to the students was useful for confirming understanding and explaining complex concepts. He also converses with the students in their L1 to engage students and add a bit of familiarity. He also felt that his attempts at speaking Mandarin boosted the students' confidence in their English. He explained that he believes that it is important to show some vulnerability with his students so he uses his imperfect Mandarin to try to communicate with them to normalize their struggles in learning English. Michael's fascination with the language was his initial reason for studying it, his pride in the history of Mandarin language was evident. He found having a basic level of understanding to be essential to career advancement in China; and, he also emphasized the importance of local language in navigating professional transactions,

Local context for teaching. In response to my entry on the teachers' lack of experience and their frustrations with their teaching environments, Michael observed tensions at the local school level due to an absence of national policies on ELT. He explained that the lack of cohesive hiring practices and curriculum support for schools create problems in local schools that make it difficult to recruit and retain teachers which ultimately impacts the quality of education for the students.

Moses. Moses' response to my journal entries in trigger 1 are representative of his emphasis on building relationships with his students and his appreciation for the use of the students' L1. He also observed how educational goals are reflected in different approaches to teaching.

Homework. When his students complained about the amount of homework in his class, he made an adjustment so that it was more reasonable for them; and, he recognized that he benefitted from the change because he spent less time on grading. Moses observed that Brant (physics teacher) didn't really seem to like the students because of the way he interacted with them. He also noted that being satisfied with your job is related to your relationships with students and found this to be especially important in teaching because it directly affects the students' learning. He questioned Brant's lack of compassion for the students as they struggled to complete his assignments. Moses' observation that Brant may have been the linguistic expert in the classroom but he was a linguistic outsider when he went off campus and therefore should be more understanding exemplified his empathy for the students. His commitment to the students was reflected in his responses to my journal entry about students not understanding the assignments and Brant's approach to motivating the students. Moses related to Brant's high expectations for the students. However, he disagreed with Brant's approach to motivating the students through fear and increased workload. Moses was clear about the importance of seeing the potential in his students. He also felt it was his responsibility to support his students' learning and discussed how he scaffolded instruction.

Use of students' L1. Moses recognized the importance of knowing the students' L1 and studied Mandarin before he began to teach English. His response to my journal entries about the use of the students' L1 in the classroom indicated that he believed it could be used to accelerate

learning and explain complex concepts, however he also found it was important to limit students use of L1 if they were capable of using English. Moses also talked about how he built rapport with his students by talking and joking with them in Mandarin.

Local school context. In response to my journal entry about the students not understanding the way that the expatriate teachers assigned homework Moses contrasted the teaching practices in China that prepare students for exams to his approach to teaching language. He explained that the textbooks in China are structured so the students are clear on what is expected, and the assignments are preparing the students for exams through memorization of information. On the other hand, he assigns work that show their ability to produce English that requires creativity and critical thinking because his learning goal for the students is to develop their ability to communicate for practical purposes.

Cross analysis of participants' responses to trigger 1 document. The cross-analysis began with two themes from my journal excerpts, homework and use of the students' L1. During my analysis a third theme, local school context, evolved. The participants' responses to this trigger document indicated they were committed to providing quality instruction that meets the needs of their students, they valued the use of students' L1 in and outside of the classroom, and the participants believed that local school context affected expatriate teachers' experiences.

Homework. On the topic of homework, the participants' responses indicated their knowledge of ELT practices and attention to their interactions with the students. The participants discussed: providing authentic, relevant learning activities; scaffolding instruction; attending to the well-being of the students, and developmentally appropriate ways of motivating students.

The comments below show that the teachers' beliefs and values and their approaches to teaching are connected.

- Their awareness of providing authentic, relevant language learning activities:

  And what I mean by more valuable is assignments that would show their ability to produce English in forms that require more creativity, critical thinking, or practical use in a communicative context (Moses, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 307-310).

  There's some best practices out there, that say that homework is not really effective and especially stupid homework like just worksheets or like this teacher's assignment to write an essay about some dumb math problem and-- I mean, I don't agree with it at all. And I have lots of students writing a persuasive unit writing unit and a lot of them have brought up these issues in my class, but-- it hurts students' mental health to do so much homework (Claire, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 71-75).

- The need for scaffolding to facilitate student success;

  But I found that for my eleventh graders, I would try to give them those kinds of assignments, but then there's less structure. Because I'm trying to give them more freedom because-- so let me try to think of an example. I don't know. Like if we're doing a unit on goal-setting, and we talk about, "Write five goals," or, actually, I had them write 50 goals, and then I would give them-- so if I just say, "Write 50 goals," like lifetime goals, things that you want to accomplish, then-- okay. That probably requires more creativity. It probably requires more thinking. And it's hopefully more useful for them because it's in their-- because it's

something that applies to them. It gives them more freedom in terms of they can write whatever they want. So it hopefully gets them more motivated. But then, on the flip side, there's not a lot of structure with that assignment. And so then the same complaints could arise in this example. They're just like, "We don't know how to do that, how do we do that?" So then there's things that I as a teacher can do to help with that, such as give them an example, give them several examples, give them different categories of goals-- things like maybe academic goals or physical fitness goals or mental knowledge goals or goals related to your interpersonal relationships or family, places you want to travel, right-- and then so hopefully, that will give them-- I can give them a little bit more guidelines, like, "Each goal needs to be a--" I don't know, a complete sentence or something like that (Moses, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 311-327).

Oh, teachers not familiar with second language learning, was another comment I had about that. I think not understanding some of those issues. And then, of course, the students being difficult because their teacher is difficult. Like, when that one teacher, it's really useless assignment that didn't anything to do with really their learning, and then wondered why there were behavioral issues or students didn't care about their class or their subjects (Claire, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 36-40).

- Attentiveness to the well-being of the students:

  The sentence, “he has high expectations for students but doesn't provide scaffolding to get them there”. I think that pretty much sums up the whole situation. And not just doesn't provide scaffolding but doesn't seem willing to

provide scaffolding. And he said they make careless errors, they're used to getting A's in spite of their errors, right? I mean, I think we all agree it's good to have high expectations for students, but hopefully, it's kind of from the perspective that we can have expectations for them that we do see potential in them that they don't see in themselves. And so, we see that they can do something better, that they can perform at a higher level than even they themselves are expecting that they can do. But along with that is a commitment to help them to get there step by step. And that's where the scaffolding comes in (Moses, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 28-38).

So I feel it's really sad and burdening of students. These are kids. Kids should have free time and in my mind, time to think and listen to music and relax and spend time with their families. I think that I design my work that if you work and focus, you can finish is in class. That's how I feel, like you shouldn't work too much outside of the classroom. But I do have books, novels assigned, and reading, but spread over long periods. But I think people overwhelm students with homework that they think it's effective, that they think it's good for them. I don't think so (Claire, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 57-64).

A lot of parents expected a lot of homework, and they thought that made it really rigorous for their students, and, then, others didn't like homework at all, so it was kind of difficult to work with each family individually. One thought you should have a lot of homework and maybe their child could or could not deal with it, and another felt like totally the opposite way. I don't know. When I was there, I always said, "You can do homework. If you want more homework, you can do it.

Here's what you need to do: read these books and do this short story thing." And some students would do it all the time, and others never did it. I think it's an option (Claire, 2020, Interview 2, Lines, 169-177).

- Developmentally appropriate approaches to motivating students:

  I have older students that I work with but trying to treat them as adults and giving them that benefit of the doubt right away. And help earn more respect or more kind of relationship with them and that like they will choose to be more actively engaged with your class (Michael, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 39-42).

  So I think more at the secondary level-- I don't care about homework. I care about our curriculum. We call it TSWs kind of goals of what they have to master. That's all I care about. So, I want to see that you can do this. If you can do it in class and show it me, great. If it takes you a week to do it, then we still have to do it. If it takes you five months, I still need to see that you can master that or else I can't say you mastered this human or whatever. So it's up to you how quickly or slowly or how much you procrastinate. I mean, sometimes that happens (Claire, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 179-186).

Use of students' L1. Also, in their responses to trigger 1, the participants' responses indicated their awareness of the challenges faced by their students, a focus on building relationships with their students, and their understanding of the EFL/ESL teaching practices. The participants discussed: students' challenges in L2 learning; their efforts to build relationships with their students; the value of using the students' L1 in the classroom; the benefits of knowing the students' L1; and, scaffolding instruction. The comments below show how the teachers' beliefs and values are connected to their approaches to teaching.

- They empathized with the challenges students faced in L2 learning: He's the one who has the big gap deficiency in knowledge and language. And so, I don't know. You'd hope that-- it doesn't happen but the hope is that, that experience could give him more empathy when he's in the expert position (Moses, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 152-154).

  But I think some students might feel they have a lot of homework because they're learning English, and they have to work on things longer or spend more time on it, right? Or they're not really used to reading a novel, so now it takes longer because they're not good readers. So I think with the eight classes, they may feel like it's piling up because these students take really high math, so there's more homework, and it's more intense. And the English issues might, for some, make their work take longer. And we have AP Physics and these classes that they have to focus on more at home or Chinese for the non-native students for whatever (Claire, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 134-142).

- They worked to develop connections with students through use of their L1:

  And I guess it reminds me of what is a philosophy of using students-- when students share a mother tongue, what is the philosophy of using that mother tongue in the classroom? And like you said some teachers say, "Don't use it at all," because we're doing English immersion and such. I guess it depends on the level of the students and for me I like to use a little Chinese in the classroom. I think there's pros and cons with it. I think the pros are that it creates some camaraderie with students. To kind of to make jokes and to kind of build a little

rapport with students and on, also use it for teaching purposes (Moses, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 199-206).

I think especially when I'm meeting new students one on one at the begining I try to incorporate Chinese in different ways to (1) make sure that they understand something that I'm talking about. (2) also show a bit of vulnerability and openness and that you Chinese person can hear my terrible Chinese and feel a little bit more comfortable about your own terrible English and that this is a place where our output is so important and trying to be just simply using the language as much as possible even if you aren't using it correctly or you're failing in some parts or in some areas but to show vulnerability…(Michael, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 133-142).

I think the pros are that it creates some camaraderie with students. To kind of to make jokes and to kind of build a little rapport with students..,(Moses, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 104-106).

- They saw value in using the students' L1 in the classroom:

  I personally believe that having a little bit of the native language in the classroom can be really helpful. It shouldn't be relied on but it can definitely be helpful in some instances too. For an explanation or two and make sure people are paying attention or to add a bit of familiarity to the students… We want to try to have as all target language environment as possible. But I am of a personal belief that it can be even like 80 20 as far as targeted language 80 percent 20 percent of native language can. Especially for those subject specific classes, it can be actually a helpful tool to use (Michael, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 70-79).

… also use it for teaching purposes. Sometimes it's just easier to give them the Chinese equivalent of a word or of an idea. It's like when I'm learning Chinese sometimes if the teacher knows an English phrase that just exactly captures that same idea or feeling. What's the word, not implication, but anyway, captures that same meaning, Connotation. And it can accelerate learning quite a bit. And yeah, so I don't put it as a hard and fast rule like no use of your mother tongue (Moses, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 208-212).

- They saw the benefits of knowing the students' L1:

  And then also with what specific parts of language are going to be hard for them to understand. So a great deal, a great mistake that Chinese people who have studied English for 30 years still make is him versus her or she versus he because in Chinese it's all the same character. Same pronunciation different character but in English you'll hear all the time like you know they're talking about mom who's using he or when they're talking about their girlfriend they're using he and Vice Versa. Knowing all the language that their native language is can help teach you a little bit of the things that would make difficult for them English. And also like past present and future tense is another one with a big one that like they don't have that in Chinese it's grammar structures that create that. (Michael, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 161-173).

- Scaffolding instruction was important:

  He needs to think about what he needs to do to adapt. And when he thinks about what he needs to do to adapt, does he need to speak slower? Does he need to list

> out vocabulary before the lesson? Or give it to them a week before? Or how he can scaffold (Moses, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 67-70).
>
> The level they're at is the level they're at. And so it's my job as the teacher-- if the standard is a five and they're only at a one, my job is just to get them to a two. Of course, I try to give them as much tips-- teaching them specialized vocabulary and test-taking strategies so that they can kind of get as many-- kind of have has much help as possible. But there is still no substitute for - I don't know - sustained practice over time. And so I will still spend the majority of the time scaffolding-- I help where they're at and then help trying to get them to the next level. And yeah. The good thing about some of the software that we had for students was that it was also scaffolded. And so we'd start the students with easy questions and then progressively get more difficult. And so that's the kind of thing you need (Moses, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 243-253).

Local school context. The participants' responses also indicated that the expatriate teachers saw connections between local school context and challenges faced by expatriate teachers. The participants discussed: education policy and practices; school leadership; and local culture of learning. The comments below show the participants' beliefs about the need for policies that are congruent with the learning goals for the students and support for expatriate teachers and their local liaisons. They also show how differences in cultures of learning present challenges for expatriate teachers.

- *Education policies and school practices are sources of tension for expatriate teachers:*

The other thing that I was going to say is your number three about all the teachers being inexperienced, or thinking about leaving ,or terrible working conditions . That, unfortunately, is the norm in China just because there is no standardized system for hiring for the most part and there's no national curriculum or national oversight of this or help with as far as H.R. and retaining ,you know retaining is the huge issue with schools in China an enormous issue… And for the most part, the majority of schools and the majority of those H.R. professionals at the schools who were foreign liaisons don't know how to work with foreigners; more demanding a lot more expectations, a lot less patience. So, because of that it creates this toxic blend. That toxic blend then creates difficult recruitment and impossible detainment efforts by the schools themselves, which impacts the students and the infrastructure of the school to have constant reshuffling. There is a reason why schools won't let "teacher candidates" talk to current teachers…they won't (usually) have good things to say. And I think this is a big problem for foreign teachers as they come to China (Michael, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 43-66).

I made a lot of comments about this one (#3). One comment I said, "Leadership should address these kinds of school issues." Another comment I said, "They need to assess their school's goals. And what's the learning material?" Those are some of the goals so is their school's goal to have students learn material information, or is it to graduate English speakers? So it seems like, I mean, it was just like such a small bit of information, but it made me think about there's some kind of problem going on, either with how the leadership is dealing with these

issues, how the teachers are struggling with them. And maybe they have some kind of disconnect about what the goals are for the school. Is it to introduce English to the students and just have a lot of practice and ability, improve their skills, or is to graduate really high-level fluent English speakers who can study and learn in English? Those are really different things. And I thought of-- they need to look at their admission standards. If it's so low and the teachers are struggling, either it's not a good fit for the teachers or the students aren't a good fit for the program. And, maybe do some teacher professional development, but how can these teachers-- what can they do day-to-day? How can they work with what they have, and what's their goals, and should they be working on fluency in the classroom, fluency for different subjects (Claire, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 283-302)?

- *Local culture of learning presents challenges for expatriate teachers and their Chinese students:*

  When I taught seventh and eighth grade, then we were more out of a textbook. And when the textbook requires-- when you have that, then there's much more structure. And then the assignments are more out of the textbook. So, the advantage to that is that students have a lot more clarity about what they need to do. And then the downside is that students could be completing the assignments but not learning anything. And also, those assignments are generally just testing their ability to memorize and regurgitate information in the forms dictated by the textbook. So there's value in that, but you can usually find something more valuable. And what I mean by more valuable is assignments that would show

> their ability to produce English in forms that require more creativity, critical thinking, or practical use in a communicative context (Moses, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 298-309).

Reflections on cross analysis of trigger 1 responses. The participants' responses and my experiences demonstrated the tensions residing in cultural differences. The use of the students' L1 for instruction posed a number of dilemmas. Expectations for students to communicate exclusively in the target language were varied. Approaches to teaching were related to beliefs about language teaching pedagogy, the expatriate teachers' knowledge of the students' L1 and culture, and the local school culture. The expatriate teachers capable of using the students' L1 actively incorporated it in their instruction. Discussions of homework showed that the expatriate teachers tried to attend to the needs of their students by scaffolding and providing authentic, relevant learning experiences. I found scaffolding instruction, especially building background information and using multiple modalities of instruction were key to developing understanding. Discussions of homework and the use of the students' L1 in the classroom indicated that all of the expatriate teachers empathized with the students' challenges in learning the target language. There were differences in how the expatriate teachers approached building relationships with their students. Both Michael and Moses, used their knowledge of the students' L1 to connect with the students in the classroom. Moses and I engaged in activities outside of the classroom to build relationships with our students. Each of the expatriate teachers expressed sensitivity to the developmental needs of the students and there were a variety of approaches to this as well.

The teachers' responses revealed differences between their experiences and my experiences described in the trigger documents:

- Only one teacher stated that his students complained about the amount of homework in his class; however, they were all aware that students complained about heavy homework loads (Note: that teacher adjusted the amount of homework that he assigned in response to their complaints).
- One teacher spoke extensively about her belief in the importance of students having balance in their lives, the work that she assigned was intentionally designed so that students could complete the assignments during class. She assigned novels for them to read outside of class. She believed that students needed time for interests outside of school for example listening to music and spending time with their families.

Our experiences as expatriate EFL teachers in China indicated the importance of culture in ELT. Conversations with the participants showed how approaches to teaching were connected to participants' education and experiences, understanding of local culture, and the local school context. We worked to provide instruction that met the academic needs of our students, at the same time we recognized the need to meet their socio-emotional needs. We addressed those needs in a variety of ways, knowledge of Mandarin, local school context, and teacher education were key factors in our approaches. Finally, tensions occurred when expatriate teachers lacked understanding of local cultures of learning and/or EFL teacher training.

Trigger document 2 context. I chose these excerpts as triggers because in the program where I taught, the tensions around cultural differences, particularly related to school-based practices and language, were a common cause of stress for all of the expatriate teachers. I began working in the program without any knowledge of the school culture, and our local liaison was equally unprepared in terms of her understanding of our previous educational experiences, Many of the frustrations that we experienced could have been mitigated if we had a deeper understanding of each other's cultures. Building relationships with the local teachers was difficult even though many of them spoke English we did not communicate well and rarely socialized. I experienced a deep sense of loss over this. During our third year this changed to some extent; however, I believe that the teachers and the students would have benefitted from better cross-cultural communication and understanding. At the same time, my relationships with local people outside of the school environment were a tremendous source of support and learning. I felt that the connections and interactions with local people were largely possible for my ability to adapt to our new environment. I was curious about whether other expatriate teachers had similar experiences.

The themes for these triggers were cultural dissonance, adaptation, school-based practices, relationships with local people, and isolation:

> *From my journal #4* - Dissonance - the school is highly structured yet bending, ignoring, and breaking the rules seem to be acceptable.
>
> From my journal #6 - The campus is pretty isolated considering that it is located in a large metropolitan area. The construction of the school was barely finished when we moved in and it is surrounded by high rise residential buildings that are still under

construction. I can see a small community from the balcony of our apartment, the roads are not paved and the buildings are run down and some are vacant… There are no shops, restaurants, or grocery stores within walking distance. We have to walk about 10 minutes to get to the metro/bus station, and the supermarket is a twenty-minute bus ride from there. I can't take a quick trip to the grocery store like I did in the U.S., we make about three trips to the supermarket each week because we can only buy as much as we can carry. The supermarket is a challenge in itself, as I don't recognize many of the products and I can't read the labels.

From my journal #2 - We said goodbye to Chloe (local friend) last night. She is off to graduate school, I am not sure how I would have survived China without her. I have learned so much from her about the culture, on a very personal level, from our relationship with Chloe. When she began teaching Chinese to Iain (my son) she took us to the state bookstore where we bought special paper and a brush so that he could learn to draw that characters in the same way that she had learned as a young girl. She told us how her grandfather had taught her the characters and that it is not only about the drawing them; the practice taught her focus, patience, and stillness. She felt that Iain needs to learn the culture in order to learn and understand the language…she did many things that helped us adjust to the physical aspects of living in China but we also traveled and spent time together socially, through our conversations I learned that connections are far more powerful than differences.

From my journal #1 - This week, the students had a week-long military training on campus. They began training at 7:00 a.m. and practiced marching drills until lunch when they took a two-hour break to eat and rest. After lunch they continued to practice drills

until the dinner break, and practiced again until 9:00. From our apartment I could hear their chants and cadences. The training was run by soldiers from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and it appeared to be grueling work under the hot sun. Tomorrow is the final exercise to show what they have accomplished but tonight's show was quite remarkable. Each class was expected to give a performance of some kind, they were all very enthusiastic and talent did not seem to be relevant. The gym was dark, the stage lights were bright, and the sound system was blaring. Having no understanding of the language I was relying on body language to interpret what was happening. The energy in the gym was far different from the militaristic activities that I had observed throughout the week. Most of the classes sang and some danced to popular Chinese songs; the students in the audience clapped and cheered after each performance. I was surprised when two groups presented comedic skits mocking their PLA trainers; however, the students, teachers, and soldiers laughed and applauded. The soldiers gave the final performance of the evening. Their traditional martial arts routine drew a standing ovation. Standing in the midst of the applauding students, I realized that they had a great deal of respect for their trainers and they had developed a bond during their week together. I began to feel the full weight of the circumstances and it was clear to me then that I was going to encounter many new and unexpected experiences here.

Participants' responses to trigger 2 document.

Claire. During our conversation about the trigger 2 document Claire and I found that our experiences were quite different. The differences were related to the local school contexts for our teaching, and Claire did not really connect to these journal entries.

Cultural dissonance. In some of the journal entries I wrote about the dissonances that I experienced around school-based practices. It was clear by the look on Claire's face that her experience did not match my entry about times when the rules didn't apply in the context of the school structure. That had not been an issue for her at the international school, which makes sense to me because the administrators were expatriates. She did say that inconsistency would have been problematic for her in a highly structured school, and that she would have left the school under those circumstances. Also, because she was not working in a public school, she had not observed the same school-based practices as me. She reflected on her previous experiences working in other countries, and she observed that group performances were common in those places. She also related the performances to the cultural practice in China of women dancing for exercise in unison in public spaces.

Adaptation. At first, I was surprised by her response to the entry about the isolation that I experienced and the challenges we faced adjusting to living on the school campus. Remarkably, she said that actually she felt it was more difficult to navigate her life in the U.S. than it was to live in China. However, in the U.S. she lives in a more remote area that does not have public transportation nor easy access to shopping. Her apartment in China was located in an area with large expatriate population and she found that transportation, shopping, and a variety of restaurants were nearby. Claire responded wistfully to the entry about my relationship with Chloe, saying she wished for someone as wonderful as Chloe. I was fortunate to have someone connected to my university that helped me establish some relationships with local people. It took longer to gain the confidence of my Chinese colleagues. After three years, Claire was beginning to form some relationships with local people who worked at her school. Claire has a calm, friendly demeanor and is very easy to talk to. She said that she learned about Chinese culture

through her conversations with her colleagues. She was also a support for a staff person who was struggling with her expatriate supervisor. It was clear that Claire viewed the woman as critical to the operation of the school and believed that the supervisor was making some missteps because she did not understand the culture. As we talked about her interactions with local people she commented that while she didn't have a local friend like Chloe, perhaps her combination of friendships would be the equivalent.

Michael. Michael had quite a bit to say about my journal entries in this trigger document. He observed that, although expatriate teachers in China have a variety of experiences, there were many common threads because of the strength of the culture.

Cultural dissonance. He observed that we had shared experiences of school-based practices but there were also commonalities in our cultural experiences outside of school. When he began teaching in China, Michael also had a very strong reaction to the students' participation in military training. He was quite young, not much older than his students, when he was sitting in his office on campus and saw them practicing drills all day long. He also commented on the comradery of the students and their PLA trainers at the final performance. In those moments, we both realized just how much we did not know about our new cultural environments.

Adaptation. When it came to feeling isolated he said he did not really experience that as much as I had. I think this was partly because of his location; but, he was part of a cohort of teachers that connected through social media on a regular basis and monthly professional learning sessions. So, he had a built-in support network. He wasn't as physically isolated either although he did say that getting to parts of the city with "Western things" required planning in advance. He felt that not having easy access to that part of the city was a positive aspect of his experience. He really enjoyed experiencing the local lifestyle. Shopping for vegetables at the

local market and eating the street food were opportunities to learn about the culture and talk to local people. He noted that the experiences of expatriate teachers are dependent on our school environment and working conditions, and those can contribute to the stress. He also believes that when teachers can be flexible, it is easier to navigate tensions. Michael's knowledge of the cultural-historical context influenced his perspective on situations, such as queueing in line, that could be frustrating. That knowledge seems to inform the way he approaches teaching as well; while he acknowledges the value of his patience and flexibility, he appreciates the quality of his work environments as important to his success.

Moses. Moses approached our conversations about the trigger documents in an organized way, he read each excerpt aloud before responding, therefore his responses were directly connected to my journal entries. Perhaps his approach was the reason that many of his responses resonated with me.

Cultural dissonances. He started this conversation without the entry about dissonance. He had a similar reaction when his class was cancelled for other school events. The school administrator asked his permission but he felt like he could not really refuse. I laughed to myself when he said that as I remembered being asked about something and then realizing that my opinion did not influence the decision. He saw the structure as a necessity for giving the outward appearances of being highly organized and efficient, at the same time it was understood that there would be some flexibility for practical reasons .He is not a rule follower, and, generally, he was fine with the rules being flexible. However, there were times, for example employment contracts, that he found uncomfortable. The teaching contracts in China follow a format specified by the government and are relatively vague. The lack of specificity leaves them open for interpretation and that can create tension around holidays and work schedules which are

sensitive topics for expatriate teachers. Moses described his experience with the tension that he faced with the curriculum. He was given the freedom to create his own curriculum but that also meant that he didn't get any support and often had to figure out how to do things on his own.

Adaptation. Moses had a similar approach to learning to adapt to life off-campus and felt that those were challenges that everybody has to find whatever works best for them. He acknowledged the difficulties presented by the language barrier particularly with reading the characters but he saw adventure in figuring out what to buy at the supermarket. My journal entry about Chloe really resonated with Moses, he said he wishes that for every person coming to China from another country. He also appreciated the value of cultural exchange for the local people. His response to the school-base activities was very positive. His observations on the military training were similar to mine. He really liked seeing the relationships between the students and their PLA trainers because it showed a different view from what we see in Western media. And, although the performances pre-empted his classes at times, he appreciated them as times when students and teachers could relax and show a different side of themselves.

Cross analysis of participants' responses to trigger 2 document.

The participants' responses indicated that the participants working in public school programs experienced dissonances related to school-based practices. Their experiences adapting to local culture varied, while the participant working in an international program did not. Participants' responses also showed that the participants' approaches to navigating cultural differences was varied.

Cultural dissonance. The participants' responses to my journal entries on dissonance and school-based practices indicated that they had similar experiences. The participants discussed

dissonances related to school-based practices. The comments below reveal their reflections on navigating these tensions.

- Expatriate teachers in local schools were aware of the dissonance between the rule-driven, highly structured aspects of the schools and the inconsistency in adhering to the structure:

  So yeah is an interesting paradox between having a highly structured environment and yet there are certain rules that are definitely bent, ignored or broken. I guess they would consider them flexible (Moses, 2020, Interview 3, Lines 44-46).

  Once I realized that had to write my curriculum and I was able to choose the times and days my classes were to happen, which now I realize is unheard of, there wasn't much. The only rule was in the spring semester I wanted to wear shorts. The class was so hot and they were just adamant, “you cannot wear shorts, you cannot wear shorts, you cannot wear shorts.” And so, I didn't wear shorts anymore but I had my own fan that I would bring into every class room and just standing there all day, and they were ok with that. And I was like checked out and done, and I was like OK whatever like you want to really do this. That honestly was the biggest rule. But so that one is this hard to me to kind of resonate with because just now I know how common that is. And things can be very political as far as like making rules and stuff. That if you have enough influence you can kind of do whatever you want. And if you don't accept that it's one of those things that just will eat you up and spit you out (Michael, 2020, Interview 3, Lines 322-334).

- Dissonances resulted in understanding of and appreciation for local culture:

And those talent shows-- were similar, I guess, in atmosphere to what you describe here. Where teachers would-- so students would perform, and there would be auditions, and then they would perform. But then teachers would also perform. And it was like a socially acceptable time for everyone to kind of let their hair down. And then they had to be chosen. And there's some amazing talented students who have these gifts that come out at these shows. And aspects of their personality that come out that you never know from the classroom. But I think yeah, it can be very cathartic. The outward kind of atmosphere-- persona. Maybe some of these teachers and students is they're very strict and very serious about their studies. Which is true, but and it's-- you get to kind of see this peek behind the window deal. And I think it's very cathartic for everyone. And they're all human. And then I also found too, the great thing about those shows is that at least from my point of view, I didn't see any kind of-- it was very supported. I didn't see any kind of sneering or making fun of people or any kind of-- what's the word? Malevolent? Malicious humor? It was all in good humor (Moses, 2020, Interview 3, Lines 379-391).

It's very cool to kind of see that kind of relationship transpire. Which is in such opposition to sometimes the view that we get of military training and the Army in general from media (Moses, 2020, Interview 3, Lines 353-356).

And it's like my first five weeks I have like one or two classes that I teach a couple of times a week so it's like eight hours of teaching. So I’m in the teachers office and I'm 22 and I'm fresh from the US and I'm watching the PLA army do all of their marches and everything, and “whoa this is crazy, there's so much I

> don't know." And then they also did a presentation like this and just kind of mesmerized by it all (Michael, 2020, Interview 3, Lines 188-191).

Adaptation. The participants' responses to my journal entries on navigating daily living in China indicated they found that being able to communicate in Mandarin was essential and that their relationships with local people supported them in navigating local culture. The participants discussed the language barrier, local living, and the importance of relationships with local people. The comments below show the importance of communicating in Mandarin, the participants' approaches to navigating the language barrier, and the ways in which the participants' relationships with local people facilitated their adaptation.

- The language barrier created a significant challenge for navigating daily life:

  > The language because we're not speaking Chinese…so I guess when it's something medical or dental and the English and Chinese come together, so I'm like hmm. So we started going to Hong Kong more often for that because they speak so much better English (Claire, 2020, Interview 1, Lines 268-269).

  > …you had your foreign liaison set you up. Your wai mai account it's your address; and your DiDi like your home and your work office; and obviously your bank account; and getting WeChat payments; and showing how that works; booking tickets and stuff you just do it on WeChat (Michael, 2020, Interview 3, Lines 314-318).

  > They can order things off of Taobao [laughter] in a couple of days, I don't know how to do it. And the postage is much cheaper than what used to, so there's definitely those advantages. But at the same time, that requires understanding how to use the interface that's all in Chinese. And then that also requires having a Chinese bank account that you can link to the Taobao. And so you need some help if you're not

fluent in the language, to accomplish getting set up. You got to be able to order things. It's online and take advantage of the things, which I think is the kind of high tech equivalent to what you're talking about (Moses, 2020, Interview 3, Lines 234-250).

- Learning to navigate the challenges of local living were viewed as adventures and opportunities for learning:

  I had to buy my vegetables from the farmers market and learn the different names for the vegetables and the ladies would recognize me, and you know I clearly, don't belong and was kind of confused and they would kind of try to convince me, buy my broccolli. So I learned to kind of appreciate that and I had a lot of street food options around me so that was really cool with the vendors and like sitting on plastic chairs (Michael, 2020, Interview 3, Lines 209-213.

  Number six on not being able to read the labels. I think that's all cultural things. I actually really enjoyed going to the-- enjoy going to the supermarket in China. I mean, definitely the pros and cons-- the cons is, yeah, sometimes I can't read the labels. But then the pro is, it's always an adventure because there's tons of stuff in there. And it's like just looking around and there's all kinds of stuff I haven't seen before (Moses, 2020, Interview 3, Lines 243-249).

  I think what you have to always remind yourself is how enormous this country is and how ambitious it is and how much has changed. It's 30 years or 40 years I guess is 20 20 but since 1980. And if we can try to remember those things then you can understand what we may see as selfish is really a will to survive. And so be competitive and come out in front. And so I always say queing that's kind of one of

my biggest examples, standing in a straight line for things that just doesn't really exist. And you can get mad about it all you want but it's and it's not going to change. And I think if you embrace it and you understand it and you realize that there's things about your culture that might seem weird or the things that you don't like then you kind of get over it a little quicker and either just accept what it is. I mean I definitely have learned to budge in lines I've been there if I need to (Michael, 2020, Interview 3, Lines 341-352).

- Participants valued their relationships with local people:

  I understand that because learning to work with your Chinese colleagues can be amazing. And it's very beneficial to your teaching experience and your overall experience at that school and in China being able to have those people as resources and to guanxi with them, like I would help out in their classes and they would help out my classes. I think one of the easiest ways to connect with somebody is to engage with them by asking questions or asking for advice or asking for their perspective on things. So just showing a little bit of vulnerability with my Chinese colleagues, “oh how do you think you would do this in the classroom?” or offering help, “hey you know I would love to come in and talk to your students or I can participate with an oral English activity with you guys can be teaching assistants.” Chinese people really value hard work and putting in time and so showing like you know when they would come if my classes ended at two and theirs would end at five and they come into the teacher's office and I'm still there it would be very impressed like, “ Oh why are you still in there?” (Michael, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 328-354).

I had people that helped me in in China, especially right away. The things I guess I didn't realize how important that stuff was until I myself had left because those people didn't really leave before me. I didn't feel this understanding at that moment. But it's more of a hindsight thing of how helpful some of that stuff was. But it is completely true as far as having someone that you can rely on that is local Chinese that helps with all those things (Michael, 2020, Interview 3, Lines 273-278).

She was an older woman and she was like our director's assistant. And this director was a little bit difficult and new compared to-- there was a rotation in this year. And so we had this new director. And she was difficult. And so this woman and I would talk about how the school runs and kind of the Chinese way and the Chinese style. She would [inaudible] in this. And then say like, "This woman doesn't understand how you get things done here." And she doesn't understand how you treat people and how you treat Chinese people and the staff, and it seemed like part of it was a difficult director but part of it was this cultural information and then she was pretty articulate in English. So, we had these conversations about kind of like the business style of China. And where that would intersect with these foreigners kind of being in charge of this school. How things worked or didn't work. And how she was portrayed herself to the staff. And this woman's unhappiness with her job now, and. And she thought about quitting and so we would talk about this. And like, "Maybe you could have a meeting with her and explain to her about kind of the Chinese style and how it's not working and she's actually creating more problems (Claire, 2020, Interview 3, Lines 150-163).

- Participants' relationships with local people were opportunities for cultural exchange:

Before, as a single guy, I lived with Chinese roommates, with other guys. And that was fun, too, and an adventure. And in that way, learning takes place much more organically. For example, if we have common interests like basketball, we would watch Chinese basketball together and they would teach me Chinese terms. Not just the technical terms that you would learn in a book, like how to shoot or assist or rebound, but also things like, "Oh, we got our butt kicked. Look at that." Yeah. Or how to say, like, "That person's awesome." And then when I started dating my wife, and then they would teach me one phrase, "[foreign]," which is literally the old cow likes to eat the tender grass. But it kind of means you robbed the cradle because I'm nine years older than my wife --we would always get a laugh out of it. And we also, I remember, took a trip to Inner Mongolia and yeah, those travel experiences are wonderful memories as well. It was me and two other Chinese guys. And then another guy from Singapore. And we're just out in the grasslands and just riding horses and trying yak milk. And yeah, it's just fun. You experience new things together (Moses, 2020, Interview 3, Lines 311-333).

This one woman I would talk to her, she ran the café. We have a café in our school and I would talk to her about food things and terms and whatever. And she was young and liked to travel and we would talk. And then the office ladies, one was older, so we talked a lot about how things worked in China culturally. And then the other woman was really interested in – she had a young child and she would ask me about English teaching so we would kind of talk about that. And she was into health so we talked about pharmacies and health and natural healing. And then there was this other staff, she always invited us to cultural events…(Claire, 2020, Interview 3, Lines 133-139).

I wish that experience for every foreigner that comes to China, or any foreign country, and I think it's a very wonderful thing for both sides. That's the kind of ideal exchange of culture, language, knowledge and friendship I think a lot of times for single people in China who are away from their families, it's neat how, I'm assuming this is you. Yeah, and your family can

> provide kind of a surrogate family for them, and I mean, that's probably the best way to learn about a culture is to be embedded in someone's family from that culture. I think it's refreshing for them too, because sometimes western families, we can be more kind of open and affectionate, and casual, which they may not get if they are more from a traditional family. And so, once they kind of relax and loosen up, it's also very characteristic of American families I guess, if it's like a British family or something else, it's definitely not-- We are not the only culture, but for American families, it can be a really refreshing place and a refuge for them. And I can kind of see that in terms of her, the way that she kind of took ownership of teaching your son as if it was her son. Where it's not just a job or a task to finish, but it's something that she wanted to show him the right way to do it, like she learned. Which is such a precious thing (Moses, 2020, Interview 3, Lines 284-307).

Reflections on cross analysis of trigger 2 responses. The participants' responses and my experiences demonstrated tensions based on differences in cultures of learning as well as language-based tensions. Additionally, the importance of building relationships with local people was clear. Notably, the experiences of the expatriate teachers in public schools were different from the expatriate teacher in the international school. The tensions in school-based practices were similar for the expatriate teachers in public schools and were related to differences in Chinese and American cultures of learning. The dissonances that we experienced came from the juxtaposition of the authoritarian structure of the school and situations when the rules and/or structure were not applied. We all found that, while we were often frustrated, these were learning opportunities that increased our understanding of the local culture and also reshaped our thinking. Knowing, or not knowing, how to speak Mandarin was a critical part of how expatriates navigated life in China. Claire managed to operate independently to accomplish daily, routine activities without knowing the language; however, her ability to travel and receive

medical care was restricted. Michael, Moses, and I operated more independently, for example we had the freedom to travel around China, because of our ability to communicate in Mandarin. All of the expatriate teachers were clearly dependent on a local liaison or friend to complete complex business transactions. Communicating in the local language provided us with opportunities to interact with local people. My son and I found that simple daily activities such as bargaining with merchants, going to the local market to shop for food, and riding in a taxi were enriched by our ability to communicate with local people. The expatriate teachers connected with local people in a variety of ways depending on their personal circumstances, we all felt that our experiences were enhanced by those relationships. On a practical level, having local friends was beneficial to navigating new situations or situations that required reading or writing Mandarin. From a cultural perspective, we all felt that those relationships and the cross-cultural exchanges were mutually beneficial.

The participants' responses revealed differences in our experiences:

- The international school structure was more familiar to expatriate teachers, the administrators were also expatriates, and the school provided the teachers with support for their teaching and adaptation to living in China.
- The expatriate teachers' use of Mandarin language was varied. Moses and Michael developed their language skills well enough to interact with their students and navigate much of their daily living independently. My language skills were limited and I was able to rely on my son for communication. Claire did not learn to speak Mandarin.

The participants' responses indicated the expatriate teachers' cross-cultural experiences in public school settings were different from the experiences of the participant working in the international

school. As expatriate teachers in public school programs we experienced dissonances related to school-based practices. Additionally, our environments afforded us many opportunities for cross-cultural experiences while those opportunities were limited in the international school. Our reflection on dissonances resulted in understanding of and appreciation for local culture. Conversations with the participants showed that connections with local culture, especially learning Mandarin and relationships with local people, were keys to our adaptation

Themes

The major themes of the findings are drawn from the coding categories: teaching practices; local context; cross-cultural experiences; and beliefs and values. Acculturation -the learning process that occurred as the expatriate EFL teachers adjusted to their new environments in China - is the broad overarching theme that connects to all of these. Furthermore, I found that language, particularly the students' L1, was embedded in our acculturation both professionally and personally and these topics are addressed together. Finally, I found that comparing similarities and differences of our experiences did not capture the ambiguities in our responses and the complexities are explained separately.

Approaches to teaching. This topic was the most extensively discussed by the participants. We agreed that being flexible, able and willing to change to adapt to new circumstances, were critical to being a successful teacher in China; and, this is revealed in the discussions of teacher education, culturally responsive teaching, and building relationships with the students.

Teacher education. Each of the teachers had a different educational path that led them to China. My educational background was distinguished from the other teachers because I was not formally trained in TESL/TEFL. In addition, my pre-service teaching experience did not include working with ESL/EFL students. Michael's M.A. program was specifically designed for teaching

in China and he felt that it prepared him well. He also benefitted from the support of local staff, his connections with his cohort, and formal professional learning sessions. Claire and Moses earned TESL/TEFL certifications at large universities in the U.S. and they worked in local public schools before moving to China. They both seemed to be confident in their ability to teach the students. The participants' knowledge of EFL/ESL teaching contrasted sharply with my experience and I observed how my expatriate colleagues in China struggled to teach the students with beginning levels of language proficiency. Claire's comment reflects the perspective of a TESL/TEFL certified teacher,

> I like our school because they say every teacher at our school is an intensive English teacher. No matter if you teach math, or science, or whatever, because we're abroad in a foreign country with students from different backgrounds…I guess it's harder for-- I mean, for me, it's not hard. For the English (teachers), because that's our job. And especially if you've been trained in TESL. I have a degree in TESL/TEFL, and so to me that's normal. But I suppose we could have teachers who just have the straight teaching license from the U.S., haven't taught non-native English speakers…That could really struggle with that…they just need to understand that they're not working with native English speakers and a lot of miscommunication and issues are going to arise because of that. And they should set their kind of classroom up for that, and expectations to reflect that. (Claire, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 200-217).

Culturally responsive teaching (CRT). While each of the teachers had different levels of understanding of Chinese culture and education, I found that all of the teachers were aware of the need for CRT. All expressed having high expectations of students and the need to provide support for students to achieve. Their implementation of CRT was revealed in responses to the

trigger about the amount of homework and the types of assignments they gave the students. All of the teachers observed that homework is a common concern in China. At times, the tension comes from parents' expectations for a heavy homework load while the students are overwhelmed with work. The different types of work assigned by expatriate teachers (as compared to the local teachers) was also discussed by all of the teachers. All of the teachers were clear about the importance of providing adequate support and structuring assignments so the students would be successful. Moses specifically discussed the need for scaffolding instruction, and I also found scaffolding and building background knowledge were critical to developing content-specific vocabulary and students' understanding. The responses below show that the participants were intentional in providing authentic, relevant learning activities and that they considered the students' culture of learning in their approach to teaching.

> Claire provided students with choices about their assignments… lot of parents expected a lot of homework, and they thought that made it really rigorous for their students, and, then, others didn't like homework at all, so it was kind of difficult to work with each family individually. One thought you should have a lot of homework and maybe their child could or could not deal with it, and another felt like totally the opposite way. I don't know. I always said, "You can do homework. If you want more homework, you can do it. Here's what you need to do: read these books and do this short story thing." And some students would do it all the time, and others never did it. I think it's an option (Claire, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 169-177).

> Moses assigned authentic learning activities…And what I mean by more valuable is assignments that would show their ability to produce English in forms that require more creativity, critical thinking, or practical use in a communicative context… That probably

requires more creativity. It probably requires more thinking. And it's hopefully more useful for them because it's in their-- because it's something that applies to them. It gives them more freedom in terms of they can write whatever they want. So it hopefully gets them more motivated (Moses, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 307-319).

Michael considered the cultural-historical context for teaching...it taught me different styles of how to work with different learners. But that's the thing in America too, right there's different learners all over the world. But I would say teaching there opened my eyes, very cliché, but it really taught me how the teaching style and approach to education is rooted in thousands of years of history and how important that "sage on the stage" kind of mindsets of "I am the lecturer, I'm talking down to you guys, take notes on my magical words." So I guess that perspective helped me understand how difficult it is (planning cooperative learning activities) (Michael, 2020, Interview 1, Lines 422-429).

Michael used authentic assessments...never in any of my classes given a formal multiple choice test. I don't, I push back on that all the time. From my own experiences I'm not a great test taker I know others feel the same way ...your life is not a test. You will not take a test when you're 30 years old working in a company. So that has been a significant challenge...trying to get students to accept that and get the administration to accept them...And when you plan it out it's a lot different than actually implementing in the classroom. So that kind of challenge I guess of having structured activities that are different than just sitting in your desk for 50 minutes and taking notes (Michael 2020, Interview 1, Lines 435-450).

Relationships with students. Throughout our conversations, it was clear that all of the teachers were actively working to attend to the academic and developmental needs of the

students. Understanding the students' L1 was often connected to the teachers' relationships with their students and is addressed below. There were a variety of ways that the teachers expressed their sensitivity to their students' needs and their desire to connect with their students. Building relationships with my students was a powerful learning experience for me. I was fortunate to have access to my students outside of class time because they lived on campus. I would go over to the classroom during evening study to check in with them, and sometimes we would meet in my office so that we could practice English or review vocabulary. Providing that individualized support helped me better understand their learning needs and strengthened my relationships with them. The time that I spent with them outside of the classroom was an opportunity for me to learn about them on a personal level. The comments below show the participants' awareness of the social-emotional development of the students.

> Claire felt that students needed time to socialize and relax outside of school…I feel it's really sad and burdening of students. These are kids. Kids should have free time, time to think and listen to music and relax and spend time with their families. I think that I design my work that if you work and focus, you can finish it in class. That's how I feel, like you shouldn't work too much outside of the classroom... But I think people overwhelm students with homework that they think it's effective, that they think it's good for them. I don't think so. There are some best practices out there, that say that homework is not really effective and especially stupid homework like just worksheets… and-- I mean, I don't agree with it at all. And I have lots of students writing a persuasive unit writing unit and a lot of them have brought up these issues in my class, but-- it hurts students' mental health to do so much homework (Claire, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 57-71).

> Michael considered the developmental of his students…I have older students that I work with but trying to treat them as adults and giving them that benefit of the doubt right away. And help earn more respect or more kind of relationship with them and that like they will choose to be more actively engaged with your class (Michael, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 39-42).
>
> Moses believed in supporting students in reaching their potential…I think we all agree it's good to have high expectations for students, but hopefully, it's kind of from the perspective that we can have expectations for them that we do see potential in them that they don't see in themselves. And so we see that they can do something better, that they can perform at a higher level than even they themselves are expecting that they can do. But along with that is a commitment to help them to get there step by step (Moses, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 32-38).
>
> Michael wanted to see his students as people outside of the school environment…It helps me remember that my students that I'm teaching are not robots and they're real people and that they are almost adults especially for the college readiness classes that I do (Michael, 2020, Interview 1, Lines 498-500).

The participants responses showed their awareness of the social-emotional needs of their students.

Local context. All of us worked in distinctly different environments. Michael, Moses, and I worked in international programs within public secondary schools. All of our students were Chinese nationals and the school administration and faculty were local people. Claire worked in a K-12 international school where most of the students were Chinese nationals but there were some students from different countries. The administration at the school consisted of both

expatriates and local people. The differences between the public schools and the international school highlighted the cultural influences on the learning environment. School-based practices and support for teachers were the main topics of discussion pertaining to local context.

School-based practices. The overall structure and operations of the schools, especially scheduling and curriculum were discussed at length by Michael and Moses. Their experiences resonated with me and were some of my greatest challenges. The expatriate teachers have a great deal of autonomy in curriculum development. We also found that school-wide events, holidays, and exam preparation conflicted with our class meeting times and affected our instruction. Claire's curriculum was set by the school and she was able to choose the units that she taught and her experiences in the international school were different. The comments below are examples of the tensions experienced by the participants.

> Michael explained first-year teachers struggles in the classroom…it's different from teacher to teacher and that some feel very empowered by it. And like excited to kind of take their own direction they also find it easier ... If you are a new teacher it is very overwhelming. In that you had never really done this before. You don't really know what it's like in the classroom. You don't know how students may react to it. You may not even know the subject you're teaching very well… The only reason as a new teacher that I didn't drown in that is because I had my master's class where we were learning how to write curricula (Michael, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 217-220).

> Moses found that his class time could be pre-empted…So I also experienced walking into a classroom and then all the students are gone, or they tell me that they had something else scheduled that came up…And so even sometimes where the-- because my test was not required for their-- my class was not teaching content that would be on their middle

> school or high school entrance exams, and so sometimes if the school had a bigger activity that everyone was going to join, or it was getting closer to exam time and another teacher, wanted my class time slot to review, then they would take the slot. Or they would ask me…but there wasn't really that much room to refuse (Moses, 2020, Interview 3, Lines 48-60).

> Moses observed that performances gave the students and teachers an opportunity to take a break from their focus on academics…And those talent shows-- were similar, I guess, in atmosphere to what you describe here. Where teachers would-- so students would perform, and there would be auditions, and then they would perform. But then teachers would also perform. And it was like a socially acceptable time for everyone to kind of let their hair down (Moses, 2020, Interview 3, Lines 379-382).

> Michael realized that he had a lot to learn…And it's my first five weeks I have like one or two classes that I teach a couple of times a week so it's eight hours of teaching. So I'm in the teachers office and I'm 22 and I'm fresh from the US and I'm watching the PLA army do all of their marches and everything, and I thought, " whoa this is crazy, there's so much I don't know" (Michael, 2020, Interview 3, Lines 188-191).

These comments showed the participants' awareness of tensions in their work environments, at the same time they recognized that they could learn from those experiences.

Support for expatriate teachers. The onboarding process and the professional learning opportunities were distinctly different for Claire. Those of us working in the public school programs had limited opportunities for professional development and no support for developing curricula. The comments below represent the difference in the support provided to teachers in the

international school and public school programs, and the tensions in public school settings are also revealed.

> Claire described the support that her school provided for new teachers…They have a system, the school, that when the new cohort group comes in, they have you matched with a few people. I was matched with the director of our instruction at the school I was going to be at. And she would send me emails…I had another person who was directly responsible for communicating with me. "Let me know what questions you have." And that was more about packing and living there and food and our apartments and whatever… And then it was a course a lot of the course was on the curriculum. They do mastery learning, so reading about mastery learning, looking at their curriculum, having discussions like in-text kind of discussions about it. And that was with the overall director (Claire, 2020, Interview 1, Lines 341-349).

> Moses explained the challenges he experienced learning to teach in his new environment…On one hand the school itself gave me a lot of freedom, and there was a good amount of trust there as well where they very rarely checked my curriculum and allowed me to develop my own curriculum. Of course, the flip side of that is that they didn't exactly give me that much support in terms of, they're just like, "Do everything yourself." You know? And then it's the same with classroom management where they-- my interview was to teach a class and so they saw how I would manage a class. But, day to day classroom management, I was unmonitored. And so I had to learn for myself and so I went to ask other foreign teachers, who were my coworkers, and also, yeah, I would see sometimes-- I would ask my Chinese liaison, kind of like my supervisor, I had some questions. But at the same time, I think my failure, in a way, was, I didn't ask other

> Chinese teachers. And so, I remember, one time I was-- and in my own personality, my principle was, what is best for the student's learning (Moses, 2020, Interview 3, Lines 121-135)?
>
> Michael explained problems related to the lack of support for foreign liaisons and expatriate teachers… And for the most part, the majority of schools and the majority of those H.R. professionals at the schools who were foreign liaisons don't know how to work with foreigners; more demanding a lot more expectations, a lot less patience. So that creates this toxic blend. That toxic blend then creates difficult recruitment and impossible detainment efforts by the schools themselves, which impacts the students and the infrastructure of the school to have constant reshuffling. There is a reason why schools won't let "teacher candidates" talk to current teachers…they won't (usually) have good things to say. And I think this is a big problem for foreign teachers as they come to China (Michael, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 58-66).

These comments showed how the differences in the local school context affected the expatriate teachers.

Cross-cultural experiences. The teachers at the public schools had more interactions with local people outside of school hours and off campus than Claire did. The public school environment afforded more opportunities for us to have cross-cultural experiences that provided valuable insights to the lives of our students. All of us greatly valued our relationships with local people. The comments below represent the participants' experiences with local culture.

> Moses shared his deep appreciation for cultural exchange…I wish that experience for every person that comes to China, or any foreign country, and I think it's a very wonderful thing for both sides. That's the kind of ideal exchange of culture, language,

knowledge and friendship. I think a lot of times for single people in China who are away from their families, it's neat how, I'm assuming this is you, and your family can provide kind of a surrogate family for them, and I mean, that's probably the best way to learn about a culture is to be embedded in someone's family from that culture. I think it's refreshing for them too, because sometimes western families, we can be more kind of open and affectionate, and casual, which they may not get if they are more from a traditional family (Moses, 2020, Interview 3, Lines 284-298).

Michael explained how his understanding of the cultural context facilitated his adaptation…I think what you have to always remind yourself how enormous this country is, and how ambitious it is, and how much has changed… since 1980. And if we can try to remember those things then you can understand what we may see as selfish is really a will to survive and, be competitive and, come out in front. I always say queing is of one of my biggest examples, standing in a straight line for things, that just doesn't really exist. And you can get mad about it all you want but it's not going to change. And I think if you embrace it and you understand it and you realize that there's things about your culture that might seem weird or the things that you don't like then you kind of get over it a little quicker and either just accept what it is. I mean I definitely have learned to budge in lines I've been there if I need to (Michael, 2020, Interview 3, Pages 341-352).

Claire described her relationship with a local colleague…She was an older woman and she was like our director's assistant. And this director was a little bit difficult…And so this woman and I would talk about how the school runs and kind of the Chinese way and the Chinese style. And then say, "This woman doesn't understand how you get things done here." And she doesn't understand how you treat people and how you treat Chinese

> people and the staff and it seemed like part of it was a difficult director but part of it was this cultural information… So, we had these conversations about the business style of China. And where that would intersect with these foreigners being in charge of this school. How things worked or didn't work. And how she portrayed herself to the staff (Claire, 2020, Interview 3, Lines 786-792).

The participants' cross-experiences were opportunities for connecting with and learning about local culture.

Beliefs and values. The teachers' use of CRT represents the intersection of pedagogy and interculturality. All of the teachers discussed the importance of tolerance, open-mindedness, flexibility, and respect for differences in our discussions of what it takes to be a successful EFL teacher in China. The comments below evidence these beliefs and values.

> Claire explained her perspective on experiencing cultural differences… It sounds so generic, open minded. But I mean really practicing that because I think when I see people getting upset, foreigners or Americans, getting upset in China about things or complaining about things, then I think, "Wow, you are a guest in this country and it's not what you expected because you want the culture to do this, but this isn't your culture and this isn't how they would behave." …not being so culture centric but being more broad minded and seeing that you're upset because something's happening that's not to your preference or to your specifications, but in this culture that's normal (Claire, 2020, Interview 1, Lines 561-568).

> Moses explained his perspective on experiencing cultural differences…I think we need to have a I would say at least in affection for the people and an interest in the culture. If teachers who come and are not interested in the culture or interpret cultural differences

> as, "These people are inferior to me and to my culture, to my thoughts." And then kind of insulate themselves in a bubble. Both a cultural bubble and a social bubble. And don't actually get to develop genuine friendships and relationships with Chinese people, whether it's both students and teachers and everyone else. Then they kind of get into an adversarial mindset and everyone's against them… it really come down to cross-cultural skills to just being adaptable, flexible, teachable, and that having some humility, "You're a guest here" (Moses, 2020, Interview 1, Lines 187-198).
>
> Michael's comment showed his awareness of culture-based differences in teaching and learning…A couple of things that I think are important is understanding the previous education experiences that your students already had and what they're used to. And especially the teaching methodologies that have been used in the classroom leading up to that point, especially for me getting 16, 17, and 18 year-olds, they've already had 10 years of school and all that has kind of taught to them in the first place. So, in China as an expatriate or Western teacher you have to understand that the way you have experienced learning and then have been taught how to teach is almost completely opposite of what these students have experienced (Michael, 2020, Interview 1, Lines 614-618).

The participants' comments are examples of their intercultural competency.

Acculturation and students' L1. Adjusting to our new cultural environments was the overarching theme of the discussions and is key to the research puzzle - how we learned to adapt to a new culture of learning and figure out how to navigate the cultural differences we experienced. Responses to these topics were related to language teaching and learning of our students as well our own understanding of the students' L1. The teachers' ability to communicate in Mandarin was varied. Moses and Michael studied Mandarin and are proficient enough to

communicate with the students for instructional purposes. I also studied Mandarin and had a basic level of proficiency. Claire studied briefly but did not have the language skills to communicate with local people. The discussions of acculturation and language were related to either classroom interactions or navigating daily living. Moses brought a different perspective to the discussions of the students' L1 and acculturation, he pointed out that expatriate teachers are positioned as language experts in the classroom but they are linguistic outsiders once they leave the campus…

> …as the teacher-- I mean, he's in the position where he's the expert, he has the superior knowledge and linguistic ability. But I mean, when he leaves the school, then he should be on the opposite end of that. He's the one who has the big gap deficiency in knowledge and language. You'd hope that experience could give him more empathy when he's in the expert position. I think sometimes foreign teachers, it's quite uncomfortable because of culture shock and all that to be in that position of helplessness as a student. And so, we can easily create a bubble for ourselves--a comfort zone. And so, we just stay in that school or position where we just don't allow ourselves to become the student. We always are operating in our mother tongue and native tongue. And so, then it creates a lot of empathy (Moses, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 148-160).

Moses' observations of tensions of EFL teaching provided insight on ways that expatriate teachers navigate their adaptation to their new cultural environments.

Classroom interactions. Discussion of the use of students' L1 in the classroom revealed that all of the teachers supported the students' use of their L1 to varying degrees. Moses, Michael, and I saw the value in using the students' L1 to convey complex concepts. Claire empathized with the students' need to communicate in the classroom but she was clear about her

expectation that the students speak only English in her class. We all agreed that the teachers' use of the students' L1 helped to develop connections with them. The comments below represent the participants' approaches to the use of the students' L1 in the classroom.

> Claire explained her approach to the students' using L1 in her classroom…but I do say, in my classes, "I need you to speak English in English class." And I set them up from the beginning to say that's my expectation. One, I don't speak Chinese at all. And you're here to learn English, and I'm an English teacher. So I think it's helpful if we speak the language (Claire, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 233-236).
>
> Michael shared his beliefs about speaking Mandarin with his students… I think especially when I'm meeting new students at the beginning I try to incorporate Chinese in different ways and make sure that they understand something that I'm talking about. But I also want to show a bit of vulnerability and like openness, and that Chinese person can hear my terrible Chinese and feel a little bit more comfortable about their own terrible English and that this is a place where our output is so important and trying to be just simply using the language as much as possible even if you aren't using it correctly or you're failing in some parts or in some areas but to show vulnerability and that I as a teacher don't care what your incoming English level is I will do my best though to improve it based on whatever your starting level is (Michael, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 133-146).
>
> Moses shared his beliefs about using the students' L1 for instruction…Sometimes it's just easier to give them the Chinese equivalent of a word or of an idea. It's like when I'm learning Chinese sometimes if the teacher knows an English phrase that just exactly captures that same idea or feeling…And it can accelerate learning quite a bit. And yeah,

> so I don't put it as a hard and fast rule like no use of your mother tongue (Moses, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 204-208).

The participants' comments showed how their beliefs about EFL teaching are connected to their approaches to teaching.

Navigating daily living. Outside of the classroom, the teachers found that the ability to communicate in Mandarin was critical to navigating certain aspects of daily living, and that having a local person to help with communication was critical to banking transactions, purchasing cell phones, and accessing healthcare. Traveling through China was also facilitated by the ability to communicate. Claire did not travel in mainland China because the language barrier made it too difficult for her family. Moses, Michael, and I have traveled throughout China using Mandarin to communicate with local people. Language proficiency was not critical, but it was helpful, for grocery shopping, transportation, and dining. The comments showed that their experiences were viewed as adventures and opportunities for learning.

> Claire found adventures in her daily life…Bike riding, adventures-- not intense but just going out in the neighborhood or exploring some new place that's close. And I like going to grocery stores, especially in foreign countries. So I love grocery shopping. I enjoy that (Claire, 2020, Interview 1, Lines 448-450).

> Claire navigated the language barrier by seeking alternatives to local resources…I guess the biggest thing is medical things when-- there's a couple of westernish clinics, medical clinics, in our area so we go to those. When it's something medical or dental, and the Chinese and English come together, I'm, hmm. So we started going to Hong Kong more often for that because they speak so much better English. And we could understand and feel more confident about it (Claire, 2020, Interview 1, Lines 382-386).

> Michael recognized the importance of speaking Mandarin…English is the lingua franca of the world but when you come to China that's kind of goes out the window. It's harsh, it is very much is still a very Chinese dominated industry or economy and to be a very active player you either need to be or have people close to you that are fluent in Chinese that can protect you. A good example of this is contracts: all contracts are bilingual but make it clear that the "correct" version is the Chinese version…meaning you really need to have that version confirmed because the English version isn't very helpful (Michael, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 92-103).

> Moses explains how he accessed good and services…For me, I kind of solved that problem with having my electric bike, my little moped. And so that's how I get around. You know, nowadays, there's much more grocery services that will deliver to your door…even my wife's little village, they can order things off of Taobao in a couple of days, I don't know how to do it….But at the same time, that requires understanding how to use the interface that's all in Chinese (Moses, 2020, Interview 2, Lines 221-235).

The participants' comments showed that knowing, or having access to, the language is critical to navigating daily living.

Approaches to teaching, local context, participants' beliefs and values, acculturation, and the students' L1 were themes of our discussions. The participants' responses indicated the importance of flexibility to the success of expatriate EFL teachers in China. Furthermore, the participants were attuned to the academic and social-emotional needs of the students, and they worked to build relationships with them. Cultural influences on the learning environment were made clear by the differences between the public schools and the international school, particularly with regard to support for teachers and professional learning opportunities. School-

based practices and support for teachers were the main topics of discussion pertaining to local context. The participants' experiences with local culture, particularly language learning, varied and their beliefs and values indicated their interculturality. Adapting to our new cultural environments was an overarching theme of our discussions. Learning to navigate the tensions was tied to our experiences with school-based practices, knowledge of Mandarin language, and the local context for our teaching,

Complexities

The complexities discussed here are related to the local culture of learning. Discussions of the triggers related to homework, school structures, the students' use of L1 in the classroom, and expatriate EFL teachers as linguistic experts.

Homework. One of my journal entries described some teachers' frustrations with the students not completing homework and the students feeling the homework load was too heavy. Additionally, the foreign liaison explained that the students were accustomed to the structured assignments given by their Chinese teachers and did not understand the assignments given by the expatriate teachers. Each of us heard complaints from students about the amount of homework that they received in general. There was also discussion about the Chinese parents' expectations that students have additional work; this belief may be connected to the need to prepare for high school and college entrance exams. Only Moses had experienced students complaining about the amount of homework for his course. He responded by assigning them less work. Moses and I discussed the need for scaffolding assignments so that students could complete their work independently. Claire's response to this trigger was extensive. At her school the students and parents expected a lot of homework assignments, however, she was personally opposed to giving her students additional work to complete outside of class. She felt very strongly that students should have free time after school and too much homework was detrimental to their mental

health. Claire assigned work to be completed in class and novels for students to read independently outside of class. She addressed the parents' expectations that the students have a lot of homework by providing optional assignments to be completed after class. In my experience, the students had plenty of work to complete outside of class. Many of the students were diligent in completing the work and did not complain about it, but some students resisted doing homework in the evenings. I found that the parents of my Chinese students were not unlike the parents of students that I taught in the U.S.; some parents expect their children to be challenged and want to see them working long hours at home, while other parents feel that children should have more flexibility and freedom in their evening schedules. These viewpoints suggest that the expatriate teachers are aware of the academic and social-emotional needs of their students.

School-based practices. At the public secondary schools, the master schedule structured the students' days: from 7:00 until 22:00 Monday through Thursday; 7:00 until 17:00 on Fridays; and they arrived on campus for evening study at 19:00 on Sundays. The courses were strictly academic and there was no time scheduled for extracurricular activities. The rigorous schedule and focus on academics gave the impression that the structure was quite rigid when, in fact, there were plenty of exceptions and instances where the rules were circumvented. As I thought about our discussions and my experiences with classes being cancelled for school-wide events I realized that the time spent on sports day, arts performances, and talent shows was an opportunity for the students and teachers to have a break from the intense focus on academic learning, and the practices and events were a brief respite from their regular schedule. So, I can now appreciate those times as relief for the students and teachers rather than feeling frustrated

by the imposition on my instructional time. These viewpoints show how considering cultural context facilitates understanding.

Students' use of their L1 in the classroom. Each of us found value in using the students' L1 in the classroom. However, our reactions to the trigger about fining students for using their L1 in the classroom was varied. Further, we approached the use of L1 for instruction in different ways. Only Moses said that he had no problem with fining students for using their L1 in an immersion class. Claire objected to using negative reinforcement as a strategy for motivating students. At the same time, she told me about her husband's experience as an English language learner, which was he grew up in a country in Southeast Asia where his teacher used this strategy and he thought it was very effective. Moses and Michael found that their use of the students' L1 was an effective instructional strategy. The academic officer for the program where I worked was very adamant about using only English in the classroom. He was a Chinese national who had attended university and lived in the U.S. for several years. I felt this restriction was not in the students' best interest. First, some students with low levels of proficiency needed support in understanding the content that I was teaching and there were times when another student could explain a concept to them using their L1. Second, I was uncomfortable with "policing" students use of their language even though it was expected in the context of my teaching. These viewpoints show the complexities of language teaching and the connections between language teaching and culture.

Expatriate EFL teachers as linguistic experts. Each of us had different educational backgrounds and previous teaching experiences, yet as expatriate teachers we were labeled as linguistic experts. Only Michael discussed the privileging of expatriate

teachers in China in his responses to the triggers. While all of the participants had education and experiences that prepared them as EFL teachers, my education in EFL teaching was quite limited. Michael talked about how he felt that, as a 23 year-old first year teacher, it was obvious to his Chinese colleagues that he lacked expertise. In fact, he told me that he avoided teaching grammar courses because he did not feel qualified. When I arrived in China, I received a foreign expert license even though I had no previous experience as an EFL teacher. During my first year I was still trying to figure out the best way to approach teaching my content in English when a group of teachers from another province came to observe my class as a model for EFL teaching. Regardless of our experiences and preparation, Michael and I were earning three or four times the salary as the local teachers. At my school the expatriate teachers had 20 hours per week of instructional time while our class sizes were much smaller. In Michael's case, his classes had the same number of students as his Chinese colleagues but he was only teaching 8 hours per week and was given a choice about when his classes would be held. These viewpoints show that having English as their L1 does not qualify expatriate teachers as linguistic experts.

On the other hand, the presence of expatriate teachers brought benefits to the school. In my experience, the expatriate teachers were expected to attend school-wide and public events as a way of promoting the international program. Having expatriate teachers, particularly Caucasians, was a status symbol.

Reflection on My Learning

Narrative inquirers study the experiences of individuals in the broader social, cultural, and institutional context (Clandinin, 2013). My experiences in China as an EFL teacher were similar to, and different from, the experiences of the participants in my study. I graduated from a

large, public university in the western U.S. with a B.A. in political science and later completed an accelerated M.Ed. program. After 11 years of teaching, I enrolled in a Ph.D. program where I was recruited to teach in a partnership with a local secondary school in China. My son (who was 13 years old at the time) and I moved to a tier one city in south China. After three years, I returned to the U.S. to complete my coursework and then returned to China, this time I was solo, to work for an international education company. Throughout my experiences in China I became aware of how the stresses of living abroad, away from family and friends, and adapting to a new cultural environment were transformative experiences. I had been living in a tier one city in northern China for 18 months when my time there was truncated by the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus. I returned to the U.S. where I was able to continue my research through virtual meetings with the participants.

As I reflected on this research process, I recognized that while my coursework provided me with the tools for conducting this study, my experiences are where the most powerful learning occurred. Also, I am aware that my learning has been a source of both professional and personal growth. Finally, thinking with my story and the stories of the participants has facilitated my understanding of our experiences (Clandinin, 2013). The depth and breadth of all that I have learned was too broad to discuss adequately in this section, therefore I decided to focus on, my experiences with the participants; the dissonances that were revealed through our discussions, and, the privileges of expatriate teachers from English majority countries.

Experiences with the participants. The positivity, professionalism, and commitment to their students' success that was reflected in our conversations are signs that they were experiencing success in their work. All of the participants were trained in

EFL/ESL teaching and were intentional in their choice to work abroad. However, there were plenty of variations in their backgrounds, cross-cultural experiences, and approaches to teaching. When I began to formulate my ideas for this project, I had a limited understanding of what contributed to the success of EFL teachers in China. Through this narrative inquiry the participants and I shared our lived stories and a more detailed and nuanced understanding of ELT in China emerged (Clandinin, 2013). I now see that there is not one correct path or appropriate way to prepare for the experience and that education, life experiences, and personal values contributed to one's ability to navigate the challenges of teaching in China (Cross, 2010).

Dissonances. In narrative inquiry tensions are used as analytic tools, these interconnected stories reveal the tensions experienced by the expatriate teachers (Clandinin, 2013). The discussions that revealed dissonances that we experienced were related to assumptions about the authoritarian aspects of Chinese culture and the expectations of the expatriate teachers and the local schools that hired them. Telling and retelling our stories helped me develop insights into the culture of learning in China.

Authority and structure. Images in the Western media highlight the authoritarian influences on the structure and practices in education in China. Typically, the long hours of studying, compulsory military training in schools, and the national standardized examinations are the focus of the media portrayals of Chinese education. My first exposure to a school-based practice was when the students participated in military training on campus prior to the beginning of the school year. The students practicing marching and military drills under the direction of People's Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers for long hours in the heat and humidity appeared to be harsh. However, our collective experiences

with the training showed that we discovered that the students and soldiers formed a bond and there was a strong sense of comradery.

Expectations of schools and teachers. Discussions with participants about teaching practices and local school contexts indicated tensions around the expectations of the local school foreign liaisons and the expatriate teachers. The primary example of this is the curricula. In my experience working with expatriate EFL teachers and in the experiences of two of the participants teaching in classes of students with basic and/or no English language skills was not congruent with the academic level that we were expected to teach. Navigating the gap between the schools' expectations and the students' language proficiency was challenging and, at times frustrating, however this can be valuable learning experiences for teachers. I found that all of us found ways to provide relevant, authentic learning experiences for our students by drawing on past experiences, working long hours, and developing relationships with the students.

***Privileges of expatriate teachers*.** The privileging of expatriate EFL teachers was not discussed at length in our conversations. However, this controversial topic is also the source of dissonances and deserves attention (Phillipson, 2016). Hiring teachers because English is their first language without regard for their actual teaching abilities is common in China. Expatriate EFL teachers have far more autonomy than the local teachers and are given the responsibility for developing their own curricula. In addition, there is relatively little oversight and/or accountability. Teacher autonomy was not congruent with the standardized curricula and the focus on test scores throughout the rest of the school.

Expatriate EFL teachers are considered to be linguistic experts and therefore enjoy many privileges that are not given to the local EFL teachers. Salaries and housing are two

examples of such privileges. The expatriate teachers earn 3-4 times the salary that the local teachers earn. Typically, EFL teachers are provided with free housing that is superior in quality to the housing for the local teachers who are required to pay rent. Often, the expatriate teachers are not made aware of these gaps in compensation. I had the opportunity to discuss this with Michael and found that we both experienced a great deal of internal conflict around this issue. We both experienced discomfort about the quality of life that our salaries afforded us compared to our local colleagues, particularly our ability to afford to travel throughout China.

I was acutely aware of the privileges of being a white, expatriate EFL teacher when we lived on the campus of the school where I was teaching. My son and I were given a two bedroom, two bathroom apartment with a full kitchen located on the administrator's floor of the teachers' dormitory. The local teachers rented studio apartments and used a common kitchen for the entire floor, it was not unusual for an entire family to live in one of these apartments. Our apartment lacked some amenities that are standard in the U.S., for example we had a single hot water heater that was connected to only one of our showers. At first, I was surprised by the lack of hot water in the kitchen and my bathroom but eventually heating water on the stove for washing dishes and taking showers in my son's bathroom became part of our lifestyle. As I observed the lives of people around me, I understood how truly fortunate (and spoiled!) we were.

5 DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a discussion of the what I learned through *thinking relationally* about the experiences of EFL teachers in China. Connecting with the participants, thinking about our experiences, and telling the stories were a learning process. I will share my reflections on the relationships between our life experiences and educational backgrounds, our thinking about tensions in EFL teaching in China, and our adaptation to teaching in the local school context (Cross, 2010). Next, I will discuss the answers to my research questions. Then, the implications and recommendations for further research will be shared. Finally, I will present my thoughts on our shared experiences in the local school context and EFL teachers' acculturation.

Thinking With Stories

In narrative inquiry, the researcher begins with thinking about her personal history (Clandinin, 2013). In my journals, I reflected on the tensions and challenges of EFL teaching and living in China. I lacked experience and training in ELT, I had never lived abroad, and my understanding of Chinese culture was very limited. I struggled quite a bit as I tried to adapt to my new environment, as a result I learned about EFL teaching and cross-cultural communication. Many of my expatriate colleagues also struggled but some seemed to have an easier time navigating their circumstances. I wondered about the experiences of other expatriate teachers. It seemed like there were many inexperienced expatriate teachers who, although they lacked qualifications, were hired to teach English. As a doctoral student and aspiring teacher educator, I wanted to learn how to support teachers as they adapted to their new cultural environments. As a researcher, I wanted to approach this project in a way that would allow me to draw on my experiences without positioning myself as an expert. Narrative inquiry incorporates collaboration and experiential learning. Working with the participants to tell the stories of the expatriate EFL

teachers' lived experiences provided insights into navigating the tensions experienced in the local school context (Clandinin). Narrative inquiry is a relational methodology that afforded me the opportunity to work collaboratively with other expatriate teachers. As the storyteller, I had step back and process our discussions from the perspective of a researcher. At the same time, I connected with the participants through our shared experiences. There was no way to separate my roles completely. Our shared experiences gave me a sensitivity to the participants' stories, and working together to create the narratives was an opportunity to convey the nuances of our experiences the research process was better informed as a result (Hangyan & Hodge, 2019).

This study found that cultural differences, lack of understanding of the local school context, and lack of teacher support and/or preparation contributed to the tensions experienced by the expatriate EFL teachers. Additionally, understanding the local culture and knowledge of the students' L1 are important to EFL teaching in China (Luk and Lin, 2006). Unqualified expatriate English teachers were a disservice to the countries hosting them according to Phillipson's (2016) analysis of a study on NETs' performance in six Asian countries. In this study, the teachers' educational background and previous cross-cultural experiences seem to support research that emphasized the importance of: understanding the local culture; teacher preparation; and, knowledge of the students' L1 (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Hoare, 2010; Ling, 2009; Luk & Lin; Lin, 2013; Rao & Yuan, 2016).

Understanding the context for teaching. The broader sociocultural context for EFL teaching in China is shaped by the traditional approach to education which emphasized teacher-centered instruction, rote learning, and recitation (Gu, 2006). However, more recent education policy in China has moved toward student-centered

learning and communicative language teaching (Ouyang, 2000b). According to Cortazzi and Jin (1996), expatriate teachers should consider their students' culture of learning, and their approaches to teaching should interweave the different language teaching methodologies (Tinker Sachs, 2002). Most of the teachers in this study were intentional in understanding the students' culture of learning. However how this influenced their teaching practices was not completely clear because our discussions of their strategies and content were fairly limited.

Responsiveness to the students' needs manifested itself in different ways. All of the participants were sensitive to the needs of their students; the teachers were invested in their students' academic success, they were intentional in building relationships with their students, and, they were sensitive to the social and emotional development of their students as well. Our discussions indicated that all of the teachers implemented culturally responsive teaching (CRT) strategies in their classrooms, for example: learning activities were relevant; students were actively engaged in learning; the teachers had high expectations for the students; assignments were challenging and scaffolding was used to facilitate student success. Several researchers found that expatriates lack of understanding of the context for their teaching had a negative impact (Jiang, 2001; Rao & Yuan, 2013), and the teachers' ability to use CRT would be dependent on their understanding of the local context. A study of cultural mismatch between expatriate EFL teachers and their Chinese students found that a teacher's view of her Chinese co-teacher and her students as cultural resources facilitated her culturally responsive approach to teaching (Spalding, et al; 2009). This study found that the experiences of the expatriate EFL teachers in the public school programs were different from the teacher in the international school.

Teaching in the public schools afforded more opportunities for the teachers to learn about the culture of learning through interactions in the local school setting. The teachers discussed how the tensions they experienced, particularly those related to school-based practices, were catalysts for their learning. Additionally, those teachers were more involved in relationships with local people and their Chinese colleagues. Some teachers also interacted with their students outside of class. These cross-cultural interactions were learning experiences that provided insights into the local culture.

Teacher education and experience. Differing expectations, and varied views on how to define good teaching, and a lack of consistent standards for work permits make it unclear as to what constitutes a qualified English language teacher (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Ling, 2014; Zhang & Watkins, Zhao & Coombs, 2001; Zheng & Zhang, 2014). Nonetheless, studies indicated a need for expatriate EFL teachers to be trained in teaching language and content to address problems with their pedagogical practices and their understanding of the cultural context of their teaching (Rao & Yuan, 2016; Stanley, 2019). The participants in this study had earned TEFL/TESOL certifications from programs in universities in the U.S.. They had also completed teaching practicums as part of their training and had had some experience teaching English abroad prior to their experiences in China. Many of the participants' responses indicated that they benefited from the knowledge they had gained and experiences they had had in their teacher training programs. In contrast, I was not trained as an EFL/ESL teacher and my experience in China was my first time living abroad. In my experience my background had not equipped me for teaching in China, and I also observed other expatriate teachers with similar backgrounds. We all struggled to learn how to teach our students. Many of the teachers

left the program out of frustration after their first year there. Other studies found that lack of language teaching experience and cultural competence were problematic for expatriate EFL teachers (Rao & Yuan; Luk & Lin, 2006).

Use of Mandarin in English class. We all found value in the use of students' L1 in the classroom, and most of us relied on the use of L1 to facilitate their understanding of complex concepts. Research indicated that students experienced difficulties adapting to the target language as the language of instruction when they did not have support in their L1 in the classroom (Ma, 2012). Further, having limited or no understanding of the students' L1 could result in expatriate teachers being insensitive to their students' linguistic problems (Ma, 2012; Rao & Yuan, 2016). The teachers that were proficient in Mandarin had the advantage of being able to check for understanding or explain complex concepts using the students' L1. While I did not have enough language to communicate with my students on that level, giving the students opportunities to support each other in their L1 seemed to be an effective way to facilitate their understanding of the content. Additionally, the participants that could interact with their students in their L1 reported that they were able to develop connections with their students (Tinker Sachs, 2002).

Personal learning experiences. The difficulties that I faced in China as I learned to navigate my new cultural environment were quite stressful and resulted in discomfort, anxiety, and a great deal of uncertainty. Eventually, I learned to overcome the difficulties and adapted to my new circumstances. The challenges of cross-cultural experiences can be the catalyst for transformation (Kim, 2008; Tinker Sachs, 2002) and my time in China was definitely transformational. My participants did not share any personal struggles that they may have experienced as they adapted to living in China, perhaps that topic was too

personal. In this section, I will discuss some aspects of my personal growth experience. Insights on our experiences with the privileges of expatriate EFL teachers; being an outsider; interpersonal relationships; and language learning will also be discussed.

My growth experiences. Prior to moving to China, I was somewhat sheltered. I had traveled internationally, including a trip to China, but I had not lived abroad. My personal struggles were challenges that led to my growth as a person. I had to find ways to deal with the confusion, depression, anxiety, and fear that I experienced. I learned that I had to go outside of my comfort zone if I wanted to survive. As I had successes and felt a sense of accomplishment for navigating the challenges of daily living, my self-confidence grew. I was determined not to give up, and I became stronger and more independent as a result of my perseverance. I was a different person when I returned to the U.S., and I found that the changes in the way that I viewed the world had a profound impact on my relationships with those closest to me. While I feel good about the person that I have become, it is difficult to process the losses that I have experienced as a result of my going to China – something that I continue to struggle with now.

Interpersonal relationships. Relationships with local people were an important part of our experiences as expatriate teachers. Local people were invaluable to accomplishing tasks that required specialized language such as banking transactions and medical treatment. Some of us also found that our relationships with local people were a source of emotional support. I developed several close friendships with local people and those relationships continue to be an important part of my life today. Both Moses and Michael met their life partners in China, and they found their spouses' insights into local culture to be valuable resources. Each of the participants lived with their spouses in China.

My spouse remained in the U.S. and being "on my own" in China with my teenage son was complicated. Being separated from my spouse gave me freedom but I also had more responsibility and less emotional support.

Privilege and outsider status. The privileges of being an expatriate teacher often positioned us as outsiders. The white faces of people from Western countries were often used in marketing products, particularly cosmetics and clothing (Tinker Sachs, 2006). Having "foreign teachers" (as designated by the sign outside of our office) was a status symbol and our presence was required at public events. The differences in our physical appearance often attracted attention, and sometimes people would take photos of us on the subway or in the supermarket. Michael and I talked about learning of our privileges as we observed the differences between the expatriate teachers' and local teachers' salaries and housing. We both felt very uncomfortable about those disparities in our lifestyles. According to Stanley's (2019) study of expatriate English teachers in Shanghai, their elevated status as foreigners contributed to othering and impeded their ability to integrate into local culture. I felt that my elevated status created a barrier between me and my Chinese colleagues. And there are additional reasons that expatriate teachers feel like outsiders. Michael and I discussed how our lack of familiarity with local school practices and inability to navigate daily living defines us as outsiders. I often felt isolated as one of a very few foreigners living in my local community. Some studies of expatriate teachers found that cultural differences could lead to misunderstandings that caused them to feel isolated and ostracized (Maley, 1990; Ouyang, 2000a). While my elevated status and lack of cultural competence may have contributed to my being an outsider, much of the

isolation that I experienced was due to my inability to converse with the local people in their language.

Language learning. The challenges presented by the language barrier were clear to all of us, knowing how to speak and understand Mandarin was critical in navigating life in China. All of us relied on local people to assist us in situations that required the use of Mandarin. Moses and Michael studied extensively and had many opportunities for interaction to facilitate their language acquisition. I struggled for two years, working with a tutor, to acquire language skills that allowed me to navigate shopping, transportation, and dining out. Fortunately, my son learned quickly and his language skills facilitated our ability to operate independently. We all found that language provided access to many experiences that enhanced our understanding of the culture (Tinker Sachs, 2002; Tinker Sachs & Li, 2007).

My Research Questions

What are the beliefs, values, and approaches to teaching of expatriate English as a foreign language teachers in China? Our discussions revealed that tolerance, open-mindedness, flexibility, and respect for differences were considered to be essential to success as an EFL teacher in China. Further conversations indicated that the teachers valued intercultural competence and sought to understand the local contexts of their teaching in a variety of ways. Learning the local language; developing relationships with their students, Chinese colleagues, and local people; learning to navigate daily life; and exploring local culture are examples of the teachers' efforts to develop intercultural competence. Furthermore, all of the teachers made efforts to employ a culturally responsive approach to their teaching and their desire to meet the needs of their students was evident in our conversations. Finally, all believed that education and professional

development were necessary for EFL teaching in China. In addition to their graduate studies in education, the expatriate teachers in this study pursued professional learning opportunities and expressed their desire to learn more about their profession.

How did the expatriate teachers navigate the tensions that they experienced as an English as a foreign language teacher in China? Intercultural competence was important to the teachers and critical to our ability to navigate our new cultural environments in China. Cross-cultural adaptation is the result of the cyclical process of acculturation and deculturation. The process of acquiring new cultural practices and unlearning existing cultural practices is accompanied by stress from the internal conflict that is created by the push and pull between the old and new ways of doing things (Kim, 2008). The expatriate EFL teachers in this study encountered a variety of challenges in their adaptation to living and teaching in China. Our values, such as tolerance, open-mindedness, and respect guided our approaches to navigating our new cultural environments. It was important to all of us to understand the culture. We made efforts to develop our intercultural competence; examples of these efforts include: learning the local language, developing relationships with our students, Chinese colleagues, and local people, learning to navigate daily life (rather than stick to expatriate friendly areas) and exploring local culture with a sense of adventure rather than fear.

Implications

Understanding the experiences of EFL teachers in China provides insights into the relationship between the broader sociocultural context and the teachers approaches to teaching. Constructing the stories of the teachers' lived experiences gives voice to the teachers and their learning contributes to the field of language teaching. These findings can contribute to understanding the ways in which context influences ELT. The findings

may also inform in-service EFL teachers, teacher education programs, and orientation programs for international teachers.

The teachers' educational experiences and interculturality are integral to their approach to teaching students from different cultural backgrounds. Understanding the local context for teaching is also critical to the teachers' ability to function in a new culture of learning. Therefore, EFL teachers working abroad and ELT teachers who experience mismatch with their students need teacher education training and professional learning that addresses the challenges of cross-cultural teaching. Furthermore, training and support for teachers that is context-specific will facilitate teaching and learning.

Our relationships with our students, Chinese colleagues, and local people were important sources of learning (Tinker Sachs, 2002). Being more intentional, such as in creating formal programs that connect expatriate teachers with their Chinese colleagues to support the teachers in understanding the local context for their teaching can serve to improve the expatriate teachers' capacity to meet the needs of the students. Furthermore, such programs will facilitate cross-cultural understanding by connecting local and expatriate teachers (Ouyang, 2000a).

Recommendations for Further Research

The current study provides a foundation for future research. Developing relationships with expatriate EFL teachers in China provided insights into their experiences that can be further explored in other settings. However, the scope of the study was quite limited and there are several aspects of these stories that warrant further investigation. In this study, it was clear that cultural differences contributed to the tensions experienced by EFL teachers; school-based practices and knowledge of Mandarin are just two examples. Further, the study showed that the participants' EFL/ESL training guided

their approaches to teaching but the participants' responses did not provide in-depth information about specific ways in which their training contributed to their approaches to teaching in China.

Teacher education and professional development. The research of Cortazzi & Jin,1996; Ouyang, 2000a; Rao & Yuan, 2013 identified challenges related to cultural differences between expatriate teachers and their Chinese national students. Further research on expatriate EFL teachers' adaptation to their new cultural environments could facilitate understanding of teaching practices that bridge the cultural gap and contribute to preparing teachers to work in cultural settings that differ from their own.

The importance of teacher education and training in Content-based language teaching (CBLT) has also been identified (Kong & Hoare, 2011; Kong, 2009; Lightbown, 2014). Teaching English and academic content at the secondary level requires the integration of language and content pedagogies (Kong, 2009). My personal experience and observations of my expatriate colleagues indicated that lack of professional EFL/ESL training contributed to the challenges of learning to teach language and academic content in China. Specific training on CBLT that includes education on the students' L1 would better prepare teachers for working in culturally and linguistically different settings.

All of the teachers in this study valued their relationships with local people as resources that supported our understanding of our students' culture. We also found that, although our experiences were limited, working with our Chinese colleagues was beneficial. Orientation programs for expatriate teachers can facilitate their adaptation to local culture. Research on ways to develop cross-cultural teaching relationships would

support expatriate teachers and local Chinese teachers, and the reciprocal relationships could be mutually beneficial.

Policies and hiring practices. Limited information on hiring policies and practices indicated concerns about expatriate teachers' qualifications for teaching English (Du, 2017). Currently, there is not a national policy on the qualifications of expatriate teachers. Requirements for teaching English vary across provinces and hiring practices do not seem to be closely monitored. One of the participants observed how these circumstances create problems that lead to high turnover rates and low-quality instruction. My experience supports these observations. Research that expands understandings of who qualifies to teach in EFL settings could improve hiring practices. Evaluation of current teacher training programs and certifications could contribute to understanding the preparation of expatriate EFL teachers.

Similarly, privileging of expatriate teachers whose first language is English deserves attention. A search for literature on ELT in mainland China secondary schools identified a gap in current research on the qualifications of expatriate EFL teachers. However, according to Rao and Yuan (2016) expatriate teachers were viewed as superior because of their native English speaker status. Working in China, I learned that it was common for expatriate teachers to be hired because English was their first language in spite of their not meeting the government criteria for a teacher work permit. Conversations with the participants in this study revealed that we had an elevated status, and we also received higher salaries and better housing benefits than our Chinese colleagues. However, as of 2020, there was surprisingly little research about their linguistic strengths, approaches to teaching, or their abilities to teach Chinese students in secondary and primary schools.

Conclusions

This study explored expatriate EFL teachers' beliefs, values, and approaches to teaching and the expatriate EFL teachers' navigation of the tensions they experienced while adapting to living and working in their new cultural environments. While there were vast differences in educational backgrounds and prior experiences, all of us were committed to our profession and had a strong desire to meet the needs of our students. Teachers with TEFL/TESL training and experience appeared to be better prepared to teach in China compared to teachers without ELT training or experience. Moreover, the teachers' previous experiences living abroad seemed to contribute to their ability to adapt to their circumstances. Teachers, such as myself, that were living abroad for the first time may have a more difficult time adjusting to being away from their home countries and living in new cultural environments.

Context. The strong connections between expatriates' EFL teachers' experiences and the cultural context appeared to be demonstrated by the commonalities in the experiences of the teachers in the public programs. The contrasting experiences of the teachers, particularly in the international school, also showed how different contexts could lead to different interactions and experiences for the teachers. Many of the tensions experienced by the expatriate teachers were often related to cultural differences. Not understanding the local culture of learning could make it difficult to navigate the day-to-day challenges of EFL teaching. Developing relationships with our Chinese colleagues and learning from our students helped many of us to understand the culture of learning and had the potential to inform our approaches to teaching. Additionally, by experiencing daily life in the local community we were exposed to the broader cultural context for our teaching; these experiences could help us to understand the lives of our students and

Chinese colleagues. Finally, by establishing and nurturing reciprocal relationships with local people could have helped us build intercultural understanding and facilitate our acculturation.

Acculturation and survival. Adapting to the new cultural environment could be a source of stress as well as a source of learning for the expatriate teachers. Each person found different ways of navigating their life in China. Being able to communicate in Mandarin seemed to be the greatest challenge, and we found a variety of ways to address the language barrier. Our interpersonal relationships may have also served as a resource, the presence of a life partner or other family members could help assuage the stresses of isolation and provide emotional support. Some of us also relied on spirituality, meditative practices, and physical activity to cope with stress. And, having outside hobbies and interests could provide outlets and serve as diversions from the professional challenges that we faced. Finally, having an open mindset and approaching our experiences with curiosity and a sense of adventure could contribute to our ability to persevere.

Moving to China as an EFL teacher can be a daunting experience. Realizing how much we do not know is the first step toward learning to teach in a local school context. Teacher education, training programs, and previous experiences are the foundation for developing an approach to teaching in a new culture of learning. However, navigating the challenges presented by cultural differences and the language barrier can be either limited or facilitated by our perspectives on the circumstances. Making a commitment to understanding the context for our teaching and the needs of our students, approaching our circumstances with curiosity and tolerance, and remaining diligent in our efforts to learn

and grow professionally and personally will lead to positive outcomes in the present and future experiences.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Recruitment Flier

Doctoral Study

Participants Needed

Expatriate teachers of English are now being recruited to take part in a study being conducted by a doctoral student from Georgia State University, USA here in Beijing. The purpose of this study is to learn about the expatriate teachers' experiences in China and how they navigate their lives as teachers of a foreign language in China. The study will take place during a 6-week period during February 2020 – March 2020. Participants will meet with the researcher once a week for four weeks. Altogether, participation will require approximately 4.5 hours of your time. Participation will be kept confidential and pseudonyms will be used when the results of the study are presented or published.

If you would like additional information or are interested in participating, please contact me on WeChat at LisaMcChambless (user ID). Thank you!

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

Georgia State University

Department of Middle and Secondary Education

Title: Teaching EFL in China
Principal Investigator: Dr. Gertrude Marilyn Tinker Sachs, Georgia State University
Department of Middle and Secondary Education, gtinkersachs@gsu.edu
Student Investigator: Lisa McLeod-Chambless, Georgia State University
Department of Middle and Secondary Education, lmcleodchambless1@student.gsu.edu

I. Purpose:

You are invited to take part in a research study. It is up to you if you would like to take part in this study. The purpose of this study is to examine how expatriate teachers approach teaching academic content and English language to their Chinese students. You are invited to take part in this study because you meet the criteria for participation: secondary-level teacher in the humanities department; a teacher at the school for more than one year; minimum education level is a bachelor's degree; you are a certified teacher or have a TEFL certificate; and, you have a minimum of two years teaching experience. A total of 5 teachers will be recruited for this study. If you decide to take part, your role in the study will last approximately 4.5 hours over a 4 week period February 2020 – March 2020.

II. Procedures:

You will be asked to do the following: (1) Participate in a an interview to discuss your teaching experiences (1 hour); (2) Read excerpts from an expatriate teacher's journal and participate in two interviews to discuss and respond to the journal excerpts (1.5 hours per session); (3) Verify and comment on interview transcripts and field texts (30 minutes); (4) Participate in a follow up interview to share your thoughts about the study (1 hour); (5) The interviews will be recorded (audio only) and transcribed; (6) All meetings will take place at a location conveniently located for the participant.

III. Risks:

In this study, you will not have any more risks than you would in a normal day of life.

IV. Benefits:

This study may not benefit you personally. Overall, we hope to gain information about the experiences of expatriate teachers of English in China.

V. Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:

Participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you have the right to drop out at any time.

VI. Confidentiality:

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by the law. Only the researchers, Lisa McLeod-Chambless and Dr. Gertrude Tinker Sachs will have access to the information that you provide. Information will also be shared with those that make sure the study is done correctly (GSU Institutional Review Board, the Office of Human Research Protection). We will use a pseudonym rather than your name on the study records. This information that you provide will be stored on a password-and firewall-protected computer and in locked cabinets. Your name and other facts that might point to you will not appear when we present this study or publish the results. You will not be identified personally.

VII. Contact Persons:

Contact Lisa McLeod-Chambless at +86 13051038696 or lmcleodchambless1@student.gsu.edu or Dr. Gertrude Tinker Sachs at +1 404 413 8384 or gtinkersachs@gsu.edu if you have questions, concerns, or complaints about this study. Contact Susan Vogtner in the Georgia State University Office of Research Integrity at +1 404 413 3514 or svogtner1@gsu.edu if you want to talk to somebody that is not part of the research team. You can talk about questions, concerns, offer input, obtain information, or suggestions about the study. You can also contact Susan Vogtner if you have questions or concerns about your rights in the study.

VIII. Copy of Consent Form to Participant:

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are willing to volunteer for this research, to be interviewed, and to be audio recorded, please sign below.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

_____ _____

Researcher's Signature Date

Appendix C: Initial interview

Initial Interview

Opening: *I am interested in learning about how expatriate teachers approach teaching here in China. I would like to talk with you about your teaching experiences but also want to know about you as a person. I have some questions about your education and other cross-cultural experiences because I am interested in knowing how they relate to your teaching. I have a list of topics here, but I also want you to feel free to discuss anything else that you find relevant to teaching in your current position. I have scheduled an hour for our conversation. We will have additional opportunities to talk so, if you think of more information that we can include, please make sure to talk with me about it then. Let's start by getting some basic information.*

Section 1: Demographic and Background Information
Personal:
Name (pseudonym):
To which gender do you most identify?
Age:
Where were you born?
Which nationality do you identify with?
Which ethnicity do you identify with?
How long have you been teaching in China?
How long have you been living in China?

Education:
What was your undergraduate major?
And, your highest level of education?

If the participant attended graduate school ask about the program.
Do you have any teaching certification(s)?

Teaching Experience
How long have you been a teacher?

And, you currently teach…..
Subject:
Grade level(s):
How long in this position?

Previous teaching experiences (Return to this after discussing teaching experiences)

- Subject(s)/grade level(s)
  - Country:
  - Number of years:
- Subject(s)/grade level(s)
  - Country:
  - Number of years:
- Subject(s)/grade level(s)
  - Country:
  - Number of years:
- Subject(s)/grade level(s)
  - Country:
  - Number of years:

What name would you like me to use as your pseudonym?

<u>Section 2: Life Experiences</u>

Education

1. Tell me about your education.
   a. Did any of these experiences prepare you for teaching in another country?
      i. Tell me more about that, or
      ii. Can you give me an example?
   b. Possible follow-up(s):
      i. Did you have any courses or experiences in your teacher education program to prepare you for cross-cultural teaching?

Cross-Cultural Experiences

1. Tell me about other experiences you have had studying/living/working abroad.

Teaching Experiences

1. Tell me what is most important to you about teaching?

2. How have your previous teaching experiences influenced your current approach(es) to teaching here in China? (Connect back to teacher training, or other experiences already mentioned)

<u>Section 3: Current Experiences</u>

China Knowledge and Experiences

1. What brought you to China?
   a. What did you know about Chinese culture and history prior to moving here?
2. What has living and teaching here been like for you?
   a. What are the challenges?

   b. What do you enjoy?
3. Tell me about your experiences outside of the school environment while you have been in China.
   a. How do you spend your free time?
   b. What about local friends?

4. You talked about (refer to responses to previous questions), How do these things influence your thinking about your students?
   a. Tell me more about that, or
   b. Can you give me an example?

The School/Classroom

1. Tell me about how you approach teaching here?
2. What experiences have contributed to How does the culture influence has your thinking about teaching language and academic content been influenced by the school environment?

What are some examples of situations that bring tensions - things that make you stop and think…

As you think about our discussion today, what kind of attitudes, beliefs, and values do you think a person should have to teach successfully in China?

Is there anything that we have not discussed that you would like to add?

Instructions for the next meeting: When I was teaching in Guangzhou, I journaled about my experiences. This document has five excerpts from those journals. Before our next meeting, I want you to read and reflect on the document. Feel free to write on the document, if you would like to make notes for our next conversation. We will meet in one week to talk about your thoughts and reactions to the journal excerpts. Let's go ahead and decide on a time to meet now, I will send you a message to confirm the date, time, and location. I will attach the document so that you have an electronic copy as well.

Appendix D: Trigger document 1

#7
Brant (Algebra 1, Physics, Calculus teacher) just came into the office during the break between classes and told me that he threatened the Sr. 2 students because their homework is not up to his standard.

Brant has high expectations for the students but he doesn't provide the scaffolding to get them there. He says that they are make careless errors because they are used to getting A's in spite of their errors… He assigned them a 500-word essay on "Why 1 + 1 = 2".

The students are complaining about the amount of homework that Brant assigns. The ELA teacher is also complaining because the students are spending most of their time on Brant's homework. Tonight, Andy (academic officer) told me that each teacher can give up to 1.5 hours per night. I pointed out that evening study period is only 3 hours long and they have 4 courses taught by expatriate teachers. His response was that the students need to learn to study faster.

At our team meeting yesterday I brought up the homework issue. Brant says he has lightened the load and seemed open to how much work he is assigning. He also approached me after the meeting to ask me about scaffolding the essay on "Why 1 + 1 = 2"

Brant said he had a meeting with Scott (Sr. 2 student) last night and learned three things: (1) Scott does not like him; (2) he does not like the course; (3) his refusal to participate in class is his way of protesting.

Andy came into the office and told Brant, "We have a problem. You need to give the students an example of what you want when you tell them that their work is not up to your standards." Brant responded, "But they know how to do this, they just don't do it." Andy replied, "I know but you still have to do it."

Shelley (program assistant) told Brant that the parents want to know what can be done to help their children. Brant told her that they need to work harder and that they need to improve their English.

#9
The ELA teacher announced that the Sr. 2 students now have a "self-imposed" rule, they agreed to pay a fine of 1 RMB for speaking Chinese. (ELA teacher, "I guess it comes from me giving them a hard time and telling them that the Sr. 1 students are better English speakers).

10
Today I went into the Sr. 2 classroom to get a map during Physics class. Brant (teacher) was speaking in Chinese to the students!

#3
AB High School students have very low English levels and the teachers are really struggling with how to teach them. Lillian, the physics teacher, has no background in education. Most of the

teachers, with the exception of the math teacher, Jack, don't have the years of classroom experience that could help them to figure it out. Jack asked me why the parents don't do something about the teachers' inability to meet the needs of the students, my guess is that they aren't aware of the program's internal problems. Sam, an ELA teacher, said that he has thought about breaking his contract because he is so frustrated but it would cost him $1000… Side conversation with Lillian: She is spending a lot of time teaching basic English structure in her math and physics courses. She also worries about what will happen when the students get to the U.S. – I shared with her that I felt that same intense anxiety during my first year.

#8
The Sr. 1 students and their parents are complaining about the workload in the WeChat group. When Michael (program assistant) told me about the complaints he observed that the students are not accustomed to the way the expatriate teachers assign homework. He explained that the Chinese teachers' assignments are clear to the students because they have a booklet that includes the content and the assignment so the students understand what is expected of them. The students don't understand what the expatriate teachers expect of them when we say they should "read and review" the materials.

Appendix E: Interview protocol

Protocol for Discussion of Trigger Documents

Opening: During this meeting I want to hear your thoughts about my journals. I have some general questions to prompt the discussion, but I do not have a focus or a particular topic that I am expecting to talk with you about.

Possible prompts:

Is there anything that you have read that really resonated with you?
Was there anything that you disagreed with?
Were there things that you read that you have some strong feelings about?

Probing questions:
Was it the same or different for you?
Can you elaborate?
Tell me more about that….

Appendix F: Trigger document 2

#4
Dissonance - the school is highly structured yet bending, ignoring, and breaking the rules seems to be acceptable.

#6
The campus is pretty isolated considering that it is located in a large metropolitan area. The construction of the school was barely finished when we moved in and it is surrounded by high rise residential buildings that are still under construction. I can see a small community from the balcony of our apartment, the roads are not paved and the buildings are run down and some are vacant… There are no shops, restaurants, or grocery stores within walking distance. We have to walk about 10 minutes to get to the metro/bus station and the supermarket is a twenty-minute bus ride from there. I can't take a quick trip to the grocery store like I did in the U.S., we make about three trips to the supermarket each week because we can only buy as much as we can carry. The supermarket is a challenge in itself, I don't recognize many of the products and I can't read the labels.

#2

We said goodbye to Chloe (local friend) last night. She is off to graduate school, I am not sure how I would have survived China without her. I have learned so much from her about the culture, on a very personal level, from our relationship with Chloe. When she began teaching Chinese to Iain (my son) she took us to the state bookstore where we bought special paper and a brush so that he could learn to draw that characters in the same way that she had learned as a young girl. She told us how her grandfather had taught her the characters and that it is not only about the drawing them; the practice taught her focus, patience, and stillness. She felt that Iain needs to learn the culture in order to learn and understand the language…she did many things that helped us adjust to the physical aspects of living in China but we also traveled and spent time together socially, through our conversations I learned that connections are far more powerful than differences.

#1

This week, the students had a week-long military training on campus. They began training at 7:00 a.m. and practiced marching drills until lunch when they took a two-hour break to eat and rest. After lunch they continued to practice drills until the dinner break, and practiced again until 9:00. From our apartment I could hear their chants and cadences. The training was run by soldiers from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and it appeared to be grueling work under the hot sun. Tomorrow is the final exercise to show what they have accomplished but tonight's show was quite remarkable. Each class was expected to give a performance of some kind, they were all very enthusiastic and talent did not seem to be relevant. The gym was dark, the stage lights were bright, and the sound system was blaring. Having no understanding of the language I was relying

on body language to interpret what was happening. The energy in the gym was far different from the militaristic activities that I had observed throughout the week. Most of the classes sang and some danced to popular Chinese songs; the students in the audience clapped and cheered after each performance. I was surprised when two groups presented comedic skits mocking their PLA trainers; however, the students, teachers, and soldiers laughed and applauded. The soldiers gave the final performance of the evening. Their traditional martial arts routine drew a standing ovation. Standing in the midst of the applauding students, I realized that they had a great deal of respect for their trainers and they had developed a bond during their week together. I began to feel the full weight of the circumstances and it was clear to me then that I was going to encounter many new and unexpected experiences here.

Appendix G: Final interview protocol

Opening: I appreciate you investing your time in this project. I am looking forward to hearing what you think about the text.

What do you think about the text? Are there any changes that you think I should make?

Have the participant point out where changes and/or clarifications should be made and discuss them.

Thank you for your feedback, I will provide you with a final copy of the text when it is complete. I would like to hear from you about this process.

Tell me how participating in this process been for you.

What has this experience taught you?